



On duty during Easter

(13 April) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš spoke via videoconference calls with the troops currently deployed on international crisis management operations and missions to wish the Slovak Contingent commanders and their teams a very happy Easter. During this Easter, over 400 SVK Armed Forces servicemen and women were performing tasks outside of Slovakia.

"I trust that you will, even when performing your demanding duties, remember to find some time and observe the Easter festivities. Naturally, you would prefer spending them with your close ones to being on duty. But rest assured that we are all the more proud of you," said the Head of the MOD.

Among other things, Minister Gajdoš thanked Lt Col Oliver Toderiška, Commander Slovak Contingent Resolute Support, for providing flexible help to our soldier who had recently been injured in Afghanistan.

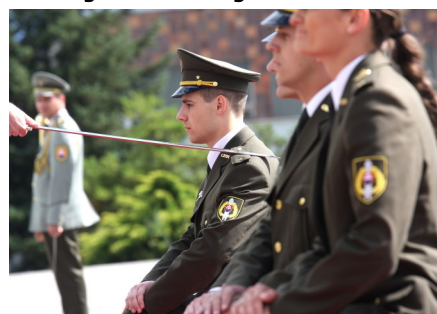
The Commander Slovak Contingent UNFICYP in Cyprus and the Commander Slovak Contingent ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lt Col Rudolf Eštok and Lt Col Ľuboš Murček, respectively, reassured the Minister of Defence that the service personnel deployed abroad do respect the Easter festivities as much as their duties allow them to do so. "In doing so, of course, we make sure that all the duties are performed to required standards," said Lt Col Murček.

Col René Ház, serving with the EUMM observer mission in Georgia, filled the Minister in on the current situation in the country, and so did Capt Stanislav Miščík, a member of UNTSO. The Head of the MOD also spoke with the Commander Task Force Štefánik, Maj Vladimír Moško. He informed the Minister that on Easter Monday the soldiers would assemble for a ceremony held in connection with Exercise Summer Shield. Currently, a total of 264 SVK Armed Forces personnel are deployed on international crisis management operations and another 149 troops are training in the Baltics.

Most of our soldiers (169) are deployed with UNFICYP in Cyprus, another 51 service personnel are on a tour of duty with the Resolute Support in Afghanistan, and 41 service personnel are deployed with EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two servicemen are serving with the UNTSO observer mission in Israel, and one is conducting military observer duties under the EUMM mission in Georgia.

Almost 500 people are interested in military university-level studies

(12 April) A total of 484 applicants have applied for military university-level studies in Slovakia this year. The General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy, located in Liptovský Mikuláš, attracted the attention of 435 applicants, but only 107 of them can be accepted. The Aviation Faculty of the Technical University in Košice, with which the MOD has been cooperating, received a total of 28 applications for the 1st level of study (Bachelor of Science) and 12 applications for the 2nd level of study (Master of Science). One novelty this year is the possibility for students to pursue their studies under the General Military Medicine programme, which is delivered by the Military Medical Faculty of the Defence University of Brno in collaboration with the Medical Faculty of Charles University in Hradec Králové. Given the fact that there has been a shortage of military doctors and they have so far had to be recruited from among the medical faculty graduates of public universities, the SVK military is now seeking to attract its own military health care professionals. The first nine students have by now shown interest in pursuing this study programme.



- On 12 Apr, the SVK Air Force's AIRCOM HQ hosted the **final planning conference on Ex AIR SHIELD 2017**. The exercise, scheduled for 19-28 Apr 2017, will be carried out on the territory of the Slovak Republic and will be supported by deployments of SVK Air Force (AF) and Ground-Based Air Defence (GBAD) assets.

- A working meeting of **Slovak and German CBRN specialists** took place on 11 Apr. Topics of discussion included exploring the options for a new CBRN Force Generation proposal for the NRF/CBRN Defence Task Force 2018 and 2019, as well as ways to present the CBRN capabilities. Another meeting on the subject matter will be held in May in Sonthofen, Germany.

