



Four Slovak-Polish cooperation pillars

(25 Feb) DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák met his Polish counterpart Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz in Warsaw to sign the Letter of Intent (LOI) on defence industry cooperation between the countries, with four pillars of action. The first one is to seek stronger cooperation on manufacture of 155mm munitions, in which Slovakia has extensive manufacturing capacities. The LOI also covers Slovakia's interest in acquiring the Polish Piorun MANPADS. The third pillar of action is to explore the joint manufacture of an IFV to be built on the Polish-made Rosomak platform with a Slovak-developed turret. Slovakia also takes a close interest in the ROK-designed K-2 MBTs to be produced by Poland.

"The defence self-sufficiency of every country comes first. We must develop not only our defence capabilities, but also our manufacturing ones so that we are able to keep all Forces supplied in the event of a threat or conflict," Mr Kaliňák said. The two ministers raised the issue of increasing defence spending. "We share the same opinion on defence spending, whereas our investments must also go into infrastructure, and I appreciate Slovakia's very good initiative to build a new military hospital, which can also help Poland if needed," Mr Kosiniak-Kamysz stressed.

"Poland is a strong leader on defence. It did not wait for the latest challenges in the NATO summit communiques. What's more, it has very innovative ideas about how to boost defence spending, and we are very much interested in that," Mr Kaliňák added. He thanked the Polish side for safeguarding SVK airspace and promised that Poland can count on Slovakia, once its AD and QRA capabilities are fully operational.

DEPMINDEF in Trenčín

(25 Feb) DEPMINDEF Martin Vojašovič paid a visit to Slovak Army Headquarters (Army HQ) and Slovak Special Operations Forces Command (SOCOM) in Trenčín.

At Army HQ, Slovak Army Commander Maj Gen Ivan Balog briefed him on the SVK Army's history, mission, structure, tasks and challenges. After the presentation, their discussion evolved around the modernisation programmes and domestic and international crisis management ops.

Moving on to SOCOM, Mr Vojašovič and SOCOM Commander Maj Gen Jaroslav Krám addressed Op Iron Stream to protect the nation's critical national infrastructure (CNI), the return of SVK Forces to KFOR in Kosovo after 15 years, and today's challenges and needs that matter to SOF.



2nd iteration of Sergeant Michael Strank Memorial Run

(1 Mar) The 2nd iteration of the Sergeant Michael Strank Memorial Run kicked off to the sound of Comd 65 Recce Bn Prešov Lt Col Ivan Nagy striking an artillery shell with an assault knife. To mark the 80th anniversary of Sgt Michael Strank's death, 88 runners – including soldiers from Slovakia's eastern garrisons and Military Academy – ran the 6.5km cross-country trail between the Sgt Michael Strank Exhibition in Stará Ľubovňa and Strank's native home in the village of Jarabina. There were also short running races for a three dozen children. Official side events were attended by Institute of Military History (VHÚ) Director Col Miloslav Čaplovič, CSEL of the Slovak Armed Forces Sgt Maj Imrich Fekete, (Replacement) Comd 2 Mech Bde Prešov Col Maroš Kmec, Comd 65 Recce Regt Prešov Col Marián Brinček, and Chief of the Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) Richard Zimányi from the MOD Personnel Management and Social Affairs Dept.

In his speech, Mayor of Jarabina Radoslav Beňo shared a message of gratitude, thanking the MOD and Armed Forces for their vital role in organising this special day and appreciated the support the village of Jarabina and the Michael Strank Exhibition received from them to raise awareness and honour the memory of the WW2 hero, who was born in Slovakia and died in action as a member of the U.S. Marine Corps in the Battle of Iwo Jima on 1 Mar 1945.



■ 114 SVK peacekeepers serving with the **United Nations Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP)** were honoured with the UN Medals for their service to the cause of peace in Cyprus at UNFICYP's Medal Parade.

■ The Defence Language Institute (DLI)'s Language Methodology, Standards and Evaluation Section hosted the **Teaching Speaking Skills Seminar** for DLI teachers, with the focus on testing the speaking skills according to NATO STANAG 6001. The aim of the seminar was to improve the students' preparation for the oral exam, while on the DLI-delivered intensive language courses.

■ 2nd-year AOS Officer Cadets participated in several **blocks of intensive training** on Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area to improve their skills in combat tactics, offensive and defensive ops, operational planning, and the construction of defensive positions.

■ **Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN)** has made the professional growth of its employees a priority. Since the beginning of the year, LOTN has launched new English language courses and organised first aid training to quickly and effectively stop life-threatening bleeding. It also provides professional training courses with speciality-specific content.

