



## F-16 modernization programme

(12 December) The most extensive modernization programme in the history of the Slovak Armed Forces is becoming a reality. In the presence of PM Peter Pellegrini at the Office of the SVK Government, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš signed the Letters of Offer and Acceptance (LOAs), the contractual documents needed to procure F-16 fighter jets, and the Framework Agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic and Lockheed Martin Corporation, an industrial cooperation agreement on developing Slovakia's aerospace industry and securing a gradual transfer of authority for aircraft maintenance to the SVK defence industry. The contract covers a comprehensive training programme for 22 pilots and 160 aircraft technicians, as well as a 2-year logistics support package. The SVK Air Force will receive delivery of its first F-16s in the fourth quarter of 2022, with the last aircraft to be delivered by the end of 2023. Of the 14 aircraft, 12 jets will be one-seaters and 2 jets will be two-seat trainers.



## Pre-X-mas presidential visit

(12 December) MOD leaders met President Kiska, C-in-C of the Slovak Armed Forces, for a traditional pre-Christmas meeting at MOD Main Building. The meeting was dominated by defence modernization programmes and how to make the military profession more attractive. Minister Gajdoš highlighted the ongoing work on the Personnel Management Concept, which envisages an increase in military pay next year. President Kiska was also keen to learn more about the servicemen and women serving away from their families abroad over the festive season.

## Uplift to Athletics Stadium

(12 December) Reconstruction works to uplift the Military Sports Centre (VŠC) Dukla Banská Bystrica Athletics Stadium will be undertaken by the MOD. The sports ground will meet the technical requirements of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) for international and national competitions. The reconstruction works to the Athletics Stadium's main training ground, grandstand and seating areas, stadium and access roads, and green areas are due to be completed at an estimated cost of €13 million, VAT included, by the end of 2020. Once reconstructed, the Athletics Stadium will also fulfil the certification conditions for the UEFA category 2 soccer stadium with an expected seated capacity of approx. 4,000 seats.

## Additional contemporary veterans inducted into Hall of Fame

(11 December) Another three contemporary veterans were officially inducted into the MOD Hall of Fame at today's pre-Christmas gathering of veterans. MSgt Martin Brodniansky, MSgt René Petráš and Col Štefan Ivan (posthumously) were thus recognised by Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš for their exceptional acts of valour and contributions above and beyond the normal scope of job responsibilities. Highlighting the heroism of all veterans, Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "They have not hesitated to act even in the most dangerous situations and contributed to building security and peace not only in Slovakia but also far beyond its borders. For this, they are deserving of our respect and gratitude." The minister then held a moment of silence in honour of all those who have died in the service of their country. Chief of Defence Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko thanked the MOD leadership for continuing with the tradition of recognising veterans, he said: "This annual recognition and induction of contemporary war veterans into the Hall of Fame provides challenge and motivation for all members of the SVK Armed Forces to do their best and accomplish their mission at home and in the world in an exemplary manner." Head of the MOD also announced the 22nd Military Deed of the Year Award in recognition of the military personnel and civilians who have done meritorious deeds and helped to build a good name for the SVK Armed Forces. You can contact us with your suggestions for nominations by email at [cinroka@mod.gov.sk](mailto:cinroka@mod.gov.sk) until 28 February 2019.



- Following the signature of international contractual documents between NSPA and Ukraine and the SVK MOD and NSPA, the Slovak Republic is now ready to go ahead with the practical phase of the **NATO Explosive Ordnance Disposal/Counter Improvised Explosive Devices (EOD/C-IED) Trust Fund for Ukraine Project**, where it is the Lead Nation. There is currently over €600,000 in the EOD/C-IED Trust Fund, with contributions from Slovakia and 9 NATO countries.

- The Slovak Republic handed over **humanitarian aid for Afghanistan**, gifting 540 new school uniforms for pupils from Mazar-e-Sharif. The humanitarian aid, collected by the Head Office of Ecumenical Pastoral Service in the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps in cooperation with the SVK Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, was dispatched to Afghanistan from Bratislava's M. R. Štefánik Airport after a ceremony attended by officials from the SVK Defence, Interior, and Foreign and European Affairs Ministries.

- Class 1 and Class 2 tests** for SVK AF flying personnel and air traffic controllers were administered at the SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM Zvolen. 4 pilots, 4 air traffic controllers, and 1 flight engineer from the Helicopter, Tactical and Transport Wings passed the AVIS programme tests.

