



Commemoration of the departed

(2 November) Service personnel and MOD employees gathered for a ceremony to mark the Commemoration of the Departed at the Appeasement Memorial on the grounds of the MOD, paying their respects to the memory of their deceased colleagues.

"Throughout the year we come together for numerous commemoration ceremonies. Most of them are dedicated to the heroes who fought for our freedom and better future. However, the one today is a little bit different. It is dedicated to our colleagues – Service personnel and employees – who died in the line of duty or whose destiny did not allow them to be with us any longer for whatever other reason," said SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš.

At the same time, he emphasised that we will never forget the warriors and colleagues we have lost across Defence. "And that we come to visit the places of their final rest, even individually and without much glory, when time allows us to do so, is a small piece of evidence for their next of kin that we are serious about what we say. Therefore, if you find some time, and make sure you do so, and not only in November but also throughout the entire year when you get a chance for that," remarked Minister Gajdoš.

The commemoration was concluded ceremonially in the so-called Hall of Fame, which is dedicated to the memory of the Service personnel who died in the course of performing their duties on missions and operations abroad. "I would like to thank you for keeping the memory of our Service personnel alive. We appreciate that very much," said Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic Gen Milan Maxim.

Minister meets for talks with French Ambassador

(3 November) The cooperation between Slovakia and the French Republic in the field of defence is at a good level and has the potential to progress further, especially in the area of joint training and education. On this point, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and the Ambassador of the French Republic to Slovakia, HE Mr Christophe Leonzi, were in agreement during their first bilateral meeting since the new French Ambassador's assumption of his duties in Slovakia. "Among other things, we discussed the training mission of the V4 countries in the Baltics, under which our troops will be serving in Latvia from April to June 2017. I likewise informed the Ambassador of Slovakia's contribution to EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, where our Military Police personnel will be operating next year," noted the head of the MOD. Topics of discussion included the NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU) in Slovakia and Slovakia's contribution to Operation EUTM Mali. At the meeting, the Minister of Defence provided information on his current efforts to press on with the work of updating the strategic documents. In connection with the NFIU, he invited France to consider manning any of the available vacancies. The French Ambassador underscored the recent Slovak Defence Industry Day event as well as other activities held under the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union. He expressed special appreciation for the September Informal Meeting of the European Union Defence Ministers.



- The 12th Mechanised Battalion base in Nitra hosted a command takeover ceremony in the presence of Gen Milan Maxim, Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, Maj Gen Ondřej Novosad, Commander Land Forces, Brig Gen Vladimír Kubáň, Commander 1st Mechanised Brigade, with Lt Col Róbert Kecő taking over the appointment of Commander 12th Mechanised Battalion.
- Based on Personnel Order of the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic No. 508 of 19 Oct 2016, Lt Col Vladimír Zastko assumed the appointment of **Chief of Special Aviation and Technical Services Division** – Chief Technician of the Air Force and Ground Based Air Defence (AF & GBAD) at SVK Air Force Headquarters as of 1 November. Concurrently, he was promoted to Colonel.
- On 27 Oct, the Training and Canine Department Vlkánová – Hronek hosted the 10th **Lt Col Luboš Belák Memorial** Combat Marksmanship Competition. The aim of the competition was to compare practical marksmanship skills in a variety of specific situations that may arise in performance of a security force member's duties. The winner of the Individual category was SSGT Miloš Halecký from the Police Enforcement Department (PED) Prešov. Along with Sgt 1 Class Jaroslav Foltá, he was also on the team who topped the Best Team category, as well as claiming a victory in the Fastest Marksman category. The winners were presented with prizes by the Director of the Military Police, Col Michal Migát.
- The members of the SVK Land Forces **Combat Service Support Brigade Trenčín** formed up for a ceremony to mark the 3rd anniversary of the unit's formation on 2 Nov. At this occasion, Col Jozef Ševčík, Brigade Commander, awarded members of the Brigade with Letters of Appreciation and Letters of Commemoration for their work in favour of the Brigade and during Exercise Slovak Shield 2016, as well as for accomplishing the tasks assigned under the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union.
- On 31 Oct, 4th Czechoslovak Brigade Barracks, home of the Training Battalion Martin, hosted a ceremony, in the presence of Commander Land Forces Maj Gen Ondřej Novosad, to mark the command handover/takeover and the cessation of operations by the Training Battalion, which is to be reorganised to form the **Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base** as of 1 November 2016. As Lt Col Róbert Kecő completed his appointment as Battalion Commander, Col Lubomír Podhorec took over as the new Commander Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base.
- A change in the leadership of **Supply Base III Zemianske Kostolany** was effected after almost five years. The outgoing Base Commander, Lt Col Július Bala, handed over command to Maj Juraj Sluk, who was concurrently promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. As of 1 November, Lt Col Bala was assigned as Commander Supply Base II Martin and succeeded Lt Col Pavol Sojak on completion of his assignment as Base Commander.

