



A memory still painful

(2 March) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš paid his respects at the memorial dedicated to the victims of the tragic accident at the Military Repair Company Nováky. It was exactly 10 years ago that 8 employees died tragically and dozens were injured in an explosion.

In his speech, the Head of the MOD reminded that sorrow, pain and helplessness are always stronger if such a loss comes unexpectedly. "Coming to terms with the loss of a close person is among the greatest challenges in the life of everyone of us. I am having a difficult time finding the right words and an answer to the question Why?, which one can easily read from your faces," he said. He further noted that although he is not in a position to judge the actions of the criminal investigation bodies, as a human being he can understand that what weighs down heavily on the bereaved families is that the person responsible for the deaths of their close ones has not been named to date.

The tragedy at the Military Repair Company Nováky occurred on 2 March 2007. Today, the company is subject to a long-term lease agreement.

Another success by LOTN

(27 February) The Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN) has succeeded in winning yet another contract through international competitive bidding. This time it has won a contract for a general overhaul of an L-410 UVP aircraft owned by the Lithuanian Armed Force. This is another success of the state-owned LOTN company following its last year's success in the international bidding process for a general overhaul of NATO helicopters.

For the Trenčín region, this is another piece of great news because LOTN is a major regional employer. For the company, more contracts means more work for employees. This has recently resulted in increasing the employment levels in the company by approx. 30 personnel.

The L-410 UVP aircraft was transported to Trenčín in the first half of February. Under the planned repair works, LOTN will check the aircraft's body, systems, technical units and devices; upgrade its avionics systems; and perform a general overhaul of the two turbine engines and the two propellers. The aircraft was manufactured 35 years ago and underwent its last general overhaul in 2006. It has logged a total of 5,543 flying hours since inception of its operation. The contract is expected to be completed over the course of 2017.



Minister discusses cooperation with new Italian Ambassador

(27 February) The main topics on the agenda of today's meeting between Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and the new Ambassador of the Italian Republic to the Slovak Republic, His Excellency Mr Gabriel Meucci, were current NATO and EU issues and bilateral cooperation. Minister Gajdoš informed the Ambassador of the approved White Book on Defence of the Slovak Republic, the drafting of the Security and Defence Strategies of the Slovak Republic, the modernisation and replacement of the main armaments and assets in service with the SVK Air Force and Land Forces. He invited Italy to participate in the NFIU Slovakia and in the Trust Fund for Ukraine. He informed the Ambassador of the SVK Armed Forces' engagement in the training mission in the Baltic States, as well as of the SVK REP having increased the 2017 defence budget by over €109 million. Another area for discussion was the US position on boosting defence spending. Ambassador Meucci updated the Minister of Defence on the current developments in illegal migration, which is having a direct impact on Italy. The SVK REP will be involved in EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, which is aimed against human smugglers and their networks and infrastructure in the Mediterranean Sea. The operation is commanded by Admiral Enrico Credendino of Italy.



- Members of the 2nd Mechanised Brigade HQ and Staff participated on 27 Feb in a **marksmanship rehearsal, firing the Pi CZ P-09 9x19mm LUGER pistol** on Garrison Ruská Nová Ves's firing range and training grounds. The aim of the rehearsal was to test the functionality of the newly fielded weapon and to improve the weapon firing and handling skills of the exercising troops.

- As a result of 2nd Mech Bde Prešov's reorganisation, the **CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre** has passed under the direct command of the SVK Land Forces HQ with effect from 1 Mar. To mark this occasion, a command transfer ceremony took place on 28 Feb at Slovak National Uprising Barracks in Martin.

- On 2 Mar, members of the SVK Armed Forces General Staff, led by Gen Milan Maxim, and delegations of the SVK MOD and the Generals' Club participated at the **Appessment Memorial in a ceremony paying tribute to the memory of the three Slovak generals** who were tortured to death by the Nazis at the Mauthausen concentration camp.

- On the last day of February, the members of the **Bratislava Garrison HQ** formed up to listen to the announcement of the unit's personnel orders at Vajnory Barracks. Accordingly, Capt Peter Krumpál received orders to report to a new duty location, CSM Michal Czódör retired from the SVK Armed Forces, Veronika Glindová took up her appointment and was promoted to 1st Lieutenant, and JUDr. Ivona Ondrejková, Legal Advisor to BA GAR HQ, terminated her employment contract.

- Capt Miroslav Bárány, the Commander of the Aviation Training Company and the delegated Commander of the **Aviation Military Occupational Specialities Training (AVN MOSS TRNG) Centre Prešov**, respectively, relinquished command of the Centre on 28 Feb to Capt Branislav Hronček, who was promoted to Major. Capt Jozef Margetin assumed the appointment as Commander of AVN TRNG COY at the AVN MOSS TRNG Centre. After 21 years of service, Capt Miroslav Bárány retired from the ranks of Regular soldiers.

