



Slovak Warthog 2016

(27 July) International exercises are the best means for aligning the capabilities of the SVK Armed Forces members with those of the Armed Forces from other countries, which is vital for ensuring collective defence pursuant to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The foregoing was stated by Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš at Sliač Airport during the joint SVK and US exercise Slovak Warthog 2016.

"The soldiers rehearsed conducting joint air combat activity and guiding aircraft to ground targets, including the coordination with and support by Land Forces units. As part of this, the ISTAR Battalion members underwent training in field conditions, with the focus on target reconnaissance, tracking and identification," explained the head of the MOD. He appreciated the long-term above-average co-operation between the SVK Armed Forces and the Indiana National Guard.

According to US Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Liam Wasley, such a coordination exercise is crucial to demonstrating the support of NATO member states. It builds on the partnership between the Indiana National Guard and the SVK Armed Forces that was established more than twenty years ago. Col Kyle Noel, Commander of the 122nd Fighter Wing, of the Indiana Air National Guard (IN ANG), pointed out that the objective of the training, which comes as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve, is to strengthen the Alliance's ability to ensure coordination among NATO Allies and Partners. "This is how we demonstrate our commitment to strengthening security and stability in Europe," he said.

"We welcome each and every training opportunity for our Tactical Air Control Parties," highlighted the 1st Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, Maj Gen Pavel Macko, who concurrently pointed out that this is the first large-scale exercise to be taking place this year and others are scheduled to continue this autumn. "Of greatest importance is to practise precise coordination between Tactical Air Control Parties, and between pilots of respective countries, or consider the rehearsal of in-flight refuelling and of coordination with Land Forces units," he said.

The SVK Air Force Commander, Maj Gen Miroslav Korba added that Exercise Slovak Warthog 2016 was a scheduled exercise, which had been planned well ahead, and that the Slovak Air Force stood the test. The SVK Air Force has demonstrated that it is capable of adjusting itself to specific conditions. "Yet already the pre-flight preparation was conducted jointly and the pilots discussed individual manoeuvres," he explained.

Exercise Slovak Warthog 2016 runs in Slovakia from 6 July and to 2 August 2016. During the exercise, members of the 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina and members of the Indiana Air National Guard have practised guiding Aero L-39 Slovak aircraft and US A-10C Thunderbolt aircraft to ground targets.

Equally, the Land Forces units have had an opportunity to test their capabilities, working through a series of exercises. At Levice Garrison's training grounds, members of the Mechanised Battalions Levice and Nitra practised planning and controlling ground operations with close air support.

The participation of the Indiana Air National Guard's A-10C Thunderbolt aircraft comes part of a broader initiative of the US Armed Forces, dubbed Operation Atlantic Resolve, which includes similar exercises in Hungary and in the Czech Republic. This autumn the Armed Forces' training activities are to continue with Exercise Tobruk Legacy 2016, large-scale international air defence (AD) drills, and Exercise Slovak Shield 2016, a series of Land Forces exercises, with a ground operation aimed at defending the territorial integrity of Slovakia.

Minister visits soldiers on karate drills

(27 July) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš visited Žilina to meet with the soldiers at the 45th International Summer Karate and Kobudo Training Drills. The event, coming under the auspices of the Minister of Defence, was officially opened by the Minister himself. "This is a way how our soldiers can as well improve their skills. They utilise karate elements in every close combat, which means they can use them in tactical combat," noted the head of the MOD, who had, in the past, trained karate and achieved the 1st kyu grade, i.e. the brown belt. He emphasised that he is committed to supporting events that connect sports with military training. This is the fourth time that members of the Armed Forces have taken part in the karate and kobudo training drills. Also in attendance was the Commander of the SVK Land Forces, Maj Gen Ondřej Novosad, who had attained the 3rd dan grade in karate and the 1st dan in kobudo. As he explained, as part of the concentrated training, instructors from the Armed Forces have the opportunity to unify their techniques, enhance the level of their technical proficiency, and gain new experience. Among the participants at the event was also Pte Lukáš Kučerák. Competing at the World Karate Championships in Dublin earlier this June, he won the World Champion title in the male team category and finished 2nd in the Kumite Male Individual 70 to 75 kg category.



- On 29 July, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš received His Excellency Mr Djumantoro Purwokoputro Purbo, the **Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the Slovak Republic**. They discussed the current security situation and the possibilities of defence cooperation. The Indonesian ambassador showed his interest in bi-lateral cooperation, mainly in the field of education and training.

- Mons František Rábek**, Ordinary of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps, celebrated the 25th anniversary of his episcopal ordination on 24 July by celebrating a Solemn Mass in his birthplace village of Močenok. As the Ordinary of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps, he has been running the military chaplaincy service for more than thirteen years. The Ordinariate of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps was established on 1 March 2003. Based on the partial Treaty on Spiritual Charge of Catholic Believers in the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps, the Ordinariate was set up by the Holy See pursuant to canon law. Mons František Rábek was appointed as Ordinary by Pope John Paul II.

