



Battle flags on loan

(17 April) The Commanders of Engineer Battalion Sereď, SVK Land Forces, and Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra, SVK Air Force, took over the units' battle flags on loan from President of the Slovak Republic Andrej Kiska, who concurrently acts as Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces.

"The results of both military units – be it domestic and international crisis management operations, or participation in Allied exercises, or cleaning up in the aftermath of natural disasters and emergencies in Slovakia – speak for themselves," said SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. At the same time, he stressed that preserving and building traditions are among the MOD's priorities.

President Kiska commended the recognised units for their achievements. In his remarks, the President said: "Today's handover of the battle flags on loan to the units is an expression of respect for the work of Service personnel."

CHOD Gen Milan Maxim underlined the meaning and significance of the battle flag. "Battle flags must be carefully protected not only against damage but also against theft. Otherwise, in the latter case tradition has it that such a unit must be disbanded," he explained.

On behalf of all members of Engineer Battalion Sereď, Lt Col František Mihalovič thanked for the privilege. Col Ladislav Dovhun, Commander of Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra, called the takeover of the battle flags as the greatest recognition of his and his colleagues' work. During the handover ceremony, General Maxim pinned the Commemorative Ribbons marking the 25th anniversary of the Armed Forces onto the battle flags. Only 15 battle flags on loan from the President of the Slovak Republic have been deposited with their military units across Slovakia to date.

Minister opens National Defence Course

(16 April) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš today officially welcomed participants of the National Defence Course organised annually by Spain's Higher Centre for National Defence Studies (CESEDEN). In the coming days, the course members will discuss current defence and security issues and the importance of NATO-EU cooperation with representatives of the SVK MOD and Armed Forces. Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Anton Hrnko, too, participated in a discussion with them.

In his opening remarks, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "The bonds between the Slovak Republic and the Kingdom of Spain are very strong and the NATO and EU integration processes bring us closer to each other. Today's meeting confirms that both countries are engaged in active cooperation." He went on to add that the course is an opportunity for us to present the latest developments in the Armed Forces in line with the new national strategic documents and the Long-Term Defence Development Plan with an Outlook to 2030, and consequently the Armed Forces' systemic and systematic modernisation.

Slovakia will host the course members until 19 April 2018. Among them are Members of Spanish Parliament, officials of the central administration bodies and defence industry, representatives from across academia and mass media, as well as leaders of the Spanish Armed Forces. They are keen to find out more about the MOD-sponsored strategic documents, especially about the new Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic and the Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic.

Minister recognises Petra Vihová's sporting successes

(19 April) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš received Petra Vihová, alpine ski racer and member of the Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica. He appreciated her sporting achievements and thanked her for representing Slovakia brilliantly at this year's Winter Olympics in South Korea. "I am immensely proud that our Dukla has such outstanding sportswomen. We have not been able to meet earlier, because Petra has had a very busy working schedule. Although two months have passed since the Olympics, it is my duty to thank her for her resolve and fighting spirit that we could see her demonstrate in all of her races. Although she did not win a medal, I am convinced she has everything still ahead of her," said Head of the MOD. The Minister and General Secretary of the MOD's Service Office Ján Holko gave Petra Vihová their personal gift – an artwork depicting her appearance. In addition, she received a financial reward and a spa holiday in an MOD-run spa facility. As Petra Vihová said, she is happy she can represent the Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica. She thanked for the support and training conditions provided by the MOD. The sportswoman of the Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica, Petra Vihová represented Slovakia at the Winter Olympics in South Korea and finished 5th in the Ladies' Alpine Combined Slalom.



- The SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM held **computer-assisted tests using the AVIS programme for air traffic controllers (ATCs)** of 1st and 2nd Classes from across the SVK Air Force units on 17 April.
- As part of work on a new military manual, an **experimental exercise combining the combat use of an anti-tank section** and the OT-90 organic vehicle and its crew in full kit and with organic weapons and full ammunition supplies took place on 17 Apr. The exercise validated the section's tactical activity and the most advantageous variants for the storage of ammunition inside and outside of the vehicle.
- **CHOD General Milan Maxim** visited the Military Police HQ Trenčín on 12 Apr and awarded the HQ staff with the Plaque commemorating the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the SVK Armed Forces. As a thank you for the cooperation with the CHOD thus far, Director of the SVK Military Police Col Michal Migát presented him with the SVK Military Police Plaque.

- On 13 Apr, Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin hosted a **pre-deployment ceremony** for the SVK personnel deploying to Operation EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In attendance were Deputy Chief of Defence Lt Gen Pavel Macko, Commander SVK Land Forces Maj Gen Jindřich Joch, Commander Strategic Centre of Crisis Management Col Martin Michalko, and other guests. The ceremony was concluded with the personnel marching off the square.

