



New Slovak-Czech cooperation dimensions

(6 Mar) DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák hosted Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic Jana Černochová for bilateral talks in Bratislava, where they signed the Joint Declaration of Cooperation on Procurement of Military Equipment, Materiel and Services between the Slovak and Czech Republics. Two of the many substantive areas of SVK-CZE defence cooperation concern the Czech Army's contribution to the NATO Multinational Brigade Slovakia (MNB-SVK) and the Czech Air Force's commitment to Air Policing (AP) arrangements in SVK airspace. For this, Mr Robert Kaliňák gave his personal thanks to Ms Jana Černochová and noted his appreciation of the Czech side's decision to extend this assistance well until the end of 2025, and promised that we are ready to take the same action at any time in the future if Czechia asks us to do so.

In light of security challenges in the region and in Europe, the two ministers recognise the need to take forward the modernisation of the Armed Forces. The joint procurement by the CZE and SVK MODs of TATRA-815 trucks serves as a model example of regional defence industrial engagement. By signing the Declaration, Slovakia and Czechia took another significant stride towards closer ties. "This is of great importance for the growth of the defence industry in both countries. We are pleased with Czechia's great interest in manufacturing munitions of all calibres here in Slovakia, because currently we are among the largest munitions producers in Europe. After Poland, we have managed to reach yet another agreement that will lift up the defence industry, thereby raising the standard of living for people in Slovakia and driving an increase in GDP," Mr Kaliňák said.

Both Alliance partners have agreed to hold further meetings in Slovakia and in Czechia to ensure progress on key projects.

Memorial service in Nováky

(3 Mar) A memorial service was held to mark 18 years since the tragic loss of eight employees in a series of explosions that tore through Military Repair Company (VOP) Nováky. DEPMINDEF Martin Vojštašovič bowed to the memory of the victims and laid a wreath at the Nováky Tragedy Memorial in Moyzes Park.

In his speech, Mr Vojštašovič said: "In addition to the lives lost and the wounded, the tragedy has also left indelible marks on the souls of the bereaved families, the survivors, and the entire community. May the memory of the victims lead to our determination to create a world in which tragedies will not be just a matter of annual memorial services, but a commitment to ensuring that they are never repeated."



Initial military training ends with Oath of Allegiance and Pass Off Parade

(7 Mar) 91 women and 223 men marked the end of this year's first IMT with a Pass Off Parade in Partizánske SNP Square. Not only did women make up 1/3 of the intake, but a female recruit was selected as the best of the best. While the Forces combined the parade with a display of firearms and equipment, the Army Recruitment Team met up with young hopefuls interested in joining the Army. In his remarks, DEPMINDEF Martin Vojštašovič said that the event in this town is a continuation of the MOD's tradition of hosting the Pass Off Parade in public places – outside the barracks – closer to people. DCHOD Maj Gen Lorinc is delighted that more candidates have signed up for the basic military training programme this year than last year, saying: "We are happy that the pass rate is pleasingly high, because the Armed Forces keep constantly developing, modernising their capabilities, and recruiting new personnel. We need people who are highly educated and well trained – theoretically, practically, and professionally." The Pass Off Parade has taken place in the town for the first time. Mayor of Partizánske and Chair of the SVK Towns and Villages Association Jozef Božík stressed that it was a real honour. Although no garrison has been stationed there in the past, Partizánske has maintained good ties with the Forces, the Soldiers Association, and the Veterans Union.



■ A memorial service for Generals Ján Golian, Rudolf Viest, Augustín Malár and Štefan Jurech, the four SVK generals executed before the end of WW2 in Germany's Flossenbürg concentration camp, was held at the MOD Reconciliation Memorial in Bratislava on 4 Mar. Participants in attendance included DEPMINDEF Igor Melicher, DCHOD Maj Gen Miroslav Lorinc, Chair of the SVK Generals' Club Lt Gen (Ret'd) Peter Vojtek, and others.

■ On 4 Mar, 11 Mech Bn Martin hosted a deployment ceremony for the SVK soldiers deploying in support of the United Nations Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP). They will be replacing 114 SVK soldiers who are returning home. DEPMINDEF Martin Vojštašovič and DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Slavomír Verčmák attended the ceremony to say goodbye to the departing troops.

■ 5 Arty Regt completed a complex battle staff rehearsal, dubbed "Thunder", on the Rožňava base, with the focus on planning an operation under the theme of 'Providing Fire Support to a Mechanised Brigade with the Aim of Improving the Planning and Decision-Making Processes'. According to Comd 5 Arty Regt, the objectives and tasks of the exercise have been met. The Regiment's upcoming battle staff exercise at TC Lešt will be the final pass or fail assessment of whether they have planned their operation well.

■ A meeting on the purchase of new UH-60L helicopters and issues related to the UH-60L Helicopter Preliminary Design Review (PDR) soon to take place in the US was chaired by Comd 51 Wng Prešov Col Stefan Okoš at 51 Wng Prešov. The meeting saw a presentation of the UH-60L project concept by ACE Aeronautics and a discussion of the technical and organisational requirements of 51 Wng helicopter pilots and engineering technicians.

