



More Active Reserves

(28 September) The SVK Armed Forces are aiming to train up to 257 soldiers for the Active Reserves next year. The soldiers in the Reserve who meet the requirements are invited to contact the Army Recruitment Teams based in Slovakia's regional capitals, depending on their permanent place of residence, until 12 October 2017. The training of engineers, CBRN specialists and artillerymen is planned to take place in stages between May and mid-June 2018.

Speaking at a press conference at the MOD, Slovak Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "The Active Reserves project has been one of the priorities for both our MOD and the Slovak National Party. As part of the pilot project this year we have trained the first 37 soldiers in the Reserve, because up until recently the system was non-functional and no soldiers had been in the Active Reserves since the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic, i.e. for almost 25 years."

Next year the SVK Armed Forces are planning to train 94 CBRN specialists, 71 engineers and 54 soldiers in the Reserve for a Multiple Rocket Launcher (MRL) Unit. These figures already take account of the soldiers who joined the Active Reserves last year.

As Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim said, the training will be directed at the military occupational specialties (MOS) that are high demand, low density and may be used in the event of emergency situations. He confirmed that a solution to the Reserve Forces, including the Active Reserves, is a priority issue for the Armed Forces.

MOS-specific training will be underway from 14 to 25 May 2018 at the CBRN Battalion Rožňava, and from 11 to 22 June 2018 at the Engineer Battalion Sereď and the Multiple Rocket Launcher Unit Rožňava. Under the current legislation, an Active Reservist is entitled to a motivational payment of 600 euros annually on completion of more than 75 per cent of the training programme. Moreover, while on training the soldier is entitled to a proportionate amount of military pay based on rank, and his salary is fully refunded to his employer. The SVK Armed Forces have a responsibility to supply military clothing and equipment to Active Reservists.

To make the project even more attractive, the MOD is already drafting the 2018 Active Reserves (Amendment) Act. It is expected to enter into force as from May 2018.

Natural disasters know no borders, soldiers must cooperate

(28 September) As natural disasters know no borders, it is important that soldiers manage to cooperate with other elements region-wide and that they are ready, if a crisis situation requires so, to help local residents. This message was communicated by Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic who, joined by CHOD Gen Milan Maxim, visited the exercising troops, firefighters and medics from 7 countries taking part in the 15th iteration of Exercise Blonde Avalanche 2017 on [Sereď Garrison's] Váh Training Ground in Kráľová nad Váhom.

Reflecting on the TISA project, Head of the MOD said: "I highly appreciate that the TISA project has functioned in an exemplary manner for the past 15 years. It is a testament to



just how vital and effective the regional cooperation has been. If required, the soldiers and other personnel from the countries represented will be able to make the best of their experiences from this exercise in a real situation." As Gen Maxim added, during the exercise the Multinational Engineer Battalion TISA demonstrated what it is capable of doing in the event of a crisis or natural disaster.

The multinational TISA project was established in 2002 as a collaborative effort of Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine.

This year the exercise was also attended by troops from the USA and Austria and by observers from the Czech Republic. The project is predestined to deliver cross-border assistance to residents in the event of natural disasters.

Armed Forces to send 25 personnel to Iraq still this year

(1 October) The SVK Armed Forces are aiming to deploy 25 soldiers to Iraq in 2017. Their task will be to provide training, advice and assistance in building the capacities of the Iraqi Security Forces under the NATO Training and Capacity Building in Iraq (NTCB-I). This follows from the document which the SVK MOD has made available for comments in fast-track interdepartmental consultations. The proposal will be up for debate in the Security Council of the Slovak Republic and Government. Subsequently, the deployment will have to be endorsed by Parliament. In his comments on the Slovak contribution to NTCB-I, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš clarified: "Our soldiers will play a role in providing training to Iraqi Armed Forces instructors in areas such as demining and repairs of Soviet-era military equipment." He went on to add that the mandate is in line with the Government's decision of May 2017. "The Slovak soldiers will partake neither in combat operations nor in their planning. They will be on a non-combat training mission," he emphasised. Slovakia is also planning to dispatch specialist demining equipment to Iraq. This deployment of troops, which is planned for a year-long period, will be effected on 30 October 2017 at the earliest and may not be continuous but interrupted. It will take into account the training phases of NTCB-I and the skill levels of Iraqi Armed Forces instructors. The activity of the SVK Armed Forces in Iraq will be implemented under NATO's Defence Capacity Building (DCB) package for Iraq with the approval of the Republic of Iraq and in accordance with international agreements and international contractual documents.



- On 25 Sept, CHOD Gen Milan Maxim presented the **Military Strategy Proposal** to representatives of a dozen civic associations, non-profit organisations and other interested entities. The Military Strategy of the Slovak Republic is currently under discussions in interdepartmental consultations. In the follow-up discussion, participants made clear their positions on the use of the SVK Armed Forces.

- During his away day trip to Martin on 29 Sept, the SVK CHOD inspected the **Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base (TMRB)**. He met with the TMRB Command Staff at 4th Czechoslovak Brigade Barracks and awarded Col František Počurek on the occasion of his birthday jubilee. He then inspected the Voluntary Military Training (VMT) members on Sučany Garrison's training ground.

