



Air Fest SIAF 2017

(26 August) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš opened the 7th annual iteration of the International Air Fest SIAF 2017 at Sliac Air Base. Visitors to the event had a chance to see the first of the two UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters in Slovak Air Force service. Speaking on this occasion, Minister of Defence Gajdoš said: "This is clear evidence that we are serious about modernising our Armed Forces, with the aim of giving Slovak citizens guarantees that Slovak soldiers are always here for them and that they are ready to help. And for this we need armed forces that are functional and operational." He further noted that the current MOD leadership places special emphasis on the modernisation of the SVK Land Forces.

A total of 15 countries were represented at the international air spectacular this year. As part of its flying and static displays, the SVK Air Force showcased its fixed wing and rotary assets, including the MiG-29 Fulcrum, Aero L-39 Albatros, Let L-410 Turbolet, UH-60M Black Hawk and Mil Mi-17. The two-day event also gave visitors the opportunity to view dynamic demonstrations and static displays of military hardware in service with the SVK Land Forces, Special Operations Forces, Military Police and Armed Forces Guard of Honour.

Head of the MOD reminded that the venue of the airshow coincided with the airfield which had played a significant role throughout the Slovak National Uprising. In his remarks at the opening ceremony, the Minister said: "Back then Three Oaks Airfield was the most important resistance airfield, and also thanks to the events that happened right here, we are lucky to live in a free country today. On Tuesday we will be commemorating the Slovak National Uprising as part of the official nationwide commemorations in nearby Banská Bystrica. Personally, I would be very pleased to see you also there in such high numbers."



To give his backing to the airshow, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš also showed up on Sunday, joined by the Adjutant General of the Indiana National Guard, Maj Gen Courtney P. Carr. The U.S. B-52 strategic bomber made its debut appearance at the airshow (on Saturday), and so did the U.S. B-1 heavy bomber (on Sunday). Also breathtaking for spectators was the majestic size of the double-deck Airbus A380 in action.

SIAF 2017 attracted a total of 100,000 visitors on its first day. As part of the solo flying displays, they could see an Austrian Eurofighter, a Spanish F-18, a Czech Gripen and Aero L-159, as well as Mil Mi-35 and Mil Mi-171 rotorcraft. The Wings of Storm Aerobatic Display Team of Croatia on Pilatus PC-9Ms and a display pilot of the Soluturk Aerobatic Display Team of Turkey on an F-16 showed off their mastery of flying skills too. Yet one of the biggest draws was the seven-ship formation of MB-339s from the Al Fursan Aerobatic Display Team of the United Arab Emirates. The flying acts mounted by a Tu-154 and an A-319, which are operated by the Flight of the SVK Interior Ministry, added to the unforgettable moments the audience took home.

The static aircraft park was enriched by tracked and wheeled vehicles in the SVK Armed Forces' inventory.

Remembering the victims of the Warsaw Pact Armies' invasion

(21 August) On behalf of the SVK MOD, State Secretary of the SVK MOD Róbert Ondrejčák commemorated the victims of the 1968 invasion of former Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact Armies at a ceremony in Bratislava's Šafárik Square. The act of commemoration marked the 49th anniversary of the military invasion of the former CSSR. Operation Danube was the code name for the invasion. It was launched on the night of 20/21 August 1968 (at about 23.00pm). Apart from the Soviet Army, the military intervention into Czechoslovakia involved troops from the Polish, Hungarian and Bulgarian People's Armies. The Soviet Army troops continued to be present on the ground in former Czechoslovakia well until the second decade of June 1991, whereupon the last military units were finally withdrawn. The withdrawal of the Soviet Army troops took 16 months to complete and was coordinated and supported by the Soviet Army Withdrawal Coordination Authority under the command of Maj Gen Svetozár Nadovič. According to official figures, a total of 10,247 troops were stationed in Slovakia, along with 5,075 family dependants.



- At Branisko on 21 Aug, climbers of the Fire Defence and Rescue Service (FDRS) Prešov and rescuers of the Mountain Rescue Service BUČE, joined by rescuers from the Czech Republic, undertook training on search operations for missing people, aimed at combing a designated area with the aid of search and rescue dogs (SARDs), giving first aid, and providing evacuation. Marián Pavlišinec, of the Mountain Rescue Service, who himself joined in tracking down missing people with his dog, was in charge of the training activity.

- Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base (TMRB) Martin hosted a pre-deployment ceremony on 18 Aug for members of the SVK Armed Forces and Military Police before deploying on Operation EUFOR ALTHEA. Also in attendance at the ceremony were the top representatives of the SVK Armed Forces General Staff and Director of the SVK Military Police Col Michal Migát, who came to wish the best of luck to the outgoing soldiers.

