



Minister in Latvia

(29 November) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš today visited the Slovak soldiers deployed under Canadian command in support of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) on Ādaži Training Area in Latvia. During his visit to Latvia as part of the delegation of Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini, Minister Gajdoš had a meeting with State Secretary of the LVA Ministry of Defence Jānis Garisons.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "I really want to praise the work of our servicemen and women who bring credit on the Slovak Armed Forces and on the Slovak Republic as a whole through taking a responsible approach to executing their tasks." He reminded that they will be on duty over the Christmas period. Head of the MOD added: "I know it is demanding both for them and their families, which is why they are deserving of my sincere Thank You."

Thanking soldiers for their exemplary performance of duties, Deputy Chief of Defence Maj Gen Josef Pokorný said: "Our current troop rotation at Ādaži is highly valued by Canadian Command and the entire Armed Forces can be rightly proud of their work."

Maj Ivan Petrik, the officer in command of the Slovak Contingent in Latvia, briefed the delegation on specific aspects of the deployment. He added this is the third such troop rotation so far and brings the total number of SVK personnel who have participated in NATO's eFP in Latvia to 455.

In his meeting with State Secretary of the LVA Ministry of Defence Jānis Garisons, Minister Gajdoš talked about how to deepen the bilateral cooperation opportunities in the field of security and defence. "Slovakia is ready to step up its cooperation with Latvia, be that, for example, on military training, education activities, defence industry or research and development, especially PESCO and its projects."

Minister Gajdoš suggested keeping Slovakia's specialist training centres at Lešť and Zemianske Kostolany, Ex SLOVAK SHIELD and Ex TOXIC VALLEY, and specialist courses delivered by the NATO COE EOD Trenčín open to the LVA military.

SVK Armed Forces Bill

(27 November) Members of Parliament approved the Slovak Armed Forces (Amendment) Bill 2019. It aims to extend the purposes for which SVK service personnel may be deployed on missions and operations, as Slovakia follows through on its commitments under the international agreements it is bound by. Reflecting the MOD's expertise on applied practices, the dynamically changing security landscape, and the diversity of tasks undertaken by the Slovak Armed Forces, the new legislation details the tasks, use and control of armed forces and the areas of the SVK Government's and the SVK Ministry of Defence's responsibility in exercising control of armed forces in line with the Defence of the Slovak Republic (Amendment) Act 2019. The Act of Parliament will come into force on 1 February 2020.

Another 4 contemporary veterans inducted into MOD Hall of Fame

(26 November) Another four contemporary veterans were inducted into the Ministry of Defence Hall of Fame by Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš during a ceremony at the Radošina Theatre in Bratislava. During this traditional pre-Christmas meeting, Cpl Milan Tomlák, Lt Col Štefan Rigas, MSgt Marián Valach and a member of the 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina were thus recognised for their meritorious service on missions and operations abroad. Speaking at the ceremony, Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "This day belongs to the contemporary veterans – professional soldiers who have already performed or are performing their duties far away from their closest ones." In his remarks, General Secretary of the SVK Ministry of Defence Ján Holko said: "We have a lot to be proud of, because our servicemen and women get credit not only at home but also abroad. In turn, we at the Ministry of Defence are keen to provide the best possible Service conditions for them." Introducing the four exceptional stories of the awardees that connect everything the Armed Forces should have and do, CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "There is an example of decisiveness which saves lives, there is the story of a soldier who helps people, the story of a commander who shoulders the burden of responsibility, and the story of a soldier who risked his own life to save other people's lives."



- Petra Vlhová, member of the SVK National Team and the Dukla Banská Bystrica Military Sports Centre, finished **2nd in this season's second slalom race**, behind first-place finisher Mikaela Shiffrin of the United States, at the FIS Ski Women's World Cup on 1 Dec 2019 in Killington, USA. For Petra Vlhová, this means the 27th World Cup podium placement in her career, with 9 1st placements, 10 2nd placements, and 8 3rd placements.

