



MOD marks 17 November

(17 Nov) The Gentle Revolution – the 33rd anniversary of which we commemorate today – brought radical changes to what was then Czechoslovakia, with the struggle for freedom and democracy having a profound impact on the Czechoslovak People's Army.

Defence Minister Naď said: "The Army was transformed very quickly from an offensive and repressive instrument of the totalitarian regime into a modern armed forces that would protect the state and its citizens, while at the same time being an active component of international security organisations." The Armed Forces continue to uphold the values of democracy as one of the pillars of the state.

In 1989, we embarked on a journey that led to Slovakia's accession to NATO in 2004. Today, that journey continues as the fully professional Slovak Armed Forces, a stable partner on keeping peace in Europe, introduce new capabilities into service and broaden their skills and ability to operate with our Allies. The events of 17 November 1989 led to the disbandment of the Army's political structures, a reduction in the length of military service from 24 to 18 months, the introduction of community service, cuts to the conventional forces, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the withdrawal of Soviet Army occupation troops from Czechoslovakia in 1991, and the restoration of reputation of the military personnel persecuted in 1948-1989.



Today's commemorative ceremony in honour of the victims of communism was held in the presence of State Secretary Marian Majer at the Freedom Gate Memorial at Devín Castle in Bratislava. The Memorial serves as a reminder of the hundreds of men and women killed while attempting to cross the CSSR's border and those who suffered persecution in 1945-1989. State Secretary Majer said: "Today marks one of Slovakia's most significant milestones of contemporary history. The events of 17 November eventually started the Gentle Revolution that stood behind the downfall of the socialist regime. Also today – only a few hundred kilometres from our eastern border, ordinary Ukrainian citizens are experiencing the hardships and horrors of a senseless war provoked by Russia."

Another ceremony took place at the Executed and Tortured Political Prisoners of Communism at Vrakuňa Cemetery in Bratislava, with Director General of the HR Dept Martin Jakál representing the MOD.



Visegrad Four (V4) Chiefs of Defence meet for talks in Slovakia

(16 Nov) At the invitation of Slovak Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, Visegrad Four Chiefs of Defence (V4 CHODs) met for talks in Slovakia on 14-16 Nov. The heads of the Armed Services from Slovakia, Czechia, Poland and Hungary confirmed their contributions to the V4 programme of activities, whereas paying special attention to the standup of the V4 EU Battlegroup. On a new SVK initiative, Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "I am pleased that my colleagues have given their support to the SVK V4 Presidency's new initiative to share lessons learned from the ongoing military operations in Ukraine and to forge closer cooperation with the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Our common goal is to exploit the lessons learned from Ukraine for training and developing our armed forces as best as we can." At a session with a representative of the UKR Armed Forces, V4 Chiefs of Defence condemned Russia's aggression and reassured Ukraine of continued V4 support. The implications of surging illegal migration on the security of the V4 countries and military support to the border and police forces as a way of containing the renewed wave of migration were high on the agenda.



- Having sworn the oath of allegiance and passed out of their initial military training (IMT), 131 young soldiers (39 women and 92 men) left the gates of the Training and Mobilisation Force Generation Base Martin on 18 Nov.
- Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFC BS) hosted a meeting between JFC BS's senior leadership and the National Military Representatives (NMRs) to SHAPE on 15 Nov. The processing of the plan for the Alliance's Central Region and the enhancement of the skills and competences required for commanders at JFC BS were the main issues on the agenda.
- Members of Slovak Military Medicine Command (MILMEDCOM) attended the Visegrad Military Medicine Conference (VIMIMED) in Budapest. At VIMIMED 2022, held under the auspices of the HUN Defence Staff, officials of the V4 countries provided updates on their current organisational structures and tasks and shared details about the situation in Ukraine, logistics support, training, and lessons learned from the Ukrainian battlefields. VIMIMED 2023 will be hosted by the SVK Armed Forces in the High Tatras next Feb.
- 902 Engr Bn Michalovce and Michalovce Garrison's White Mountain training ground hosted training for Explosive Ordnance Reconnaissance (EOR) specialists throughout the whole of November. Members of 11 Mech Bn Martin, 901 Engr Bn Sereď, 5 SOF Regt Žilina, 52 Abn Bn Trebišov and 905 Specialist Combat Support Centre (SCSC) Nováky are taking part in the training activity.
- 13 Mech Bn Levice hosted follow-up C-IED and EOD integration training, with participation from EOD specialists of 905 SCSC Nováky, personnel of 11 Mech Bn Martin, 12 Mech Bn Nitra and 13 Mech Bn Levice, and a member of Specialist Firearms Command (SCO19). The aim of the training was to align the SOPs and to establish cooperation between the Slovak Army's EOD units and mechanised battalions.

- 23 service personnel on the Brigade Staff Officer Course along with their instructors and Deputy Head of Foreign Activities from Romania's National Defence University Bucharest visited AOS Liptovský Mikuláš and took part in multinational Ex Chopok as part of the 27th International Staff Officers' Course (ISOC). Alongside SVK soldiers, the exercise saw participation from BIH, GEO, MDA, ROK and ROU.
- Petra Vlhová, skier of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, placed 3rd in the opening and second slalom races at the FIS Ski World Cup in Finland's Levi.
- The Slovak National Uprising (SNP) Museum Banská Bystrica hosted an international scientific conference on Heroism and Violence in World War II. The conference was organised by the SNP Museum Banská Bystrica, the Institute of Military History (VHÚ) Bratislava, and the Slovak Historical Society at the Slovak Academy of Sciences. In recognition of Veterans Day, the conference opened with a wreath-laying ceremony at the SNP Memorial. Director of VHÚ Col Miloslav Čaplovič delivered the keynote speech at the conference. Individual papers and discussions were interpreted simultaneously and were livestreamed.
- The Computed Tomography (CT) facility at the Central Military Hospital - Teaching Hospital Ružomberok will be closed to the public due to equipment being replaced from 21 Nov to 15 Dec.

