



## Farewell to generals

(28 Nov) President Peter Pellegrini bade farewell to Lt Gen Ľubomír Svoboda and Maj Gen Róbert Tóth, who are leaving the Service.

"The general's stars on your shoulders represent a recognition of your long-time meritorious contributions to building and developing the SVK Armed Forces," the President said before adding that "for the outgoing generals, service to the country was not only a job, but also a mission". According to Pellegrini, the public's sense of security relied on their professionalism, determination, and morale.

Lt Gen Svoboda is retiring after 48 years of service. He served as a pilot and later held command appointments. He was in command of the Slovak Air Force before serving as Deputy Chief of Defence. Maj Gen Tóth served as a pilot and the professional head of the Slovak Air Force, too. Over his 37 years of service, he was gradually promoted to the most senior general officer ranks and held the most senior appointments. Lt Gen Ľubomír Svoboda is succeeded by Maj Gen Miroslav Lorinc. During the farewell ceremony, Gen Zmeko wished Maj Gen Lorinc every success with the responsible tasks that lie ahead.

Maj Gen Róbert Tóth formally handed over command of the Slovak Air Force to his successor Brig Gen Martin Kuterka in a change of command ceremony at 81 Wng Sliach on 27 Nov. Gen Zmeko presented Maj Gen Tóth with the Chief of Defence Commemorative Cross 1st Grade.

"The change of leadership at the key positions symbolises the determination to ensure the continuity of professional leadership across the Slovak Armed Forces," CHOD Daniel Zmeko said.

## Otto Smik remembered

(28 Nov) A memorial plaque was unveiled to WW2 Czechoslovak RAF fighter ace Otto Smik, posthumously promoted to Maj Gen, in the Dutch town of Zwolle 80 years on after being shot down there. A memorial ceremony was held on the anniversary of his heroic death at the crash site. In attendance were Mayor of Zwolle Peter Snijders, DEPMINDEF Martin Vojtašovič, Deputy Royal Commissioner Erwin Hoogland of Overijssel Province, representatives of embassies, veterans, and students of a local school. The memorial ceremony kicked off a series of events to culminate on the 80th anniversary of Zwolle's liberation on 14 Apr 2025.



## 7th 'Through the Eyes of the Heart' Charity Concert

(28 Nov) People with big hearts sharing with those in need and the event organisers were honoured by Ms Karin Silberhorn, Director of the Defence Minister's Office, at the charity concert titled 'Through the Eyes of the Heart'. The fundraiser, held under the auspices of DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák at the Slovak Radio Concert Hall, was organised by the Head Office of the Ecumenical Pastoral Service (EPS) in the Slovak Armed Forces and Armed Corps in cooperation with the Military Support Foundation (MSF), the Slovak Armed Forces, and the Ministry of Defence. EPS Chaplain-in-Chief Col Viktor Sabo and MSF Administrator Milan Gajdoš announced that all the proceeds from the concert will go towards helping oncological children. Among the performers before the crowded audience were the Slovak Armed Forces Band, rapper Kali, singer Lenka Piešová, and the Bratislava Boys Choir. The 'Military Art Project' exhibition preview was part of the evening, with renowned Slovak painters' artworks portraying the personalities of Slovakia's WW2 Resistance and Armed Forces. 12 artworks will be auctioned at a Slovak Armed Forces charity event next March. Proceeds will go directly to support orphan children of ex-Service and civilian personnel.



- The Topographical Institute Banská Bystrica organised the 1st edition of the **Military Equipment Recognition Competition 2024**. The contestants identified 60 pictures of Army, Air Force and Navy assets selected from a set of 200 pictures. The best results were achieved by a member of 12 Mech Bn Nitra.

- **103 CBRND Bn** hosted a change of command ceremony for the Battalion Commander on 26 Nov. Lt Col Ondrej Iliško, leaving the Service after 31 years of service, handed over to Maj Anton Kardoš, who took over the Battalion Colours from the operational head and service chief of the Slovak Army, Brig Gen Ivan Balog.

- **DEPMINDEF Martin Vojtašovič** paid a visit to the Military History Museum's branch in Svidník and 51 Wng Prešov. Cdr 51 Wng Prešov Col Štefan Okoš briefed him on the Wing's mission, tasks, facilities and assets. Afterwards, he attended a memorial ceremony in remembrance of the Tokajik tragedy victims.

- The TRANSPAREX Public Procurement Database recognised the **Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš** for performing to the highest standards on public procurement. With its A+ rating in public procurement, AOS rose to 5th place in the Tertiary Schools, Science and Research category, improving by two places against last year. A total of 3,492 public contracting authorities were evaluated by TRANSPAREX.

- On 26-27 Nov, the MOD was the venue for a **meeting of the Defence Psychology Service**, chaired by Chief Psychologist Lt Col Olga Jančová Kohárová, with a focus on psychology training for the services and branches of the Armed Forces and on capabilities development to support military psychologists in light of the current security situation.