■ **The latest episode of the SVK Military Academy Podcast** is dedicated to the military occupational specialty of G10: Dismounted, Motorised, Mechanised and Tank Forces, with Lt Col Michal Hrnčiar from the AOS Military Tactics and Art of Operations Dept as a guest speaker to present this Army specialism with its roles, forces and equipment.

■ AOS Officer Cadets completed the **16th Commando Half Marathon** in Warsaw. 59 teams – running 21km in combat uniform and with weights – from 14 partner Military Academies from 13 countries took part. Our OCs Damián Polončák, Michal Zuštiak and Patrik Mafaš finished an excellent third place, securing fifth place overall in the race.

■ Competing in the final match at the UWW Ranking Series Event in Albania's Tirana, **wrestler Tajmuraz Salkazanov** from the **Dukla Military Sports Centre** placed second in the 74kg weight class, losing to local wrestler Chermen Valiev (ALB).

■ With a time of 1:48.39, **Dukla skier Rebeka Jančová** won the women's giant slalom at the Alpine Skiing World Cup in Italy's Madesimo.

■ With a time of 2:34:11, **Dukla race walker Michal Morvay** won the men's 35km race walking event at the International Race Walking Tour - Bronze Meeting in Türkiye's Antalya.

■ **Young Dukla lugers Christian Bosman and Bruno Mick** finished third at the 46th FIL Junior European Championships in Sigulda, Latvia.

■ With a clean shoot, **Dukla biathlete Jakub Borguľa** won a silver medal in the men's 10km sprint at the Junior Biathlon World Championships in Sweden's Östersund.

International training exercise for MWDs and their handlers at Bojnice Zoo

(27 Feb) Throughout the last week of Feb, an international training exercise on Military Working Dog (MWD) operations – teaming dog handlers and instructors from Slovakia's Military Police, Armed Forces, and Police Forces with their colleagues from NATO Armies – took place at the Military Police Dept Vikanová - Hronsek and at other locations across Slovakia. A total of 44 professional dog handlers took part in the K9 event including from: SVK Military Police (21), 905 Special Combat Support Centre Nováky (2), 5 SOF Regt Žilina (1), SVK Police (3), SVK Financial Police (2), SVK Prison and Court Guard (3) DEU Army (4), POL Army (2), POL Military Police (2), LVA Army (2), and SVN Military Police (3). Veterinary support was provided by two vets from MILMEDCOM Ružomberok. The training exercise for the dog handlers, divided into five groups according to the Service Dog specialities, focused on the detection of explosives and drugs.



On Day 1, they set to work with arms explosive search (AES) dogs and drugs detection (DD) dogs at the MP Dept facility in Vikanová - Hronsek, where they checked vehicle convoys at

the entrance to the guarded area as well as parked vehicles suspected of carrying prohibited substances such as explosives and drugs, engaged with individuals suspected of wearing suicide vests, and searched for ammunition caches in a forest. Their skills were next put to the test at Slovakia's largest zoo in Bojnice. Then it was on to conducting searches for hides at the bus and coach depot and the Europe Shopping Centre in Banská Bystrica. According to Lt Col Marián Turanský, Director of the Training and MWD Branch within

MP Dept Vikanová - Hronsek, the international training exercise has proven the value of cooperation in delivering training to dog handlers and service dogs, as well as the benefits of an international exchange of experience and ideas.



SOF coordination training

(25 Feb) Slovak Special Operations Forces Command (SOCOM) Trenčín made good use of Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN)'s airport facility for operations of 5 SOF Regt Žilina and policemen of the Specialist Fire-arms Response Units Prešov

and Trenčín to rehearse alternative insertion techniques from a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter. The aim of the training – supported by airmen and air assets of 51 Wng Prešov – was to coordinate and synchronise the work of all those involved in the 'fast rope' or 'full landing' insertions in open spaces or directly onto buildings, rehearse SOPs and commands on board the helicopter, plus getting an intruder's vehicle stopped by a team of snipers.

30th Basic Command and Staff Course

(27 Feb) 77 officers joined the 30th Basic Command and Staff Course, taking place at the SVK Military Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš. They were welcomed to the course by AOS Commandant Brig Gen Aurel Sabó. The course curriculum integrates socio-societal perspectives in the military, security and defence, defence planning, and battalion- and brigade-level military operations, including drills for planning and conducting ground operations at the manoeuvre battalion and brigade levels. The course will be running until 25 Apr. Upon completion of the course, the officers will qualify for promotion to Major.

