



Minister inspects preparations

(2 June) Slovak Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš checked on the status of the Armed Forces' preparations for the launch of the Voluntary Military Training (VMT) pilot project in the grounds of the Training Battalion in Martin. "I went there to see for myself what the real conditions of support by the Armed Forces to the voluntary military training pilot project are out there. And I can say that I am satisfied," evaluated the Minister after checking the accommodation and catering facilities, and the prepared clothing items, and familiarising himself with the training. As Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim added, all conditions have been created to enable the entry and training of 50 volunteers.

According to Minister Gajdoš, voluntary soldiers could, in the future, become one of the sources for replenishing the Reserve Component (RC) as well as other security elements. "They will be ready to continue in the State Service and to enlist even for active duty with the Armed Forces," he said.

A total of 129 candidates applied for the VMT project, however, some of them either failed to pass the medical check-up or psychological tests, or were rejected on administrative grounds. "After its completion we need to carry out an analysis of the pilot project. Based on it, we will adopt measures," explained the head of the MOD.

The training will be underway at the Training Battalion Martin in the period from 6 July to 30 September. As part of the first 9-week phase, the graduates will have gained basic knowledge and skills in tactics, firing personal weapons, orienteering in terrain, and medical and topographic training. They will develop physical and psychological readiness and self-discipline, and be able to better cope with stressful and demanding situations. Over the follow-on specialized three-week training, they will acquire knowledge in one of the four Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs) on offer: marksman, engineer, decontamination specialist, and signaller.

Congratulations to a legend

(2 June) While in Piešťany, Slovak Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš congratulated Lt Gen (retd) Anton Muržic, the founder of military academic education in Liptovský Mikuláš, on the 90th anniversary of his birthday. He played a role in the establishment of the Military Technical College in Liptovský Mikuláš and acted in the capacity of its first commandant – rector. Besides this, he exerted a considerable influence on the quality of education and sciences at the M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy.

On the occasion of his jubilee, Lt Gen (retd) Anton Muržic was awarded by the Minister with the 70th Anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising and the End of WWII Commemorative Medal. At the same time, the Minister presented him with the latest edition of the book titled *Generals*. Lt Gen (retd) Anton Muržic sincerely appreciated also the Gen Ján Golian Medal, 1st Class in Gold, which had been handed over to him by Maj Gen (retd) František Blanárík, the chairman of the SVK Generals' Club.

Taking stock of activities with Indiana National Guard

(1 June) At the invitation of Major General Courtney P. Carr, Adjutant General of the Indiana National Guard, and Command Sergeant Major James R. Gordon, Indiana National Guard State Command Sergeant Major/Senior Enlisted Leader, a delegation of the SVK Armed Forces, led by Maj Gen Pavel Macko, 1st Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, and Command Sergeant Major Vladimír Beluš, Command Senior Enlisted Leader of the SVK Armed Forces, paid a visit to the USA on 25 May through 1 June. The aim of the trip was to take stock of the joint projects between the Indiana National Guard and the Slovak Armed Forces. The partners held talks on cooperation in the field of education and training, familiarised themselves with further options for cooperation, preparations of joint exercises, exchange of experience from international crisis management operations and representation of the NCO Corps and that of the SVK Armed Forces as a whole. The delegation visited the 38th Combat Aviation Brigade in Shelbyville, where the 1st Deputy CHOD inquired about the current status of the training of our flying and technical support personnel.



- On 3 June, in the presence of State Secretary Marián Saloň and Chief of the General Staff of the Slovak Republic Gen Milan Maxim, a farewell ceremony was held for the 25 soldiers who are to be deployed, within a regular rotation, to the operation **EUFOR - ALTHEA** in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The SVK Armed Forces' engagement in the operation can be traced back to its very beginning in 2004. Altogether 713 members of the SVK Armed Forces have participated therein so far.

- Director of Military Police Col Milan Hamar awarded 1st Lt Matej Sikorai, on the occasion of his leaving the ranks of MP, with the **Military Police Medal**, 2nd Grade (silver) for an exemplary performance of service tasks and duties and for a job well done in behalf of the Military Police.

- Chief of the Air Force Medical Service Maj Ivana Gutzelnig organized a course for the air traffic controllers, dubbed **Human Factors in Aviation**, which course was held on 31 May – 3 June on the premises of the SVK Air Force HQs. It was another one of the series of the aerospace medicine courses, focusing mainly on effects of a human factor in aviation, and providing the participants with an outline of frontiers and limits of performance. The participants also rehearsed relaxation techniques that should help them effectively control stress, tension and psychological discomfort.

