



New Year 2024's gun salute

(1 Jan) In keeping with tradition, a 21-round gun salute was fired, using the 122mm HD-30 towed howitzers, by the firing party of 54 MLRS Bn Rožňava from Bratislava's Vienna Road on Danube Embankment on New Year's Day at 14:00 on 1 Jan 2024, to mark Slovakia's Foundation Day.



Thank you to soldiers abroad

(21 Dec) Traditionally, before Christmas, Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko hosted phone and video calls with the commanders of the SVK contingents deployed on operations abroad, receiving up-to-date briefs, including on the security situation, the performance of tasks, and the duty roster for the Christmas and New Year's Eve festivities. He was interested in how they would celebrate the festivities in high risk countries such as Iraq and Syria. He wished our Service men and women a peaceful time on duty. In the end, Gen Daniel said: "Thank you for representing Slovakia abroad and I wish to extend season's greetings to all of your fellow subordinates." Over 440 SVK soldiers are currently deployed on operations abroad. 80% of them were on duty over Christmas.

Gen Lavigne visits Slovakia

(18 Dec) At the invitation of the SVK Chief of Defence, NATO Supreme Allied Commander Transformation Gen Philippe Lavigne paid a visit to Slovakia, building on the conclusions of July 2023 discussions and briefs at ACT Norfolk, Virginia, USA.



Gen Lavigne was welcomed to the MOD by Gen Daniel Zmeko and was received for talks by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák. The current security situation on NATO's eastern flank and the direction of the Alliance's transformation in the new security landscape were high among the talking points.

While in Slovakia, Gen Lavigne met with academic staff and officer cadets at the Military Academy Liptovský Mikuláš, inspected the NATO Battlegroup in Slovakia at the Training Centre Lešť, visited Konštruktúra - Defence in Dubnica nad Váhom before wrapping up the working trip with a tour of the NATO EOD COE in Trenčín, for which ACT Norfolk has overall responsibility.

Departed colleagues remembered

(27 Dec) Family members, friends and military personnel came together to mark the 10th anniversary of the tragic deaths of Capt in memoriam Edmund Makovnik and Sgt 1C in memoriam Patrik Fraštia in ceremonies held in Košice and Žilina, in the presence of CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, CSEL of the Slovak Armed Forces Sgt Maj Marcel Kaniak, DCOM SOCOM Col Pavol Šebik, and Cdr 5 SOF Regt Col Peter Žochňák. The two SVK SOF operatives and U.S. Air Force Capt David I. Lyon lost their lives in a suicide vehicle-borne IED attack in Afghanistan. While their military convoy was crossing a densely built-up area of Kabul, a civilian vehicle exploded close to it on 27 Dec 2013.



► Defence Minister Robert Kaliňák and Chair of the MOD Trade Unions Katarína Krajčová signed the 2024 **Collective Agreement** on 22 Dec 2023.

► Working closely with Log Spt Dept (AOS) and instructors from NFIU SVK, Investment & Acquisition Office (MOD), and Armed Forces units, the Defence Staff's HNS Section prepared the first **Host Nation Support (HNS) Course** at the Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš, with the aim of creating a network of points of contact (POC) to support allied movements, exercises and long-term presence of troop in Slovakia. A total of 45 service members of the SVK Armed Forces and TC Lešť improved their subject matter expertise in HNS on the course.

► A Recce Coy, part of 65 Recce Bn Prešov, underwent training at the AOS Simulation Centre, starting with complex tactical simulation exercises with international types of military equipment, followed by the Call for Fire Phase with precise detection, reporting and artillery engagement of enemy targets. Alongside this, soldiers used the indoor Electronic Target Range (ETR) to engage a range of targets and the Close Quarters Battle (CQB) Hall to practice building entry and room-clearing procedures with the use of airsoft rifles. **Combined simulation-based training** enables recce troops to improve their tactical skills and efficiency for the conduct of missions on a modern battlefield.

► The Force Protection and Defence Battalion's **Security Forces Unit (SFU)** underwent its historically first certification under the oversight of the USAF Security Forces - 435th CRSS, based at AB Ramstein, Germany. While Part 1 of the joint training focused on air base security procedures, Part 2 of the training saw the Security Forces specialists mastering the M4 assault rifle. The SFU certification ceremony took place at Kuchyňa AB, in the presence of CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko and Indiana Adjutant General Maj Gen R. Dale Lyles.

