



Minister at ZMOS assembly

(18 May) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and State Secretary Marián Saloň participated in the opening session of the 27th assembly of the Association of Towns and Villages in Slovakia (ZMOS). Among those delivering speeches at the event were also Chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic Andrej Danko and Prime Minister Róbert Fico.

"The SVK Armed Forces have their units stationed throughout the whole of Slovakia. That is why it is our responsibility to cooperate with representatives of municipalities and to discuss, among other things, even potential problems with them, as well as ways of processing requests in their favour," said Peter Gajdoš. He reminded that the Ministry of Defence cooperates with municipalities also as part of domestic crisis management operations, for example, in the eventualities of floods and snow calamities.

The Minister emphasised that the Ministry of Defence will organise open day events in its military units across Slovakia so as to bring the activities of the SVK Armed Forces closer to the public. The events will be primarily aimed at pupils and students in an effort to raise their awareness of defence issues.

Exercise Blue Wave

(22 May) To practise establishing a no-fly zone over an assigned portion of Slovak territory is the main goal of Exercise Blue Wave, which is to be held at the end of May in Bratislava,



Sľač, Trenčín, as well as across other military bases and units of the SVK Air Force. The command post exercise with a partial deployment of forces comes part of the Slovak Shield 2016 series. The exercise, involving the SVK Air Force Headquarters, will test the defence and protection capabilities of defence infrastructure facilities, the air surveillance systems deployed for the purpose of the exercise to establish a common operational picture, and air defence systems.

"Providing for 24/7 defence and protection of Slovak airspace is a responsibility we have towards our citizens and a commitment to our Allies in NATO," said SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. One of his priorities is to step up training aimed at delivering the defence of the Slovak Republic.

"This will be one of the exercises designed to comprehensively test the capabilities of the SVK Air Force to operate in a joint operational environment," said Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim, adding that the conduct of the air operation itself in this particular form is one of the main tasks of the SVK Air Force.

Two activities will form the basis for this year's Slovak Shield 2016 series, namely Exercise Blue Wave, which is to be held from 23 to 27 May, and Exercise Slovak Shield, which is to be organised at the end of September and the beginning of October.

General Milan Maxim attends EU Military Committee session

(18 May) Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim participated in a session of the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) in Brussels. At the meeting, the Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS), Alain Le Roy, informed of the structure and key messages of the European Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS), which is currently being drafted. The EUGS will be submitted to the Council of the European Union in June 2016. In the context of the migration crisis, the latest information was provided on the European Union Force Althea (EUFOR ALTHEA) and Naval Operation SOPHIA in the Mediterranean, while the European Commission supplied additional information on the activities of FRONTEX, the EU's border management agency. The Chiefs of Defence from the contributing countries to EU operations were invited to attend a session on EU military operations. Then, at the session dedicated to the EU's military capabilities, the Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency (EDA), Jorge Domecq briefed on the status of the EDA's key projects and the announced 2017 capabilities development review. In relation to the Slovak Republic's upcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Gen Maxim highlighted the results of the current Dutch EU Presidency. As the priorities of our EU Presidency he named the strengthening of security and stability in the neighbourhood of the European Union, the deepening of cooperation between the EU and NATO, and, upon submission of the EUGS, also support for discussions on elaboration of military issues. The next EUMC session at Chiefs of Defence level will be held on 7 and 8 November in Brussels.



- State Secretaries of the SVK Ministry of Defence Ivan Máčovský and Marián Saloň provided the event dubbed **Night of museums and galleries**, organized on 21 May, with their support. They visited the Museum of Military History (MMH) in Piešťany, thereby opening the season. Also the Museum Section of the MMH in Svidník took part in this event with a European dimension. All the activities undertaken by the museums falling under the MMH were held under the auspices of Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. Part of the 12th edition of the event was a wide-ranging accompanying programme. The visitors had an opportunity to sit in a fighter aircraft's cockpit or in armoured vehicles. At Dukla, they could see small arms and close-combat demonstrations. Equally, they could hear the songs sung in tribute to soldiers and guerrilla fighters during liberation of Slovakia.

- Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš awarded four members of the Slovak Military Revival Association (ZVOS) with Commemorative Medals of Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic, 3rd Grade. At the **13th national ZVOS conference** held on 19 May at the SVK MOD, the medals were handed out to the awardees by Eleonóra Kišová, Director General of the Human Resources Department of the SVK MOD.

- On 16 – 20 May, the members of the 1st mechanized brigade HQs directed the 11th mechanized battalion group's command staff exercise dubbed **Little Shield 2016 I**, supported by the JEMM system and simulation technologies. The exercise took place on the premises of the 11th mechanized battalion and in the Armed Forces Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš. Its focus was on preparations of the HQs and staff for a conduct of defensive operation by the mechanized battalion group upon a violation of state sovereignty of the Slovak Republic by an aggressor.

- On 18 May, on the occasion of the **Sporting Day**, the military policemen from the Police Enforcement Division Prešov worked on building their physical fitness and resilience and on increasing locomotive faculties. The aim of the event was also to encourage teamwork and to build up strong relationships. They had an opportunity to play mini-football, tennis, mini-golf, to exercise in a fitness centre and to discover hiking and biking trails in the vicinity.

