



SVK defence industry's complex modernisation

(18 July) The MOD invested €10m in the complete replacement of the manufacturing machinery to make artillery gun barrels in the 100 - 155mm calibre range at ZTS Špeciál. This is the first step towards modernising and expanding Slovakia's defence industrial base, which will not only create new jobs on site, but also scale up its manufacturing capacity and ability to respond to increased market demands, DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák and Director General of DMD Group Miroslav Sim announced at a press conference in the armament production facility in Dubnica nad Váhom. During his visit to the company, Robert Kaliňák along with Miroslav Sim introduced a new machine for forming internal rifling grooves in gun barrels for artillery systems. This will soon be followed by modern machines for lathe, milling and other special operations. "ZTS Špeciál is unique for its ability to produce guns from 30mm to 155mm calibre. There are only a few production sites with such technological possibilities in the whole of Europe," Minister Kaliňák said. The MOD is interested in expanding production in the companies that fall under the MOD's remit. ZVS Holding, KONŠTRUKTA - Defence and ZTS Špeciál - which belong to state-owned DMD Group - form the backbone of the State's support within the SVK defence industry. Separate programmes have been designed for them, ensuring that they will keep developing further and guarantee permanent jobs. "This is about production with a high added value. There are three regions that are historically tied to armament production in Slovakia - that is why we want to restore Považie, Turiec and the surroundings of Detva to their former glory," Minister Kaliňák said. What makes Slovakia most interesting for many markets is that a country of our size is capable of producing today's most sought-after munitions in the range from 30mm to 155mm calibre. "Similarly, we are also capable of producing 30mm - 155mm weapon systems for direct or indirect artillery support. You will not find this anywhere in the surrounding countries. So, it is important to invest in developing these companies and in improving the working conditions there. Only in this way will we carry this tradition into the future," he emphasised. Thanks to the MOD's investment, ZTS Špeciál will accommodate an entire production line under Phase 1. As modern barrel manufacturing equipment replaces the outdated barrel-making machinery, the production line may be put into operation still this year. Transformed by new technologies, ZTS Špeciál will be capable of manufacturing up to 10 gun barrels a month, which is several times more than before. "Already today, the number of orders far exceeds our armament production capacity. Therefore, the expansion of armament production is an absolutely necessary step," Mr Kaliňák said.

Change of Command (COC) ceremony at SVK Defence Staff

(17 July) Members of the Slovak Defence Staff gathered for a Change of Command (COC) ceremony for the Deputy Chief of Defence and Chief of Staff (DCHOD/COS) and for the Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) of the Slovak Armed Forces at the MOD Club in Bratislava.

Based on the Appointment Orders from the Slovak Chief of Defence with effect from 1 August 2024, CHOD Daniel Zmeko appointed Maj Gen Peter Babiar as the Military Representative of the Slovak Republic to the NATO Military Committee, Brig Gen Slavomír Verčík as Deputy Chief of Defence and Chief of Staff, Sgt Maj Marcel Kaniak as Course Leader at the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) in Tampa, Sgt Maj Imrich Fekete as Command Senior Enlisted Leader of the Slovak Armed Forces.

At the ceremony, Gen Zmeko presented Maj Gen Peter Babiar with the Slovak Chief of Defence Commemorative Cross 2nd Grade and Sgt Maj Marcel Kaniak with the Slovak Chief of Defence Badge 1st Grade. In his remarks, Gen Zmeko thanked both of them for their professionalism, dedicated work, and long-time contribution to the Slovak Armed Forces. Gen Zmeko also bade farewell to Cdr 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany Brig Gen Alexander Kollárik who is leaving the Service as of 31 July 2024.



- On St Marina's Feast Day in Cyprus on 16-17 July, Slovak UNFICYP peacekeepers along with Slovak Air Force Chaplain Maj Slavko Ganaj took an active part in organising a pilgrimage for Greek Orthodox Cypriots to the two Greek Orthodox churches which are located in the buffer zone near the SVK soldiers' positions - Command Post 10 (CP-10) in Dheryneia and Camp Pribina in Athenou. UNFICYP MP officers from Ireland, Serbia, Finland, China and Italy also helped to make this pilgrimage happen.

- 56 kids crossed the threshold of the Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš to attend the AOS Children's University. At the Attestation Ceremony, they received the Certificate of Attestation from the hands of Deputy Commandant for Military Affairs Col Štefan Accai before experiencing physics experiments and lectures at the Academy's Depts. At the Simulation Centre, Slovakia's first astronaut and former Slovak Air Force fighter pilot Brig Gen (Ret'd) Ivan Bella briefed them on the Štefánik Space Mission. In addition, Liptovský Mikuláš-based firefighters prepared a programme of fun activities and contests for them.

- 51 Wng Prešov hosted joint training for airmen of 24 Air Transportation Base at Prague Kbely Airport and airmen of 51 Wng Prešov. The aim was to find out the differences in the use and maintenance of the HS 29900-59 and HS-29900 hoist systems, made by Breeze Eastern, and to address maintenance issues for these devices on the Mi-17LPZS and UH-60M Blackhawk helicopters.

