



New generals

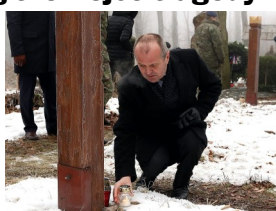
(15 January) Based on the Government-approved proposal by the Minister of Defence, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces Zuzana Čaputová promoted Defence Staff (DS) Colonels Ivan Balog and Vladimír Lengvarský to the most junior general officer's rank of Brigadier General. At the same time, she promoted Major General Josef Pokorný to the rank of Lieutenant General.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "For a soldier, to achieve the general officer's rank is an honour as well as a commitment into the future. In every case, this is about recognising service personnel's work to the benefit of the security of the State and its citizens, often working out of hours." He went on to thank the families of the generals for their support. "Without it, this simply would not be possible," he emphasised.

Speaking on behalf of the generals, Brig Gen Ivan Balog, Commander 1st Mech Bde Topoľčany, thanked the Defence Minister and the SVK Government for the trust invested in them, he said: "It is an honour for us to get such opportunity. We promise to ensure the security of the Slovak Republic and we will not betray the trust that has been placed in us today."

Commemorating the Hejce tragedy

(19 January) Victims of the worst air disaster in Slovakia's history were commemorated by Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš and his Hungarian counterpart Tibor Benkő, Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko and other representatives of the SVK MOD and both Armed Forces during a commemoration ceremony on Borsó Hill in Hejce, Hungary. They came to pay their respects to the memory of the SVK soldiers who died in the crash of the Antonov AN-24 aircraft returning from KFOR 14 years ago.



Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "Slovakia remembers 19 January 2006 as a black day in its history. 42 families lost their close ones and the rest of us our wonderful colleagues and specialists in their trades." He continued: "14 years on, it is impossible to come to this place out of habit or because it is our duty, but rather we wish to offer our sincere respects to the heroes who lived up to the words of the military oath." He thanked the residents of Hejce for taking good care of the places of commemoration.

Hungarian Defence Minister Tibor Benkő expressed his deepest sympathy to the next of kin and friends of the departed soldiers, he said: "They deployed abroad to help other nations to live in peace and calm and security, for which they are deserving of our respect."

As Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko said, the 19 January 2006 event is a tragic part of the contemporary history of the Slovak Armed Forces. "I have a personal connection to the soldiers who lost their lives in the accident. Indeed, it is essential that we commemorate this tragedy every year as well as the memory of all those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of the Slovak Republic beyond its borders," he said.

SVK CHOD attends NATO Military Committee in CHOD Session in Brussels

(15 January) The 182nd NATO Military Committee in Chiefs of Defence Session (MCCS) was held at NATO HQ in Brussels on 14-15 January 2020. The SVK Armed Forces delegation was led by CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko. The session was opened by Chairman of the NATO Military Committee Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach (UK). As a tradition, this was followed by a joint session of Allied CHODs with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. The Chiefs of Defence addressed NATO operations, missions and activities, including force generation for NATO operational commitments. They also dealt with current challenges and the next heading of the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan, the NATO Mission Iraq (NMI), and the Kosovo Force Mission (KFOR). In his statement, Gen Zmeko reassured Allies of the Slovak Armed Forces' readiness to continue performing the tasks in support of NMI. The Allied Chiefs agreed on the need to continue delivering the mandate of NMI despite the fact that its training activities have been temporarily suspended due to current security developments. The Allied CHODs also focused on the Alliance's southern flank and the complex Enablement of the SACEUR's Area of Responsibility before moving on to the tasks of the newly established Joint Force Command (JFC) Norfolk and Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) Ulm. The last topic discussed was NATO-Georgia cooperation. The next meeting of MCCS will take place on 14 May 2020 in Brussels.



■ **Petra Vihová (SVK)** and **Federica Brignone (ITA)** shared a victory in the women's giant slalom at the FIS Alpine Skiing World Cup in Italy's Sestriere on 18 Jan 2020. A few days earlier, on 14 Jan 2020, she triumphed in the women's slalom in Austria's Flachau.

■ As part of her New Year's receptions at the Presidential Palace on 14 Jan 2020, SVK President Zuzana Čaputová received **members of the SVK Presidential Guard** to thank them for their service and their role in representing the SVK Armed Forces in public.

■ With the re-subordination of the 2nd Mechanised Brigade's **23rd Motorised Battalion** to the Slovak Special Operations Forces Command (SOCOM) on 1 Jan 2020, the official email of the Battalion has changed to gs.vesso.23mopr@mil.sk.

■ A remembrance ceremony in tribute to two members of the elite 5th SOF Regt and one U.S. Air Force officer – **Cpt Eduard Makovník, MSgt Patrik Fraštia, and Cpt David Lyon** – was held in Afghanistan at the end of 2019. They died when a vehicle-borne IED was detonated near their convoy in the province of Kabul on 27 Dec 2013.

■ Thanks to the Slovak Arts Council's Arts Support Fund Grant No. 19-51404069 in the amount of 3,000 euros and a payment of 200 euros by the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy, the Academy Library went ahead with purchasing new books under its **Academy Library Services Improvement Project**.

■ The **SVK Special Operations Advisory Team (SOAT) in Afghanistan** participated in the preparation and selection of candidates for the Afghan Khat/Khas (KKA) Special Unit, a national anti-terror unit.

■ Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be 10 **Allied road movements** from 20 to 26 Jan 2020 in Slovakia. They will mostly involve CZE and POL troops. During the week, SVK Army convoys will ferry oversized cargo on the following routes: Zvolen – Prešov, Zvolen – Banská Bystrica, Trebišov – Prešov, Trebišov – Moldava nad Bodvou. There will also be a SVK Army rail movement from Prešov to Kamenica nad Cirochou.

Full Field Kit this week

Live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat on Regina Radio's Full Field Kit, dedicated to all those who care about homeland security and defence, we will pay tribute to the victims of the AN-24 air disaster in Hejce and Slovakia's villages and settlements burned down in WW2. We appreciate your comments, suggestions and opinions. Please, write to us at pinapolna@mod.gov.sk.

Rocket & Missile Forces and Artillery Day below Trenčín Castle

(15 January) Peace Square below Trenčín Castle along with the Trenčín Garrison Club became the venue for the 75th anniversary commemorations of the battle at Jasło and Rocket & Missile Forces and Artillery Day. Representatives of all SVK Armed Forces artillery units and veteran associations (i.e. the CZE and SVK Artillery Community, Rifleman and Artillerymen Guild Bratislava, SVK Soldiers Union, SVK Generals Club) gathered in Peace Square for a commemoration ceremony, with combat systems on display.

The MOD delegation led by Director General of the Human Resources Dept (MOD) Brig Gen Boris Ďurkech, Armed Forces leaders represented by DCOM SVK Army Brig Gen Martin Michalko, Trenčín region and city authorities, and partner artillery organizations from Czechia commemorated the 75th



anniversary of the decisive battle waged against Nazi troops at the town of Jasło, Poland. This was Czechoslovak artillery's most extensive and successful engagement throughout WW2. During the ceremony, representatives of SVK Armed Forces

units, veterans and members of military associations were presented medals in Peace Square and later on at the Trenčín Garrison Club. CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko underlined that 15 January is a day of great importance for artillerymen as they mark Rocket & Missile Forces and Artillery Day, a famed tradition whose bearers are ex-servicemen and serving personnel – commanders, officers, artillery systems operators, technicians and armourers from gun, rocket and missile units. Some of them were dubbed Knights of Artillery by Honorary Chairman of the Czech and Slovak Artillery Community Maj Gen (Rtd) Dušan Humený.