



Certification of 5th SOF Regt

(27 November) 62 personnel of the elite 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina are undergoing a Special Operations Forces Evaluation (SOFEVAL) process to confirm their capabilities in support of the NATO Response Force's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (NRF/VJTF) for 2020. As part of this NATO SOFEVAL, Ex SAMSON 2018 aims to test the Unit's SOF operations planning capabilities at the tactical level, C2, and deployable CIS systems. The exercise and the SOFEVAL process will be underway across the 5th SOF Regt base in Žilina and the Training Centre Lešt' until 4 December 2018. On achieving the 5th SOF Regt Unit Combat Readiness certification for the VJTF, Slovakia will be ready to reinforce the NRF for the second time. The SOFEVAL process is supported by the SVK Air Force, the Office of SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General, and the SVK Military Police and is monitored by a two-member team of SOFEVAL evaluators from the NATO Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ).

We support our biathletes

(28 November) Members of the Military Sports Centre DUKLA Banská Bystrica Paulína and Ivona Fialkové have the full support of Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sports Martina Lubyová. This information was confirmed in their joint media statement ahead of the Cabinet meeting. Commenting on the ban imposed by the Disciplinary Commission of the Slovak Biathlon Association, Minister Gajdoš said: "It is absolutely unjustifiable that they are banned from representing our country." He added that the sportswomen of the Military Sports Centre have received training throughout the entire year and have been led to believe that they would be on the Slovak National Team. In her response, Minister Lubyová said: "Participation of our sportswomen in Slovakia's national representation at international sporting events is in our public interest. Therefore, we call on the Slovak Biathlon Association not to hinder the sportswomen's participation in the national representation."



Humanitarian aid delivered

(30 November) The Head Office of Ecumenical Pastoral Service in the SVK Armed Forces, working in cooperation with the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, prepared and delivered the 6th humanitarian aid consignment to residents of Višegrad County (Republic of Serbia) and Una-Sana Canton (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) on 28-29 November 2018. SlovakAid's humanitarian aid consignment, worth nearly €40,000, consists of winter clothes, nappies, hygienic articles, sleeping bags, mattresses, engine generators, and large tents. The humanitarian aid was handed over to the Red Cross by the Slovak Embassy in Sarajevo in cooperation with the SVK Armed Forces personnel deployed on Operation EUFOR Althea in BiH.

Major General Smik remembered at newly restored Memorial

(30 November) Members of the Major General Otto Smik Tactical Wing held a remembrance ceremony at the Smik Memorial at Sliach Air Base, remembering the hero of the Slovak Air Force. Since 2002 TW Sliach has borne the name of the WW2 fighter pilot and a bust of Maj Gen Smik was unveiled in a ceremony at the base in 2010. The reconstruction work on the Memorial was sponsored by British Ambassador Andrew Garth and British Defence Attaché Gp Capt Michael Longstaff and was carried out by members of Sliach Air Base in cooperation with the S/LDR Otto Smik DFC Aviation Club, a civic association. Among those coming to lay wreaths at the Memorial were State Secretary Róbert Ondrejcsák, the family of Maj Gen Otto Smik – Ján Smik along with his wife Elena and son Alexander, British Ambassador Andrew Garth, British Defence Attaché Gp Capt Michael Longstaff, DCHOD/COS Brig Gen Miroslav Lorinc, Commander SVK AF Maj Gen Lubomir Svoboda, Commander TW Sliach Col Vladimír Lisý, and other guests. They were then invited to visit a photo exhibition on the life of Maj Gen Smik at the Airport Club, TW Sliach.



■ Cpl Helena Kanalošová and Sgt 1st Class Andrej Brzula are the **SVK Air Force Best Soldier and NCO of the Year**. The results were announced by a selection board on 27 Nov at TW Sliach. Sgt 1st Class Brzula will represent the SVK Air Force at the SVK Armed Forces Best NCO of the Year Award.

■ Meeting on 28 Nov in Trenčín, a selection board unanimously concluded that MSgt Marián Valach, support team leader, Operations Support Group, Crisis Management, Training and Cynology Department Vlkánová – Hronsek, was the **SVK Military Police Best NCO of the Year**.

■ The 6th meeting of the **SVK Air Force Commander's Military Council**, chaired by Maj Gen Lubomir Svoboda, was held on 28 Nov, with the participation of Director of the Military Aviation State Administration Branch Lubomir Žák (MOD), Chief of the SVK Air Force Support Branch (SVK GS) Col Adolf Uličný, and key personnel from the SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM and subordinate units.

■ Crime investigation technicians from the SVK Military Police took part in a **specialist training course** on the methodology for detecting and retrieving forensic surface and volumetric trace evidence, which was organised by the Search and Crime Technical Operations Branch, Criminal Police Office, SVK Police Corps Presidium (HQ), in Stará Lesná.