Slovak Armed Forces get body armour, LMGs and MBTs

(15 Nov) A total of 3,986 XP-1814 Tactical Combat Vests with additional attachments for neck, arms and groin protection have been supplied to the Slovak Armed Forces as part of a deal worth €4.6m. The body armour systems will supplement the Individual Ballistic Protection Systems (IBPS) in service with the SVK Army's manoeuvre units, as well as providing the needed level of protection for Army soldiers in combat on the battlefield. Additionally, the SVK Armed Forces have taken delivery of nearly 1,600 FN MINIMI 5.56mm Light Machine Guns (LMG) along with accessories and spare parts, enabling them to replace the UGL vz. 59 (Universal LMG Model 1959), mostly in service with the Slovak Army's manoeuvre units. As well as providing the direct fire support capability to enable close combat troops at the section level to engage the enemy, the FN MINIMI LMG, chambered in 5.56x45mm, marks a shift to a unified NATO calibre. This will ensure an increased level of interoperability where SVK units are operating side by side with NATO partner forces. As with the body armour systems, the €1.7m contract for the LMGs was awarded through the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA). With the signing of agreements in Brussels on 15 Nov, the SVK MOD successfully concluded its negotiations on a "ring swap" deal with

Minister's call to Sweden

(14 Nov) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď spoke with his Swedish counterpart Pål Jonson by telephone regarding the existing SVK-SWE defence cooperation links and opportunities for future collaboration, especially in light of the Slovak military's modernisation programmes and Sweden's accession process to NATO. "I trust my new colleague and I will build on the strength of our bilateral defence ties, as has been the case so far. Most importantly, what lies ahead of us is a landmark milestone in the form of a G2G agreement to deliver 152 CV90 MkIV tracked armoured vehicles. Currently, our expert teams are doing everything they can to provide our service personnel with this key armoured capability for the protection and defence of the Slovak Republic at the earliest possible time," Jaroslav Naď said.

U.S.-led UDCG meets virtually

(16 Nov) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď joined a virtual meeting with counterparts from the U.S.-led Ukraine Defence Contact Group (UDCG), to address the latest developments and efforts needed to keep up the momentum on the battlefield in Ukraine, the progress being made in training UKR armed forces, and the initiatives to support the national defence industrial bases in the interests of strengthening Ukraine's defences. The UDCG was set up as Defence leaders from over 40 nations first met to discuss international support for Ukraine at Germany's Ramstein Air Base on 26 Apr 2022. Today marked the seventh such meeting.

State Secretary Majer in Brussels

(15 Nov) State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marian Majer attended the Foreign Affairs Council (Defence) in Brussel, where EU Defence Ministers consulted closely on the security developments in Ukraine, the situation in Africa's Sahel region, and the EU's rapid deployment options in response to immediate threats and crisis scenarios. Also present at some of the discussions was NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in person, while UKR Defence Minister Olexii Reznikov joined in via video link. Mr Majer joined the defence ministers in signing a new EDA programme on cyber defence titled MIGNET.

30 years of military welfare services

(16 Nov) A special birthday celebration marking 30 years of the establishment of the Military Social Welfare Services Office (VÚSZ) took place at the Slovak Radio Building in Bratislava on 15 Nov, in the presence of serving and former staff of the Office who were joined for celebrations by Secretary General of the MOD Service Office Peter Kozák. As a professional welfare provider in Defence, the Office administers welfare programmes for members of the Slovak Armed Forces.

Yet another Zuzana 2 for Ukraine

(18 Nov) Yet another one of the eight Zuzana 2 SPHs, ordered by Ukraine under a commercial contract with Slovakia, has been delivered into service with the UKR Armed Forces. Under the contract, the last piece is now in the process of being built on production lines. Thanks to KONŠTRUKTA-Defence's contract for an additional 16 Zuzana 2s for Ukraine, funded by Denmark, Germany and Norway, deliveries of Slovakia's Zuzana 2 SPHs to Ukraine will continue into the future.

the German Federal Ministry of Defence and Rheinmetall. Under the arrangements, Slovakia is to get 15 Leopard 2A4 main battle tanks (MBTs) from Germany in exchange for gifting 30 BVP-1 infantry fighting vehicles to hard-pressed Ukraine. With the first MBT slated to arrive in Slovakia as early as this year, Slovakia is awaiting the arrival of the other Leopard 2A4 MBTs through to the end of 2023. They will be overhauled and upgraded to make them combat-ready and deployable on operations. For example, they will be kitted out with the CIS systems that are compatible with those in service with the SVK Armed Forces. The initial package gifted includes tank ammunition, tank crew and maintenance personnel training, spare parts, and logistics support. The training of SVK Leopard 2A4 tank crews is set to begin in Germany in the weeks to come. A military facility based in Michalovce, eastern Slovakia, will be involved in repairing the German military equipment, gifted to Ukraine, which has been damaged in combat. This follows on from a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the German Federal Ministry of Defence and the Slovak Ministry of Defence in Brussels on 15 Nov. The full cost of repairs will be covered by Germany.