



Minister welcomes soldiers

(21 April) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and Deputy Chief of Defence Lt Gen Pavol Macko attended a homecoming ceremony, held at the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin, for 22 SVK Armed Forces service personnel returning from their tours of duty beyond Slovakia's borders. 19 personnel returned from EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2 servicemen came back from the Resolute Support in Afghanistan, where they had assisted in training Afghan Air Force personnel, and 1 officer completed his year-long tour of duty with the UNTSO peacekeeping observer mission in the Near East.

The Minister underlined the significance of their service on international operations, thanked them for their exemplary representation of the Armed Forces and Slovakia, and was genuinely pleased they returned home in full strength and safe and sound. In terms of operational deployments, the total number of the Slovak soldiers deployed to EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina has so far amounted to 777, including 26 servicewomen. Since 2015, 217 soldiers, including 13 servicewomen, have rotated in and out of the Resolute Support in Afghanistan. And 35 SVK Armed Forces personnel have completed deployments to the UN-led UNTSO observer mission in the Near East to date.

A military historian's jubilee

(18 April) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš recognised Vojtech Dangl, renowned Slovak military historian, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of his birthday. The Minister awarded him with the Slovak Defence Minister's Memorial Medal, Class I, for his merits in raising the SVK Armed Forces members' awareness of history and promoting our military history science.



"Partly thanks to him, we can read the Military History of Slovakia book series, the Military History Magazine and many other publications that map out our military history," said the Minister of Defence, highlighting the fact that, even at the advanced age of 80, Vojtech Dangl continues to actively cooperate with the Institute of Military History. "Vojtech Dangl is among the prominent personalities of the Slovak military history science. He has set his inerasable seal on its distinct character over the period of his almost 35-year-long career at the Institute of Military History," remarked Col Miloslav Čaplovič, Director of the Institute of Military History.

PhDr Vojtech Dangl CSc was born on 15 April 1937. From 1969 well until 2004, he worked at the Slovak Military History Section, which was later renamed as the Institute of Military History. In the long term, he played a significant role in developing the military history science in Slovakia. He made an indelible contribution to translating numerous scientific intents into action. Among the most important ones was the publication of Military History of Slovakia in 7 volumes. Moreover, he was one of the founders of the Military History Magazine and still works as the Deputy Chairman of its Editorial Board. In 1998, he was awarded the Slovak Defence Minister's Memorial Medal, Class III, and is a recipient of several other recognitions and awards.

Preparations for Exercise Slovak Shield 2017 culminate

(20 April) The main planning conference for Exercise Slovak Shield 2017 took place on the SVK Land Forces HQ's premises on 19-20 April. The task of SVK Land Forces personnel, representatives of the SVK Armed Forces General Staff, Training Centre Lešť, Office of the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General, Topographical Office, Logistics Office, MOD Military Police, 5th Special Forces Regiment, and members of the Indiana National Guard (USA) was to agree on the exercise's organisational setup, the structure of exercising troops and logistics. For this purpose, four syndicates were formed in order to address the specific areas of preparations for the exercise.

Ex Slovak Shield 2017 is the SVK Armed Forces' most important training activity in the Training Year (TY) 2017. It will be aimed at the certification of National Commitment (NC) 2013 – Mechanised Brigade, forming an integral part of the declared unit's training. Designed as a two-level command staff exercise with a partial deployment of troops to a military training area, Ex Slovak Shield 2017 will be held at the Training Centre Lešť in October 2017 and will be preceded by a series of complex staff drills, intense training exercises, and Ex LOGEX and Ex New Horizon 2017.



- US Army military vehicles will be moving across the territory of the Slovak Republic between June and July. There will be several movements, possibly including as many as several hundred vehicles, organised in several convoys during both months. The movements across south-western Slovakia into Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania will take place in support of NATO's international exercise Saber Guardian 2017. In total, 25,000 Service Members will participate in the exercise. A small troop movement will pass through Slovakia as early as this week. The convoys will be escorted by the MOD Military Police in cooperation with the Police Corps of the Slovak Republic.

- The physical factors of flight strain and hypoxia were tried out by members of the First Aid Stations and the Air Search and Rescue Service at the end of a three-day **Specialised Air Medicine Course**. Held at the Cultural and Educational Activities Centre at Garrison Zvolen and at the Tactical Wing Sliac on 10-12 Apr, the course was organised by Lt Col Ivan Gutzelnig, Chief of Slovak Air Force Medical Service. It was aimed at the theoretical and practical training of First Aid Stations medical staff to enable them to execute medical care tasks for high performance pilots and flight personnel, as well as to carry out medevac ops at all levels.

- A specialist meeting, led by the Director of the Defence Language Institute, to assess the results of language training across the SVK Armed Forces in the Training Year (TY) 2016 was held on 19 Apr. In attendance at the meeting were members of the SVK Land Forces Personnel Management, SVK Air Force, MOD Military Police, Office of the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General, Personnel Management Branch of the Staff for Operations Support at the SVK General Staff. The participants familiarised themselves with the new Directive No. 14/2017 on Language Education and discussed supporting and improving language training across the Armed Forces.

