



Recognising burned villages

(23 January) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš and General Secretary of the SVK Ministry of Defence Ján Holko visited the Slovak National Uprising (SNP) Museum in Banská Bystrica to present medals to 108 villages and settlements burned down in Slovakia during WW2. Another 35 SNP personalities were also awarded the 75th SNP Anniversary and End of WW2 Commemorative Medal.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "The aim of today's event was to symbolically award those villages whose residents lived through the cruelty of war in a most dreadful and horrifying manner." He went on to underline that "it is important to speak about such happenings and remember them even today, so that the young generation can form their own opinion about them and resist the intensifying ideas of extremism."

Calling on the mayors of the awarded villages to raise awareness about fascism being a very dangerous ideology, General Secretary of the SVK MOD Ján Holko said: "I myself come from the village of Košarovec, it is among the villages awarded today, because its residents too experienced the bestiality of Nazism in its most cruel form, when it was burned down by Nazis. For this reason, I perceive the events with greater sensitivity, because I know them from the stories of my parents as well. And my message to all people is that it is our duty to fight extremism in any of its forms and in all circumstances."

Nazi occupation forces burned down a total of 111 villages and settlements in Slovakia. Nazi repercussions claimed 5,304 victims who were buried in 211 mass graves.

Minister congratulates veteran

(23 January) In Žilina, Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš visited František Marek, participant of the WW2 national struggle for liberation and veteran, who celebrated his 100th birthday at the beginning of January. During the visit, the Minister awarded him the 75th Slovak National Uprising Anniversary and End of WW2 Medal.



Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "I appreciate such memorable moments as this visit to Mr František Marek. In this way too we can pay tribute and thank our veterans for what they did for our freedom and peace."

Expressing his gratitude for the Minister's visit and congratulations, František Marek said: "As an ordinary soldier, I am pleased to have met the Minister. I appreciate it very much, it is an honour for me, and I am very thankful for it," he said. "God our Lord, milk, honey, garlic and no anger is a recipe for living to 100," he revealed.

František Marek is a holder of the Certificate of Participation in [WW2] National Struggle for Liberation and the Certificate of Participation in Resistance Movement Abroad. He was a member of the 2nd Technical Division in Italy. In Feb 1944, he joined a group of partisans in Rome, he was captured by Nazi troops and imprisoned until July 1944. In Apr 1945, he voluntarily joined the 1st Czechoslovak Division. He returned home on 3 Aug 1945.

Dukla Observation Tower has a new speed lift after nearly 50 years

(22 January) The Dukla Observation Tower has a new speed lift after nearly 50 years. Designed for improved safety and larger capacity, the speed lift will be available to visitors to the Museum of Military History Svidník come this summer season. The funding for the lift replacement was secured by the Ministry of Defence. By restoring the sites connected with our history, the MOD seeks to support the public interest and especially that of young people in Slovak military history and place greater emphasis on deepening patriotism, as it committed to in the Government Manifesto. Director of the Institute of Military History Col Miloslav Čaplovič said: "Thanks to the new speed lift with larger passenger capacity, the exhibition premises capturing the bloodiest battlefield of our country in WW2, i.e. the Carpatho-Dukla Operation, can now be visited from May to October by more visitors who can take a lift up the 49-metre-tall observation tower with greater safety and comfort."

Operational since the opening of the Dukla Observation Tower in 1974, the original technically outdated lift has been replaced by a new one. The lift installation works were put out to tender and have now been completed by the winning company. The contract is recorded in the Central Register of Contracts. The approval procedure for the lift installation works is underway.



- The historically first Memorandum of Cooperation with the Town of Brezová pod Bradlom was signed by **Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko** and Mayor of Brezová pod Bradlom Jaroslav Ciran on 17 Jan 2020.

- Celebrations to mark the **75th anniversary of the liberation of Svidník** were held on 19 Jan 2020, with the participation of State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marián Saloň, Member of Parliament and Deputy Chairman of the Prešov Self-Governing Region Jozef Lukáč, and First Secretary of the Russian Embassy in Slovakia Igor Samoshkin.

- Bratislava's Kutuzov Barracks hosted the initial planning conference for **Ex Slovak Shield 2020** on 20 Jan 2020. The conference centred on the fundamental pillars on which the architecture of the entire exercise will be based.

