



**Institute of Military History is modernising its VHM Museum Piešťany**

(21 Jan) In 2024, construction works were completed on the new Large Size Exhibits Hall 4 (H4) at the Museum of Military History (VHM) Piešťany, part of the Institute of Military History (VHU), and the final inspection and approval on H4 was carried out at the end of last year. The Museum is now working on the interior design of its entrance area and a specialised conservation workshop for treatment of small size exhibits, as well as redesigning the Museum's galleries and creating multimedia and interactive displays. Modernisation works are also underway on Hall 1 (H1) to house a collection of aircraft and helicopters restored by Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN). The goal is to modernise the Museum's galleries to make them more immersive for a wider audience and enhance visitor comfort. For these reasons, the Museum's galleries will remain closed until further notice.



■ On 21 Jan, a memorial service was held at the Memorial to the victims of the Hejce air disaster of 19 Jan 2006 at former Camp Šajkovac, the Slovak Contingent of the Kosovo Force (SLOVCON KFOR) base in Kosovo. In attendance were SVK military personnel on a 20-24 Jan reconnaissance visit to the area as SVK Forces prepare to deploy to NATO's peacekeeping mission in Kosovo.

■ On 22 Jan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus and Head of UNFICYP Colin Stewart welcomed members of the United Nations Police (UNPOL) from BiH, China, Indonesia, Jordan, Nepal, Romania and Slovakia to UNFICYP. They will oversee the restoration and maintenance of law and order in the UN Buffer Zone in Cyprus.

■ After weeks of dense fog and drizzle, the weather improved on Fri 24 Jan, allowing a crew of the Let L-410 Turbolet UVP-E-LW OM-SYI calibration aircraft to conduct trials on Trenčín airport's ground lighting systems. The airport, named after Gen Štefan Jurech, is now properly lit after 20 years.

■ On 20 Jan, the MOD and Armed Forces commemorated the 103rd anniversary of the birth of Sqn Ldr Otto Smik (posthumously promoted to Maj Gen), member of Czechoslovakia's WWII Western Front Resistance in France and the UK and commander of No 127 Sqn RAF.

■ On 27 Jan, the MOD and Armed Forces marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day – the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the largest Nazi concentration and extermination camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland. Thousands of Slovak Jews, deported by the Slovak State, were among those murdered in the gas chambers of the death camp in 1942-45.

■ Working closely with the Technical University of Košice (TUKE)'s Aviation Faculty, Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN) hosted the EASA Part 66 Module 12 – Helicopter Aerodynamics, Structures and Systems in the early weeks of the new year. Intensive technical and general English courses have also begun.

■ The Slovak National Uprising (SNP) Museum wishes to invite the public to a play titled "An Uprising with a Woman's Face" at the Rázcestie Puppet Theatre in Banská Bystrica at 19:00 on 28 Jan. This performance will be followed by a lecture on the women who served in Slovakia's WWII Resistance.

■ A military chaplains' meeting of the Head Office of the Ecumenical Pastoral Service (EPS) in the Slovak Armed Forces and Armed Corps took place at the ESP Head Office and Chapel in Bratislava on 20-22 Jan.

■ To mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU), the 1700th Anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea Conference and prayers for Christian unity took place at St Sebastian's Cathedral in Bratislava on Tue 21 Jan. The Bishopric's Cathedral took over the baton from the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia (ECAV) after its last year's WPCU at the New Evangelical Church on Legionárska Street.

■ Biathlete Jakub Borguľa of the Dukla Military Sports Centre finished 4th in the 12km Mass Start race at the IBU Junior Open European Championships in Altenberg, Germany.

**ESP soldiers at Kamenica TA**



(21 Jan) Soldiers from the Spanish Contingent (ESPCON) of the NATO Multinational Brigade Slovakia (MNB-SVK), stationed at TC Lešť, made a reconnaissance visit to Kamenica nad Cirochou

Training Area (KCTA). KCTA COM Capt Alexander Bugyi provided a brief on KCTA's training capabilities. ESP soldiers were particularly interested in the use of the IFV firing and driving ranges and the tactical training grounds, even outside of KCTA. The discussion also covered issues such as parking, accommodation and catering. The visit continued with a reconnaissance visit to the training ranges and grounds and culminated with the signing of the KCTA Facility Use Agreement (FUA) by an ESPCON Rep.

