



Slovak Shield 2016 is coming up

(9 March) On Wednesday, a comprehensive command staff rehearsal of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces got underway on the assumption that by the end of the next seven days it will have brought forward a military strategic assessment as well as a proposal for military solutions to the synthetic scenario of the Slovak Shield 2016 exercise series. The drill rehearsing the command staff's planning procedures at the strategic level is to set the entry data for the operational and tactical levels, with the result of testing a mechanized brigade-sized unit's ability to conduct operations as part of a Multinational Joint Task Force in defence of the territorial integrity of the Slovak Republic in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

"Exercise Slovak Shield 2016 is one of the milestones along the path to the mechanized brigade being certified and achieving full operational capability within the NATO Forces of Lower Readiness (FLR) as from 31 December 2017, that's why it is essential to exploit this training opportunity to the full extent," remarked Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim.

One series of the training activities based on the common theme of Exercise Slovak Shield was a complex command staff rehearsal, dubbed Little Shield 2016, geared towards operational planning by the staff members of the 1st Mechanized Brigade Headquarters and its subordinate components, running from 7 to 9 March, in the grounds of Jaselské Barracks, Topoľčany. The three-day rehearsal, entitled "Mechanized Brigade in Planning Operations in Defence and Protection of the Territorial Integrity of the Slovak Republic", tested the abilities of the exercising personnel to plan a high intensity combat operation.

The staff members of the 1st Mech Brig HQ, replenished by CIMIC and PSYOPS specialists, members of the National Support Element (NSE) of the 11th Mechanized Battalion Group (Logistics Battalion Topoľčany), a member of the ISTAR Battalion, and an infantry battalion chief of staff, honed their skills in formulating battle orders and documentation, and deepened their working habits in executing command staff work.

Command Sergeant Majors of the SVK Armed Forces meet in session in Prešov

(8 March) The 2nd Mechanized Brigade (SVK Land Forces) Garrison Club Prešov hosted a two-day specialist meeting of the Command Sergeant Majors of all SVK Armed Forces components under the patronage of the Command Senior Enlisted Leader of the SVK Armed Forces, Command Sergeant Major Vladimír Beluš. The aim of the meeting was to assess the results of the Command Sergeant Majors cadre in Training Year (TY) 2015. The Command Senior Enlisted Leader of the SVK Armed Forces, CSM Vladimír Beluš, focused his assessment on the evaluation of the 10-years-long history of building the Senior NCO structure within the SVK Armed Forces. In his statement, he thanked Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim and SVK Armed Forces commanders for their support and cooperation, as well as complimenting the Command Sergeant Majors on their job well done. The General then handed out the Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Badge to selected junior enlisted soldiers and NCOs. To mark the 10th anniversary of the formation of the Command Sergeant Majors' structure, CSM Vladimír Beluš awarded Letters of Commendation to those CSM members who had participated in building the Senior NCO structure within the SVK Armed Forces. General Maxim and CSM Beluš then presented an award to the best NCO of TY 2015, SSgt Ľudovít Vereš.



- On Thursday, 3 March, members of the Slovak Republic Generals Club organized a **commemoration ceremony in honour of Slovak generals** Augustín Malár, Ján Golian, Štefan Jurech and Rudolf Viest, all of them executed in 1945. The ceremony took place at the Reconciliation Memorial on the grounds of the SVK MOD and was commenced by the deputy chairman of the Club, Lt Gen (Ret.) Peter Vojtek. Accompanied by members of the Honour Guard of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, the delegation laid wreaths as well as a handful of soil from the concentration camp Flossenbürg at the Reconciliation Memorial, after which Lt Col (Ret.) Marcel Jurech, son of general Štefan Jurech, held a short speech.

- In accordance with the new Act on State Service of Professional Soldiers, besides undergoing basic military training, soldier trainee attendants and cadets will also undergo **specialized individual training** for the first time. They have been assigned to three training companies at the Training Battalion Martin and the Aviation Specialties Training Centre Prešov.

- On 2 March, the Firing Range Devičany saw the **BVP-2 and BVP-1 Infantry Fighting Vehicles BVP-2 and BVP-1 gunners** practising their knowledge and skills in firing the BVP-2 and BVP-1 guns from a stationary position and on the move during day and night; storing and mounting anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM); feeding 30mm ammo into the ammunition belt – the BVP-2; and in feeding rounds and rectifying guns. Cpl Ján Babiak, of the 1st Mechanized Company, was rated the best gunner.

- On 9 March, members of the **Military Diplomatic Corps** accredited in Slovakia visited the CIMIC and PSYOPS Unit (CaP Unit) based at Martin Garrison. Capt Martin Jankov, Deputy Commander of the CaP Unit, welcomed the attachés from 14 countries and familiarized them with the Unit, its tasks, structure, and equipment. The attachés expressed their will to arrange cooperation between the Unit and specialists from their countries serving in the field of civil-military cooperation and psychological operations. As a sign of gratitude for the opportunity to familiarize himself with the Unit, Defence Attaché of the U.S. Lt Col Andrew Taylor presented Capt Jankov with a gift.