- On 28 Nov 2019, members of the Tactical Wing Sliač attended a ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the tragic death of WW2 military aviation hero **Major General Otto Smik**, the most successful Slovak fighter pilot of the Royal Air Force (RAF). The name of this pilot has been closely associated with the Tactical Wing Sliač since 2002, when the Wing was awarded the honorary title of "Major General Otto Smik Sliač Air Base".

- The Stationary Communications and Information Systems Base Trenčín organised a selection of soldiers for the **2019 Best Other Ranks Soldier and NCO of the Year** on 27 Nov 2019. Cpl David Kovačič and SSgt Martin Nedúchal claimed the Stationary Communications and Information Systems Base's Best Soldier and NCO of the Year titles.

- The traditional pre-Christmas **meeting of chaplains with believers and supporters** of the Ecumenical Pastoral Service in the Slovak Armed Forces and Corps took place on 25 Nov 2019. This year it was enriched by a programme dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the 1989 Gentle Revolution and a concert. The proceeds from the fund-raising event will be spent on charity.

- On 26 Nov 2019, the Slovak National Museum Bratislava hosted a **methodology seminar** linked to the exhibition "1919 Battle of Slovakia and French Military Mission", co-prepared by the Institute of Military History. The seminar, aimed at history teachers of primary schools, was presented by military historian Peter Chorvát. The exhibition is open to the public until 2 Feb 2020.

- Drivers are advised by the Ministry of Defence to drive carefully as there will be **25 Allied road movements** from 2 Dec to 8 Dec 2019 in Slovakia. During the week, Slovak Army convoys will ferry oversized cargo from Sereď to Martin and there will also be SVK Army rail movements from Kamenica nad Cirochou to Prešov, from Zemianske Kostolany to Vlkánová, and from Zemianske Kostolany to Prešov.

Martin-based Mech Bn soldiers fire small arms and throw hand grenades

(27 November) Individual elements of the Mechanised Battalion Martin fired small arms and threw hand grenades on Martin Garrison's Sučany Training Ground in the last week of November. Battalion Commander Lt Col Rudolf Ďurník reminded that all Battalion units and staff members were gradually undertaking firing practice at the turn of November and December.

Battalion Commander Lt Col Rudolf Ďurník said: "We pay special attention to firing weapons and throwing hand grenades, so that our service members develop operationally relevant skills, while complying with all



safety regulations. All units of the Battalion are now gradually undergoing shooting training on Sučany Training Ground, with the focus on firing standard-issued pistols." Commander of the Combat Support Company Cpt Peter Lukáč oversaw the RG-4 offensive hand grenade training. According to him, it was a specific assignment where newcomers, who made up approx. 1/5 of the company, had to overcome the fear factor. MSgt Peter Šipoš was in charge of

Change of Command

(26 November) In the presence of SVK Army Commander Maj Gen Jindřich Joch, a Change of Command (COC) ceremony for Commander and Deputy Commander of the Combat Service Support Brigade was held in Trenčín. General Staff Col Ján Bujňák took over from the outgoing Brigade Commander, Col Zuzana Kraushuberová, who assumed the appointment of Chief of the Logistics Branch, SVK Army HQ Trenčín. The outgoing Deputy Commander, Col Róbert Kecső, handed over to Col Maroš Murárik.

Nurse awarded

(25 November) The Slovak Association for Protection of Patients' Rights presented "My Doctor Awards" and "My Nurse Awards" to 10 medical professionals in both categories. Among the awardees was Viera Priesolová who works as Chief Nurse of the Neurology Clinic, SNP Central Military Hospital – Faculty Hospital Ružomberok. She was nominated for the award by the Slovak Multiple Sclerosis Union. She has worked with multiple sclerosis patients for the past 18 years already.



Soldiers on mixed patrols

(27 November) Service personnel will go out on mixed foot patrols with members of the SVK Police Corps to maintain public order and security in Bratislava in the run-up to Christmas and over the Christmas festivities. A total of 270 military personnel will participate in this activity. In the run-up to Christmas 5 servicemen will be out on patrols every day until 22 December, while up to 16 servicemen will be available to the SVK Police Corps every operational day from 23 December to 1 January. Soldiers have been earmarked for this purpose largely due to current security developments, following a request from the SVK Police Corps and the Cabinet's decision of 6 November 2019.