■ Military Forests and Estates (VLM) Branch Facility Kežmarok would like to invite you to the 2024-25 Hunting Season Trophies Show from the Javorina hunting reserve. The show will be open to the public from 21 to 24 Mar at 18 Baštová Street in Kežmarok.

■ Military Forests and Estates (VLM) forestry educators visited a primary school in Pliešovce to speak with pupils about foresters and hunters and to show them a variety of forestry tools such as a pair of binoculars, a tree caliper, and a tree diameter tape. The pupils also listened to the sounds of forest animals and tried to identify them.

■ The Slovak National Uprising Museum in Banská Bystrica has announced that its galleries will be closed to the public on 18 Mar.

■ The SVK Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps marked 22 years since its establishment on 4 Mar with an anniversary gathering of priests and deacons at the Police Academy in Bratislava's Rača. After being treated to lunch, they moved to St Sebastian's Cathedral, where they celebrated Mass, in the presence of other lay employees of the Bishopric, cadets of the Police Academy in Bratislava, students of the Secondary Police School in Pezinok, and local parishioners. The Liturgy of the Word was reinforced with the music performances by students from the Bratislava Conservatory's Church Music Depart.

■ Shooter Juraj Tužinský from the Dukla Military Sports Centre Banská Bystrica secured the European Champion title in the men's 10m Air Pistol at the European Championships in Osijek, Croatia. Scoring a total of 242.5 points in the final, he maintained his lead over Pavel Schejbal (CZE) and triumphed by 1.6 points.

■ Judoča Ema Fizeľová (SVK Dukla) claimed a bronze medal in the women's 70kg weight class at the Podgorica Senior European Cup 2025 in Slovenia.

■ At the 2025 ISMF Ski Mountaineering World Championships in Switzerland's Morgins, skimo athlete Marianna Jägerčíková (SVK Dukla) took an excellent 6th place, and she and Jakub Šiarnik (SVK Dukla) finished 8th in the Mixed Relay race, gaining precious ranking points towards qualification for the Olympics.

AOS OCs – future pilots undertake winter wilderness survival training

(6 Mar) In the Low Fatra Mountains, SVK Military Academy (AOS) third- and fifth-year officer cadets – military pilots from the Technical University of Košice (TUKE)'s Faculty of Aeronautics undertook Joint Winter Wilderness Survival Skills and Specialist Physical Training under the leadership of MSgt Miroslav Štubňa, Physical Training Instructor from 51 Wng Prešov.

Because the maximum daily temperatures kept over 0 C, the instructors tried to increase the difficulty of the tasks by making the conditions more challenging. And so, in crossing a water obstacle, the OCs moved from a standing pool of water to flowing water. With the strength of its current and rocky bottom, the Varínka River inspired awe in them. In a matter of week in winter wilderness, they learnt to sustain themselves in a cold weather environment by building shelters, starting fires, finding water and food, cooking food over open fires, and making wicker snowshoes and improvised stretchers.

Survive, Evade, Resist, Extract

(6 Mar) TC Lešt hosted Level-B Survive, Evade, Resist, Extract (SERE) training, designed for special, airborne and reconnaissance forces, AF pilots and aircrew, MP personnel, and all those involved in international crisis management ops. Following the theory module, trainees immersed themselves in the reality of SERE challenges – from building a shelter, starting a fire, getting food from whatever nature provided to giving first aid. They did not miss out on preparing for evasion, capture and escape, establishing contact for rescue, and reaching an extraction point undetected – the skill-sets needed to make it home alive. According to Sgt 1C Ján Engler, Chief Instructor of the SERE Training Course from the TC Lešt-based Special Training Unit, the soldiers who got SERE-trained came from across the entirety of the Armed Forces.

EDA's CBRN event in Slovakia



(7 Mar) The European Defence Agency (EDA)-organised first-ever CBRN Live Agent Training – Pilot Training Course (CBRN LAT PTC) took place at the CBRN Training and Testing Centre Zemianske Kostofany. Com-

menting on the CBRN training, Exercise Director Col Oliver Toderiška (SVK A) said: "All participants had to complete distance learning modules before taking part in an advanced training exercise for the Sampling and Identification of Chemical Agents (SICA) teams. The CBRN sampling scenarios were co-designed by SVK CBRN specialists, for whom preparing the international training exercise was a new experience. SICA teams from Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Germany, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia – which were assessed by an international evaluation team – demonstrated not only a high level of professionalism, but also exceptional helpfulness in exchanging expertise and resolving ambiguities."

WW2 veteran turns 103



(5 Mar) A birthday party for WW2 veteran Col (Ret'd) Ján Ihnatik, 103, who fought at Jaslo and in the Battle of Dukla, was hosted by the "Treasure" Cultural House in Ostrava. Among the well-wishers were representatives of the Moravian-Silesian region, Ostrava City Council,

CZE MOD and Armed Forces, CZE and SVK Artillery Community, and Czechoslovak Legionary Community. President of the CZE and SVK Artillery Community Col (Ret'd) Jozef Kavecký presented the celebrant with the SVK Chief of Defence Commemorative Cross 3rd Grade, awarded by Gen Daniel Zmeko.