**Office call at HQ MND-C SZR**



(22 Jan) Commander of NATO MNB-SVK Col Jesús Manuel Martínez (ESP A) had an office call with Commander of Headquarters NATO Multinational Division - Centre Székesfehérvár (HQ

MND-C SZR) Maj Gen Tibor Králik (SVK A) in Hungary on 22 Jan. In their discussion, they analysed the current situation and considered the possibilities for further cooperation.

**A modern educational space**



(21 Jan) A modern classroom for L3HARRIS communications systems has been established at 7 Training Regiment in Martin. This represents a significant step in enhancing

the Slovak Armed Forces' training opportunities and technological readiness. The classroom, designed to accommodate 12 students and an instructor, combines modern technologies and attention to detail to create a space that meets all the requirements for effective teaching and training. The reconstruction works included a complex upgrade to the facility with a focus on new technologies and safety features.



**Ministry of Defence is looking for heroes**

(22 Jan) The MOD opened the 28th iteration of the Military Deed of the Year Awards 2024 for nominations. The Awards recognise and reward the extraordinary deeds and acts of service by SVK military personnel who have gone 'over and above' in the line of duty whilst displaying human and moral strength, and foster a spirit of cooperation with those who don't work in Defence, but their activities send a positive message about the SVK Forces.

The nominations in four categories – Rescue of Life, Assistance to the Public, A Friend of the Armed Forces, and Service to the Country – are to be sent by email to cinroka@mod.gov.sk or regular mail to our address (Marketing Section, Communications Branch, Defence Minister's Office, Námestie generála Viesta 2, 832 47 Bratislava) no later than 14 Feb 2025.

A nomination should include the nominee's contact details, the nomination category, a citation highlighting the "exemplary deed" of an individual or team, and the date and place where it happened.

The winners of the Awards will be decided by a panel of judges, including by the top Defence officials and the President as Commander-in-Chief.

**Slovakia signs DFA with Türkiye**

(20 Jan) A SVK Government delegation led by PM Robert Fico, part of which was also DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák, concluded several strategic documents during an official visit to Türkiye.

One of them was the SVK-TUR Defence Framework Agreement (DFA), signed by Turkish National Defence Minister Yaşar Güler and Slovak Defence Minister Robert Kaliňák.

The signing of the strategic document elevates the long-standing cooperation between the two NATO member states to a new level, a new stage of specific projects within the framework of defence cooperation, education and industry. Minister Kaliňák also participated in a memorial service at the Mustafa Kemal Atatürk Mausoleum in Ankara.



**SVK RC Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps Pilgrimages 2025**

● **65th International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes (FRA)**  
Dep & Rtn dates: 14-20 May, receipt of a participation fee of €210 to be confirmed (TBC) by email, transport by coach, pack your own food for the coach journey to/from Lourdes, breakfast & dinner included in Lourdes, time off work, application closing date (ACD): 28 Feb

● **27th SVK RC Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps's National Pilgrimage to Levoča (SVK)**  
Dep & Rtn dates: 5-6 Jul, the amount of the participation fee TBC, transport by MOD service coaches, breakfast on Sunday included, accommodation included, time off work, ACD: 13 Jun

● **4th SVK Forces Walking Pilgrimage to Levoča (SVK)**  
Dep & Rtn dates: 4-5 Jul, a participation fee of €20, start point in Prešov, tent accommodation, ACD: 30 May

● **32nd International Military Pilgrimage from Warsaw to Czestochowa (POL)**  
Dep & Rtn dates: 4-14 Aug, transport by service vehicles,

catering and tent accommodation included, specific requirements: good health and equipment for a 300km march, ACD: 30 Apr

● **19th SVK RC Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps's National Pilgrimage to Rome and the Vatican (ITA)**

Dep & Rtn dates: 21-27 Sep, a participation fee of €290 TBC after the candidate's approval, transport by coach, pack your own food for the coach journey to/from Rome, breakfast & dinner included in Rome, time off work, ACD: 30 Apr

● **13th 'Sts Cyril and Methodius' Meeting of the SVK and HUN Bishoprics of the Forces and Armed Corps in Zalavár (HUN)**  
Dep & Rtn dates: TBC, transport by coach, time off work, ACD: 16 May

Details, conditions, dates and booking forms can be found on the Bishopric's [website](#).