



Missions and Ops Hall of Fame

(29 November) Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic Peter Gajdoš inducted another five contemporary veterans into the Missions and Operations Hall of Fame within the Ministry of Defence. The tradition of the MOD leaders holding a pre-Christmas function for the SVK Armed Forces members who have completed missions and operations abroad dates back to 2010. This year, this honour was shared by MSgt Igor Čačko, MSgt Peter Mesiáček, Maj Peter Sudimák, Lt Col (Rtd) Jaroslav Valko, and a member of the 5th Special Forces Regiment.

"You decided to make a contribution to security in the countries which do not know the luxury of peace. It was not always an easy tasking, whether for you yourselves or your families. That is why I would like to use this occasion to extend my thanks not only to you but also to your close relatives as you made it through together and they encouraged you when things got tough," remarked Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. He expressed his admiration for contemporary veterans who have completed their deployments as engineers, EOD specialists, members of force protection and sentry units or their day-to-day missions outside of military bases under the highest threat level. Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim honoured the memory of the 57 Slovak Servicemen and women who have laid down their lives on peace support missions and military operations abroad. "They brought the ultimate offering, sacrificing themselves on the altar of our homeland while representing their country," noted Gen Maxim.

Today a total of 257 SVK Armed Forces members, of whom 15 are women, are currently deployed on operations abroad. Our soldiers find themselves serving with RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION in Afghanistan, EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and UNFICYP in Cyprus. The Slovak Armed Forces are also represented in the UN-led observer missions in Egypt and Syria, and in the EU-led mission in Georgia. Overall, more than 17,500 Slovak soldiers, including 500 servicemen, have rotated in and out of missions and operations to date.

During the event, the Minister of Defence announced the 20th Military Deed of the Year Awards, which recognises exemplary deeds of service by soldiers and civilian employees across Defence in saving lives or doing work above and beyond the scope of their service duties. Nominations can be made in three categories: Rescue of Life, Assistance to the Public, and Friend of the Army. Anyone who will submit an entry no later than 28 February 2017 by post to Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic, Communications Division, Kutuzovova 8, 832 47 Bratislava, or by email to cinroka@mod.gov.sk is invited to participate in the Military Deed of the Year opinion survey.

MOD wants to improve the quality of the Voluntary Military Training project

(2 December) Based on the Voluntary Military Training (VMT) pilot project review, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš has put forward a proposal for legislative changes which are now under consideration.

Under the new proposal, the financial reward will increase by approx. 200 euros, the length of the VMT training will be shortened from 12 to 11 weeks, and successful graduates will receive guarantees of an easier entry into the Armed Forces, the Police Corps, and the Fire-Fighting and Rescue Corps. The proposal follows from an analysis of the pilot project, into which the personal assessments of the 31 successful VMT graduates have been incorporated.

"In view of the demanding nature of negotiations and the length of the legislative process itself, we have decided not to train voluntary soldiers next year and to resume the full extent of the VMT training under new conditions in 2018," noted Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, adding that next year the MOD wants to focus on another



General Maxim recognised with Germany's highest military decoration

(1 December) The Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ursula von der Leyen, awarded the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, Gen Milan Maxim, with the Bundeswehr Cross of Honour in Gold. He was presented the highest German military decoration for his personal merit in building the relationship between the Armed Forces of both countries. The Cross of Honour was also presented to Miloslav Ivančík, an MOD employee from the International Relations Section.

The decorations were handed out to them by the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, His Excellency Mr Joachim Bleiker. Speaking at the award ceremony, Gen Milan Maxim said: "I am convinced that the decoration belongs to all – be that our partners in the Bundeswehr or members of the SVK Armed Forces – for they did an excellent job. Of course, my Thank You also goes to my superiors without whom some projects would not have taken place." In his own words, the award of the decoration sets the direction and continuity of bilateral cooperation. SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš conveyed his congratulations to both recipients of the decoration.

Speaking about SVK-DEU defence engagement, Ambassador Bleiker underscored the deployment of the Bundeswehr on Exercise Slovak Shield 2016, the involvement of German Air Force observers in Exercise Tobruq Legacy, and the assignment of a German staff officer to the SVK MOD under the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union (SK PRES).



- At the invitation of the conference organisers, Lt Gen Pavel Macko, 1st Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, participated in a Globsec Policy Institute conference titled Countering Information War, dedicated to conflicts in the information space. In his speech, he emphasised the need for nation-wide measures and capabilities in the field of strategic communications and gave more details on measures to train units in this area. The conference was supported by the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (NATO STRATCOM COE), headquartered in Latvia.

- On 29-30 Nov, Liptovský Mikuláš hosted a working meeting on cooperation between members of CIMIC and PSYOPS from across the SVK Land Forces and the German Bundeswehr. The staff-to-staff meeting was led by the Chief of the CIMIC and PSYOPS Section at the Headquarters SVK Land Forces, Lt Col Milan Žilničar, the Commander of the Bundeswehr CIMIC Centre, Col Joachim Miller, and the Commander of the Bundeswehr Operational Communication Centre, Col Christian Bader. In attendance at the meeting was also the Deputy Commander SVK Land Forces Brig Gen Daniel Zmeko.

