



New biathlon shooting range

(14 January) The training centre Králiky at the Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica has a new modern biathlon shooting range. It was officially opened by the SVK Minister of Defence Martin Gľavč and the Olympic winner Anastasia Kuzmina.

"The new shooting range will significantly contribute to the quality of preparation of our elite sportsmen and, of course, our young talents. I am glad we can provide the optimum conditions for the preparation of our biathlons. Equally, the 5th Special Forces Regiment will be training there in the nearest future," said Minister of Defence Martin Gľavč on the occasion of the ceremonial opening. The amount of approximately EUR 220,000 needed for building the shooting range was provided by the SVK MOD and the process of building the same took three months. Training can now take place in the alpine conditions close to the cross-country skiing trails.

The Olympic winner Anastasia Kuzmina fired the first shots on a target, thereby launching the new shooting range into life. "I have supported the idea of building a new shooting range in the environment providing such high quality conditions for training. Now we have a full-fledged shooting complex that meets the international quality standards," said our most successful biathlete. "I do believe that after Nastiya Kuzminova brings home gold from the next Olympics and decides to finish her sporting career one day, she will bring up the young generation there to make the most of their talent," added Head of the Defence Department Gľavč.

"We support the concept of our sportsmen spending the most of their training time home, without having to bear the high costs during the away days. I view the building of the sports infrastructure as crucial and I do believe this trend will continue in Slovakia," concluded Richard Galovič, Director of the Military Sports Centre Dukla.

Veronika Velez-Zuzulová and Petra Vihová rewrote history

(15 January) On 13 January, Slovak skier Veronika Velez-Zuzulová celebrated her third World Cup victory at the attractive Women Night Slalom in Flachau, Austria. Her colleague Petra Vihová finished at a great sixth place. SVK Minister of Defence Martin Gľavč congratulated both successful sports-women of the Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica.

On Friday, 15 January, Veronika Velez-Zuzulová won again and Petra Vihová earned an excellent third place. For the first time in history, they stood on the podium side by side.

"Today, Veronika and Petra rewrote history. For the first time ever two Slovak women stood on the podium next to each other. I warmly congratulate both of them and I want to express my gratitude for a beautiful sports experience," stated Minister Gľavč.



- Nitra-based **12th Mechanized Battalion** commenced its training year with marksmanship drills. During the second week of January, Firing Ranges Devičany and Tomášikovo saw all mechanized companies, a combat service support company, a combat support company, as well as a dressing station. They drilled weapon and ammunition handling, targeting and firing at targets. In the first half of this year, the Battalion's units will train at a section-level, so during the handgun firing exercise, all members of the company were firing at a time. Chosen platoons underwent also night firing exercise.

- A service regulation of the main Service Office for State Service of Professional Soldiers № 86/2015 – **Ethical Code of a Professional Soldier** – was published in connection with the new Act on State Service of Professional Soldiers and came into effect on 1 January 2016.

- During his official visit to Cyprus, besides meeting the President of the Republic of Cyprus and other representatives of the government, the Deputy Chairman of the European Commission on Energetic Union, **Maroš Ševčovič**, did not forget to meet with the Slovak unit operating on Cyprus as well. Accompanied by the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic, Oxana Tomová, Mr. Ševčovič also visited the UNFICYP Mission HQ in Nicosia, where in the Camp Tatty – Cypriot home of Slovak engineers – he met with Slovak soldiers serving at the headquarters and the Sector 4.

- On 12 – 14 January, a training **course on first aid**, bandaging techniques and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) took place in the medical field station in Liptovský Mikuláš operating under the Training, Education and Specialized Preparation Section, Specialized Medical and Veterinary Activities Division, Surgeon General Office Ružomberok.

- On 12, January, on the grounds of Sučany Firing Range, members of the **Mobile CIS Base** underwent marksmanship drills from a static position – firing the Vz. 58 (model 58) assault rifle at disappearing and moving targets and the Vz. 82 (model 82) pistol at stationary targets. They also focused on the preparation of handguns for firing, mastering firing techniques and rules, as well as compliance with safety rules.