- Gen Milan Maxim **decorated military professionals** for their active commitment to executing duties in the second and third periods of Training Year (TY) 2017 during a ceremony on 28 Sept. At the conclusion of the ceremony he mentioned that he expected commanders to keep soldiers motivated well enough to preserve at least the same professional standards in execution of duties. He further called on commanders to adopt an uncompromising position on violations of regulations, especially regarding extremism.

- During a farewell ceremony at Brig Ján Nálepka Barracks in Trebišov on 28 Sept, **Lt Col Norbert Hrib** said good-bye to the members of 23rd Motorised Battalion. Ranked Colonel with effect from 1 Oct, he will take over as DCOM 2nd Mech Bde Prešov. COM 2nd Mech Bde Prešov Brig Martin Stoklasa appointed Maj Marek Barna as COM 23rd Mtrd Bn.

- At the invitation of their Serbian counterpart, SVK CHOD Gen Maxim and HUN CHOD Gen Benkó visited Belgrade on 27 Sept to participate in a **ceremony to decorate UNFICYP members** upon completion of their mission in Cyprus. Among those awarded were SVK, HUN and SRB service personnel. Following the ceremony, he met with officials of the SRB Armed Forces.

- A **work-related death incident** occurred on the morning of 29 Sept at Military District Valaškovce, when a 43-year-old logger was involved in a fatal accident while cutting trees. He was a civilian contractor working for the Military Forests and Estates of the Slovak Republic. The accident is being investigated by the District Directorate of the Police Corps Humenné.

- SVK MOD informs the public of the **upcoming military movements**, scheduled from 2 to 8 Oct. A total of 23 road moves will take place across Slovakia, especially in support of Polish and Czech troops. Also planned is a rail movement of SVK Armed Forces assets.

Cooperation with Austria

(26 September) The Training Centre Lešt' hosted a Joint Combined Exchanged Training (JCET) activity, entitled JCET AUT SOF 2017, held on 26-29 September as part of the cooperation between the 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina and the Bundesheer's Special Counter Terrorism Unit from Neustadt, Austria. It was geared towards the practice of the tactical procedures for Hostage Rescue Operations (HROs) and Close Air Support (CAS) and the practice of the SOPs for the provision of guidance to CAS by forward air controllers. Austrian Air Force helicopters from Tulln-Langenlebarn and Linz-Hörsching Air Bases were used as CAS assets during the exercise. The take-offs, landings and pre-flight preparation of the Austrian rotary aircraft took place at Sliac Air Base.

Open Doors Day

(26 September) The Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin organised its Open Doors Day on 22 September. The event saw the graduates of basic military training (BMT) swearing the SVK Armed Forces Oath of Allegiance. Having taken part in the Oath of Allegiance and BMT graduation ceremony, a total of 211 soldiers completed their preparation for service with the SVK Armed Forces. In attendance at the ceremony were DCOM SVK Land Forces Brig Karol Navrátil, COM Presidential Palace Col Norbert Kádek, SVK Armed Forces CSEL Sgt Maj Vladimír Beluš, and other guests. 1st Degree Pte Matúš Golha was named Best BMT Graduate. The event attracted 276 pupils and students from primary and secondary schools.

Rescuers train at TC Lešt'

(27 September) The Training Centre (TC) Lešt' was the venue for a coordination exercise on 26-27 September with a focus on medical elements from the Office of the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General and the Bratislava Ambulance Service. This includes representatives of the First Aid Stations from across the entire Slovak Armed Forces, Mobile Field Medical Unit ROLE 2E, and Defence Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) Tactical Wing Sliac. The exercise centred on the complex management of an incident response to a mass casualty event under daytime and nighttime conditions and on the set-up of medical command posts to coordinate such response.

Toxic Valley 2017 culminates

(29 September) The CBRN Training and Testing Centre (TTC) Zemianske Kostolany organised Exercise Toxic Valley 2017 on 18-29 September. Taking part in the multinational exercise were Armed Forces personnel from Slovakia, Czechia, Belgium, France, Hungary, Slovenia, Poland, the USA; from Joint CBRN Defence COE Vyškov, EOD COE Trenčín, NAKA SVK Police Corps; and observers from the UK, Germany and Italy. The exercise came in two phases: Phase I was a coordination exercise for CBRN sampling teams, while Phase II, slated from 25 to 29 September, saw 115 specialists of mobile chemical labs engaged in identifying toxic chemicals and toxic industrial chemicals, and incorporated validation of procedures as presented in NATO AEP-66 for sampling and identification of biological and chemical agents and those in the Forensic Training Concept.

New Wings in Kuchyňa

(28 September) The preparation of the Transport Wing (TW) Kuchyňa command staff culminated on 25-28 September with a Command Post Exercise (CPX) with partial deployment of troops - New Wings 2017, which was organised according to NATO standards. The training audience was drawn from the Battle Staff and selected elements of TW Kuchyňa as part of a Live Exercise (LIVEX). The aim of the exercise was to rehearse the conduct of a military operation in defence of the Slovak Republic by providing air transport capabilities for the units operating concurrently within a Task Force, formed of an Air Force and Surface Based Air Defence (AF&SBAD) Brigade Air Component, and to validate the unit's readiness to deploy and to use its earmarked forces and assets for Search and Rescue (SAR) missions.