



GOV with soldiers in Rožňava

(14 September) After their away-day meeting in Rožňava, the Government Cabinet members visited the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Battalion (CBRN Bn) and the Rocket Launcher Detachment, of 1st Mechanised Brigade, SVK LF, in Rožňava. During the visit, the service personnel introduced to them the hardware and equipment they work with and staged a dynamic demonstration of their activities. Among other things, the CBRN Bn has an irreplaceable place in domestic crisis management. The Rocket Launcher Detachment forms an integral element of the Slovak Republic's defences, being a priority task of the SVK Armed Forces. Both units are located in the same facility.

Engineer Rescuers 2016



(13 September) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš visited the SVK troops exercising alongside their Czech colleagues in Kráľová nad Váhom as part of the international exercise Engineer Rescuers 2016. The theme of the exercise was the greatest humanitarian operation, whilst cleaning up in the aftermath of floods. The exercise unfolded concurrently in the Vyškov area in the Czech Republic from 5 Sept.

"They've been out practising a variety of rescue and demolition works by cleaning up the consequences of floods, rescuing drowning people, and evacuating residents. They've been building replacement bridge crossings, keeping roads passable, recovering stuck vehicles. The tasks have been designed so as to replicate real-world operational situations," explained the head of the MOD, underscoring the significance of this international exercise, where soldiers are exercised in synchronising their capabilities.

A total of 523 troops and 225 pieces of hardware and equipment have been assigned to the CZE-SVK Engineer Brigade Joint Task Force. For the purpose of the exercise, Sered-based Engineer Battalion was reinforced by 47 Czech engineers, while 40 SVK soldiers joined the exercise in the Czech Republic. As part of the away-day on 13 Sept, Minister Gajdoš visited the Engineer Battalion Sered and met with the mayor of Kráľová nad Váhom.

St Hubert in military fashion

(17 September) The Minister of Defence visited Pliešovce to participate in the celebrations of St Hubert Day, the patron of hunters. Within Defence, the remit for hunting as an ecological forest management activity falls under the state-run plant Military Forests and Estates of the Slovak Republic. "Our Military Forests manages hunting across the nature reserves in the east, west and right here in the heart of our beautiful Slovakia, and our foresters lead by example in living up to the message of St Hubert: "Wild game is not to be only hunted but, above all, protected and understood in the wild," emphasised the Minister. While in visit to Pliešovce, he reassured the residents that the MOD is committed to supporting the tradition of annual reunions, bringing together the natives and countrymen of the abolished village of Lešť, some of whom live directly in Pliešovce. "In the SVK Government Manifesto Commitments, we committed ourselves to supporting traditions, of course, especially the military and national ones," he remarked. He went on to inform the residents of a planned commemorative event to be held at the Fallen Romanian Soldiers' Memorial at the TC Lešť. "We wish to organise a commemorative gathering to mark the liberation of the village of Senohrad by Romanian soldiers in February every year," explained Minister Gajdoš.

Chief of the General Defence in Cyprus

(14 September) On 12-14 Sept, Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim, accompanied by Col Ján Bujňák, Commander of Strategic Crisis Management Centre at SVK Armed Forces General Staff, and Col Marián Kurilla, Chief of Personal Office of Chief of General Staff of SVK Armed Forces, inspected the Slovak troops serving with UNFICYP in Cyprus. He was welcomed by Lt Col Jozef Paňko, Commander of Sector 4, at Larnaca International Airport. At UNFICYP HQ in Nicosia, the SLOVCON Commander briefed the delegation on the current situation and the contingent's tasks. While in visit to Camp Taty, Gen Maxim met with soldiers executing engineering tasks from the Engineer Platoon, the Mobile Force Reserve, and the Force Military Police Unit. In the evening, he held a meeting with the Slovak Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus, HE Mrs Oksana Tomová. On Day 2 of his visit, Gen Maxim met with Mrs Elizabeth Spehar, Special Representative and Head of UNFICYP, and Col Tom Wildish, UNFICYP Chief of Staff. Both of them highly appreciated the SLOVCON's engagement in UNFICYP. To mark Gen Maxim's visit to Camp General Štefánik, members of Sector 4 held a welcome ceremony in the evening. On the last day of his trip, Gen Maxim met with members of the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP).



- The SVK Ministry of Defence informs the citizens of the upcoming **movements of military vehicles** across Slovakia's territory on the occasion of holding the international exercise Tobruq Legacy 2016. The moves of Slovak and foreign troops will be secured by the Military Police. The exercise involving Air Defence (AD) units will be held at the TC Lešť, where the vehicle convoys will be heading after crossing the border checkpoints.

- Slovakia hosted the historically first session of the **ATHENA Special Committee (SC)** in Bratislava on 13 Sept. The two-day meeting took place under the SK PRES. The SC discussed joint funding for some expenditures of the EU's military ops and civilian missions. The participants of the away-day meeting discussed the funding of the EU BGs to include their preparation, exercises, certification and deployment. The event featured a tour of Bratislava and visits to the Training Centre Lešť and the National Centre EOD. The SC convened for the first time under the SK PRES earlier in July in Brussels.

- A 3rd-year cadet, of the Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš, Pte Peter Baláž turned out to be the **champion of the Slovak Republic** in the Olympic 50m Free Pistol 60 shots discipline. On 10 Sept, he pulled off a victory at the SVK REP Shooting Championships in Ball-Round Weapons in Domaníža, where he participated for the first time in the men's category. "The result is a precious success for me because I achieved my personal record of 563 points, moving ahead of Pavol Kopp (562 points) and Juraj Tužinský (538 points), who recently represented Slovakia at the Rio Olympics," said Peter Baláž.