- To mark 100 years of Czechoslovakia, representatives of the SVK and CZE Republics at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), Mons, opened an exhibition entitled **Legionaries – Our Heroes of the Great War 1914 – 1918**. The author of the exhibition is the Director of the SVK Institute of Military History, Col Miloslav Čaplovič. The exhibition is made up of 14 panels with texts and photo captions in both Slovak and English languages. Brussels will be the next venue of the exhibition to be organised by the Office of the SVK Military Representative to the NATO Military Committee.

- The SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM Zvolen hosted this year's last **SVK Air Force Commander's Military Council meeting** on 13 Dec. The meeting was chaired by Maj Gen Lubomír Svoboda, with the participation of the Director of the Military Aviation State Administration Branch (MOD), the Chief Inspector of Flight Safety (MOD), and the commanders of subordinate SVK AF units. The discussion focused on the protection of SVK airspace within NATINAMDS, the 2018 training activities, and the spending of resources. The 2019 Military Council Work Plan was approved at the end of the meeting.

- Chief of Defence Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko launched the book **Slovakia and Slovaks in the Whirl of WW1** by Miloslav Čaplovič and Jana Zatková during a book launch ceremony on 12 Dec. The publication describes the military engagements of Slovakian soldiers serving in the ranks of the multinational Austro-Hungarian Army and the Czechoslovak Legion.

- Drivers are asked by the MOD to be alert and drive with care as there will be **16 Allied military road movements**, mostly involving CZE and POL troops, across Slovakia from 17-23 Dec 2018.

## P. Gajdoš meets J. Sullivan



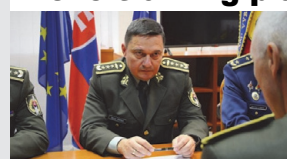
(12 December) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš held talks with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan at MOD Main Building. During the meeting, they praised the mutual defence cooperation

between the Slovak Republic and the United States of America, culminating today with the signature of the purchase contract for U.S. F-16 fighter jets. Minister Gajdoš and Deputy Secretary Sullivan also agreed that the defence cooperation between the SVK Armed Forces and the Indiana National Guard has been excellent, especially when it comes to joint training and exercises in both countries. They also discussed the industrial cooperation between the two countries, the SVK deployments on international crisis management missions and operations, and the planned increase in the SVK contribution to the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan under the approved mandate.

## G. Darrieussecq visits MOD

(11 December) Thanks to their joint defence activities, the cooperation between the Slovak Republic and the French Republic has been excellent. Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and French Minister of State for Defence Geneviève Darrieussecq were in agreement on this point during their meeting at MOD Main Building. On her visit to the MOD, the French Minister of State for Defence was accompanied by the French Ambassador to Slovakia, HE Mr Christophe Leonzi. The minister underlined the joint defence activities of the Slovak and French Republics thus far. Among the recent examples of collaboration is the training of French Armed Forces personnel with toxic chemicals at the CBRN Training and Testing Centre Zemianske Kostolany, as well as the participation of FRA personnel in Ex TOXIC VALLEY 2018 and the Slovak Air Fest (SIAF) 2018.

## 2019 training plans approved



(11 December) Chief of Defence Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko approved the training directive and plans for subordinate HQs and units, marking the culmination of the planning

process for 2019. The planning process is geared towards strengthening the operational readiness of armed forces through a balanced uplift to four pillars: (1) well-educated and capable personnel, (2) modern armaments, (3) challenging training and strong will, and (4) high morale and discipline. This year was unique insofar as the operational planning principles enabling continuous monitoring of results were strictly applied.

## Best Armed Forces NCO of the Year is Martin of Martin

(13 December) A selection board, chaired by CSEL Sgt Maj Vladimír Beluš, named Sgt 1st Class Martin Chovanec, of the CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre Martin, 'Best Armed Forces Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year' at the M. R. Štefánik Museum in Košariská. Senior PSYOPS specialist Sgt 1st Class Chovanec's military career began with him enlisting into the Immediate Reaction Battalion Martin. He completed two tours of duty in KFOR, Kosovo and one tour of duty in ISAF, Afghanistan. He was trained at the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) at Fort Bragg. He is



currently undergoing pre-deployment training for EUFOR ALTHEA in BiH. He has been promoting his military unit at school events and at the Košice International Peace Marathon. Specialist Gunner/Operator Cpl Lukáš Vnučko, of the Mechanised Battalion Nitra, was selected 'Best Armed Forces Soldier of the Year', Cpl Helena Kanalošová, of the C2S Wing Zvolen, was awarded 'SVK Air Force Best Airman of the Year', MSgt Marián Valach, of the Crisis

Management, Training and Cynology Department Vlknavá – Hronsek, walked away with 'Military Police Best NCO of the Year'.