- On 23 – 27 May, the SVK Armed Forces' Surgeon General Office organized a **specialized joint training** for the SVK Armed Forces and Integrated Rescue System's **dressing stations and specialties H-10**. Training, which was aimed at coordination, focused primarily on non-military threats on our territory, particularly on provision of first aid and treatment to the injured persons and to the population at risk in the emergency situations caused by natural disasters and industrial incidents. Altogether 26 medical personnel and members of the firefighting military units, 44 members of the Slovak Rescue Medical Service Bratislava and 14 figurants from the Slovak Medical University Bratislava received said training.

- On 24 – 27 May, under the auspices of the Remand Centre and Penitentiary in Banská Bystrica, the **Championship in firing from service guns** was held at the firing range serving for the purposes of the Military Police Training and Cynology Division. For the MP, Sgt 1st Class Peter Toscano and SSgt Vladimír Fecura from the Police Enforcement Section Prešov took part in the contest. The contestants competed for the two days in eight parkours. SSgt Vladimír Fecura finished second in the category of the corps individuals and invited guests. Also in the category of the corps teams and invited guests the MP team finished in the second place.

- On 1 June, Lisa Buttenheim, the special political representative of the military operation **UNFICYP**, wished farewell to the Sector 4 members. In her address, she expressed her thanks and appreciation for excellent cooperation and for a professional approach to the performance of the operational tasks during her six-year-long engagement in Cyprus. Commander of Sector 4 Lt Col Jozef Paňko thanked her for her undiminished enthusiasm and a highly diplomatic approach used to seek settlement of the Cyprus issue. He wished her sound health and every success in her new position that she will take up on 10 June at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Meetings with ambassadors

(3 June) On SVK MOD premises, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Czech Republic to the Slovak Republic, Her Excellency Mrs Livia Klausová. He appreciated the high level of cooperation between both countries and that within the V4. They discussed the priorities of our Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the key topics on the agenda of the upcoming NATO Warsaw Summit.

Peter Gajdoš received the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to the Slovak Republic, His Excellency Mr Lee Tae-ro. The main topics of discussion included the current security situation and options for the deepening of bilateral cooperation in the field of security and defence, especially within the framework of military training, education and support to cooperation among defence industry manufacturers. The Minister also informed the ambassador of the MOD Programme Priorities and the direction of the Slovak Republic.

The Minister of Defence also met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Turkey to the Slovak Republic, Her Excellency Mrs Gülhan Ulutekin. The main topics of relevance included today's security situation, bilateral cooperation in the field of the defence industry, and the upcoming NATO Summit in Warsaw. Ambassador Ulutekin suggested holding a meeting at the level of the Commission for Military Technical Cooperation to discuss further options for the stepping-up of cooperation.



Further step towards NFIU

(30 May) State Secretary at the SVK Ministry of Defence Ivan Máčovský signed the Base Support Agreement (BSA), one of the fundamental documents required in support of the NATO Force Integration Unit' operation on the territory of the Slovak Republic. The unit should have reached the initial operational capability by the end of 2016.

"BSA defines the scope of support that we, as a host nation, should provide to foster the NFIU activities and its personnel. Currently, we are going ahead with preparations for building the requisite infrastructure. At the same time we take measures in support of the establishment of the NFIU and its activities," informed State Secretary Máčovský. The Slovak NFIU will fall under the command of the Multi-national Corps Headquarters North-East in Szczecin.

Arrows from Tobruq internationally



(3 June) The international exercise Tobruq Arrows 2016 was held on 30 May through 3 June on Hradište Training Area in Western Bohemia, Czech Republic. The Firing Range Březina hosted joint combat

firings involving the man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) in service with the Czech, Lithuanian and Slovak Armed Forces. Among the goals of the exercise was to increase the level of interoperability among the NATO coalition units and to demonstrate a joint air defence operational capability. The exercise and firings were undertaken by members of the 25th Air Defence Regiment Strakonice, of the Army of the Czech Republic, the Air Defence Battery, of the Air Defence Missile Brigade Nitra, and Lithuanian Air Defence units. The Czech troops fired the RBS-70, S-10M and S-2M air defence systems, while the Slovak troops fired the 9K38 IGLA surface-to-air missile defence system (SAM/

MANPAD), and the Lithuanian troops used the STINGER man-portable air defence system. The troops engaged targets imitating a wide spectrum of air attack assets currently in use on operations. The exercise was also attended by cadets from the SVK Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš. Exercise Tobruq Arrows 2016 was a prelude to the international exercise Tobruq Legacy 2016, to be held in Slovakia this autumn.

