



## Respect lights up castle



(11 November) To pay tribute to veterans, the red poppy emblem as a symbol of 11 November was projected onto Bratislava Castle.

Veterans Day and the 102nd anniversary of the end of WW1 were observed by Prime Minister Igor Matovič, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď, Parliamentary Deputy Chairman Gábor Grendel and Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko. They gathered to show their respect to all veterans and pointed to their unwavering and ever-relevant legacy – the struggle for universal values of peace, democracy and freedom.

Prime Minister Igor Matovič said: "I am proud of our members of the Armed Forces who have, over the past weeks, helped us in a very fundamental way to return to a more peaceful life." The Prime Minister honoured the memory of all WW1 and WW2 veterans, including the Slovak National Uprising (SNP) veterans. "I believe that even in the future the Slovak Armed Forces will be the element which will enable us to live out our lives satisfactorily and that Europe will continue to be a peaceful haven without war," he said.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "It is an immense honour for us that for the first time in history we celebrate Veterans Day today with a projection of wild red poppies onto Bratislava Castle. These are a symbol of the blood shed across the battlefields and meadows of WW1. Ultimately, we are grateful to WW1 and WW2 veterans, SNP veterans, contemporary veterans of UN, EU and NATO missions and operations, and these months also to all Slovak servicemen and women for what they have done for the Slovak Republic and the health of our citizens."

As Deputy Parliamentary Chairman Gábor Grendel said, today reminds us that peace and quiet cannot be taken for granted. "Our fathers, grandfathers and their fathers fought to win peace and quiet for our generation. I am pleased that the SVK Parliament can contribute to this commemoration by lighting up Bratislava Castle."

Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "I am very grateful that Veterans Day is becoming a day of remembrance for the whole civil society. We know that all those who fought and spilt their blood in WW1, WW2 and in other conflicts were not just soldiers but also citizens dressed in uniform who served their country and their Nation. They all deserve to be remembered. I am very pleased that the Armed Forces have carried on the traditions that our forebearers established."

According to the MOD statistics, the total number of WW2 veterans and contemporary veterans is 86 and 8,267, respectively. Contemporary veterans have served on international crisis management missions and operations. "Today, we also remember those who have been helping to build peace and a safer world wherever needed – far away from their homes and close ones, with the aim of bringing better tomorrows to all. Thank You!" said the head of the MOD.

On the occasion of Veterans Day, SVK Armed Forces personnel handed out red poppies and leaflets across the towns and cities of Slovakia and Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď attended commemorations at the MOD's Reconciliation Memorial and in Bratislava's Šafárik Square.

## Council of European Union agrees rules for third-state participation in PESCO

(12 November) After two years of negotiations on third-state participation in PESCO, the Council of the European Union adopted Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/1639 of 5 November 2020. Thanks to the Council Decision, third states and their entities (e.g. industrial companies and research institutes) will be able to fully participate in PESCO projects. This agreement opens up new opportunities to markedly strengthen cooperation on the EU's key defence initiatives with strategic EU partners. Since the establishment of PESCO in 2017, Slovakia has supported the flexible involvement of strategic partners in PESCO projects and the coherence of initiatives with NATO. However, negotiations over the issue were prolonged considerably, as several EU Member States took, over the long run, a position pointing to the risks associated with the participation of some partners in this European project. The general conditions for third states include sharing the principles and values of the European Union, the goals of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and a contribution to strengthening the Common Security and Defence Policy. From a legal viewpoint, the third-state admission process requires that the third state must have a Security of Information Agreement with the EU in force and, if a PESCO project is implemented with the support of EDA, it must also negotiate an Administrative Agreement with EDA. After meeting a set of conditions, a third-country participant is invited by project members to join a PESCO project. Compliance with the conditions must also be approved unanimously by the Council. If so, project members will negotiate an administrative arrangement with the state seeking participation.



## Strong partnership and common visions



(13 November) The changing security environment, new and ever-relevant challenges in the politico-security field, effective multilateralism and sharing of common goals and values in the Euro-Atlantic region were among the themes of the meeting between Defence

Minister Jaroslav Naď and the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Slovakia, HE Ms Barbara Wolf, who introduced herself after taking up her Diplomatic Service appointment as German Ambassador. The deployment of SVK military personnel and assets on Op Shared Responsibility topped the agenda. During his first official meeting with the Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to Slovakia, HE Mr Gregor Kozovinc, the Defence Minister and the Slovenian Ambassador discussed security and defence issues. Ambassador Kozovinc was keen to find out more about the experience Slovakia and its Armed Forces have from planning, preparing and conducting Op Shared Responsibility. The head of the MOD updated him on the priorities of the SVK Government in the field of defence and security and work on the new strategic defence and security documents.

