



Children's Day in Orava

(28 May) Helicopter flypast, military paratroopers' drop into water, military equipment, demonstration of activities by cynologists, demonstrations of combat in a built-up area and close combat, military music band, Komajota music band, creative workshops and a variety of other spectacular shows were prepared by soldiers for children in Námestovo on the occasion of the Children's Day to be spent with the SVK Armed Forces. Among those who came to welcome the children were also SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim. Peter Gajdoš reminded that this was already the 19th edition of the event to mark the International Children's Day, which will be on 1 June. He emphasized he would be glad to see the increasing interest among the wide public in the issues like defence, security and safety of our country and willingness to contribute to the same. "Today, we have prepared an attractive programme for you on this site, but I will be most glad if you, together with your parents or teachers, would evince interest in the future in visiting the units where our soldiers prepare and work. And, who knows, perhaps one day you will put on a military uniform, wear military boots, and the safeguarding of our country will, maybe, become a matter of professional honour for you," said the Minister.

Part of the Children's Day with the Armed Forces was announcing the results of a drawing competition Soldiers as seen through the eyes of children. The jury had to evaluate 850 drawings and paintings made by pupils of the Slovak elementary schools. It was Klára Mráziková, the second-class student from the Elementary School at Jamná ulica in Žilina, who became the winner in the category of younger students. The work by Matúš Tomovčík, the sixth-class student from the J. Šverma Elementary School in Michalovce, attracted most interest in the category of older students. The jury presented special awards also to Dominik Kotlár from the Associated School - Special Elementary Boarding School in Topoľčany and to Šimon Hacıj from the Kindergarten at Baničovej street in Bratislava.

Successful Blue Wave 2016



(27 May) According to 2nd Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Brig Gen Jindřich Joch, director of the command-and-staff exercise Blue Wave 2016, the exercise with partial deployment of troops verified the SVK Air Force's planning capability as well as its command and control capability in a full-scale air operation, in which a no-fly zone was established over the designated

V-4 countries intend to send training units to the Baltics next year

(25 May) The Visegrad countries intend to send training units to the Baltics in 2017. Each one of the V-4 group is supposed to contribute 150 troops, on a 3-month-rotation basis, to the joint training activity. In this particular case, the rotation principle means that the presence is maintained only by troops from one of the V-4 countries at the time. Details shall be agreed by CHODs and confirmed in June on the NATO Defence Ministers' meeting in Brussels. The ministers should present information on the actual details of the troops operation in the Baltics during the Warsaw Summit to be held in July. The joint training activity in the Baltics was endorsed by the V-4 Defence Ministers on their meeting in Liblice, the Czech Republic. They also evaluated the project of the V4 EU BG which has been on stand-by in the first half of this year. The countries concerned are committed to continuing their cooperation in 2019, when the Battle Group should again be on stand-by. "The V4 European Union Battle Group underwent successful certification in the past year. We must be ready, however, to respond to persistent threats that affect us all, be that terrorism or a migration crisis. That is also why we have concurred on providing our support to the project of the joint battle group also in 2019, as well as to the initiative of training rotations in the Baltics," accentuated SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. With respect to training units in the Baltics, Czech Minister of Defence Martin Stropnický said that the V-4 countries were ready to meet the needs of the Baltic states. Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Poland Antoni Macierewicz appreciated the joint stance of the V-4 countries to the issue of NATO troops' permanent presence in the eastern wing of the Alliance. Secretary of State for Defence at the Hungarian Ministry of Defence Tamás Vargha expressed his thanks and acknowledgement for support provided to the joint exercise Balaton, held in Hungary.



- SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš held talks on 27 May with the Ambassador of the Republic of Italy, His Excellency Mr Robert Martini, discussing the current security situation in Europe, the priorities of the SVK MOD, and the options for defence cooperation. Both representatives stated that the bilateral cooperation is at an excellent level and affirmed their commitment to its continuation. Roberto Martini assured the Minister that Italy will support Slovakia's upcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Peter Gajdoš informed the ambassador, among other things, of Slovakia's engagement in the migration crisis. Both partners unanimously appreciated the activities of EUNAVFOR MED Operation SOPHA in the Southern Central Mediterranean.

- In the grounds of the 5th Special Forces Regiment base in Žilina on 28 May, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš opened the 22nd Jozef Gabčík Memorial Run organised in memory of a WWII hero and an important representative of the anti-Nazi resistance movement. The start of the 11-km run took place in the village of Poluvsie, where the birthplace home of Jozef Gabčík is located, and the finishing line was at the 5th Special Forces Regiment base. The event was organised with support from the MOD Subsidy Fund. The overall winner with a time of 39:55 was Jozef Bubeník from the Jozef Gabčík Runners' Club.

- Members of the Stationary Communication and Information Systems Base (SCISB) donated blood as part of the May Drop of Blood initiative on 25 May. Thanks to this, the Mobile National Transfusion Service Trenčín received 29 blood donations. This kind of blood donation event took place at the premises of the SCISB for the first time, but the organisers intend to make a new tradition out of it.

- The State Secretaries of the SVK Ministry of Defence, Ivan Mačovsky and Marián Saloň, paid a visit to the Military Police Trenčín (MP Trenčín) on 20 May. After touring the MP Trenčín's premises, they met with the MP command officials and were given a presentation on the Military Police's unit locations, areas of responsibility, tasks and direction. This was followed by a discussion. The State Secretaries expressed their support for the Military Police and promised to give their backing to all substantiated requirements from military police-men.

