



A visit to Latvia

(4 Dec) DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák along with President Peter Pellegrini and CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko made a pre-Christmas trip to SVK servicemen and women on deployment to Latvia. A total of 115 SVK artillery troops, whose regular rotations are due to finish early next year, are currently serving with NATO MNB-LVA at Camp Ādazi. Mr Kaliňák thanked them for representing Slovakia and leaving behind their good name in Latvia.

As most of the Service personnel will be on duty away from home over Christmas, our traditional Christmas sauerkraut soup and pastries were served for lunch, and our soldiers found gifts under the Christmas tree. As well as creating a Christmas atmosphere, the SVK delegation expressed their gratitude to the men and women of the Armed Forces deployed on operations abroad for their service to the country.

SVK soldiers were also visited by Bishop František Rábek, head of the Slovak Armed Forces and Armed Corps Chaplaincy Service, who celebrated a Holy Mass on the Feast Day of St Barbara, the Patron Saint of Artillery. In attendance were SLOVCON personnel and the LVA, CAN, and POL military chaplains. Bishop Rábek presented the St Sebastian's Medal and a letter of thank you to the military chaplains, Cdr SLOVCON Lt Col Michal Németh, and selected SVK soldiers for supporting the Military Chaplaincy Service.



Slovenian Soldiers Memorial

(3 Dec) At the WW1 cemetery in Becherov, DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák and his Slovenian counterpart Borut Sajovic unveiled the Slovenian Soldiers Memorial dedicated to the SVN servicemen who lost their lives in WW1 in Slovakia. The Memorial was commissioned by the SVN MOD with support from local authorities.

Speaking at the ceremony, Minister Kaliňák said: "We are honoured to ensure that these fallen soldiers will never be forgotten and that our generations will remember not only their sacrifice, but also the true value of just how far from home they were deployed to fight."

A total of 147 SVN soldiers from 47th Inf Regt of Maribor lie at rest in cemeteries across Slovakia. Becherov WW1 Cemetery is the final resting place for 15 of them.

Elsewhere in Košice, SVK and SVN Defence Ministers Robert Kaliňák and Borut Sajovic delivered keynote speeches at a conference titled 'Enhancing the Slovak Armed Forces through Unmanned Aircraft Systems: Needs and Insights', co-organised by the Institute for Central Europe, the MOD and the TUKE Faculty of Aeronautics. Topics included new trends in UAS technologies, lessons learned from conflicts, and the expectations and requirements of the MOD and Armed Forces.

Speaking at the conference, DEPMINDEF Martin Vojštašovič said: "New Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) technologies are being developed – as are countermeasures against them. The dynamics of their development requires constant adaptation and innovation. Therefore, Slovakia must build its own capacities, including a strong industry sector and R&D."

Military Deed of the Year 2023 Awards announced

(6 Dec) In their 27th year, the Military Deed of the Year 2023 Awards, the goal of which is to celebrate the extraordinary actions of soldiers and the commendable efforts of ordinary citizens, know their winners. The laureates – decided by a panel of judges led by President Peter Pellegrini – received their awards in the presence of top MOD and Armed Forces leaders, service personnel, and guests of honour. Speaking on the occasion, DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák said that the greatest strength of our Service personnel lies in their unity, cohesion and team spirit. In the 'Rescue of Life' category, Lt Peter Jurov from 21 Mech Bn Trebišov took the award for performing CPR on a 67-year-old man. The laureate of the award in the 'Public Assistance' category was Officer Cadet Dominik Jurko for subduing and detaining an attacker with a knife stabbing a student on a Košice - Žilina Intercity Express train. The award in the 'Friend of the Armed Forces' category went to Petra Džerengová and Beáta Gottzmanová, both teachers of M. R. Štefánik PS in Spišská Belá, for promoting patriotism and encouraging respect for the elderly and veterans. Also awarded was former airman of 51 Wng Prešov Capt Stefan Veliky, posthumously promoted to Major, who won the 'Service to the Country' category for making a major contribution to enhancing cooperation among the deployed forces and assets of the Air SAR Service, the Ground SAR Service, the Fire and Rescue Service, and the Police Forces.



- Director of the 'Children with Cancer' non-profit organisation Katarína Balašová received 7,000 euros from the MOD-organised 'Through the Eyes of the Heart' Charity Concert, held under the auspices of DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák. Secretary General of the MOD Service Office Peter Krajčirovič and Chaplain-in-Chief of the Ecumenical Pastoral Service (EPS) Office Col Viktor Sabo promised that this marks just the beginning of the MOD's initiatives to help children with cancer.

- The Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church Choir held a memorial ceremony for Col Gen Ján Ambrúš from the Slovak community living in the Romanian village of Nadlak. In attendance were CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, Cdr 51 Wng Prešov Col Štefan Okoš, Chaplain-in-Chief Col Viktor Sabo, representatives of the ROU Armed Forces, diplomats and other guests. The official programme included the unveiling of two Ján Ambrúš Memorial Plaques as well as a Symposium on the Life and Personality of Col Gen Ján Ambrúš.

- 7 Trng Regt Martin's Hall of Honour and Fame hosted a graduation ceremony for the graduates of the OR-9 NCO Course, covering military leadership, professional progression of NCOs, effective communications, and today's global strategic security environment, both in theory and in practice. The ceremony was attended by Cdr 82 Jnt Spt Bde Brig Gen Jozef Ševčík, Cdr 7 Trng Regt Col Pavol Barančík, Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) of the Slovak Armed Forces Sgt Maj Imrich Fekete, Commandant of the NCO Academy Sgt Maj Roland Hulán, commanders of the Slovak Armed Forces units and facilities, Command Sergeant Majors (CSMs) of the Operational Commands, and other guests.

