



Soldiers take stock of progress

(7 July) After attending the SVK Senior Commanders' Meeting, Minister of Defence Jaroslav Nad' and Chief of Defence Daniel Zmeko shared their assessments of the past 18 months in Defence and outlined the goals and tasks that lie ahead in defence of the state. The MOD's priority remains to deliver on the NATO Capability Targets, with a focus on completing the formation of a heavy mechanised brigade and the ongoing modernisation and infrastructure programmes. Also in attendance at the meeting was President and Commander-in-Chief Zuzana Čaputová.

Minister Nad' said: "During the assessment period, the Armed Forces deployed to support not only the fight against the pandemic, but also the evacuation of civilians from Afghanistan. But most recently and importantly, they have been doing a fantastic job in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. For that, I feel not only grateful but also extremely proud of them, especially as we are seeing that their help for the most vulnerable is being driven by high levels of commitment, togetherness and humaneness."

Mr Nad' expressed his belief that thanks to the dedicated effort and approach of the Slovak Armed Forces working in tandem with the civilian Defence component, Slovakia is safer today than years before – even in this difficult and unprecedented situation with external threats on the increase. He appreciated that Slovakia has succeeded in gaining support from our NATO Allies, insofar as NATO MN BG SVK is now protecting its territory.

In Gen Zmeko's assessment, there has been an improvement in the state of the Slovak Armed Forces – largely thanks to the strategic decisions that have been taken to improve their operational readiness. He thanked the Minister for the efforts and resources going towards modernising the Armed Forces. "I would also like to extend my thanks to members of the public for giving us their support. The Slovak Armed Forces are ready to undertake all the tasks as set out in legislation and the SVK Constitution," he said, signalling that the SVK military's operational readiness will soon achieve better parameters through gradual increases in force levels. The meeting put military training, strategic communications and response to hybrid threats in the spotlight. At the conclusion of his remarks, Gen Zmeko spoke of exploiting the lessons learned from Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine for future planning, training and doctrines.



24th National Pilgrimage to Levoča

(4 July) The first Sunday of July is traditionally associated with Slovakia's oldest and most famous pilgrim site – the Hill of Our Lady in Levoča. Central theme of this year's National Pilgrimage to Levoča was family love – vocation and a path to holiness as well as 100 years of the consecration of the Basilica of the Visitation of our Lady on top of the hill. Taking part in the pilgrimage were members of the Bishopric of the Forces and their families, including from military, police, rescue and financial authority services. They were joined by POL and DEU soldiers serving with NATO's eFP in Slovakia. The event was supported by the SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour and the Military Band Banská Bystrica.

61 young officers pass out of Liptovský Mikuláš

(8 July) 61 Officer Cadets, of which 16 were female, completed a passing out parade to mark the end of their Master of Engineering (MEng) and Magister (Mgr) study programmes at the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš. In the presence of Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad', the Officer Cadets were commissioned into the Slovak Armed Forces and were promoted to the most junior officer rank of lieutenant. Lt Jakub Čorba was named Best Officer Cadet of the Academy during the ceremony. "My sincere congratulations to these new lieutenants on their graduation. I wish them every success, strength and resolve as they move on to serve their country," Minister Nad' said. Since they deployed on domestic crisis management operations to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and to support refugees on the SVK-UKR border after the outbreak of the Ukraine war, Minister Nad' appreciated that they tried walking in our service personnel's shoes while still at school. "Working in a complicated and dynamic military environment full of rapid changes is not easy. Therefore, I am all the more delighted that our graduates have chosen this profession. With the wealth of knowledge they have acquired during their studies, I am convinced they will be of benefit to the Armed Forces," AOS Commandant Jozef Puttera said.



- A feast of flying entertainment featuring an opening ceremony with a flypast of aircraft and helicopters, flying performances, static displays, live action demonstrations by SOF – these all will be offered by the Slovak Armed Forces to the visitors of the **Slovak International Air Fest (SIAF) 2022**, due to take place on 27-28 August. The rich programme will be supported by military hardware from Prešov, Malacky and Sliac.

- After a three-year pause, a **Tatra AV-15 – D3 Crane Operator Course**, designed for crane and recovery operations, was organised under the guidance of instructors from the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin from 13 June to 1 July. The graduates of the course gained knowledge and skills in operating specialist equipment.

- At the request of the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) Armed Forces to train instructors of the Command Staff Course for future lieutenant colonels and personnel of Training and Doctrines Command, an international team of experts from the Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš and the National University of Public Service (Ludovika) in Budapest prepared a four-day version of the **Operational Planning Programme**, designed under NATO's DEEP by the International Courses Branch of the AOS Training Centre (TC). Through presentations, exercises and guided discussions, the participants familiarised themselves with operational planning according to the Allied COPD Directive.

- Pilots of 2 Tac Sqn of 81 Wng Sliac practised **exiting aircraft in an emergency**. The training consisted of safety drills in the event of ejection failure.

- Held under the auspices of the Netherlands as the chair country of the Military Police Panel / Land Operations Working Group (MPP/LOWG), Bucharest hosted a meeting of the **MPP/LOWG on defence standardisation** from 27 June to 1 July. SVK MP was represented at the meeting by Lt Col Marek Hušek and Capt Miroslav Litvik.