- Between 19 Mar and 13 Apr, Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin's Training Peace Support Operations Unit organised **pre-deployment training for the 8th rotation of SVK personnel to be deployed to Resolute Support (RS)**, a non-combat mission in Afghanistan. The training, divided into three phases, culminated with a command staff rehearsal. The 8th rotation troops are still to undergo further national and international training. After conducting personal interviews and a pre-deployment ceremony, they will replace their colleagues on completion of their 6-month tour of Afghanistan in May 2018.

- While deployed with Operation EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina, members of SLOVCON's 2nd Observation Team organised **EUFOR DAY in Foča** on 13 Apr. Among the invited guests were SVK Ambassador in Sarajevo Martin Kačo, SVK Defence Attaché Col Ladislav Regenda, and SLOVCON Commander Lt Col Daniel Draganovský. SVK troops thanked the local authorities for their excellent cooperation. The programme featured a photo exhibition entitled Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Eyes of EUFOR Soldiers, and a presentation and tasting of traditional Slovak meals and wines.

- **MiG-29 fighter pilots** practised low-, medium- and high-level flying in a flight formation as well as tactical manoeuvring in a two-ship formation and in a flight formation. Being proficient in these types of formations is a condition for pilots to perform, successfully and efficiently, the operational tasks in ensuring the defence of SVK airspace.

- The SVK MOD wants to alert the drivers in Slovakia to take caution, as there will be 25 **Allied military movements** across Slovakia over the period from 23-29 Apr 2018. They will mainly involve CZE and POL troops. Drivers should also pay attention to the movements of SVK Armed Forces convoys and convoys transporting oversized cargo of equipment along the route Hlohovec – Koliňany Training Area as well as to 1 railway movement of Slovak troops along the route Trebišov – Martin.

Military policemen offer 3 days of adventures to kids from a children's home

(20 April) The SVK Military Police prepared a three-day camp for children from Children's Home Kráľová Lehota. Children, aged 9 to 17, enjoyed a programme full of activities and new experiences at the Training Centre Lešť and the Training and K9 Military Police Department Vlkánová – Hronsek. "We want to give these kids unforgettable experiences and what they may miss at the children's home. Children are our future. We want to be part of their presence and make them happy," said Director of the SVK Military Police Col Michal Migát. From 17 to 19 April, children gained a lot of knowledge from such areas of interest as road traffic regulations, cynology, topography and



medicine. The theory package was connected to hands-on exercises. Thanks to this, they tried out executing the everyday duties of MP personnel. They did a lot of physical training, which culminated in a climbing activity and an assignment with military working dogs (MWDs). The SVK Military Police has organised the camp since 2011 on a regular basis. "When we first started the camp, there was one military policeman who grew up in this children's home. Originally, we only staged static and dynamic demonstrations. Today, children have the opportunity to try out the duties of military policemen for three days," added Lt Col Marián Turanský.

USA offers assistance

(19 April) The Slovak Republic may get financial support worth US\$46 million from the United States of America to modernise Sliach Air Base and Kuchyňa Air Base. The aim of the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) is to facilitate the development of defence capabilities in Europe, especially in the countries on NATO's eastern flank. In the case of Slovakia, the investment of resources should serve to maintain airfield pavement surfaces and to increase fuel storage facilities. For Slovakia to accept the offer, it is important that it corresponds to the operational requirements of the SVK Armed Forces and that it is based on a written agreement. The acceptance and implementation of such support is conditioned by the signing of a Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) by both sides.

An act of heroism recognised



(17 April) Minister Gajdoš recognised Capt Miloš Karel for rescuing an 11-year old boy who was drowning in the River Váh. The Minister thanked the serviceman for performing an outstanding act of heroism in saving a human life, which attests to the fact that the military profession is not only a job but, above all, a mission. "I believe this act of heroism will be an inspiration not only to his colleagues but also to all those who are considering participating in the Voluntary Military Training scheme or joining the Armed Forces, to serve and help others." The Armed Forces will train them for that mission." CHOD General Milan Maxim awarded Capt Karel with the SVK Armed Forces Honour Badge (in Silver), 2nd Grade, for the meritorious act of rescuing a human life.

Parachute jumps from Black Hawks



(17 April) Helicopter Wing (HW) Prešov hosted a training for helicopter pilots in executing insertions of paratroopers by parachute from UH-60M Black Hawks. The conversion-to-type pilot training took place in collaboration with a U.S. Mobile Training Team, who have been helping to train SVK pilots and aircrew at HW Prešov. The training was undertaken by SVK helicopter pilots and military parachutists. Familiarised with the theory of helicopter insertion operations, the exercising personnel were instructed in how to prepare a helicopter for an airborne insertion and for parachute jumps. In addition to the helicopter pilots, the first UH-60M Black Hawk jumpmasters and military parachutists gained new practical skills. They are now ready to execute training jumps, to train new jumpmasters, and to extend the deployment options whenever the Air and Ground Search and Rescue Services are called on. Instructors of 5th SOF Regiment Žilina and of ISTAR Battalion Prešov were also involved in the training activity.