- 12 service members from SVK Joint Operations Command (JOCOM) Banská Bystrica participated in a 1st Cavalry DIV US Army-organised Battle Staff (BS) training in Romania on 2-6 Dec. The main focus of the training was on Rear Command Post (RCP) operations as JOCOM works towards achieving Full Operating Capability (FOC).

- In the State University and Teaching Hospitals category of the Slovak Hospitals Ranking 2024, the Central Military Hospital - Teaching Hospital Ružomberok has defended its Hospital of the Year title for the fifth time so far and for the past three consecutive years.

- Ex Air Support and Ex Air Delivery for SVK Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs) took place on Záhorie TA and at Kuchyňa AB, with participation from SVK SOF personnel. Working closely with pilots of the Transport Squadron (Tpt Sqn) and paratroopers of the Parachute and Rescue Service (PRS) from 46 Wng Kuchyňa, the JTACs practised their Close Air Support (CAS) skills with fighter jets and guided transport aircraft to the drop zones to airdrop material. The paratroopers parachuted into Kuchyňa AB, landing as close as possible to a defined point.

- A two-level complex Battle Staff (BS) rehearsal, dubbed Strong Border 2024, involving members of the Defence Staff, JOCOM, and selected Armed Forces elements, took place on 2-6 Dec. This marked the culmination of months-long training to test the Slovak Armed Forces' capabilities to conduct operations in defence of Slovakia.

- 46 Wng Kuchyňa hosted a meeting of Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) experts in the Slovak Armed Forces named ELINT 2024. The participants exchanged expertise and experience from ELINT monitoring and reporting, and presented the latest trends and technologies in the field.

- In their visit to the Military District Záhorie near Malacky, SVK and CZE airmen of 22 Heli Base Náměšť nad Oslavou and 46 Wng Kuchyňa paused to pay their respects at the Memorial to Lt Col František Max, who died in the line of duty 55 years ago.

- Bratislava Garrison Club, located in Dulovo Square, hosted a meeting of the Defence Staff Workers' Union (DS WU). The chairwoman of the DS WU, based at Military Unit 1010 Bratislava, Ms Viera Křošová gave her assessment of 2024, worked through issues in the DS WU programme for 2025, and presented the new DS WU Chronicle. The event wrapped up with an informal pre-Christmas event.

FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme presents the Military Deed of the Year 2023 Awards at 21.05 on Fri with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

Results of Defence-wide competitive displays announced in Prešov

(2 Dec) The winners of the Defence-wide PhotoAttack and Gallery MIL 2024 Competitive Displays, organised by the Educational and Cultural Activities Section, Support Programmes Branch, Armed Forces Personnel Office in collaboration with Trenčín, Bratislava and Prešov Garrison Clubs, were announced. A total of 189 entries from 60 authors were submitted this year, with three authors entering both contests.

In the PhotoAttack competition, the judges evaluated 94 entries from 23 authors. In the Armed Forces category, Roman Kavulič from 6 Sig Regt Trenčín, won the top gong for his photograph 'Parachute Drop'. Recognised as the winner of the Open category was SSgt Pavol Delej from 22 Mech Bn Michalovce for his photograph 'In the Bunker'.

In the Gallery MIL competition, the 1st place winner of the Painting & Sculpture category was Stanislav Lubina from Trenčín Garrison Club for his painting 'Pinhead'. In the Applied Arts category, Peter Čech from 2 Mech Bde Prešov took home 1st prize with his artwork 'Chess Sets'. In the Children's Works category, five-year-old Artur Gavaj took first place with his

PRT CHOD visits TC Lešt'

(2 Dec) As part of his visit to the NATO Multinational Brigade in Slovakia (MNB-SVK) at the Training Centre Lešt', Portuguese Chief of Defence Gen José Nunes da Fonseca met his SVK counterpart Gen Daniel Zmeko and Deputy Chief of Defence Miroslav Lorinc. Gen Fonseca expressed his appreciation for the programme of joint training activities with the SVK and PRT Armed Forces. He also remembered to pay tribute to all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the struggle for freedom and peace.

Elena Kaliská – new DUKLA director

(2 Dec) Two-time Olympian Elena Kaliská took over from Olympian Matej Tóth as the next Director of the DUKLA Military Sports Centre. Lt Col Matej Tóth decided to quit his role and leave the Service at his own

request with effect from 30 Nov. Elena Kaliská, who most recently worked as the DUKLA Marketing and Public Communications Team leader, was temporarily appointed to the role by Sec Gen of the MOD Service Office Peter Krajčirovič. "Her hard work, tenacity, knowledge of the work environments and people in them professionally qualify her to undertake this role," he said and thanked the outgoing director for a job well done.

Apart from this, Maj Pavel Kobela is succeeded by Gabriel Baran as Director of the Sports Management Branch and Chief Coach of the DUKLA Military Sports Centre.

In memory of Maj Gen Otto Smik

(3 Dec) 81 Wng Sliač hosted a memorial ceremony to mark the 80th anniversary of Maj Gen Otto Smik's tragic death. Airmen of 81 Wng Sliač and several distinguished guests paid their respects to Slovakia's most successful WW2 pilot and RAF fighter ace.

Wreaths were laid at the base of the Maj Gen Otto Smik Memorial by British Ambassador Nigel Baker and British Defence Attaché Col Jonathan Kitson, Director General of the MOD Personnel and Social Affairs Dept Martin Rimeš, Civil Servant in Defence Col (Ret'd) Richard Zimányi, COS SVK AF HQ Col Ondrej Boroš, Cdr 81 Wng Sliač Col František Pytlík, and the Smik family.

The ceremony continued with the unveiling of a Spitfire model aircraft, in which Otto Smik was shot down over Zwolle, the Netherlands.