- The **Air Traffic Controller (ATC) Instructor and Assessor Course** for Ministry of Defence and Slovak Air Force airmen took place at the AOS Simulation Centre, overseen by the ATC Training Organisation.

- Members of the **NATO Multinational Brigade in Slovakia** took to the swimming pool for a friendly swimming contest, organised by CZE soldiers of NATO MN BDE SVK. After a tough race, ESP paratroopers were crowned the victors.

- Despite the cold weather in Cyprus, UNFICYP military personnel took part in this year's **Military Skills Competition**. Force Commander Maj Gen Erdenebat Batsuuri of Mongolia congratulated the Argentinian team on their victory and thanked all peacekeepers for their service to the United Nations. SVK military personnel took an excellent third place in the competition.

- The Jubilee of the Armed Forces, Police, and Security Personnel worldwide will be marked in Rome on 8-9 Feb as part of the 2025 Jubilee Year. For this occasion, the Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps will be leading the **Slovak Armed Forces, Armed and Rescue Corps Jubilee Pilgrimage to Rome (ITA)** on 6-11 Feb 2025. You can find more information by visiting the internet.

- On 29 Nov, the **Radiology Clinic of the Central Military Hospital - Teaching Hospital Ružomberok** on Považská Street will be closed due to the replacement of an X-ray system until further notice.

## FULL FIELD KIT

**Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme brings interviews, reports and insights into the life of the Armed Forces at 21.05 on Fri with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.**

## Infanteers drive IFVs and fire TURRA-30 turret's main gun

(25 Nov) Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area (TA) hosted specialist training for infantry fighting vehicle (IFV) gunners-operators and drivers.

Day 1 focused on testing the gunners-operators' skills to fire on targets from an IFV on the move and on moving and disappearing targets from a stationary IFV. Day 2 featured the IFV drivers' off-road driving practice sessions, as in combat conditions. Day 3 saw BVP-M and BPsV-I gunners-operators firing the TURRA-30 turret's main gun. The Officer Cadets (OCs) of the Armed Forces Academy (AOS) who had passed the TURRA-30 Operator Course joined the gunners-operators of 22 Mech Bn Michalovce in training on the ranges. On Day 4, the gunners-operators and the OCs improved their skills firing the main gun of the BPsV-I IFVs on the move. As well as this, Mor Plts from 22 Mech Bn Michalovce along with the OCs engaged in live mortar firing. The training week was supported by Recce Plt of CS Coy, who, flying an unmanned aircraft system (UAS) over

## CDR HQ NRDC-ESP visits BA

(28 Nov) Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko received Lt Gen Luis Sáez Rocandio, Commander Headquarters NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Spain (CDR HQ NRDC-ESP), at the Defence Staff in Bratislava. During the meeting, the SVK CHOD underscored the significance of HQ NRDC-ESP in reinforcing the Alliance's Eastern Flank. Much of the focus of the information brief, led by DCHOD/COS Brig Gen Slavomír Verčimák, was on the state of national defence plans in line with NATO's defence plans and the joint training activities of SVK and ESP armed forces. Lt Gen Rocandio also paid a visit to the Lešť-based Spanish Contingent of the NATO Multinational Brigade in Slovakia.

## CERTEX for SOF personnel



(29 Nov) On 18-29 Nov, the Slovak Special Operations Forces completed its national Certification Exercise (CERTEX) Samson 2024, to test the SVK SOF's tactical and operational levels and their capabilities and

readiness to deal with complex tasks within the planned operations. Much of the emphasis was on enhancing cooperation between the units subordinated to SOCOM and to SVK AF HQ, respectively. The operational phase of the CERTEX covered solutions to model situations simulating unexpected, challenging scenarios. The tactical phase of the CERTEX involved the conduct of the planned operations under the watchful eye of the exercise control team. Ex Samson 2024 demonstrated the units' good level of readiness, met its aims, and reaffirmed the SVK SOF's commitment to the latest advances in training and preparedness.

## Pres GOH change of command

(28 Nov) Commander of the Slovak Presidential Guard of Honour Col Andrej Tvrdoň and Commander of the Prague Castle Guard of Honour DS Col Jaroslav Ackermann signed a Memorandum of Cooperation between the two GOHs on 28 Nov. That same day a change of command ceremony (COC) for the Commander of the Slovak Presidential Guard of Honour took place at Dukla Barracks in Bratislava. In attendance at the ceremony were President Peter Pellegrini, DS Col Jaroslav Ackermann, senior officers of the Slovak Presidential Military Office, commanders of military units and installations, representatives of the CZE Presidential Guard of Honour, former commanders of the SVK Presidential Guard of Honour, and other guests. Col Andrej Tvrdoň is succeeded by his second-in-command, Lt Col Marián Mäsiar.

the ranges, provided the officer in charge of the training with an aerial view of the live firing results across Kamenica nad Cirochou TA.

