



Ministers meet in Piešťany

(10 June) Over the past year the Slovak V4 Presidency has brought several successes in the field of security and defence, both at the level of regional and global cooperation. The V4 Defence Ministers agreed on this during their final meeting held under the aegis of the Slovak V4 Presidency in Piešťany on 10 June 2019.

The Visegrad Group has recorded a number of successes, such as the high readiness of its flagship project – V4 EU Battlegroup, to be on standby starting from 1 July 2019, the V4 Defence Ministers Meeting + France and Germany, and a novelty in the field of education and training – the Visegrad Military Medicine Conference (VIMMED) 2019. Those results are reinforced by the fact that the SVK MOD has organised a total of 24 events over the period.

The contribution of the Slovak leadership was recognised by Czech Defence Minister Lubomír Metnar, as the CZE MOD takes over the V4 Presidency on 1 July 2019. Minister Metnar then outlined the Czech V4 priorities for the coming year. Among them is to continue with the V4 + FRA + DEU project, launched by the SVK V4 Presidency, and host the V4 + UK meeting.

After taking stock of the Slovak V4 Presidency achievements, partners paid special attention to current EU and NATO defence initiatives, PESCO, international crisis management missions and operations, and closer coordination of national positions on EU and NATO initiatives.

Later that day, V4 delegates were joined by their colleagues from Austria, Slovenia and Croatia for the Central European Defence Cooperation (CEDC) Defence Ministers Meeting. They reviewed the current state of play of their joint CEDC PESCO project – CBRN Surveillance as a Service, paid special attention to the preparations for the joint CEDC exercise COOPSEC 2019, and spoke about international security in relation to illegal migration along the Western Balkan route, the support for the Western Balkans and its integration efforts, and the importance of international missions and operations in the region, with focus on continuity of the executive mandate of Op EUFOR Althea.

Gun salute for new CinC

(15 June) Artillerymen, of the Self-Propelled Artillery Battalion Michalovce, fired a 20-gun salute from the Tyrš Embankment, as Ms Zuzana Čaputová was inaugurated the new President of the Slovak Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces.

As part of the inauguration, ceremonies were held in Bratislava's Reduta Building and Hviezdoslav Square, supported by service personnel and members of the Slovak Armed Forces Guard of Honour and the Slovak Armed Forces Military Band.

According to applicable legislation, the President of the Slovak Republic/ Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces declares war while acting on the decision of the Parliament if the Slovak Republic is under attack or if the international commitment to NATO's collective defence calls for it. The President's powers encompass, among others, concluding peace; issuing orders to mobilise citizens for the Slovak Armed Forces; and declaring and terminating the state of war or the state of emergency.

Laureates of 22nd Military Deed of the Year Awards

(13 June) Winners of the 22nd Military Deed of the Year Awards were announced by the Ministry of Defence during a ceremony at the MOD on 13 June 2019, honouring exceptional deeds of the servicemen and women who saved life or helped other people in need. In the presence of Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Anton Hrnko, DCHOD Maj Gen Josef Pokorný, also recognised were those from the public who fostered positive relationships with and brought credit on the SVK Armed Forces. Winner of the **Rescue of Life** category was 2nd Degree Private Lukáš Kucharčík, of 23rd Motorised Battalion Trebišov. Thanks to his prompt response to a road vehicle accident in June 2018, he saved the life of a young man and helped the crew of another vehicle get out shortly before it exploded. The **Assistance to the Public** category was won by Sgt Martin Majer. Last year it was already for the 6th time that Sgt Majer organised a fund-raising event at the Repair Battalion Martin for the Children's Faculty Hospital in Banská Bystrica. Finalists of the **Friend of the Slovak Armed Forces** category were Lt Gen (Rtd) Pavel Honzek and members of the Generals Club Trenčín for initiating and organising an extensive reconstruction of the Trenčín-Kubrá WWI Cemetery. This year the judges recommended to the MOD that they announce an **Exceptional Award** for Lt Col (Rtd) Ján Himpán, a member of the Slovak Soldiers Association Sered' and a recipient of the Kňazovický Blood Donation Plaque, who has donated blood over 100 times for free.



■ On 10 June 2019, 46 **active reservists** reported to the Engineer Battalion Sered' for training. The two-week training at Lešť will see them engaged in all arms training and pontoon bridge laying, as well as undertaking domestic crisis management tasks.

■ On 12-13 June 2019, the **Self-propelled Artillery Battalion Michalovce** was visited by Commander of 13th Artillery Regiment Jince Col Ivan Mráz (CZE A). During his meeting with the Battalion Commander and the Chief of Artillery (Field Artillery Branch), he was briefed on the training of 2nd Mech Bde fire support units and fire support-related issues.