► A newly refurbished, air-conditioned gym, kitted out with brand new physical training (PT) equipment and machines, has re-opened to military personnel of **22 Mech Bn Michalovce**. The facility has a separate room for specialised PT.

► The Neurology Clinic of the **Central Military Hospital - Teaching Hospital Ružomberok** has been closed to all visitors of patients due to the deteriorating epidemiological situation since 28 Dec.

► Slovak Muay Thai fighter **Monika Chochliková**, member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre Banská Bystrica, won the intercontinental World Muaythai Council (WMC) title in Thailand's Bangkok on 23 Dec.

On priorities with our allies

(19 Dec) The pre-Christmas period at the MOD was in the spirit of international visits. After NATO Supreme Allied Commander Transformation Gen Philippe Lavigne's arrival in Slovakia on 18 Dec, German Deputy Defence Minister Sjemtje Möller arrived in Bratislava the following day. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák hosted Ms Sjemtje Möller for talks on the NATO Battlegroup in Slovakia, the forms of Germany's contribution to the Battlegroup, and the avenues of cooperation on equipment modernisation and between the nations' defence industries.

A visit from Slovenia

(20 Dec) Slovenia's President Nataša Pirc Musar and Chief of Defence Lt Gen Robert Glavaš made a visit to Slovakia. The SVN CHOD was welcomed to the Defence Staff in Bratislava by DCHOD Lt Gen Lubomir Svoboda. After short briefs, the SVN CHOD's

next steps took him to the Training Centre Lešť for a meeting with SVK CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko. The SVK CHOD thanked his counterpart for the SVN contribution to the NATO Battlegroup in Slovakia. Afterwards, the SVN delegation met with SVN troops based at Lešť.

AOS has a new Commandant

(18 Dec) President and Commander-in-Chief Zuzana Čaputová, on the recommendation of the Minister of Defence, has appointed Defence Staff (DS) Col Aurel Sabó as the new Commandant of the Armed Forces Academy

(AOS). He previously served as Deputy Commandant for Education from 2019 until recently. Throughout his career, he has specialised in communications and information (CIS) systems. He began his studies on the Radar Surveillance Programme at the Faculty of Electrical and Construction Engineering at the Military Academy Brno. From 1993 to 1996, he continued his studies on the CIS and Radar Systems Programme at the Military Academy Liptovský Mikuláš. His doctoral studies in theoretical electrotechnical engineering were concluded with the defence of his doctoral thesis in 2003. He completed a range of professional qualification courses at military educational institutions abroad. His tour of duty in BiH was a valuable experience.



Unique TURRA-30 simulator saves time and money

(19 Dec) EVPÚ Nová Dubnica delivered a new TURRA-30 simulator to the SVK Armed Forces. The simulator was installed and trialled at the Training and Mobilisation Force Generation Base Martin. T&MFG Base instructors and SVK military workshop technicians were the first to be trained on the simulator before its official handover.

The TURRA-30 simulator incorporates the TURRA-30 turret with the crew room, equipped with the desktop stations for the commander, gunner-operator and driver, directly underneath it. The simulation-based training system, which replicates real-life training environments in virtual reality, is controlled by the instructor from the instructor's station.

Taking advantage of the digital maps of the SVK military training areas and ranges, the commander, gunner-operator and

driver can practice firing and tactical tasks, when stationary or on the move, with the TURRA-30 turret's weapon systems. In addition to the 30mm automatic cannon and the 7.62mm machine gun, it is possible to fire anti-tank guided missiles

(ATGMs). The vehicle's movement along tracks can be simulated automatically or specified by the driver. The simulator allows the mechanical aspects of training necessary for the preparation and operation of the weapon systems such as rectification, maintenance, assembly/disassembly, loading, fault removal to be conducted without the need to halt the training of crews in the crew room. A newly refurbished classroom to support the simulation-based training is adjacent to the simulator, meaning that all training can be delivered at one place, which saves money, time and effort.