- The Slovak soldiers deployed with **Task Force Štefánik** on a training mission in Latvia were given the opportunity to observe the Easter festivities with a series of Holy Masses celebrated in the Slovak language at the Chapel of the Ďaži Training Centre. They started with the Holy Mass on Holy Thursday, continued with a service on Easter Friday, and culminated with the liturgy of Easter Vigil and the Solemn Holy Mass on Easter Sunday. The Military Chaplain of the Engineer Battalion Sereď, Lt Peter Dobrovodský, had been sent to Latvia to provide spiritual guidance over the Easter period for the members of Task Force Štefánik.

- Even during the performance of operational tasks, the Easter festivities of the V4 service personnel in **Resolute Support in Afghanistan** were observed in the friendly spirit of a joint informal lunch. According to the statements made by the national representatives of Slovakia, Czechia, Poland and Hungary, the idea of organising joint Easter festivities has caught up and will continue to be developed in the future. The Polish national representative has already invited everyone to participate in the Easter get-together next year.

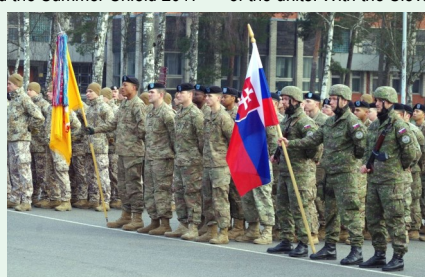
Slovak soldiers in Latvia are participating in Exercise Summer Shield 2017

(19 April) The Slovak service personnel deployed with Task Force Štefánik in Latvia have joined the Summer Shield 2017

tactical exercise. Besides the Slovak troops, the training audience come from Latvia, the USA, Canada, Lithuania, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Luxembourg, Romania, Bulgaria and Sweden. In total, 1,700 personnel are taking part in the exercise.

On behalf of the SVK Armed Forces, a Mechanised Company is taking part in the exercise.

Speaking about the exercise, Maj Vladimír Moško, Commander Task Force Štefánik, said: "Our Mechanised Company, led by Capt Gabriel Molnár, will be employed 100 per cent. Several countries have asked us to undertake joint training with them." NATO's large-scale exercise Summer Shield 2017 is aimed at



training the reconnaissance, anti-tank and artillery capabilities of the units. With the Slovak unit's capabilities, our partners can practise engaging an armoured enemy.

The presence of Allied troops in the Baltics is attracting the public attention. As the host nation for the exercise, Latvia therefore prepared an Open Day event at the Ďaži military base, where the public had the opportunity to see the vehicles and equipment operated by Allies in the Baltics.

In Latvia, 149 SVK Armed Forces members have been carrying out missions as part of Task Force Štefánik this quarter of the year. Through the deployment of its soldiers to Latvia under the V4 initiative, the Slovak Republic is delivering on its commitment made at the NATO Warsaw Summit in 2016.

AIR SHIELD 2017 kicks off

(20 April) By delivering an initial briefing, Brig Gen Miroslav Lorinc, Director of EX AIR SHIELD 2017, went ahead with the practical preparations phase for the exercise. Still before the briefing, the assigned working premises had been checked and personnel drawn from the SVK Air Force, SVK Land Forces, 5th Special Forces Regiment, Topographical Institute, and Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) personnel had undergone specialist preparation, followed by rehearsals of activities and coordination checks.

The exercise itself will test the staffs of the units subordinate to the SVK Air Force on their ability to conduct planning and to secure Slovak airspace protection and defence. Building on EX AIR SHIELD 2015 and EX BLUE WAVE 2016, it represents a training opportunity for all components of the Air Force (AF) and Ground-Based Air Defence (GBAD) Brigade and serves as a supporting activity for EX SLOVAK SHIELD 2017. EX AIR SHIELD 2017 will run at the permanent operating bases from 24 to 26 April, with a partial deployment of SVK Air Force units and assets to a training area.

Tanks fire at Kamenica



(18 April) Running from 10 through 12 April, Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area saw the Tank Company, of the 21st Combined Mechanised Battalion Trebišov, conducting a live fire exercise (LFX) involving the T-72 tanks. The gunners practised firing during sunny and raining periods, as well as at night. Their performances were rated as "excellent". Among the best was Cpl Marek Kováč, SSgt Peter Stulák and Lt Rastislav Bodnár. Maj Jozef Horváth, DCOM 21st Cmbd Mech Bn and former COM Tk Coy, expressed his satisfaction with the conduct of the firings. The Slovak Generals' Club members were invited to come and see the firings. Lt Gen (Rtd) Jaroslav Vylvlek, Maj Gen (Rtd) Miroslav Kováč and Maj Gen (Rtd) Marián Horský took time to observe the exercise, accompanied by Col Karol Navrátil, DCOM SVK Land Forces, and Col Ján Parimucha, DCOM 2nd Mech Bde Prešov.

Meeting in Martin

(21 April) On 21 April, the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin hosted a meeting of Deputy Chief of Defence Lt Gen Pavol Macko with representatives of the Civic Associations and NGOs that maintain professional working relations with the Armed Forces. They confirmed a positive trend in developing cooperation and appreciated the support provided by the SVK Armed Forces. For the meeting participants, members of the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin delivered presentations and staged practical demonstrations, highlighting the history and current trends in training military personnel for execution of missions at home and on international operations abroad.