- At present, a two-week **Close Combat Course** is under way at Lešť Training Centre. The course draws from basic close combat techniques and its participants will familiarize themselves with basic movement skills, improve their proficiency, deftness and basic combatives – punches, kicks and defending oneself against them, as well as ground combatives. The graduates can also undergo the next level of the course – for trainers and subsequently for instructors.

- On 10 March, members of Topoľčany-based Brigade HQ underwent an improvement training at Lipovník Garrison Firing Range, aimed at drilling the activities of tactical and marksmanship training, as well as **sappers preparation in the field of mine security**. As part of the training, there were also activities like operation in a dangerous area with the occurrence of mines and unexploded ammunition; steps to take when explosive devices are discovered; marking a minefield; and ways to identify dangerous areas.

Colloquium on cooperation

(8 March) Under the expert guidance of Lt Col Zdeněk Horák, representative of the Slovak Republic in the Steering Committee of the Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCD COE), located in Tallinn (Estonia), the Information Security and Protection and CIS Branch, operating under the Operations Support Staff of the SVK General Staff, organized a specialized colloquium on options of cooperation between national authorities of the Slovak Republic and the representatives of academia with the CCD COE. The colloquium was participated by the representatives of the Slovak National Security Office, National Agency for Network and Electronic Services, SVK Police Corps, Police Corps Academy, SVK Armed Forces Academy, SVK MOD, and SVK Armed Forces.

Preparations for Exercise Anaconda

(10 March) In connection with Exercise Anaconda 2016, the Commander of the Mechanized Brigade Prešov accepted an operational order of the Commander of the Polish 16th Mechanized Division on 29 February. The task of the Brigade HQ, reinforced by other specialists from the SVK Land Forces and the SVK AF, was to meet the deadline of 9 March to plan an operation that would ensure the fulfillment of tasks and the reaching of the end-state required by the Commander of the superior Polish Division. By rigorous operation scheduling, the members of the Brigade HQ will prepare themselves for successful representation of the Slovak Republic in Exercise Anaconda 2016, which will take place in June in Poland and will be participated by 250,000 soldiers from 24 European countries and the U.S.



Operation Desert Storm veterans

(11 March) On Friday, State Secretary of the SVK MOD Miloš Koterec and 1st Deputy Chief of the SVK General Staff Lt Gen Peter Gajdoš met with participants of Operation Desert Storm on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of its conclusion. The veterans were awarded Commemoration Letters and SVK Minister of Defence Medals. Mr Koterec and Lt Gen Gajdoš highly appreciated continuing cooperation between Czech and Slovak soldiers, starting with the deployment of Czechoslovak CBRN specialists to the Persian Gulf. Col (Ret.) Ján Valo, Commander of the Czechoslovak Unit, held a speech on behalf of more-than-twenty participants of Operation Desert Storm.

Rožňava-based CBRN specialists train at Lešť with U.S. Indiana National Guard

(10 March) The Slovak Armed Forces is the LEAD NATION for the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) defence of the entire Visegrad 4 (V4) EU Battlegroup. On Lešť Training Area, members of the Mechanized Battalion Martin practised their coordination along with our V4 EU BG assigned unit in the CBRN specialty. As part of the deployment of the Mechanized Battalion's companies to Lešť Training Area, running from 7-18 March, whose aim is also to check the synergy of companies in executing fire exercise, the units were tested on their ability to continue executing combat missions after decontamination.

While on Lešť Training Area, the CBRN unit, drawn from the CBRN Defence Battalion Rožňava, conducted a full-scale decontamination of two companies of the Mechanized Battalion Martin. As part of the exercise, the mechanized companies had managed to carry out partial decontamination by themselves, using their own equipment. The full-scale decontamination saw both companies proceed through a decontamination line, which had been set up within the length of 2km at Lešť. At the end of the decontamination line, all personnel and equipment were subjected to full decontamination. With the tasking successfully accomplished by Rožňava-based CBRN specialists, both Martin-based mechanized companies could quickly continue executing their missions in favour of the V4 EU BG.



For the time being, this was only on Lešť Training Area, but in the eventuality of a CBRN incident they would be ready to do so in the

V4 EU BG's real area of deployment.

At the Training Centre Lešť (TC Lešť), members of the CBRN Defence Battalion Rožňava went on to train alongside their counterparts from the Indiana National Guard. Lt Col Oliver Toderiška, the Commander of the CBRN Defence Battalion, appreciated the cooperation between the SVK and U.S. Armed Forces: "The U.S. CBRN unit has been fully integrated into a CBRN Defence Platoon unit. We execute all talks shoulder to shoulder." The U.S. troops are operating jointly in a unit led by 1st Lt Naomi Mickle. According to her, the U.S. troops successfully undertook joint coordination exercises; familiarized themselves with the setting up and operation of the Human Decontamination System (HDS) and the decontamination line for personnel and equipment; tried out pumping water from a water tank and using it for cleaning equipment; put on the CBRN suits and protective gear in service with Rožňava-based CBRN Defence Battalion. On the other hand, their Slovak counterparts had a chance to try on the U.S. CBRN gear. Some of the U.S. soldiers are in Slovakia for the second time, having deployed to Lešť for Exercise Slovak Shield 2015. This week, combat chemical substances training is awaiting members of the Indiana National Guard and specialists from Rožňava-based CBRN Defence Battalion at the CBRN Training and Testing Centre Zemianske Kostolany.