- Michalovce Garrison's Biela Hora training ground hosted a **coordination exercise** for the Mortar Platoon of the CS Coy to be assigned to NATO MN BG SVK as of 4 July. This was the last inspection of the platoon before its 6-month deployment to TC Lešť, where it will conduct live firing with its Czech counterparts from the CZE Mortar Battery on 26-27 July.

- Through live action demonstrations, members of Rožňava-based 103 CBRN Bn and 54 MLRS Bn enlivened the **summer camp for kids** from the children's homes in Banská Bystrica, Tornaľa, Dobšiná, Podolínec and Hnúšťa. They set up five information stands for kids at the Vŕšky Mountain Hotel at Závadka nad Hronom. The camp is intended for kids aged 6 to 18.

- At the **World Games 2022** – the top non-Olympic multi-sport event held in Birmingham (USA) this year, karate fighter Ingrid Suchánková and powerlifter Ivana Horná, members of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, finished 3rd in the women's kumite 61kg event and 7th in the women's powerlifting competition, respectively.

VMT soldiers start training

(6 July) The Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin opened its gates to 41 men and 29 women to undergo Voluntary Military Training (VMT). After being in-processed and issued all equipment, they started their 11-week training to develop basic soldiering knowledge, competences and skills in military tactics, marksmanship, physical fitness, drills, engineering, medicine, psychology, topography, CBRN, ethics and law – this all will enable them to perform the tasks of the Slovak Armed Forces. On completion of the VMT training, they will swear the Oath of Allegiance on 23 September 2022.

Kayak racers harvest medals

(10 July) Ondrej Macuší, Filip Stanko and Richard Rumanský, kayak racers of the DUKLA Military Sports Centre, won the gold medals in the men's Junior K1 category at the Junior and U23 Canoe Slalom World Championships in Ivrea, Italy. Kayaker Eliška Mintálová won two out of the three races and became the World Champion in the women's U23 K1 category. Filip Stanko and Samuel Krajčí placed 5th in the men's K1 and C1 categories, respectively.



Support for museum staff

(8 July) Drawing on years of experience, service personnel of the Slovak Armed Forces are providing support for the Military History Museum (VHM) Piešťany. After the winter pause, members of 11 SVK AF Bde Nitra cleaned up the museum's premises before conducting basic treatment of the objects on display in order to prepare them for the Museum's Permanent Exhibition Display titled Czechoslovak Army Weapons in 1945 - 1992. Working in close coordination with the museum staff and personnel from 405 R&O Bn Martin, members of 13 Mech Bn Levice moved and repainted an MT-55 armoured vehicle-launched bridge (AVLB). In addition, soldiers from 54 MLRS Bn Rožňava gave a 9K714 Oka missile system a new paint job. Similarly, a ZP 60/90 trench plough required a repaint. This task was assigned to members of the CS Coy of 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany in the last week of June. As part of preparations for the construction of a new exhibition hall in the museum, it was necessary to free depository space at the VHM's exhibition site at Piešťany airport. This technically challenging move-out task was put to 405 R&O Bn Martin. Elsewhere, the battalion has since May moved 25 tracked vehicles, 9 wheeled vehicles, 15 trailers, three aircraft, two rail wagons and a large number of small collection objects to the depositories at SNP Barracks in Piešťany.

CAS SOF Air Capabilities Development Workshop

(8 July) The CAS SOF Air Capabilities Development Workshop, a highly specialist training programme for Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs), was hosted across different locations in Slovakia in June. The workshop was structured around complex scenarios for the Special Operations Forces (SOF) with the use of different types of insertion and extraction techniques (IETs). JTACs called in airstrikes in support of a SOF ground manoeuvre in the area of operations, maximising fire support through joint fires as different platforms fired alongside each other under their guidance. For two weeks, JTACs operated in three different locations across Slovakia. Using a water reservoir in East Slovakia, they carried out a scenario where they were inserted into a moving Zodiac FC470 boat from a helicopter by fast rope. The assault team was supported by Mi-17 and UH-60M helicopters from 51 Wng Prešov. In line with their tactical mission, the helicopters also engaged targets, both on and off the water. Elsewhere, Fighting

in Built-Up Areas (FIBUA) and Urban Close Air Support (UCAS) were conducted at the Training Centre Lešť, where an assault team fast-roped on to a building in order to fight in a built-up area. The team was supported by L-39s from 2 Tac Sqn of 81 Wng Sliac. Separately, the Weapons Firing Range of the Military District Záhorie was used to improve the skills of JTACs in directing and integrating the action of air and land assets as a land operation was being conducted by SOF forces in the enemy rear area.



Thanks to JTACs, it was possible for members of 5th Special Forces Regiment and pilots of L-39 fighter jets to synchronise live fires, with the use of heavy and light infantry weapons and aircraft weapons systems. The assault team was resupplied with ammunition and materiel, dropped by parachutes from a C-27J Spartan from 46 Wng Malacky. This type of live fires, which occurred in the environment of the Slovak Armed Forces for the first time, was the main benefit of the training.