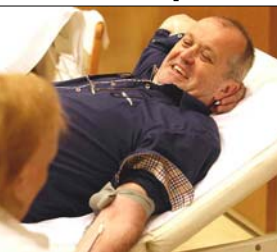
- On 17 May, a **workshop aimed at usage of PC-DRAW software** was held on the premises of the Institute of Forensic Research and Education at the University of Žilina, the target group being the military policemen from the Police Enforcement divisions in Bratislava and Prešov, from the Investigation section Trenčín and from the Training and cynology division Vlková – Hronsek. Its focus was on documenting traffic accidents, on drawing sketches of an accident and creating accident reconstruction diagrams.

- From 18 April to 13 May, a course aimed at **driving tracked infantry fighting vehicles** was held in Martin-based training battalion's combat training company, with 13 professional soldiers and one civilian employee from MOD attending the course. Building on theoretical technical preparation, they practised driving the vehicle at the garrison training area Sučany. To pass the course they had to meet the requirements of the driving exercise, to include autonomous vehicle navigation and obstacle avoidance. The best drivers were SSG Richard Poník, PFC Peter Zípaž (both from CSS battalion Prešov) and CPL Martina Gáborová from the 12th mechanized battalion Nitra.

- On 18 May, on the occasion of the Day of victory over fascism, Director of Military Police Col Milan Hamar awarded **Military Police Medals of Merit in development of Military Police**, 3rd Grade (bronze) and 2nd Grade (silver) to eleven members of MP.

- Members of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces underwent **specialized recurrent combined arms training** on the premises of the Military Training Area Turecký vrch. It was aimed on firing a pistol vz. 82, throwing a grenade and on tactical preparation. At the end of the activity they took part in a cross country march.

Defence Department's Blood Drop



(17 May) Defence Department's employees and professional soldiers had an opportunity to donate blood on the premises of the SVK MOD in Bratislava. Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, who is a long-term blood donor himself, attended this traditional event in person to provide support to the same.

"I do not know how many times I have donated blood. For the first time, it was during my studies at military gymnasium, at the age of eighteen," said the Head of the Defence Department. It feels great that I can help someone in this way. I used to be a professional soldier and it is one of our tasks to help the others. Furthermore, I always feel better after donating blood," he added.

"I can conclude that health condition of donors from the Department of Defence is above standard," commented favourably Juraj Mitura, Head of the Institute of Clinical Hematology and Transfusion Medicine at the SNU Central Military Hospital Ružomberok – Teaching Hospital, on blood donations at the Defence Department. He pointed out that it is traditionally in summer that hospitals are facing a serious deficit of blood in the blood banks.

This time, more than forty soldiers and civilian employees from the SVK MOD and SVK Armed Forces took part in the Defence Department's Blood Drop, which is the event regularly organized by the Ministry of Defence. Traditionally, the Central Military Hospital's medical team provided support to the event.

Competitive rock climbing



(18 May) The Specialised Training Division, of the Training Centre Lešť, held the 4th International Rock Climbing Competition for members of the SVK Armed Forces and non-MOD armed components at the Bralce Training Rocks on 17 and 18 May. Among

those competing were two-member teams made up of members of SVK Armed Forces units, the Military Police, the Firefighting Rescue Corps of the SVK Interior Ministry, the Mountain Rescue Services, and the Firefighting Rescue Corps of the Czech Republic. A total of 30 climbing routes awaited them. For completion of each climbing route they were awarded 1 or more points, depending on climbing grades, i.e. the level of difficulty. The winner's cup went to Lt Martin Kamas, of the Firefighting Rescue Corps Training Centre Lešť, and Lt Vladimír Plachý, of the Firefighting Rescue Corps Prievidza. 1st Lt Peter Zingor (evaluated as the best individual climber) and WO-3 Štefan Šajgal, of the Mountain Rescue Service Low Tatras, achieved the second place in the competition. The Czech team, Capt Martin Špaček and Capt Tomáš Šajfr, of the Firefighting Rescue Corps Hradec Králové, came in third place.

Sports Friday of Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš in Banská Bystrica

(20 May) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš familiarised himself with the final preparations of sportsmen and women at the Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica (MSC DBB) prior to the Summer

Olympic Games. A total of 16 sportsmen and women have so far qualified for the Olympics, with six others still working hard on their qualifications. Nevertheless, it is clear by now that Slovakia's military sportsmen and women will have their strongest presence at the Summer Olympics ever. During his visit to the MSC DBB, Minister Gajdoš was briefed by Richard Galovič, the director of the MSC DBB, on the latest organisational structure introduced by the MSC DBB leadership earlier in January 2016. As part of his tour of the MSC DBB facilities and meeting with sportsmen and women, Peter Gajdoš, who is an active sportsman himself, tried throwing a hammer during the training session of hammer thrower Martina Hrašnová and attend-



ed a karate training session led by Klaudio Farmadín.

At the football stadium in Radvaň, Banská Bystrica, still on 20 May, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš opened the 6th International Small Football Tournament, which was organised in memory of soldiers who died while serving on international crisis management missions and operations by the Slovak Veterans' Union with support of the SVK MOD.

"I am proud of all servicemen and women who bring credit to Slovakia while serving on operations abroad. A total of 17,000 soldiers, of whom nearly 500 were service-women, have so far served on operations. Unfortunately, there are situations when their missions end without a happy end and they never return home to their beloved ones. It is, therefore, our responsibility to take maximum efforts to keep their memory alive so that the people of Slovakia come to realise the values of quiet life and peace, because they do not come for free," said the head of the SVK MOD.