- At the invitation of Bishop of Siemiatycze – Orthodox Ordinary of the Polish Armed Forces Jerzy Mariusz Pańkowski, members of the SVK Armed Forces paid a visit to Poland on 17-20 Aug. The aim of the visit was to participate in the 22nd Pilgrimage to Holy Mount Grabarka to mark the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ on Mount [Tabor]. Taking part in the pilgrimage were Chaplain General of the Ecumenical Pastoral Service in the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps Col Marián Bodolil (Chaplain of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession) and Military Chaplain of the Self-Propelled Artillery Unit Michalovce 1st Lt Simon Czap (Chaplain of the Orthodox Church), and SVK Armed Forces personnel.

- Representing the CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre Martin at the 345-km relay non-stop run, titled **From the Tatras to the Danube**, i.e. from Jasná to Bratislava, held on 19-20 Aug, was a 12-member running team under the command of SSgt Peter Kviatkovský. Amid the fierce competition of 205 registered teams, they came in 10th with the time of 27:19:49 in the category of all 9- to 12-member teams regardless of age, performance and gender, and placed 2nd in the corporate relay teams category.

- The SVK MOD issues this traffic warning notice to alert the citizens of Slovakia to the upcoming **movements of Allied military convoys** mainly across the territory of Central and Eastern Slovakia, due to take place in the period of 28 Aug to 3 Sept. A total of 14 road moves are scheduled over the period. They will include military movements in support of SIAF 2017's conclusion, U.S. Army troops' return from the international SABER GUARDIAN 2017 exercise, and a Polish troops' deployment to Lešt' Training Area for Special Operations Forces (SOF) training.

SVK military policemen are now fully engaged in the Mediterranean Sea

(24 August) The Slovak military policemen who deployed at the start of August on EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia have by now been firmly embedded with a team under German Navy Command. Having mastered operational procedures in the maritime environment, they are intervening alongside their German colleagues directly in the crisis area. After embarking on the operation in the German port of Wilhelmshaven, the first port of call for the military policemen was the Italian port town of Augusta where they replenished materials and supplies before sailing out to sea aboard a German Navy frigate.

The Slovak Republic sent out members of the SVK Military Police to EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia as its contribution to



The aim of the operation is to stop or cut down on the smuggling of people from the African countries to Europe in the face of the current migration crisis and the spread of global terrorism.

Bound for Cyprus



(25 August) A further 92 SVK soldiers are departing for UNFICYP in Cyprus under the ongoing rotation of troops. SVK Air Force Commander Brig Lubomír Svoboda came to the Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra to bid farewell to them during a ceremony on Friday. There will

also be a change of the Slovak Contingent Commander in UNFICYP. Lt Col Rudolf Eštok will be succeeded by Lt Col Jaroslav Marko. As of today a total 169 Slovak active duty soldiers are currently deployed across the island.

With the first all-Slovak aircrew



Prešov Air Base to Poprad Airport and back. The aircrew took off from Prešov Air Base at 1000 hours and returned to base at 1205 hours local time.

(23 August) The first flight of the brand new UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter with the first all-Slovak aircrew was conducted on Wednesday (23 August). The flight route took the rotorcraft, crewed by Major Vladimír Jakubík, Major Ján Zvalený and Captain Štefan Okoš, from

Legion train in the centre of Košice



Museum, and the Museum and Documentation Centre Bratislava opened a presentation of the unique historic Czechoslovak Legion train in Košice's Main Street on 22 August. The opening ceremony was attended, among others, by former SVK President Rudolf Šuster, Deputy Commander of the SVK Land Forces Brig Karol Navrátil, Director General of the Slovak Technical Museum Eugen Labanič, Administrator of the Milan Rastislav Štefánik Foundation Bratislava Pavol Šesták, and Deputy Mayor of Košice Martin Petruško. The Czechoslovak Legion train will stay at the Main Railway Station Košice until 3 September. Visitors can see the train exhibition for free from 8.00am to 18.00pm on an individual basis, or can enjoy guided tours with guides from the Czechoslovak Legionary Community every hour. The train's next stopover on its journey across Slovakia will be Zvolen, where it will stay from 5 to 10 September.

(23 August) The SVK MOD, working in cooperation with the Czechoslovak Legionary Community, Legion 100 Endowment Fund, Railways of the Slovak Republic, Milan Rastislav Štefánik Foundation Bratislava, Historic Equipment Club Zvolen, Slovak Technical