- NCOs of the Mech Bde Prešov HQ underwent yet another of a series of **improvement training exercises**. They carried out a 5-km speed march in combat uniforms, rehearsed drills and moves without weapons, and engaged in close combat.

- Members of the Helicopter Wing Prešov welcomed the **US Ambassador to the Slovak Republic**, HE Mr Adam Sterling, to the Helicopter Wing Prešov base. On his visit to the Prešov-based Air Force unit, Ambassador Sterling was accompanied by Maj Gen Miroslav Korba, COM SVK AF, Róbert Ondrejčák, SVK MOD State Secretary, and Brig Gen Martin Stoklasa, COM 2nd Mech Bde.

- Garrison Velké Opatovice's training grounds saw members of 2nd Mech Coy, 21st Cmbd Mech Bn Trebišov, practising **tactical manoeuvres** and improving their competence in conduct of different types of combat. The training of units was inspected by Maj Martin Socha, DCOM 21st Cmbd Mech Bn Trebišov.

- On 6-7 Apr, Garrison Rožňava's Multiple Rocket Launcher Detachment (MRL Det), of 1st Mech Bde, hosted a **specialist meeting of Fire Support (FS) members**, led by Lt Col Pavol Barančík, Chief of SVK Armed Forces Artillery. In attendance at the meeting were G-20 FS specialists from across MRL Det, Sp Arty Det, Mech Bde HQs, Mech Bn, and guests.

- On 3-7 Apr, 1st Mech Bde HQ Topoľčany and 12th Mech Bn Nitra hosted a complex staff rehearsal. Built around the theme of "Conduct of Mechanised Battalion Group's Defensive Operations in Response to Violation of the Slovak Republic's State Sovereignty by Aggressor", **EX LITTLE SHIELD 2017** tested the 12th Mech Bn staff members and unit commanders.

- On 3 Apr, Lt Col Norbert Hrib assumed the appointment of **Commander 23rd Motorised Battalion Trebišov** at Brig Gen Ján Nálepka Barracks in Trebišov.

- On 3-7 Apr 2017, Tpt Wng Kuchyňa hosted a **specialised aircraft accident investigation course**. It was attended by flight safety inspectors from the Military Aviation State Authority (MASA) Division, SVK Air Force's AIRCOM HQ, SVK AF Wings, C2S Wng Zvolen, and 5th SOF Regt.

- On 5-6 Apr, the Hotel Granit Smrekovica hosted a **working meeting of Defence hygiene officers** with the Chief Hygienist of the Slovak Republic Ján Mikas. 17 Defence hygiene officers and regional hygienists addressed issues related to communication problems and coordination with the ministries, standard procedures, directives, information exchange, solutions to the scope of competences shared between the ministries and the Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic.

New stained glass in chapel

(12 April) The Military Parish of St Joan of Arc, located at the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) in Liptovský Mikuláš, completed another phase of upgrading the military chapel's décor by installing new stained glass windows. In terms of the artistic theme, this series of stained glass windows depicts the biblical rendition of the world's creation. They were blessed, in the presence of the local parishioners, during the Holy Mass of 12 April by Military Chaplain Capt Tomáš Hudo, SchP. Covering a total of 37m², the monumental stained glass windows are made up of transparent colour foils. Once the chapel's reconstruction and the windows' replacement were completed, their installation could go ahead. The colourful stained glass windows were designed by the design team Fero Vozár and Beáta Farkašová according to an artistic graphic proposal by Mgr Robert Kandrik, an AOS employee.

Border meeting



(12 April) Traditionally, the Slovak and Czech Chiefs of the General Staff hold a meeting in the first half of the year in the common border area. This year's meeting between General Milan Maxim and Army General Josef Bečvář took

place on 11-12 April in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, Czechia. The delegations of the CHODs met to discuss the current issues of the SVK-CZE Defence engagement and to explore the options for furthering joint cooperation, especially in the field of joint training. During the meeting, both generals paid their respects to the memory of the fallen WWI and WWII soldiers at the Memorial to the Fallen in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm.