■ Instructors of the EOD Specialist Training Section from the National Centre EOD and CBRN Nováky and members of the elite Special Purpose Unit from the SVK Police Corps Presidium (HQ), attended **skills improvement training** at the end of Nov and familiarised themselves with the principles of offensive pyrotechnics, equipment and clothing.

■ On 27-29 Nov, the Helicopter Wing Prešov hosted a **meeting to review the Training Year (TY) 2018 tasks** that had been performed in the fields of Quick Reaction Alert (QRA), combat readiness, mobilization and operational readiness. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Staff for Strategic Planning (SVK GS) and was attended by representatives of the SVK Armed Forces units. The leaders were briefed on the accomplishment of the TY 2018 tasks and the TY 2019 priorities.

■ Drivers are asked by the MOD to be alert and drive with care as there will be **30 Allied military road movements**, mostly involving HUN and POL troops, across Slovakia from 3-12 Dec 2018. In addition, SVK Army vehicles carrying oversized cargo will drive in convoy from Hlohovec to Levice, from Michalovce to Nemecká, and from Martin to Bratislava. There will also be a military railway movement from Nové Mesto nad Váhom to Trebišov.

Danubia Bridge Conference

(28 November) CIMIC and PSYOPS specialists of the SVK Armed Forces organised Danubia Bridge 2018, an international CIMIC and PSYOPS conference, at the CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre in Martin. The aim of the conference was to spark off a debate on the current CIMIC and PSYOPS challenges occurring on international and domestic crisis management operations. Attended by subject matter specialists from CZE, HUN, POL, LTU, USA, DEU and members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), this type of conference was held in Central Europe for the first time ever. The feedback was positive, so the organizers incorporated the 2nd Danubia Bridge Conference into the plan for next year.



Training of Blue Berets



(27 November) Personnel to be deployed to UNFICYP, Cyprus were into the third week of their pre-deployment training on Nitra Garrison's training ground at Kolíňanský vrch, practising the knowledge and skills they had acquired to be able to patrol the area of their responsibility. The SVK UNFICYP Engineer Platoon crews focused on operating special engineering equipment at the Major General Otto Smik Tactical Wing at Sliach Air Base. All soldiers were also vaccinated during the week. The pre-deployment training culminated with a final tactical exercise testing the Blue Berets' theoretical knowledge and practical skills on 27-28 November.

AOS in Brussels

(30 November) The General Milan Rastislav Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) presented its activities at the 2018 NATO Partnership Training and Education Centres (PTEC) Marketplace in Brussels. The aim of the PTEC Marketplace, bringing together 23 centres from around the world, was to present their activities, exchange experience and discuss potential areas of cooperation on military education and specialist training. AOS was recognised as a PTEC in 2004 and as a NATO Accredited Institution in 2018. This means it meets all NATO criteria for training and education and is qualified to certify Alliance courses. At the PTEC Marketplace, AOS presented its numerous activities, among others, Introduction to Planning of Joint Operations, an international senior staff officers' course, and its short-term variants, as well as a certified operational level course. AOS also delivers training by way of its mobile training team. Specialists from the Armed Forces Academy conduct international education activities for NATO, Partnership for Peace (PfP), Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (IOI), and Global Partnership (GP) countries.

SVK troops on Ex Anakonda-18, Poland's largest training event

(28 November) 120 troops from HQ 2nd Mechanized Brigade and other elements of the SVK Army are participating in Ex Anakonda-18 (AN-18), Poland's largest exercise, organised by the Polish Armed Forces on Bemowo Piskie Training Area in Poland's Orzysz. The aim of Ex An-18, running until 6 December, is to test the ability of Allied troops to conduct operations as an Allied Task Force in response to the growing threat of hybrid warfare in an Article 5 scenario, to run decisive military operations in an international environment, and to demonstrate the ability of Allied forces to deploy and to sustain their combat strength. Ex An-18 will involve approximately 12,500 troops on



Polish territory and another 5,000 soldiers will exercise in LTU, LVA, EST, and in the Baltic Sea. In addition to ground assets, Allied forces will be supported by 45 vessels and 150 aircraft and helicopters. ANAKONDA has since 2006 evolved into a biannual series integrating national security and defence capabilities into a joint, interagency, multinational and public environment in order to confront modern and future threats. Being the largest exercise of the Polish Armed Forces over the past 27 years, this year it is primarily aimed at enhancing the cooperation of Allied troops, bringing together Army, Air Force, Navy and Special Operations Forces units for a Command Post Exercise (CPX) and a Live Exercise (LIVEX).