- The **Logistics Support Office** trained an evacuation of the building in a simulated case of fire with casualties. The exercise took place on 15 January and tested the preparedness of the Military Fire Team of the Ammunition Supply Point Trenčín as well.

- The 12th Mechanized Battalion organized a **blood donation event** carried out in cooperation with the mobile unit of the Blood Collection Centre Nitra, in which participated 28 soldiers.

SOCEUR Commander's visit

(11 January) Based on invitation of Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, the US Maj Gen Gregory J. Lengyel, Commander of the Special Operations Command Europe in Stuttgart, Germany, made a visit to Slovakia. He was received by Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim and State Secretary at the SVK MOD Miloš Koterec. In a briefing, Maj Gen Lengyel was introduced into the structure of our Armed Forces, their engagement in the international crisis management operations, as well as the concept of training and implementation of conclusions of the last NATO Summit. Subsequently, Maj Gen Lengyel left for Žilina where he was informed of the current capabilities of the 5th Special Forces Regiment. The issue raised in the discussion in Žilina was the intended augmentation of the Regiment and the forthcoming commitments in respect of service in the North Atlantic Alliance or the last year's certification of the special operations task force and its consequent inclusion into NATO Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.



Start of training and courses

(11 January) The gate of the Training Battalion opened on 11 January for 146 candidates of the preparatory state service and for 50 cadets – university graduates, who will undergo the basic military training, during which time the barracks at the 4th Czechoslovak Brigade in Martine will become, for the seven weeks, a home from home for them. There are 29 servicewomen among the candidates and cadets. After successfully completing the initial military training, they will take part in a passing-out ceremony to take place in February. Besides the candidates and cadets of the basic military training, also the professional soldiers started preparation in the Training Battalion, namely 28 professional soldiers starting their career course OR-6, 89 professional soldiers starting specialized courses and 150 professional soldiers starting the specialized and standard courses. To-date, altogether 465 members of the SVK Armed Forces are undergoing training and attending courses in the Martin Battalion.



Troops of V4 EU Battle Group ready to perform tasks

(17 January) 538 members of the SVK Armed Forces, declared to the V4 EU BG, took part in a ceremonial muster in the barracks of the Trebišov unit. The overall strength of the Battle Group is approximately 3,900 to include combat support units. Contribution of the Slovak Republic represents approximately 12 per cent of the whole Battle Group.

"The Battle Group is on stand-by and is regarded as an extremely significant contribution to the European security. The Battle Group is fully prepared and ready to perform the tasks for the purpose of which it was created. Our contribution to the Battle Group was endorsed after a detailed analysis of our capabilities. In the case of contingency, also the Slovak Republic shall ask for deployment of the Battle Group," said SVK Minister of Defence Martin Gľavč. The Battle Group's capabilities should be sustainable even after the stand by, both for the EU and NATO purposes.

"The current security situation in the European Union neighboring countries is highly demanding in terms of



preparedness of the armed forces and our colleagues from the other V4 countries. In the history of the EU BGs, the likelihood of deployment has never been greater than it is now," stated

Lt Gen Peter Gajdoš, 1st Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces. At the same time, he extended his thanks to the troops for a successful accomplishment of preparation, which was completed in November 2015 by the international certification exercise Common Challenge 2015 in Poland. The V4 EU BG is a joint project of the Visegrad Four within the EU's Common Defence and Security Policy. For the SVK Armed Forces, it is a start of a next large engagement in the European security structures.

Over the upcoming six months, the members of the mechanized company, CBR company, transportation company and combat support units, together with the staff members, shall be ready to deploy within a radius of 6,000 kilometres from Brussels. The troops shall be deployable to the required location within ten days of the EU resolution.

Based on the decision of the European agencies and organizations, the V4 EU BG is ready to perform tasks of separating the parties to the conflict, tasks of stabilization, reconstruction and provision of military advice to the countries in a position of a third party, as well as tasks of evacuation or assistance in humanitarian operations, or tasks of conflict prevention.