



A General's stars

(9 January) President of the Slovak Republic Andrej Kiska, who concurrently acts as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, today promoted General Staff (GS) Colonel Slavomír Staviarský to Brigadier, the most junior General appointment, and Brigadier Ľubomír Svoboda to the rank of Major General. Furthermore, he promoted Colonel (Rtd) Ivan Čierny to the rank of Brigadier for his life-long achievements in advancement of military sports.

Reflecting on the promotions, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Every single general's star is a recognition of the soldier's work in favour of the SVK Armed Forces and Slovakia, albeit often at the expense of one's own family and close ones. I believe the promotions will motivate the Generals to push the limits of the highest standards expected of them. At the same time, they will be the role models for other service personnel to follow."

In his remarks, SVK President Kiska said: "Based on the proposal of the SVK Government of December 2017, your promotion today is a natural recognition of your service in the Slovak Armed Forces. That is why the Government and I, along with our citizens in particular, expect that you will live up to the solemnity of your ranks as you perform your activities."

Offering his thanks on behalf of the Generals, newly promoted Brigadier Slavomír Staviarský said: "We would like to thank you for the trust you have put in us. On behalf of us all, I would like to express our conviction and assure you that in our service to the benefit of the Slovak Republic we will at all times act, conscientiously and in good faith, so as not to betray this trust and to be an asset to the security and defence capability of our country."

Brig Staviarský currently holds the appointment of Chief of Staff for Strategic Planning, Maj Gen Svoboda serves as Commander SVK Air Force, Brig (Rtd) Čierny is the former Director of the Military Sports Centre, who played a major role in advancement of military sports.



First NTCB-I rotation decorated

(11 January) SVK Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim welcomed the first NTCB-I rotation members, returning from their tour of duty in Iraq, to the Hall of Fame and Glory. They were decorated with the SVK CHOD Memorial Medal for their excellent results in the area of deployment.

During their tour of duty, the NTCB-I members had trained 21 Iraqi Army soldiers in manual demining skills. Some of the SVK soldiers are to continue serving in Iraq as part of the next rotation of the NTCB-I to press on with the SVK Parliament-mandated training tasks.

Minister Gajdoš meets Swedish Ambassador Eduards

(9 January) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš today received the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to Slovakia, Her Excellency Ms Helen Eduards, at MOD Main Building. They addressed current areas of defence cooperation, ways of deepening them, modernisation projects, and the strategic documents the SVK MOD had adopted in 2017. On the SVK-SWE defence cooperation, Slovak Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "We agreed that the cooperation between our countries is at a high level and we have a foundation to build on in the future." Also discussed at the meeting was the collaboration in the field of EOD and the SVK-initiated "EuroArtillery" Indirect Fire Support project, which has made it onto the list of the first PESCO projects. On CBRN, Head of the SVK MOD said: "Of course, we would welcome Swedish Armed Forces personnel to participate as observers in CBRN Exercise Toxic Valley 2018." And he reaffirmed an offer to keep the International Staff Officers Course (ISOC), delivered by the SVK Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš, open to Swedish soldiers. In connection with the recently adopted strategic documents, Minister Gajdoš informed Ambassador Eduards of the Long-Term Defence Development Plan, which represents a defence investment plan through to 2030, and of its implementation in practice. On regional cooperation, it was stated that there is room for deepening the regional links between the Visegrad 4 (V4) and the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO), as Slovakia takes over the V4 Presidency in July 2018.



- The SVK CHOD received the **Most Reverend Archbishop George** of Michalovce and Košice and his delegation of the Orthodox Church. His Eminence was keen to find out about the provision of spiritual life for SVK Armed Forces personnel. He wished the CHOD a successful 2018. At the conclusion of the meeting, Gen Maxim presented His Eminence with a memorial coin.

- 18 military pilots of 1st and 2nd Tactical Squadrons, part of **Tactical Wing Sliac**, underwent a practical rehearsal for emergency exit procedures in the first days of the new year. The results of the final test of 9 Jan reflected the pilots' excellent knowledge and readiness.

- The SVK Ambassador to Cyprus, HE Mr Ján Škoda, paid a visit to SVK soldiers in Sector 4 of **UNFICYP** on 11 Jan. Lt Col Jaroslav Marko, Commander Sector 4, brought him up to date on the performance of their operational tasks. Ambassador Škoda wishes to see the SVK Embassy deepening its cooperation with soldiers.

- A handover ceremony was held on 5 Jan at Jaselské Barracks of Logistics Battalion Topoľčany, to mark the official handover of the post of **Commander Logistics Battalion** from Lt Col Pavol Kobík to Lt Col Vladimír Palko. The ceremony was attended by Col Róbert Kecő, Deputy Commander Combat Service Support (CSS) Brigade Trenčín, and Lt Col Vladimír Kotrus, Commander Repairs Brigade Martin.