- With the signing of the **Implementing Agreement on the Treaty on Spiritual Service in the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps between the SVK REP and the Holy See** by Mons František Rábek, Ordinary of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps, and Lucia Žitňanská, Minister of Justice of the SVK REP, the Agreement has come into force, laying down the existing rights and obligations, whilst neither extending nor narrowing down the scope of the obligations arising out of the existing documents.

- To mark the **14th anniversary of the establishment of the Ordinariate of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps** on 2 Mar, a Holy Mass was celebrated at St Sebastian's Cathedral in Bratislava. It was celebrated by Ordinary Mons František Rábek with the participation of the State Secretary of the SVK MOD, Marián Saloň, the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Milan Maxim, and representatives of the Police Corps, the Fire and Rescue Corps, and the Prison and Justice Guard. The dignified atmosphere was made complete by members of the Bratislava Garrison HQ – SVK Armed Force Guard of Honour (SVK Armed Forces GoH) and the SVK Armed Forces Military Band.

MP personnel under training



(4 March) Slovak Military Police personnel are being trained at the Eckenförde Training Facility in Germany to deploy abroad on EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia. The two-month specialised training will last until 31 March. For the purposes of the operation, the

SVK REP has assigned 10 Military Police personnel who will be on the Boarding Team of a Germany Navy ship operating in the Mediterranean Sea. The contingent is made up of two identical 5-member teams, with every team member charged with clearly defined tasks. Germany committed itself to providing them with training under the maritime environment conditions of which Slovak soldiers have no hands-on experience. The main mission of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia is to disrupt human smuggling and trafficking from the African states to Europe in the face of the migration crisis and the threat of global terrorism.

Synod's final session



(2 March) The creative period of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps Synod concluded on 2 March with a ceremonial convocation of the Synod's delegates and invited guests. The afternoon's Holy Mass at St Sebastian's Cathedral was preceded by the final working session of the Synod's delegates and

invited guests at the Assembly Hall of the Police Corps Academy. It was presided by the Ordinary of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps, Mons František Rábek, who presented the Synod documents. The final part of the working session was dedicated to a presentation of the signed Implementing Agreements on the Treaty on Spiritual Service between the SVK REP and the Holy See. The convocation culminated in celebrating the Holy Mass. Among those who accepted the invitation to attend the Solemn Liturgy of Thanksgiving for the concluded Synod were P. Giulio Cerchietti, Head of the Central Office for Military Ordinariates at the Congregation of Bishops in Rome, Mons Jure Bogdan, Military Ordinary of Croatia, Mons László Bíró, Military Bishop of Hungary, Mons Tomo Vukšič, Military Bishop of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mons Werner Freistetter, Military Bishop of Austria, Leszek Ryzka, Vicar General of Austria, Lt Col Władysław Kozicki, Canonist General of the Cathedral Chapter House of the Polish Military Ordinariate and several Slovak bishops. Also in attendance were State Secretary Marián Saloň, Chief of the General Staff Gen Milan Maxim, and other representatives of ministries.

Slovak military doctors can study in Hradec Králové again

(1 March) After more than 20 years Slovak military doctors have the opportunity to pursue their military medicine studies at the Medical Faculty of Charles University in Hradec Králové again. The deal is based on the Agreement on SVK Armed Forces Professional Soldiers' University Education at the Faculty of Military Medicine of the University of Defence Brno, which was signed between the Slovak and Czech MODs. The SVK Armed Forces have experienced shortages of doctors in the long term and Slovakia lacks an education establishment that would specialise in military medicine. Since the foundation of an independent Slovak Republic the ranks of military medical personnel have been replenished exclusively by recruiting graduates of the medical faculties at civilian universities.

The General Military Medicine study programme is provided by the Faculty of Military Medicine at the University of Defence Brno in collaboration with the Medical Faculty of Charles University in Hradec Králové. The first successful applicants from among the SVK REP citizens can start their studies in Hradec Králové, beginning from the 2017/2018 academic year. This education will be delivered in the form of a 6-year full-time study of General

Military Medicine. Students will pursue their studies as Regular soldiers under Preparatory State Service, while having the status of cadets, ranked 1st Degree Private. The cadets will receive training to perform the Temporary State Service duties of the Officers' Crops, and will assume the appointment of doctor in the H10 Military Medicine MOS.

To meet the admission requirements for the Faculty of Military Medicine, applicants must also be accepted and enlisted for the General Military Medicine study programme at the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Hradec Králové. Over the course of their studies, the cadets will gain two university diplomas. In parallel with the General Military Medicine study at the international civilian university, they will be following the Military Programme and the Military Specialised Programme at the military university abroad, which are aimed at delivering military medicine, medical support in the field, medical logistics and the organisation of the Military Medical Service. The SVK MOD seeks to attract more doctors already during their university studies, and will also have them trained for the performance of the medical occupation under specific military conditions.