



New Defence Minister officially introduced by Prime Minister

(6 Nov) As part of his visit to the MOD, Prime Minister Robert Fico officially introduced Mr Robert Kaliňák as the new Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence.

The PM set out his government priorities for Defence: Slovakia's air defences and the procurement of tracked and wheeled IFVs. Both leaders agreed to support the SVK defence industry.

According to the PM, Slovakia will continue to act on its commitments to NATO. Minister Kaliňák identified the response to the migration crisis as an immediate task. Contracts concluded in recent months are to be reviewed. The main focus will be on soldiers, capabilities, and protection.

Mr Kaliňák announced a reform in the Armed Forces to address the instability on Slovakia's eastern border, saying: "If the SVK Armed Forces protect Slovakia, the Ministry of Defence must protect soldiers." According to him, the MOD will be intensely involved in next year's Slovak National Uprising (SNP) celebrations.

Awardees visit President



(9 Nov) In a ceremony at the Presidential Palace, President and Commander-in-Chief Zuzana Čaputová appreciated the moral and professional qualities of the Military Deed of the Year 2022 Award laureates. In the presence of Defence Minister Robert Kaliňák and CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, she thanked the awardees for lending a helping hand and their exceptional service in critical situations, reflecting great credit on the Armed Forces.

Lt Poláček won the award in the 'Assistance to the Public' category for his proactive psychological work in the Peace Support Operations (PSOs) Training Unit, regular psychological interventions, educational activities, and record of publications. The award in the 'Friend of the Armed Forces' category went to Jana Medvecová, mayor of Tokajik, for her years-long, dedicated work in preserving the village as a national heritage site. Sgt 1C Marcel won the 'Service to the Country' category for leading an evacuation mission of 28 people from Kyiv during the first days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In the 'Rescue of Life' category, 1Lt Višňovský, SSgt Gabák, Capt Peter and 1Lt Maroš scooped the award for saving the life of a person injured in a road accident.

International Veterans Day and Armistice Day marked

(11 Nov) An official Veterans Day & Armistice Day commemoration ceremony in recognition of the nation's veterans and war dead took place at Petržalka - Kopčany WWI Cemetery in Bratislava.

Participants in attendance included President and Commander-in-Chief Zuzana Čaputová, Parliament Speaker Peter Pellegrini, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák, and Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko. In a separate ceremony, the Chief of Defence paid tribute to the fallen soldiers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Vajanský Square.

The MOD and members of the public celebrated Veterans Day with the Run in Honour of War Veterans, which symbolically started at 11:11am at Petržalka - Kopčany WWI Cemetery. 200 runners, including Armed Forces personnel in full field kit, officer cadets of the General Štefánik Armed Forces Academy, sportspeople of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, and soldiers of the NATO Multinational Battlegroup in Slovakia, took their place on the start line for the run. The latest veteran statistics released by the MOD show that there are 8,970 living war veterans. Of them, 18 were engaged in WW2 operations. A total of 10,542 soldiers have been given the status of war veteran since 2004.



► CIMIC specialists from Martin-based 57 Ind Det (SVK SOF), members of Michalovce-based 902 Engr Bn, Sered-based 91 Engr Regt, and Hlohovec-based 53 Fld Svcs are assisting in the aftermath of the earthquake in the villages of Nižná Sitnica and Baškovoce. They are helping with demolition works and are preparing the ground for the installation of containerised housing units (CHUs).

► The Slovak Armed Forces provided the grounds and equipment of 81 Wng Sliáč to support the DEU-NLD PATRIOT Air & Missile Defence (AMD) Group. In attendance at the signing of the Protocol Handover/Takeover were DEU DA Lt Col Rüdiger Heinrich, Lt Col Thomas Müller from the Bundeswehr's Ops HQ, Lt Col Maik Trlik, and representatives of the NATO MN BG SVK, Comdr 81 Wng Sliáč Col František Pyltik, and other guests.

► The Athlete of the Year 2023 Award winners were announced during the gala evening of the Slovak Athletics Federation. Viktória Forster, sprinter of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, won the accolade, with sprinter Ján Volko and 800m Dukla sprinter Gabriela Gajanová following closely in 2nd and 3rd places, respectively. Viktória Forster's coach, Katarína Adlerová, won the Adult Coach category.

► OC Dominik Jurko from the Armed Forces Academy helped to disarm and detain the attacker who stabbed a 22-year-old student on the fast train from Košice to Žilina on 2 Nov. AOS Commandant Jozef Puttera has awarded him a medal for his courage and decisiveness. The medal will be presented to him on 16 Nov on Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day. Capt Vladimír Čorňák, Chief of the 1st Investigation Section, Criminal Investigation Depart Košice, has sent an official Letter of Thank You to OC Jurko.

► U.S. Ambassador Gautam A. Rana and Defence Attaché LTC Joshua Passer paid a visit to 5 SOF Regt Žilina, where they were given a warm welcome by Col Peter Zochňák, Comdr 5 SOF Regt Žilina, and were briefed on the Regiment's history, structure and tasks. Ambassador Rana and DA LTC Passer then laid a wreath at the SOF Memorial, took a tour of the Regiment's firing range, and viewed a live action demonstration on the Žilina base.

