



## Polish V4 Presidency concluded

(13 July) The Ministers of Defence of the Slovak and Polish Republics and the State Secretaries of the Defence Ministries of Hungary and the Czech Republic came together in Warsaw to evaluate the Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group, as it drew its close, in the field of defence. Minister Peter Gajdoš appreciated the cooperation of the V4 countries going from strength to strength, whereas he called the ongoing joint training mission in the Baltics the most successful joint activity during the Polish V4 Presidency.

On the V4 defence engagement, the Minister said: "In Warsaw we formally concluded the Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group. Over the past year, too, this regional level cooperation has proved its relevance, especially at a time when Europe has been faced with numerous crises." In the field of defence, the V4 regional grouping is primarily geared towards joint training and exercises. The latest examples of this are Exercise Tobruq Legacy 2017 in the Czech Republic and Exercise Brave Warrior 2017 in Hungary, with the latter building on last year's Slovakia-sponsored Exercise Slovak Shield. These days Slovak troops are participating in both exercises.

The participants of the meeting gave a positive assessment of the status of preparations for another V4 EU Battle Group, which is due to be on stand-by in the second half of 2019. Minister Gajdoš said: "The Slovak Republic has offered a contribution of 250 troops of different specialities. As a Lead Nation for CBRN we have come up with a CBRN Defence Concept that defines the basic principles and activities connected with this particular capability." He went on to remind that the next planning conference for the V4 EU BG 2019 will be held in Slovakia this autumn. He also expressed his appreciation for the updated Action Plan of the Visegrad Group Defence Cooperation 2017 – 2019, thanks to which it is possible not only to take the V4 cooperation forward but also to verify its efficiency progressively.

During the meeting, the Polish Minister of National Defence, Antoni Macierewicz, officially handed over the V4 Presidency to the Parliamentary State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of Defence, Tamás Vargha. Over the duration of its V4 Presidency, Hungary will be mainly committed to preparations for the stand-up of the V4 EU BG 2019.

## Commemoration in Darney

(10 July) A commemoration ceremony went ahead at the Military Memorial in France's Darney on 24 June to mark the 99th anniversary of the 21st Czechoslovak Rifle Regiment swearing the Oath of Allegiance and the then President of the French Republic Raimond Poincaré handing over the Regimental Colours to the Regiment. In parallel with this act of commemoration, France was the first country in the world to recognise the Czech and Slovak peoples' right of self-determination and their entitlement to an independent state. Moreover, the assembled units formed the basis for establishing the Czechoslovak Army. The commemoration ceremony was organised by the Czech Republic, which has since 2002 observed Czech Armed Forces Day on this day. Traditionally, the event in Darney has also incorporated a short visit by the delegations to the Memorials of Czechoslovak Presidents T. G. Masaryk and Václav Havel.

The year 2018 will see a commemoration ceremony in Darney to mark the centenary of the swearing of the Oath of Allegiance by the Regiment. This will be conceived as a high visibility commemorative event in remembrance of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in France, and Heads of the French, Czech and Slovak Republics are expected to attend.

## Military Police sets up a new MP Desk duty

(11 July) A new Military Police (MP) Desk duty was put in place as of 1 July with the aim of improving the quality of MP operations and ensuring better information transfers across MP. It has replaced the old duty shift system, with the MP Operations Departments (MP OPDs) standing duty on a permanent rotational basis. The new system is based on MP operations duty officers working 24-hour duty shifts in one duty location and covers the whole of Slovak territory. The main task is to control MP forces and assets and to ensure up-to-minute information flows across MP, Defence, and non-Defence security and rescue components. The duty shifts that were originally delivered by the MP OPDs Prešov and Bratislava have now been replaced by a centralised desk staffed by MP operations duty officers. A duty shift is made up of two MP members who are earmarked exclusively for this type of duty and are based in Trenčín. It is expected that the newly established MP Desk will maintain up-to-minute information flows between the Defence and Interior Ministries, as well as coordinating MP forces and assets. The responsibilities of the MP Desk include managing communications on road traffic accidents, loss and damage incidents, tip-offs on criminal activities, assistance to solutions on military road movements upon occurrence of glitches, disaster incident and emergency incident reporting; searches for soldiers, etc. Any information on the MOD, professional soldiers and MOD civilian employees may be reported to the MP Desk, which is directly contactable by phone on +421 960 339 484 /+421 903 824 295, by fax on +421 960 339 494, or by email to [mp.tn@mil.sk](mailto:mp.tn@mil.sk).



- Hungary's Várpalota/Újmajor Training Area is hosting 44 SVK troops with 4 Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFVs), supported by other assets, on **Exercise Brave Warrior 2017**, running from 6 until 22 July, where they are testing their capabilities to respond to crises of different forms alongside other Allied troops. This V4 exercise series in Hungary is a follow-up to last year's Exercise Slovak Shield in Slovakia.

- Specialists of the **Explosive Ordnance Disposal Centre of Excellence (EOD COE) Trenčín** trained 32 personnel from 13 NATO and PIP countries who participated in two one-week courses at Lešť in July. The training audience, drawn from AUT, FRA, DUE, HUN, ROU, EST, ITA, GRC, ESP, SVN, PRT, CZE and SVK, learned to identify and to dispose of home-made explosives. The courses were held in cooperation with the ITF security agency operating under the United States Department of Justice.