■ The **Summer Military Skills Competition** took place in UNFICYP, Cyprus. The SLOVCON team triumphed in the competition and received an accolade from the hands of Force Commander Maj Gen Cheryl Pearce (AUS A). On 9 June 2019, the SLOVCON team participated in the Dragon Boat Race at Gerasmogia Dam near the city of Limassol, Cyprus. The team won the race with the finals race time of 54 seconds.

■ On 10 June 2019, employees of the Institute of Military History – Museum Section Svidník participated in the **16th Slovak Museums Festival**, which was organised at the Museum in Svidník and the South Zemplín Cultural Centre in Trebišov by the Slovak Museums Association.

■ Deputy Commander of the Slovak Air Force Brig Gen Róbert Kleštinec welcomed the outgoing **U.S. Air Attaché to Slovakia**, Lt Col Adrian Patrascu and the incoming U.S. Air Attaché to Slovakia, Lt Col Greg Christiansen to the SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM Zvolen on 12 June 2019. Lt Col Adrian Patrascu thanked for fruitful cooperation over his tenure as U.S. AA to Slovakia. Afterwards, the Air Attachés paid a visit to the Tactical Wing Sliač.

■ This year, on 10 June 2019, for the 17th time already, members of the SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM visited the **Children's Faculty Hospital** with Outpatient Clinic in Banská Bystrica to donate gifts and learning aids to young patients and teaching staff of the hospital-based primary school.

■ The **Estates Management Agency (MOD)** organised a working meeting for logisticians from across the Slovak Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence. Alongside representatives of the Estates Management Agency (MOD), the Operations Planning Staff (GS), and the Logistics Support Office (SVK Armed Forces), the meeting was attended by 246 logisticians.

■ **Employees of the Institute of Military Hygiene and Epidemiology** held the 3rd series of away day voluntary preventive medical check-ups at the Transport Wing Kuchyňa. As part of the Healthy Heart Programme, they wanted to diagnose cardiovascular diseases at the earliest stage possible.

■ On 12-13 June 2019, members of the **Self-propelled Artillery Battalion**, 2nd Mech Bde Prešov, held a command staff rehearsal and went through the SOPs for delivering effective fire in support of 2nd Mech Bde Prešov.

■ Drivers are asked by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be **50 Allied road movements** and 3 railway movements from 17-23 June 2019. They will mostly involve HUN troops. Over the period, SVK Army convoys will also ferry oversized cargo on the following routes: Hlohovec – CV Lešť – Trenčín, Martin – CV Lešť, Nitra – TC Lešť, TC Lešť – Sered'.

Maj Gen Miroslav Lorinc visits Indiana National Guard in USA

(10 June) Deputy Chief of Defence/ Chief of Staff Maj Gen Miroslav Lorinc visited the United States of America at the invitation of Adjutant General of Indiana Maj Gen Courtney P. Carr. At the Indiana Joint Force Headquarters (JFH) in Indianapolis, they held a bilateral meeting before visiting Ex United Front 2019, an international exercise involving members of the Indiana National Guard and staff of the Israeli Defence Forces' Home Front Command. Maj Gen Miroslav Lorinc then held talks with Chief of Staff for the Indiana Air National Guard Brig Gen Patrick R. Renwick on bilateral cooperation, especially on the UH-60M Black Hawk and F-16 modernization programmes. Ex United Front 2019 has been regularly



organised under the State Partnership Programme (SPP) since 2012 alternately in Israel and in the USA. Similarly,

the Slovak Armed Forces and the Indiana National Guard have worked together through the SPP since 1994. Rehearsals of search and rescue (SAR) operations in a built-up area offer an opportunity to extend the SPP cooperation to include Slovak troops, while the use of Slovak training facilities for this purpose is also under consideration. Maj Gen Miroslav Lorinc also met with Officer-in-Command of Ex United Front 2019 Brig Gen Patrick C. Thibodeau, of the INNG, and Commander of the Home Front Command Maj Gen Tamir Yadai, of the IDF, to speak about extended partnership options.



Tobruq Legacy enters its final stage

(14 June) The most important phase of Ex Tobruq Legacy 2019, a major Live Exercise (LIVEX), for a multinational SBAD task force began in Poland on Monday, 10 June 2019. From 10-13 June 2019, 2,600 troops practised providing air defences for a NATO Ally according to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty under the command of the NATO Joint Force Air Command (JFAC). During the LIVEX, 106 air defenders of the SVK Air Force performed SBAD tasks alongside forces from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom at the Ustka Training Range.

Members of the SVK Anti-Aircraft (AA) Detachment, tasked to fire the 9K38 Igla Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS), underwent a rehearsal on the coast of the Baltic Sea at the SO-3 Fire Post at the Ustka Training Range, Poland. Daytime and nighttime live firing took place on 17 June 2019.

Members of the Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra carried out preparations for a live fire exercise to be held at the Ustka Training Range next year.