



Military Deed of the Year

(26 November) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' along with Defence State Secretary Marian Majer, Secretary General of the SVK MOD's Service Office Peter Kozák, CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, and CSEL for SVK Armed Forces Sgt Maj Marcel Kaniak revealed the laureates of the 2019 Military Deed of the Year Awards and congratulated them at an awards ceremony. Traditionally, the MOD recognises remarkable acts of service and heroism in saving human lives, assisting those who need it most, and friends of the Armed Forces who have contributed to building civil-military relations. Due to the pandemic, this year's 23rd edition of the Awards took place at the MOD, with the participation of MOD officials and the Award laureates.

Minister Nad' said: "I am very pleased that today we have awarded all those who have proved the validity of an unwritten rule whereby "military profession is not a job but a mission", adding: "Thank you for doing what is right, which often remains hidden before members of the public, yet it may either inherently change or even save a number of human lives."

A team of service personnel from the ISTAR Battalion Prešov were named the Award laureates in the Rescue of Life category. On behalf of the team, the Award was taken over by Lt Ján Štefančík and Cpl Jozef Bilohučšin. Among the first responders in the aftermath of the residential tower block gas explosion in Prešov was a team of 27 members of the Prešov-based ISTAR Battalion. Cpl Jozef Bilohučšin was a resident of the tower block and evacuated his elderly neighbour immediately after the gas blast.

The winner of the Award in the Assistance to the Public category was Sgt 1st Class Michal Holbík, of the SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour, HQ BA GAR. Ever since 2016, he and his colleagues have raised money for families in need, citing "A Team Achieves More Than An Individual" as their motto.

In the Friend of the Armed Forces category, the Award went to Milan Gajdoš, of the Military Support Foundation. Since 2011, it has looked after serving, ex-service and civilian personnel in Defence who have found themselves in hardship, need or distress. This is the only military charity of its kind in Slovakia which also helps build military traditions.

The Service to the Country category is dedicated to service personnel who have played a role in building a good reputation of the SVK Armed Forces at home and abroad. The Award laureate in this category was Army medic SSgt Ivana Krivošová for providing medical care to residents of the marginalised Roma communities in quarantine as part of Op Umbrella. She was not able to attend the ceremony because of her deployment abroad. The head of the MOD video called to congratulate her on the accolade and say thank you for a job well done and for representing the SVK military abroad.

After the ceremony, the recipients of the Military Deed of the Year Awards were received by SVK President and Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces Zuzana Čaputová.



Minister Nad' takes part in meeting of countries contributing to eFP BG Latvia

(27 November) In a video conference with representatives of the countries contributing to the NATO eFP Battle Group Latvia, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' discussed the current state, goals and tasks of NATO's Canadian-led eFP in Latvia, where 152 SVK service personnel are deployed alongside troops from nine NATO countries. On the country-wide population testing as part of Op Shared Responsibility in Slovakia, the head of the MOD shared his experience and the successes of the Slovak Armed Forces, providing an update on the mass testing for the presence of COVID-19. Another part of the discussion was focused on current security issues, including the Alliance's ability to respond effectively to the growing influence of disinformation and hybrid threats. In this context, the participants of the discussion appreciated the tasks and goals being delivered by the Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (NATO StratCom COE) in Riga. Slovakia has been a member of the NATO StratCom COE since 2019. Based on a SVK Parliament-endorsed mandate, SVK military personnel will carry out tasks with the NATO eFP BG Latvia until the end of NATO's eFP. After 15 Dec 2020, the SVK contribution will be transformed to incorporate SVK Armed Forces personnel performing duties as part of this task force, backed by direct and indirect fire support capabilities and a Military Police team.



- The UK Government will give a grant of €31,300 to the SVK Ministry of Defence to buy germicide ionisers to assist the SVK military and people with their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This follows from the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic, which was signed by Andrew Wells, Deputy Head of Mission to Slovakia, and Martin Sklenár, Director General of the MOD's Defence Policy Department, on 26 Nov 2020.

- Due to the pandemic, this year's commemoration of Lt Col František Maxa, who died in an aircraft crash in the Military District Záhorie in 1969, took place exceptionally without Czech guests. DCOM Tpt Wng Kuchyňa Lt Col Peter Výrostek, CSEL Tpt Wng Kuchyňa Sgt 1st Class Emil Šefčík, and Staff Chaplain Maj Slavko Ganaj laid bunches of flowers at the Lt Col František Max Memorial.

- Director of the Air Medical Centre Sliáč Col Ivana Gutzelnig will participate in the Halifax International Security Forum's Peace With Women Fellowship Programme. Over the course of three weeks, 12 female military officers from 10 NATO and partner countries will visit the political and technological centres of Canada and the USA. The aim of the programme is to promote women's leadership roles in international security affairs, while fostering a network of military leaders throughout the world.