- A training exercise with toxic chemical substances involving 35 CBRN specialists from the 15th Engineer Regiment of the Army of the Czech Republic took place at the CBRN Training and Testing Centre Zemianske Kostolany - NC EOD and CBRN Training Facility Nováky on 16-20 May. It focused on chemical detection, decontamination and sampling. The CBRN specialists checked the functionality of their detectors and gained confidence in the protective features of their individual CBRN protective equipment.

- To specify tasks and clarify the basic activities in conducting funeral services and acts of commemoration was the focus of the intense training of garrison administrators on 24 May in Bratislava. While meeting on Bratislava Garrison Headquarters (GAR HQ) premises in Vajnory, Bratislava, they detailed all principal activities to be performed in relation to the provision of military funerals and acts of remembrance marked by laying of wreaths, as well as during ceremonial drills in support of funerals and acts of remembrance involving laying of wreaths. To support this, practical demonstrations were performed by the Honour Guard of the SVK Armed Forces together with the Military Band of the SVK Armed Forces Bratislava.

- Members of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps Ordinate, led by Mons František Rabek, participated in the 58th International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes on 20-22 May. Also present was the Honour Guard of the President of the Slovak Republic and the Military Band of the SVK Armed Forces under the leadership of Maj Boris Hokina, the conductor of the band. The pilgrimage was undertaken also by the next of kin of the soldiers who died in the debris of the An-24 aircraft which went down in Hungary a decade ago.

- A Combat Lifesaver (CLS) - Extended First Aid in Combat Conditions Course was held at the Training, Education and Specialized Preparation Section, Specialized Medical and Veterinary Activities Division, Office of the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General Ružomberok with Detached Workstation Liptovský Mikuláš. The course covered theoretical instruction, practical training on simulators, and training in field conditions with a simulated tactical environment, including training at night.

territory of Slovakia. Equally, its preparedness to respond to diverse types of incidents was put to the test and performance of functions within the whole chain of command up to the main command post at the SVK General Staff was assessed.

In the course of the exercise, the air defence network was operationally deployed, making use of anti-aircraft missile systems, fighter aircraft and tools employed to ensure overall situational awareness in the air. At the same time, response to unexpected incidents was monitored and evaluated, e.g. rescuing a pilot after emergency abandonment of an aircraft or defence and protection of an airport or command post.

On Tuesday, 24 May, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš came to check the progress of the exercise, with Chief of the command and control centre Lt Col Norbert Hrb having provided him with all relevant information. On the third day of the exercise, SVK Air Force Commander Maj Gen Miroslav Korba welcomed State Secretary Ivan Mačovsky to the deployment area of the air component command at Sliac Airfield. Col Igor Brandabura, Chief of the Operational Planning Group of the Air Force and Air Defence Brigade introduced him into the process of the operation. The current evaluation results were presented by director of the exercise Col Adolf Uličný. On Wednesday,

Tribute to peacekeepers

(27 May) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim, members of the Armed Forces and employees of the Department of Defence commemorated the International Day of UN Peacekeepers in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Reconciliation Memorial at the Kutuzov Barracks courtyard. The Minister of Defence highlighted the significance of the peace-keeping operations under the auspices of the United Nations Organization, and accentuated the contribution of the Slovak troops to building peace and stability in different corners of the world.

"The effort to assist and contribute to resolution of crises abroad eventually results in the enhanced security of each one of our own citizens. And we should honour the memory of our colleagues who had served in the UN-led operations but never again returned home," said Peter Gajdoš. To-date, 161 members of the SVK Armed Forces serve in the UN-led operations in Cyprus and the Golan Heights.



Ironman is a policeman

(26 May) The Training Centre Lešť hosted an Ironman competition. The event was attended by over three dozen representatives from the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Justice, and also present were members of the Mountain Rescue Service. The participants were tasked with completing 10 disciplines. These included a speed march in uniforms and boots, and with sub-machine guns; pull-ups on parallel bars using one's own weight; moving a 200-kilogramme tyre; chin-ups with a jump onto the bar and forward grip; carrying 120-kilogramme logs; overcoming an obstacle course; rope climbing without leg support; stretching arms forward with a 15-kilogramme log in standing position; carrying a 100-kilogramme load strapped to a wooden "backpack-style" frame for a distance of 100 metres; and crossing a water obstacle in combat dress uniform. Regardless of age groups and weight categories, the competition was won by WO-2 Peter Ursiny from the District Directorate of the SVK Police Corps Banská Bystrica, followed by WO-1 Michal Sklárick from the Ministry of the Interior's Office for Protection of Constitutional Authorities and Diplomatic Missions. SSgt Tomáš Barborík, of the Air Defence Missile Brigade Nitra, came in third place.

25 May, Chief of the General Staff Gen Milan Maxim visited the exercise. He appreciated that the exercising troops performed adequately even in difficult conditions.

From 23 to 27 May, hundreds of troops joined the exercise on the whole territory of Slovakia, particularly the members of the Air Force from Zvolen - based Command, Control and Reconnaissance Wing, from Sliac - based Tactical Wing Sliac and from Nitra - based Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade, but also the members of the Land Forces and Military Police.

Exercise Center (EXCEN) - tasked with control of the activities and exercise incidents, as well as with preparation of the scenario and evaluation of response produced by the exercising troops - operated in Bratislava, Trenčín and Sliac. After the exercise has been completed, the follow-up activities will be conducted, to include assessment and evaluation with the aim to adopt and implement measures to further improve the performance of the SVK Armed Forces.