- At the invitation of the SACEUR and the Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) for ACO at SHAPE, the CSEL of the SVK Armed Forces, Command Sergeant Major Vladimír Beluš, participated in an expert seminar for CSEs from NATO and partner nations at the NATO Marshall Centre, Garmisch-Partenkirchen (GER), 11-16 Sept. The CSEs and CSMs from NATO commands from 45 countries attended the **International Senior Enlisted Seminar (ISES)**. It was aimed at increasing readiness and co-operation among the most senior NCO Corps representatives from NATO Member States and accession countries, providing solutions to the NCO Corps structure for all matters relating to training and transformation.

- On Tue, 13 Sept, 1st DCHOD Lt Gen Pavel Macko received the **Defence Attaché of Montenegro**, Lt Gen Ljubiš Jokić, to mark the end of his diplomatic mission to Slovakia. Lt Gen Jokić has held the post of Defence Attaché since 2012, and upon completion of his mission he will return home.

- To mark Armed Forces Day, the Garrison Club Bratislava (GC BA), working in conjunction with the Education and Cultural Activities Section, of SVK Armed Forces Personnel Office in Liptovský Mikuláš, hosted an exhibition entitled **Soldier and Service**. The vernissage was held on 13 Sept in the presence of club and special interest group leaders at the GC BA and other invited guests. The exposition consists of 11 paintings and four sculptures from the cultural exhibits depot of the SVK Armed Forces. The exhibition will be open to the public well until 12 Oct.

- A meeting of the NATO Multinational Military Police Battalion (MNMPPBAT) leaders was convened on 6-8 Sept in Brijuni, Croatia. Slovakia was represented by Col Ivan Viseľka. The participants signed a new implementation agreement and approved of the **NATO MNMPPBAT** participating in Exercise Saber Strike 2017. Next year, the SVK MP will be the Lead Nation for the NATO MNMPPBAT and hence responsible for the exercise preparation and organisation.

Minister meets with Ambassador

(12 September) The defence co-operation between the Slovak Republic and the Kingdom of the Netherlands has been maintained at a good level and has the potential to grow further. On this, both Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Slovak Republic, HE Mr Richard van Rijssen, were unanimously in agreement. The Minister informed the ambassador of the updated White Paper on Defence of the Slovak Republic and the modernisation projects. Topics of discussion were the SVK EU Presidency and the NATO Defence Ministers' informal meeting in Bratislava, to be held on 26-27 Sept. There, one of the underlying themes will be the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS), which will be elaborated on separately as part of an EUGS conference. Other topics will include the co-operation between the EU and NATO. Our historically first EU presidency comes part of the current presidency trio – the Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta. The Minister and the ambassador also discussed regional co-operation. The issue of Reserves is being considered as a potential area of co-operation.

NFIU officially introduced



(12 September) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš received the Commander of the NATO FORCE INTEGRATION UNIT Slovakia, Col Jozef Zekucia, and his DCOM, Lt Col Martin Botík (CZE). He was briefed on the unit's main objectives, tasks and activities, with focus on meeting the criteria of Initial Capability (IC) and Full Capability (FC). "For the NFIU Slovakia to achieve IC and FC is one of my personal priorities and you can count on my full support," said the Minister of Defence during the meeting. At the same time, he appreciated our Coalition partners' interest and initiative in the stand-up of the NFIU. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Minister of Defence handed over the insignia of the NFIU Slovakia to Col Zekucia.

Bratislava Summit and soldiers

(17 September) Soldiers, Military Police (MP) personnel and members of other MOD security elements played a role in delivering the security measures for the Bratislava EU Summit on Friday. Service personnel patrolled alongside policemen of the Police Corps of the Slovak Republic, providing the security of key buildings. Deploying on joint patrols, they maintained public order in the surroundings of Bratislava Castle, Airport and Expo Arena. While working in conjunction with the SVK Interior Ministry Constitutional Members and Diplomatic Missions Office, a total of 50 MP members executed tasks relating to VIP protection and escorting. To put in place appropriate security measures, the SVK Armed Forces deployed almost 250 troops and 30 vehicles. Among those involved were members of the Special Forces, the CBRN and EOD units, as well as military medical staff. The security of the airspace over the capital city was as well supported by SVK AF aircraft, and the SVK Air Defence was on high alert with the S300 system. The Air Search and Rescue Service (SARS) was on stand-by with reinforced operations.

CBRN troops conclude training in the Upper Nitra region



The Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Training and Testing Centre (CBRN TTC) Zemianske Kostolany hosted the international exercise Toxic Valley 2016 on 5-16 Sept. Members of the Armed Forces from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, the USA, Slovakia, and the National Crime Agency of the SVK Ministry of the Interior were all playing a role. The training objectives included practising specialist CBRN capabilities in near-real conditions, preparing teams for taking samples and mobile chemical labs for tasks performance in an international environment in compliance with NATO standards.

The exercising troops were in agreement that the CBRN TTC provides unique opportunities for soldiers to rehearse the procedures for taking samples, identifying toxic chemical substances, carrying out decontamination, as well as synchronising the teams' coordination. Stage I of the exercise was aimed at the Sampling and Identification of Chemical Agents (SICA) teams and incorporated seven realistic scenarios, where the teams went from training with simulation to real chemical substances. Stage II of the exercise, which was specially designed for mobile chemical labs from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, ran until 16 Sept.