- Drivers of the TATRAPAN ZASA vehicles underwent training as part of the **wheeled vehicle driver course**, organised at the Combat Support and Combat Service Support Training Company, of the Training Battalion Martin, during the period of 11–22 July. Based on the TATRA 815 (6x6) chassis with enhanced small arms resistance, the all-terrain wheeled armoured vehicle is designed to transport fully armed personnel. It offers improved protection against mine explosions and is mainly used for conducting patrolling and defence. Among the best course graduates were Pte 1st Class Ladislav Juhás, of the ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) Battalion Prešov, and Cpl Marek Stančík, of the Logistics Battalion Hlohovec.

- On 22 July, a **passing out ceremony** for the successful graduates of the Training Instructor Course culminated at the Training Battalion Martin. After three difficult weeks of training, all of the trainees, who started the course on 4 July, managed to complete it successfully. Among the most successful participants was SSgt Ján Šimek, a member of the Training Battalion Martin, who, on the occasion of the passing out ceremony, was presented with the rotating Best Graduate Award.

- At the Sučany Firing Range on 27 July, the **marksmanship skills** of the Mobile Communications and Information Systems Base Ružomberok members were put to the test. For the purposes of the exercise, they used the vz. 82 pistols. Each marksman had at his disposal 20 rounds and fired at Target No. 4 – an uncovered figure in prone position, with concentric circles. Altogether 44 professional soldiers underwent the marksmanship training.

- On 28 July, members of the Supply Base II Command Martin bid farewell to their long-time colleague, **Jozef Hartinger**, on the occasion of his retirement. In 1992, serving as a professional soldier, he was one of the core members to establish Military Unit 5728 Martin and became its first Chief of Staff. After his military retirement he continued to work as a civilian employee. The Base Commander, Lt Col Pavel Sojak expressed his recognition to him and wished him sound health and family harmony. At the same time, he presented him with the Logistics Office Commander's Commemorative Badge and the Supply Base II Commander's Letter of Remembrance.

Battles on the Hron - Tekov 2016



(30 July) The Ministry of Defence is set, within its available means, to support events that bring significant historical milestones closer to all generations in a captivating manner. One of such events is called the Battles on the (River) Hron, which was organised on Saturday by military history fans in Starý Tekov. Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš took patronage of the event. Highlights on the side events programme were the dynamic demonstrations and static displays by the SVK Armed Forces and Military Police. In Starý Tekov, Minister Gajdoš participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the WWII Victims Memorial. He appreciated the efforts of military history clubs enthusiasts to raise public awareness of the events that unfolded in the Tekov region in March 1945. The Battles on the Hron – Tekov 2016 was the 11th edition of this increasingly popular event. Alongside the Slovakian military history clubs, military history clubs from abroad too participated in preparations for the happening.

Cadets training in summer



(29 July) A nearly three-week-long intensive field training exercise, aimed at the cadets of the General Milan Rastislav Štefánik Armed Forces Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš, has been in progress in the grounds of the Training Centre Lešť. For the cadets, a successful completion of the training exercise is a prerequisite for qualifying for the next study term. The training mainly consists of tactical and marksmanship modules. It also contains engineering, topographic and medical instruction. Along with the 120 Slovak cadets, nearly 30 cadets from the USA underwent training in Week 1. In Week 2, they were replaced by 6 cadets from the Brno University of Defence.

Disposal of WWII ordnance



(31 July) Last week, experts from the National EOD Centre and the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Centre Nováky, working shoulder to shoulder with Military Police (MP) ammunition technicians, disposed of unexploded ordnance (UXO) from WWII. Concurrently, the unexploded ordnance disposal at the Training Centre Lešť served for the purposes of research and training. To dispose of aerial bombs and artillery shells in the grounds of the Training Centre Lešť, the EOD experts employed specialised procedures. The explosive remnants of war (ERW) were provided for training purposes to the Armed Forces by ammunition technicians from the Police Corps within the framework of inter-departmental cooperation.

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Snap inspection of VMT soldier trainees

(27 July) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš carried out an inspection to check the progress of the first Voluntary Military Training (VMT) soldier trainees.

Under the pilot project, a total of 31 volunteers, including 9 women, are undergoing basic military training. Initially, a total of 37 volunteers enrolled for the VMT training, but four women and two men chose to quit.

"I have talked to those who are continuing with their training and their feedback is positive. They have confirmed that they want to complete the training. Many of them have shown interest in becoming active duty soldiers upon completion of the voluntary military training," said the Minister. He



appreciated the level of the organisation and support provided by the Training Battalion. "Even though my visit and inspection were unscheduled, everything went off well."

Under the VMT scheme, during the first nine-week phase the participants will acquire basic knowledge and skills and during the three-week follow-on specialised training they will acquire expertise from one of the four military occupational specialties (MOSs). Initially, a total of 129 applicants enrolled for the VMT project. However, some of them failed the medical or psychological tests, or were rejected on administrative grounds.