- On 30 Nov, Trenčín saw the selection process for the Best Non-Commissioned Officer of the Military Police in the Training Year (TY) 2016. Named as the Best NCO was MSgt Peter Očenáš, a member of the Buildings Protection Section at the Police Enforcement Department Bratislava.

- At the invitation of the Georgian Chief of the General Staff and the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), Lt Gen Pavel Macko, 1st Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, participated in the command post exercise dubbed NATO – Georgia Exercise 2016 at the newly opened Joint Training and Evaluation Centre in Georgia. As part of the visit, he received a tour of the Defence Institution Building School and met with the Georgian graduates of the Slovak ISOC course.

- Members of the First Aid Station at the Engineer Battalion Sereď, working in conjunction with the National Transfusion Service of the Slovak Republic – Blood Collection Centre Nitra, held a blood donation activity called Blood of Drop from an Engineer on 28 Nov. A total of 30 Engineer Battalion members and civilian employees came to donate blood. Since 1993 the blood donation campaign has attracted 6,000 blood donors.

- On 25 Nov, Sliac Air Base hosted a remembrance ceremony marking the 72nd anniversary of the tragic death of Major General Otto Smik. It was attended by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Slovak Republic, His Excellency Mr Andrew Garth, the Head of the Zvolen City District Office, Samir Moumani, the Chief of the Strategic Planning Staff at the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, Brig Gen Ivan Pach, the Deputy Commander SVK Air Force, Brig Gen Miroslav Lorince, and other distinguished guests. In his speech, General Staff (GS) Col Vladimír Lisy, Commander Sliac Air Base, emphasised the importance of promoting Smik's message.

- On 24-25 Nov, Michalovce (Military Unit 1018 Prešov) hosted an engineer support and EOD experts' specialist gathering. They evaluated the 2016 work results and familiarised themselves with the state of affairs in the field of standardisation and Allied publications implementation, with the planned changes in Engineer-specific military occupational specialties (MOS), and current developments. At the conclusion of the meeting, the participants set out the tasks ahead for the upcoming period with an outlook for the years 2017-2018.

- Having sworn the SVK Armed Forces Oath of Allegiance and taken part in the passing-out parade on 25 Nov, a total of 113 new professional soldiers – 102 servicemen and 11 women – completed their preparations for active duty service in the SVK Armed Forces at the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin. 1st Degree Pte Pavol Teplan was named as the best graduate of the basic military training.

Aircraft Repair Company at fair

(28 November) Aircraft Repair Company, JSC, joined the JOB FORUM in the exhibition grounds of the EXPO CENTRE Trenčín on 24-25 Nov 2016. For potential candidates, its exhibition stand offered job vacancies in different specialities. These mainly included job positions such as aircraft mechanic, avionics mechanic, tinsmith – riveter, and mechanical engineering worker.

Secondary schools too were given an opportunity to present themselves at the fair. Secondary Specialised Technical Aviation School Trenčín, among others, did not miss out on the event. Within its scope of cooperation with the school, Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín offers the possibility of delivering a so-called trainee placement scheme, in other words, students undertake practical training directly in the company facilities. Upon successful graduation from the school, students may take up employment with the repair company in two specialisations: aircraft mechanic and avionics mechanic.

Since July 2016 Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín has created and staffed 29 new job positions. Yet in the near future the company plans to employ another 20 employees.



Congratulators at Major General's

(28 November) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, joined by the 1st Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, Lt Gen Pavel Macko, congratulated Maj Gen (Rtd) Ondrej Šedivý on his jubilee in Bratislava's Dúbravka. In recognition of his 95th birthday, the Minister of Defence awarded him the Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic Memorial Medal, Grade II. Maj Gen (Rtd) Šedivý was born on 28 Nov 1921 in Soblahov. He is a holder of a number of Slovak and foreign military awards and decorations.

Literary Comp knows its winners

(4 December) The winners of the 12th Literary Competition for Secondary School and College Students, announced on the theme of National Pride and Patriotism in the Period of "Likes" by Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, are already known to the public. They were chosen by the public in an online vote on the SVK MOD Facebook.

The Secondary School Works category was won by Tereza Mikáčová, of Ludovít Štúr Grammar School in Trenčín, with 1,431 votes. Kristína Klačanská, of Milan Hodža Bilingual Grammar School in Sučany, finished second with 1,404 votes. Third place in the secondary school category went to Viktória Papinčáková, of Business Academy in Vranov nad Topľou, whose essay received 1,044 votes.

In the College Works category, the public gave the highest number of votes to Peter Kromka, of the Medical Faculty at Comenius University in Bratislava, who secured first place with a total of 1,105 votes. Second place went to Krištof Kolomus, of the Natural Sciences Faculty at Comenius University in Bratislava, his work received 887 votes. Third place with 674 votes was awarded to Marián Hrdina, of the Performing Arts Academy in Bratislava.

Secondary and College School students had sent their competition entries via email to the SVK MOD by 17 Nov. Out of the 150 submitted works which had met the set criteria, the jury selected the best 10 papers. 5 papers in each category were then made available on the Facebook social media site for online voting. A total of 7,569 people participated in the online vote from 25 to 30 Nov.