- The Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin organised a suburban camp – **ARMY CAMP 2017** – for children of service personnel and employees at GAR Martin during the first week of the summer holidays. 38 children participated in the event. The programme was designed in the spirit of military training, including marching drills, engineering, topographical, medical, marksmanship, and CIS training. On their last day, on GAR Sučany's training ground children tried out military life in the field, building a tent camp, starting a fire, cooking food, and treating injured people. The activity was concluded with a closing ceremony.

- Martin SNP Barracks opened a **PSYOPS training activity** on 10 July, directed by specialists from the Army Centre for Operational Communications (DEU), under the leadership of Capt Andreas Vogel. The training is being attended by PSYOPS operatives of the SVK Land Forces' CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre, and by members of the Czech Armed Forces' 103rd CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre.

- Members of the Slovak Contingent RSM in Afghanistan formed up at HKIA in Kabul on 9 July to pay their respects to the memory of **Sgt Daniel Kavuliak**, who died after being shot by an Afghan soldier at Kandahar Airfield four years ago. Our soldiers also joined a memorial run, organised by the Czech Contingent RSM, in honour of 4 CZE soldiers who died on 8 July 2014 after a suicide bomb attack near Bagram Air Base in Parwan province.

- On 10-14 July, members of 21st Cmbd Mech Bn Trebišov organised the first edition of **Trebišov-based Wolf Cubs Camp**, financially supported by the Military Support Foundation, for children of professional soldiers and civilian employees in Defence. Held within the Bn barracks premises, every day the children's day camp started with physical training and continued with military specialities-specific training. The wolf cubs were also visited by SVK CHOD Gen Milan Maxim, who brought a small gift for them.

## Change of SVK Air Force Commander



(14 July) After almost 5 years of service as SVK Air Force Commander Maj Gen Miroslav Korba handed over command of the SVK Air Force to Brig Gen Lubomir Svoboda. The SVK Air Force Commander change of responsibility

ceremony was held at the Tactical Wing Sliac, with the participation of CHOD Gen Milan Maxim, who commended Maj Gen Korba for his work achievements and wished him every success in his next assignment abroad. Brig Gen Svoboda was the first Commander of the Command, Control and Surveillance Brigade Zvolen (SVK Air Force), commanded the SVK Training and Support Forces, served in the capacity of DCOM at the SVK AF's HQ AIRCOM, went through different positions at the SVK General Staff, and gained rich expertise while deployed outside of Slovakia. He will officially assume the new appointment with effect from 1 August.

## 108 VMT candidates get a pass

(12 July) The SVK Armed Forces have selected 108 candidates from among 246 applicants for this year's Voluntary Military Training (VMT). They were required to meet demanding requirements, including medical examinations and individual psychological assessment. A total of 83 men and 25 women were successful in the selection process. The youngest and oldest candidates are 19 and 44, respectively. Successful candidates will start their 11-week training at the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin on 2 August. Alongside physical and psychological preparation, they will undergo engineering, signals, tactical, topographical, medical and marksmanship training. Each graduate will have developed a Mechanised Unit military occupational speciality (MOS)-specific knowledge and skills.

## Tobruq Legacy 2017

(12 July) A joint exercise opening ceremony at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Romania kicked off Exercise Tobruq Legacy (TOLY) 2017. Being held across three European regions under the unified command of the multinational NATO JFAC and under the specialist guidance of the CAOC UEDEM, taking part in the exercise are 10 countries, with a team of observers from another 12 countries. The integration of NATO AWACS platforms into the exercise is a novelty. The launch of TOLY 2017 in Region North (Lithuania) was also marked with an opening ceremony. There, 400 troops joined the exercise, including from Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, the UK, the USA and Slovakia. In Region Centre (CZE REP), members of Task Group IGLA, of the AAM Bde Nitra, are carrying out the tasks assigned to the Surface-Based Air Defence (SBAD) forces. The SVK battery-sized unit is operating in a joint formation alongside the RBS-70 Unit (CZE), of the 25th AAM Regt Strakonice. Among the priority tasks of the exercise is to validate the interoperability of the SBAD forces' C2 systems in a multinational SBAD Task Force environment.

## Exercise New Horizon 2017 at Slanské Hills

(13 July) Garrison Velké Ozorovce's training ground at the Slanské Hills and the villages of Malé and Velké Ozorovce hosted Exercise New Horizon 2017 on 10-13 July, with the aim of practising the C2 system and SOPs in running the SVK Armed Forces' assistance missions in a non-military threat environment. The missions saw exercising members of the SVK Armed Forces, especially from the 23rd Motorised Battalion Trebišov, supported by assigned MP assets, employed in rehearsing efficient cooperation in a simulated time of war and state of war environment, while coordinating their operations with the Foreign and Border Police, Migration Office, Police Corps, Firefighting and Rescue Corps, the Slovak Red Cross and the state and local administration bodies. Some security and rescue services and local administration authorities managed to organise a controlled evacuation of residents living in the endangered area, tried out

securing the protection and defence of the state border, as well as cleaning up in the aftermath of combat operations. The exercise was held under the auspices of the Mechanised Brigade Prešov and was attended by 200 troops, drawn mainly from the Motorised Battalion Trebišov and another 100 members from the other components mentioned above. According to the Officer Commanding the Exercise/ Trebišov Military Unit Commander, Lt Col Norbert Hrib, this has been the first serious validation for the unit since its formation on 1 September 2015. The course of the exercise has demonstrated that the regulations applicable to individual components need to be synchronised to deliver smooth and efficient cooperation in a similar event in the future. The importance of improving the understanding and coordination of specific activities was also echoed in the statement by the Director of the Red Cross Branch Trebišov, Libuša Babuřáková.