- Ordinary of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps, His Excellency **Mons František Rábek** blessed the working premises of the General Staff leaders on 9 Jan. To mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the SVK Armed Forces, CHOD Gen Maxim presented Mons Rábek with the SVK CHOD Memorial Medal.

- The main training activity of the SVK Air Force this year is Exercise AIR SHIELD, scheduled for 1-12 Oct. In this connection, 10 Jan saw the SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM hosted this year's first **independent SVK AF HQ AIRCOM staff rehearsal**, bringing together its Chiefs of Branches and Sections and selected personnel of C2S Wing Zvolen. Deputy Commander SVK Air Force, Brigadier Miroslav Lorinc was the officer in command of the rehearsal.

- Members of **CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre** met with members of MVZ&EZ SR SLOVAKAID at their base in Martin on 12 Jan. The initial briefing of Deputy Commander Capt Petříček on the Centre's mission was followed by a presentation of M. Kramá on the activity, structure and mechanism of SLOVAKAID. Rastislav Bílík filled the audience in on the details for delivery of humanitarian aid abroad. They discussed the potential areas of cooperation between SLOVAKAID and CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre, representing the SVK Armed Forces.

- The SVK MOD releases this traffic alert to inform the inhabitants of Slovakia of the upcoming **Allied military movements**, scheduled from 15-21 Jan 2018. A total of 10 Allied road moves will take place across Slovakia over the period. They will mainly involve Polish and Czech troops transporting materiel and personnel in support of an exercise.

Slovakia chairs OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC)

(13 January) Since the beginning of 2018 the Slovak Republic has held the OSCE's Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) Chairmanship. The FSC's opening session under the SVK Chairmanship will take place in Hofburg, Vienna, as early as this Wednesday (17 January).

The aim of the FSC is to support active collaboration of the OSCE's participating States on fundamental politico-military issues of European security and stability at military level. Falling under its remit, the SVK MOD is tasked to make sure that Slovakia's obligations ensuing from the politically and legally binding international documents on arms control, disarmament, and confidence and security-building measures are fully implemented. On the FSC, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš explained: "The main intention of the Forum for Security Co-operation is to build the security environment in Europe by employing tools such as the 2011 Vienna Document and other regional agreements derived therefrom." In this connection, he further argued that it is important to build military contacts to translate the said documents into

CHOD on inspection



(8 January) SVK Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim, accompanied by the SVK Land Forces Commander, inspected key military units of the SVK Land Forces stationed in eastern Slovakia. To mark the 25th anniversary of the

establishment of the SVK Armed Forces, Gen Maxim extended his congratulations to members of the Mechanised Battalion Michalovce, Self-Propelled Artillery Unit Michalovce, Combined Mechanised Battalion Trebišov, and Motorised Battalion Trebišov. In a series of meetings with their commanders, he thanked them for their job well done in 2017 and set out the tasks for 2018. He was also interested to find out about the progress made in removing previously identified deficiencies, especially when it comes to the security of vitally important facilities in some garrisons. He concluded his visits by handing out memorial plaques to the commanders and signing military chronicles.



BMT officially begins

(8 January) 98 soldier trainees under Preparatory State Service (PSS) and 41 college graduates reported to the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin on 8 January, to undertake basic military training (BMT). Martin-based 4th Czechoslovak Brigade Barracks will be home to them for the next 7 weeks.

Among the soldier trainees and cadets are 28 women. After going through the in-processing procedures and drawing stores at the Regional Clothing Centre, of the Multifunctional Supply Base West Nemšová, the newcomers were assigned to Training Platoons and began their boot camp. On completion of BMT, they will attend a graduation ceremony in February.

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Towards this end, the implementation of the 2011 Vienna Document (VD11) and the Regional Bilateral Agreement with Ukraine in areas such as information sharing, verification and military contracts is fully delivered by the SVK MOD.

The FSC Chairmanship is an important part of Slovakia's preparations for the Slovak 2019 OSCE Chairmanship. The FSC is among the OSCE's three decision-making bodies. The Slovak Republic is now part of the OSCE Chairmanship Troika along with Italy and Austria, which will enable it to co-participate in the OSCE Chairmanship in its advisory role, adopting the organisation's most significant decisions. From the politico-security perspective, this is of great importance because all the military powers located in Europe are involved in exchange of information and verification regimes.

Slovakia will assume the OSCE Chairmanship on a rotational basis, with each OSCE participating State having this opportunity only once every 19 years. The concluding session of the FSC is scheduled for 14 March 2018.