► Members of the Specialist Police Operations Teams underwent basic helicopter insertion and extraction training at the MP Training and Canine Facility Vikanová - Hroneck, MTC Lešt', and 51 Wng Prešov. The Fast Rope Insertion and Extraction System (FRIES) Qualification and Improvement Course for MP Jump Masters was held concurrently at 51 SVK SOF Training Base.

► 53 Fld Svcs Bn Hlohovec, 20 Log Bn Prešov, Military Facility Tepličky, and Nitra Garrison's MTG Kolíňany hosted a certification exercise (CERTEX) according to the combat readiness evaluation (CREVAL) process. The Fuel Transport Company, 1st Movement Control (MOVCON) Team, and National Support Element (NSE), formally declared to NATO, are now ready to undertake missions in support of NATO.

► Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 124 Officer Cadets in training on the Weapons System, Weapons and their Components Study Programme at the Military Academy have completed their placement with five SVK Armed Forces units, under the watchful eye of their instructors from the Engineering Department, AOS Liptovský Mikuláš. They were mostly embedded with Operation & Repair Teams and Supply & Repair Platoons, assisting with the 'winterisation' of equipment and with inventory checks.

► Alpine skier Petra Vihová, member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, won Saturday's first slalom race at the World Cup in Finland's Levi, and proved her good condition in the first round of Sunday's second slalom race.

► Judoka Marius Fizeľ, member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, won the men's +100kg category at the Perth Oceania Open 2023 in Australia.

► Judoka Patricia Tománková, member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, placed 1st at the European Judo Cup in Győr, Hungary. This marks her 23rd victory at the international judo events. Her Dukla colleague, judoka Nina Filkorová, placed 2nd in the women's +70kg category.

Ex Strong Cohesion 23-2 – Spanish troops' debut in Slovakia

(12 Nov) MTC Lešt' is hosting Ex Strong Cohesion 23-2 (STCO23-2), in preparation for the Spanish forces' integration into the NATO Multinational Battlegroup in Slovakia as the ESP Armed Forces are set to take over the Framework Nation (FN) role in the NATO MN BG SVK next spring. The training audience comprises over 500 ESP exercise participants with tactical and combat vehicles, Czech members of the Battlegroup, and Slovakia's 2 Mech Sqdn from 11 Mech Bn Martin. They have been practicing SOPs in defence of NATO's eastern flank.

On the exercise, Martin-based soldiers tested the capabilities of the 5,56mm FN Minimi LMG in the field conditions. As they transition from the outdated 7.62mm UGL vz. 59, both the commander and the soldiers are satisfied with the Belgian LMGs, largely thanks to their reliability.

STCO23-2 also tests the readiness of Allied forces to withdraw from the host country and return to their home base. A large focus of the exercise is, therefore, on Allied nations'

Minister meets Ambassadors

(8 Nov) Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák held bilateral meetings with German Ambassador Barbara Wolf and British Ambassador Nigel Baker at the MOD in Bratislava. The main themes on the agenda of the bilaterals included a deepening of defence ties and NATO's current processes and activities. Mr Kaliňák appreciated the excellent, long-standing bilateral relations between our countries and governments and confirmed Slovakia's interest in continuing its efforts to enhance them further.

Deputy Minister visits SVK SOF

(9 Nov) Deputy Defence Minister Igor Melicher visited the General Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš and 5 Special Forces Regiment Žilina. Mr Melicher met AOS Commandant Jozef Puttera to congratulate him on the Academy's half-century anniversary and discuss the Academy's issues of

the day, including its cooperation with other schools at home and abroad and ways to attract new and next generations in the military. While at 5 SOF Regt Žilina, Mr Melicher took keen interest in the Regiment's fill rates, tasks and needs, commended the Regiment for its strong track record of deployments at home and abroad, and laid a wreath at the SOF Memorial on the Žilina base.

A rose for war veterans

(10 Nov) To mark Veterans Day, Deputy Defence Minister Igor Melicher attended a wreath-laying ceremony in tribute to Slovakia's WW2 Resistance soldiers at the Slovak National Uprising (SNP) Memorial Hall in Banská Bystrica. Afterwards, Mr Melicher and WW2 veteran Vladimír Strmeň planted a rose bush at the War Veterans Bench in the grounds of the SNP Museum. He also received a tour of the Museum's newly refurbished depository for collections before meeting Director of the SNP Museum Marian Uhrin.

A day earlier, at the Western Resistance Memorial in Bratislava's Šafárik Square, he joined British Ambassador Nigel Baker in paying tribute to all Soldiers who have died in wars around the world.

Red Poppies Day in Trenčín

(10 Nov) To mark Veterans Day and Armistice Day, DCOM SVK Army Brig Gen Ivan Balog, COM SVK SOF Brig Gen Jaroslav Krám, and representatives of Trenčín Garrison paid their respects to the nation's veterans and war dead at Trenčín-Kubrá WW1 Cemetery.

In his remarks, President of the SVK Generals' Club Lt Gen (Ret'd) Peter Vojtek reminded that the cemetery's renovation was initiated by the SVK Generals' Club, then led by Lt Gen (Ret'd) Pavel Honzek.



ability to support military movements. Allied deployments and withdrawals are NATO's crucial requirement with a decisive influence on the success of combat operations.