Preparations for LFX in Poland

(13 April) During Week 2 of April, Garrison Koliňanský Vrch's training grounds saw the 2nd Anti-Aircraft Missile Group members training in preparation for a live fire exercise (LFX) involving 2K12 KUB surface-to-air missile system crews, to be held in May on Ustka Training Area, Poland. The designated duty shifts of the KUB Control and Guidance Radar (CGR) operators responded to realistic targets that were provided via flight missions by Tactical Wing Sliač Flight pilots of L-39 aircraft. The CGR commanders and operators honed their skills in detecting and tracking air targets and in responding to the flying platform's manoeuvre of releasing a target. Col Ladislav Dovhun, Commander Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra, did not miss out on the preparations. "The upcoming live fire exercise will mark the culmination of the training by our members. The results of the firings on Garrison Koliňanský Vrch's training grounds demonstrate that we will be well prepared before leaving to Poland," he concluded with satisfaction.

MOD to recognise exceptional deeds of 2016 in Military Deed of the Year Awards



(16 April) This year, too, the MOD is to recognise exceptional deeds of soldiers and those who cooperate with the SVK Armed Forces and contribute to developing military traditions and building a good name for Slovak soldiers. Those who have made it to the broader selection for the 20th jubilee edition of the 2016 Military Deed of the Year Awards are as follows:

The nominees in the **Rescue of Life** category are: Capt Michal Bón for

providing first aid to an injured man. Capt Vladimír Šatka for helping a man whose cardio stimulator had failed. 1st Lt Tomáš Virec for rescuing a humanitarian NGO worker, while working as a medical staff member in Afghanistan. SSgt Vladimír Blahuta and SSgt Pavol Šinál for aiding injured US citizens, while deployed with the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. Cpl Marek Hano for helping, together with his wife,

people involved in a road traffic accident. 2nd Degree Pte Martin Šipula for rescuing a drowning child. Pte 1st Class Ján Hrinko for rendering first aid to a woman who had lost her consciousness.

In the broader selection, there are six nominees in the **Assistance to the Public** category: The collective of the 1st Company from the SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour for their fund-raising initiative to fund medical treatment for a girl who has suffered from medical problems since her birth. The Engineer Company Michalovce members for their long-term assistance to the wife of a former colleague who died in a tragic incident. Sgt Natália Drobná, Cpl Dušan Lacko and Sgt Andrea Ševčovičová, of the Military Unit Rožňava, for their voluntarily service at a drop-in centre for people in need. Pte 1st Class Juraj Bulla, of the 13th Mechanised Battalion Levice, for catching a thief in the act of stealing. 1st Lt Simon Czap, a member of the 13th Mechanised Self-Propelled Artillery Detachment Michalovce, for his regular involvement in humanitarian operations. The Repair Battalion Banská Bystrica members for their fund-raising activities over the past five years in favour of the Children's Hospital in Banská Bystrica.

As part of the broader selection, those nominated in the **Friend of the Army** category are: Marek Marušák, Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS) editor, and Ján Červenák, cameraman, for their reports on Slovak service personnel who had served on an operation abroad. Ladislav Žákovič and the Military History Museum Pohronský Ruskov Civic Association for helping to develop military traditions. The Partizánske city authorities for fostering national and patriotic awareness of younger generations. Marián Simeon, the main organiser of Tank Days Laugaric, for his cooperation with the SVK Armed Forces in raising public awareness of military history. The translators of LOT VISEGRAD for cooperating with the Slovak Contingent EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

When evaluating the nominations, a Judges Special Award may be presented as part the Military Deed of the Year Awards. The public opinion survey was initiated 20 years ago by the then Slovak Radio's Army Editorial Staff. The Military Deed of the Year Awards seeks to publicly and morally recognise those SVK Armed Forces members who have provided selfless assistance to others.