- The MOD cooperates with dozens of civic associations and non-profit organisations. Many of them work with children, families and single mothers with children in hardships, need or distress. Working in cooperation with SVK Military Forests and Estates SOE, the MOD will gift 129 Christmas trees to the Centres for Children and Families throughout Slovakia.

- The MOD has issued a traffic warning to motorists as four Allied road movements involving US troops are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 30 Nov to 6 Dec 2020. Over the same period, the SVK Armed Forces will conduct convoy movements from/to: Nitra – Martin, Hlohovec – CV Lešť and back, Trenčín – Sliáč and back, Sliáč – Moldava nad Bodvou, and Sliáč – Kuchyňa.

Regina Radio's next FULL FIELD KINT, live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat, will focus on the Military Deed of the Year Awards. Please, forward your suggestions and opinions to plnapolna@mod.gov.sk.

MOD releases detailed results of COVID-19 mass testing

(25 November) The mass testing programme for COVID-19 continued this past weekend across 459 municipalities as part of Op Shared Responsibility. Acting over and above the originally planned 458 requests, the SVK military complied with a late request from the mayor of Podhorany in Kežmarok district and added another location to the list of test sites. Defence Minister Nad' said: "Of course, we were pleased to support the responsible approach of the village leadership and local residents. Based on the request of local authorities, this time we have separately listed residents and non-residents in the test results of all municipalities. I believe this will help the mayors see the high prevalence areas within their communities so that they can respond to emerging problems," said Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad'. Mr Nad' thanked local authorities for their cooperation, helpfulness and willingness in supporting the testing efforts and



praised all those involved in organising the test rounds. "To carry out testing on a mass scale has always been a big challenge. That's why I am immensely proud of our servicemen and women who have proved that there are no working time limits, no tiredness, and no unwillingness in their service to the country. My sincere and massive thanks go out to them for this," he added.

As part of Round 4 of testing, a total of 110,609 residents were tested for COVID-19, of which 2,501 were diagnosed positive, which equates to 2.26% of all people tested. So far, a total of 5,921,772 people have been tested using the antigen tests as part of Op Shared Responsibility.

A table with a comparison of 2nd, 3rd and 4th round test results from all municipalities is downloadable as a PDF document from the SVK MOD [website](http://www.mosr.sk).

Minister visits Cyprus

(23 November) The SVK UNFICYP contingent was visited by Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' and Foreign and European Affairs Minister Ivan Korčok. They met with SRSG in Cyprus and Head of UNFICYP Elizabeth Spehar and UNFICYP Force Commander Maj Gen Cheryl Pearce, who both appreciated the dedication and work achievements of SVK armed forces in Cyprus. Defence Minister Nad' said: "Almost two decades have passed since our soldiers first deployed on this mission. Over this period, they've become respected and recognised members of international teams and they've accomplished a massive amount of tasks and goals. I thank them for representing Slovakia in an exemplary way." As part of his visit to the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Nad' held talks with Cypriot Defence Minister Charalambos Petrides.

Minister holds talks in UAE

(24 November) On his trip to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' met with UAE Minister of State for Defence Affairs His Excellency Mohammed Al Bawardi and UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan. They concurred that stability, security and peaceful co-existence is the basis of prosperity and economic development, with the fight against terrorism being the greatest security challenge. SVK-UAE security and defence cooperation was taken up as a priority topic. Alongside mutual support for defence industry, the head of the SVK MOD presented opportunities for cooperation on military training at the specialised Training Centre Lešť and offered recreational stays for UAE military personnel at the SVK MOD-run spa and rehabilitation centre in Piešťany. According to Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad', another signal for a further deepening of partnership might be the Agreement between the SVK Government and the UAE Government on Mutual Protection of Classified Information. Mr Nad' appreciated an invitation to participate in IDEX to be held in February 2021 in Abu Dhabi and offered a reciprocal invitation to his partners to attend IDEB 2021 in Bratislava.

MOD Budget Proposal

(23 November) Acting on behalf of the Defence Minister, Defence State Secretary Marian Majer presented the 2021-2023 Defence Budget Proposal at the 14th session of the SVK Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security. Next year, the defence budget is projected to reach 1.75% of GDP, whereas over one third of the budget will be spent on modernisation projects and infrastructure. In line with the SVK GOV Manifesto, the Government aims to reach its 2 per cent GDP spending goal by 2024. The Secretary provided the Committee members with the outcomes of the latest EDA Steering Committee session and EU Defence Ministers meeting. He assured the MPs on the Committee that Slovakia will work towards a further strengthening of EU defence cooperation, without duplicating NATO's functioning mechanisms.