12th Literary Competition

(2 November) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš announced the 12th Literary Competition for secondary school and college students. To participate in the competition, they need to submit their story, composition or essay with the theme of **National Pride and Patriotism in the Period of "Likes"** no later than 17 November 2016 by forwarding them to the email address sutaz@mod.gov.sk.

The literary contributions must be sent in a selected literary style in the Slovak language before the midnight of 17 November 2016. The word count is set between 500 and 600 words. The file should be delivered in either of the following formats: .doc, .docx or .odf. Also enclosed therewith should be personal information (i.e. first name, surname, age, school name, and telephone number).

In the competition there are two categories – the secondary school students and the college students. The 1st place winners in each category will get a financial reward of 400 euros, the 2nd place winners will receive 300 euros, and the 3rd place winners will pick up 200 euros. The competition has two rounds. The papers, to be delivered by the set deadline, will be evaluated first by an MOD committee. Then the best papers in each category (a maximum of 5) will be published on the SVK MOD Facebook from 25-30 November 2016, without the personal data of the participants being disclosed. The final results will be decided in a vote by the public via "likes". The winners of both categories will be announced on 1 December 2016.

New trade union chairwoman



(31 October) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš received the new Chairwoman of the Slovak Employees' Trade Union in Defence, Mária Huszlicsková. Speaking at the meeting, the head of the MOD remarked: "For sure, we have a lot of common work to do ahead of us. Yet, I am convinced we will always succeed in finding consensus." The new Chairwoman of the SVK Employees' Trade Union in Defence, Mária Huszlicsková, was elected for the position in a secret ballot vote on 20 Oct, succeeding the long-time chairman Marián Lacko.

On fighting hybrid threats

(31 October) Specialists from across the institutions of the EU Member States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation gathered on the premises of the Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the European Union in Brussels to discuss cooperation on fighting hybrid threats. The expert seminar, held as a SVK MOD activity under the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union, was configured to contribute to cultivating the relations between both organisations.

The panel discussion, led by the Permanent Representation of the SVK REP to the EU and the Permanent Delegation of the SVK REP to NATO, contained three main themes: Information Sharing and Situational Awareness, Strategic Communication and Adequate Response, Increasing the Resilience of EU and NATO Partners.

Meeting with chaplains



(3 November) Gen Milan Maxim met with the representatives of the Ordinary and Pastoral Service Office of the Armed Forces and Armed Corps of the Slovak Republic. Topics of discussion with Bishop Ordinary Mons František Rábek and Chaplain General Col Marián Bodolló included exchanging information and experience from the service of military chaplains with Armed Forces military units and facilities, as well as the need to update the service regulations governing the chaplains' work in this area. "I am pleased that we are meeting here today in this way and that we can make our views on the needs of both sides clear," noted Gen Maxim.

Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín repairs helicopters from Afghanistan

(3 November) An Antonov AN-124 aircraft touched down at M. R. Štefánik Airport in Bratislava, bringing in three Mil Mi-17 helicopters from Afghanistan for general overhaul, which will be carried out at Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín. The joint stock company, which operates under the SVK MOD, has been awarded a contract in an



international competitive bidding process by the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA), where it beat off completion from the world's leading companies. "This is one of the biggest contracts in the history of our Aircraft Repair Company. However, our success consists not only in

standing out among the competition with the world's top companies, but also in securing jobs for people in the Trenčín region for several years to come," said SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. The movement of the Mil Mi-17 helicopters from Bratislava Airport directly to Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín was ensured by using

the surface transport option. Because of the competitive bidding process conditions and the nature of the concluded contract, it is not possible to supply more information. However, the MOD will bring updates on the implementation of the contract.