## LOTN signs contract with Russia

(12 November) Director General/Chairman of the Board of Directors of Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN) JSC Lubomír Galko brought the conclusion of a contract on provision of constructional and technological support services for general overhauls of Mi-8/Mi-17 helicopters by NCV Mil and Kamov to a successful end. The contract was signed between Russian Helicopters JSC and Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín JSC in Moscow on 6 November 2020, with the participation of representatives of Rosoboronexport JSC, the Federal Service of Military-Technical Cooperation, Rostec, and the Slovak Embassy. The conclusion of the contract was preceded by intense communications and negotiations in Slovakia and in Russia. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď appreciated the steps taken by the new Director General of state-run LOTN.

## Spartan Race winner Peter Žiška



(9 November) Peter Žiška, PT instructor from the Department of Physical Training and Sports, M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš, participated in the long-distance Spartan Race, held in cooperation with the HUN MOD, in Veszprém, Hungary.

The race involved a series of obstacle courses at the local military training area, with the use of the AK-47 assault rifle replica. From among nearly 7,000 runners, Peter Žiška came in first with the best time and without any penalty points. He proves to be among the absolute top Spartan athletes.

- SVK Air Force leaders, led by Maj Gen Lubomír Svoboda, gathered to commemorate Veterans Day at the Generals J. Golian and R. Viest Memorial next to the Slovak Air Force Headquarters Zvolen.
- Members of the Dukla Banská Bystrica Military Sports Centre – biathlete and Olympian Anastasiya Kuzmina, race walker and Olympian Matej Tóth and slalom canoeist and world and European champion Alexander Slaňovský visited the war cemetery in Majer to show their respect and support for veterans.
- 11 November as Veterans Day was presented by members of the Armed Forces Recruitment Teams to the public across the district cities, where they handed out leaflets and red poppies as a symbol of gratitude and respect for veterans. Recruitment Teams used different forms and places for promoting the event in the public, distributing information leaflets and red poppies to primary schools, municipal offices, civic associations and clubs.
- Slovak UNFICYP personnel, led by SLOVCON Commander Lt Col Ján Hrica, commemorated the victims of WW1 and remembered veterans in Cyprus on 11 November. They marked the memorial day by lighting candles and saying prayers.
- The Institute of Military History Bratislava has joined an international project entitled The World Remembers, supported by the Government of Canada and overseen by the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. The aim of the project, which involves 19 countries, is to introduce the names of the men and women who fell victim in the Great War, irrespective of the side of the conflict they came from. The Institute of Military History will provide documents on Slovak soldiers who served on the battlefields of WW1, digitalised military birth registers of fallen soldiers – members of the Austro-Hungarian Army from today's Slovakia, period photos, and databases of fallen soldiers.
- 32 members of the Slovak Armed Forces Personnel Office have participated in Op Shared Responsibility in support of the Ministry of Health and mass population testing for COVID-19. They have provided logistical support and carried out taskings given by commanders of the testing teams. Currently, they are assisting with selection of new recruits, assessing their health condition, and administering psychological tests. Additionally, selection of Other Ranks and NCOs for officer courses is now culminating.
- The MOD has issued a traffic warning to motorists as three Allied road movements by US, Czech and Polish troops are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 16 to 22 Nov 2020. Over the same period, the SVK Armed Forces will conduct convoy movements from/to: Martin – Michalovce and back, Michalovce – PC Biela Hora and back, Zemianske Kostolány – Nemšová and back, Nováky – Záhorie, and Zemianske Kostolány – Martin and back. Also scheduled is a SVK Armed Forces rail movement from Kuchyňa to Zemianske Kostolány.

## Military policemen undertake aircraft protection training



(14 November) With (Amendment) Act No. 124/1992 on Military Police as amended, Military Police was given new authorisations in protecting pilots and aircraft in service with the military with effect from 1 May 2019. They allow MP personnel to prevent crimes from occurring aboard aircraft, bar passengers from bringing prohibited items on board flights, and stop persons from boarding aircraft unlawfully. New duties require a knowledge of searches to detect and identify prohibited items, as well as a knowledge of emergency procedures for protecting crews, aircraft, passengers, goods and, last but not least, aircraft. Towards this end, military policemen from the Personal Protection and Escorting Section, MP Department Bratislava, have undertaken specialist training over the past two weeks. The practical phase saw them training along with crews of C-27J Spartan and L-410 UVP E20 aircraft at the Transport Wing Kuchyňa. The course extended their knowledge and practical skills. Roman Hrubý, the course leader, highly appreciated the approach the participants took to the training as well as their efforts.