- Cigef, a village in Upper Nitra, hosted the **45th SNP March of Gratitude** on 18 Jan 2020, with the participation of PM Peter Pellegrini, Chairman of the Trenčín Self-Governing Region Jaroslav Baška and DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Miroslav Lorinc, and members of HQ Bratislava Garrison.

- Director of the Topographic Institute Banská Bystrica announced the 0 edition of the **Defence-wide Military Equipment Recognition Competition**, to be held on 6 May 2020. More information is available at http://web.topu.mil.sk/aktivty/imint_sut0.html.

- Servicemen from the 2nd Mechanised Brigade Prešov ascended **Borsó Hill** at the Hungarian village of Hejce for the 12th time, to pay tribute to the 42 victims of the Antonov AN-24 air disaster of 19 Jan 2006.

- **Biathlete Paulína Fialková** (SVK), of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, finished 2nd in the women's 10km pursuit at the Biathlon World Cup in Ruhpolding, Germany on 19 Jan 2020.

- Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be **military road movements** across Slovakia from 27 Jan to 2 Feb 2020. They will include six road movements of CZE troops, escorted by SVK MP, deploying on Ex Transylvanian Dragon 2020 and SVK Armed Forces convoys ferrying oversized cargo on the following routes: Hlohovec – Martin, Trebišov – Michalovce, Kuchyňa – Martin – Levice, and Sered – Michalovce.

Full Field Kit this week

What will 2020 be like for the Armed Forces? This question will be answered not only during this week's Annual Meeting of Commanders chaired by Chief of Defence (CHOD), but also during our show live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat on Regina Radio. We appreciate your comments, suggestions and opinions. Please, write to us at plnapolna@mod.gov.sk.

Separate staff rehearsal for International Ex Bobr 2020

(24 January) Led by Chief of Staff 1st Mechanised Brigade Col Peter Ondrejka, a separate staff rehearsal ahead of International Ex Bobr 2020 was underway at Jaselské Barracks in Topoľčany on 20-24 Jan 2020. As part of the staff rehearsal, the personnel of the 1st Mechanised Brigade and other SVK Armed Forces units assigned to the HQ Staff Mechanised Brigade Capability Target 2017 practised and aligned the military operational planning capabilities and verified the functionality of the Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) and that of the Military



the Polish Armed Forces in Brzeg and in Warsaw in June 2020.

DAs visit SVK Air Force HQ



(24 January) The Slovak Air Force Headquarters (SVK AF HQ) Zvolen was visited by the Defence Attachés (DAs) of Poland, Hungary, the USA and Germany accredited to Slovakia. They were greeted by Deputy Air Chief Brig Gen Róbert

Kleštinec and briefed on the mission and fundamental tasks of the Slovak Air Force by Col Peter Baliak. The presentation was then followed by a concise update on the Slovak Air Force's ongoing modernisation programmes by Col Josef Hausner.

Live fire and fire control rehearsal

(23 January) Deployed to the Simulation Technologies facility at the Training Centre Lešť, the Self-propelled Artillery Battalion conducted a live fire and fire control rehearsal entitled 'Self-propelled Artillery Battalion in support of 2nd Mechanised Brigade units in a defensive role'. Battalion Commander Lt Col Roman Bobaľ set two basic exercise objectives – to test the provision of command, control and communications (C3) within the Battalion's structure and the methodological procedures for the preparation, organisation and execution of firing tasks. During the exercise, members of the Battalion HQ and Staff, 1st and 2nd Fire Batteries, Artillery Reconnaissance Battery, Command Support Battery, and two ISTAR Battalion soldiers executed over 20 exercise injects with follow-up tasks for the recon teams, the elements providing communications and target acquisition, and the fire batteries. The Battalion Commander along with his SinC, Maj Stanislav Šrag, oversaw the training of the unit, which is gearing up for a June-to-Dec eFP deployment to Latvia.

SCISB Change of Command



(21 January) In the presence of SVK Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, members of the Stationary Communications and Information Systems Base (SCISB) Trenčín and invited guests attended the Change of Command (COC) ceremony for Commander Stationary Communications and Information Systems Base Trenčín on 16 Jan 2020. Gen Zmeko expressed his satisfaction with the performance of SCISB in the Slovak Armed Forces and thanked the outgoing commander, Col Peter Schvarbacher, and all SCISB members for handling challenging tasks. Finally, he introduced the incoming commander, Col Jozef Furák, who is to take up the appointment with effect from 1 Feb 2020.