- With the help of 65 Recce Bn Prešov and 20 Log Bn Prešov, the Institute of Military History is changing the design concept for the Military Equipment Gallery at the Svidník branch of its Military History Museum after more than 50 years. Thanks to the Gallery's new exhibition layout, visitors will now be able to experience large-scale WW2 exhibits in a more engaging manner.

- Members of SVK Army HQ Trenčín, 2 Mech Bde HQ Prešov and 14 Tk Bn HQ Trebišov visited the Tank Simulation Centre in Świętoszów, Poland, which offers training for Leopard 2 MBT crews. The aim was to get first-hand information on the Centre's capabilities and apply it to the training of 4 Tk Coy, part of 14 Tk Bn Trebišov.

- Ten members of the Auxiliary Technical Battalions or military forced labour camps were awarded the SVK Minister of Defence Commemorative Medal at the Communist Victims Memorial in front of the City Town Hall in Nitra. Of them, four are still living and six were awarded the medal posthumously.

- The Granite Hotel in Smrekovca hosted two ten-day children's summer camps, organised by the Bishopric of the Forces, for 40 kids of military and civilian families each. The camps were led by Senior Chaplain Capt Ján Čupalka of 22 Mech Bn Michalovce and Staff Chaplain Capt Slavomír Krajiňák of 2 Mech Bde Prešov. For kids aged 6 - 15, they prepared a programme full of spiritual and sporting activities, games and trips, including a visit to the UN - Veteran Slovakia Association, a Liptovská Mara Reservoir boat ride, and swimming in a natural lake.

- Through the Dukla Military Sports Centre, the MOD supported the organisation of the U18 European Athletics Championships on 18-21 July in Banská Bystrica. The Centre provided sporting, accommodation and administrative facilities and personnel including co-organisers and judges for 1,190 competitors from 48 member states of the European Athletics Association. The event was supported by the SVK Military Police and the Armed Forces Band. Of the Dukla sportsmen, Lukáš Rosenbaum performed best when he placed 4th in the men's 5km race walk. Of the entire SVK Team, Laura Fričková stormed to a European U18 best record and took gold in the 100m hurdles.

FULL FIELD KIT

Radlo Regina's Full Field Kit programme presents the MOD's support for the SVK defence industry at 21.05 on Fri with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

Officer Cadets train in foothills of Vihorlat Mountains

(19 July) Throughout this summer, 3rd-year Officer Cadets (OCs) of the Military Academy Liptovský Mikuláš have been gaining military training experience on Valaškovce Training Area, 2nd-year OCs on Turkish Hill Training Area, and 1st-year OCs in the Liptov region.

While one part of the 3rd-year OCs are now familiarising themselves with the SVK Army's IFVs under the watchful eye of instructors from 22 Mech Bn Michalovce, others are undergoing tactical combat training (TCT). Maj Ján Jurčák, officer in charge of the 3rd-year OCs' training, praised their efforts to deal with all aspects of the field training challenges.

OC Petronela Sivák, who was awarded the Best OC's Dagger for her academic results in the Security and the Defence of the State Programme, appreciated the process of building up a genuine military team as OCs work together in teams for a period of time. Her colleague, OC Marek Harenčár, highlighted the crucial role

Cooperation is key to security

(15 July) DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák hosted a working lunch for EU Ambassadors at the MOD, to update them on the conclusions of the NATO Washington Summit and on

Slovakia's expectations for the defence of the Alliance's Eastern Flank. Having donated almost our entire Air Defence (AD) system to Ukraine, priority has been given to the protection of SVK airspace. "Without having sufficient Air Defence systems in place, the deterrent effect on the Eastern Flank is ineffective," Minister Kaliňák stated. He wished Hungarian Ambassador to Slovakia Csaba Balog the best of success with the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union to the benefit of European cooperation, peace and security. "The Slovak Republic will always act constructively and advance topics of importance to the entire European Union," Mr Kaliňák added.

Štefánik keeps inspiring others

(19 July) DEPMINDEF Martin Vojtášovič attended a wreath and flower laying ceremony at the General Štefánik Bust in front of Štefánik's native home in Košariská. To mark the 144th anniversary of Štefánik's birth, Košariská and Brezová pod Bradlom hosted a three-day festival of culture, sports and education.

Military Olympians take oath

(16 July) On behalf of the entire SVK Olympic Team, slalom canoeist Jakub Grigar and Paralympic table tennis player Alena Kánová took an oath in the presence of President Peter Pellegrini. The 33rd Olympic Games

(26 Jul - 11 Aug) and the 17th Paralympic Games (28 Aug - 8 Sept) will take place in Paris. A total of 28 SVK sportsmen and women will take part. Of the 28-strong SVK Olympic Team, 15 will be from the Dukla Military Sports Centre. "Our expectations are always high. We have never returned from the Olympic Games without a medal in the history of Slovakia. I am pleased that more than half of the SVK Olympic Team come from Dukla. I hope we will win at least two medals for Slovakia," Director of the Dukla Military Sports Centre Lt Col Matej Tóth said.

