



Commemoration in Senohrad

(21 February) The legacy of the fallen Romanian soldiers who along with Red Army soldiers and Czechoslovak units freed our territory was commemorated by General Secretary of the SVK MOD Ján Holko and Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko during the commemorations held in the village of Senohrad and in Oremov Laz at the Training Centre Lešť. In attendance at the ceremonies dedicated to the fallen WW2 heroes were also representatives of the Romanian Diplomatic Corps.

Speaking at the ceremony in Senohrad, General Secretary of the SVK MOD Ján Holko said: "I appreciate that the residents of Senohrad do not forget how cruel the war was and that every year they commemorate the village's liberation from Nazi oppression. Today we pay homage to all those soldiers who fought for our freedom." On this occasion, he emphasised that the growing voices of intolerance and right-wing extremism cannot have any place in today's society.

In her speech, Mayor of Senohrad Oľga Bartková said: "In our village and its surroundings, in the days of February we commemorate the defeat of Nazism and the end of the Second World War – the most extensive and destructive conflict in the history of mankind. The war brought huge human and material losses that mankind had not hitherto experienced. There are only a few living witnesses from this period. That is why it is up to us to commemorate and cherish the memory of these events. Let us not allow hatred to spread in society and let us protect our hard-won freedom!"

The memory of the fallen WW2 soldiers was also commemorated by the SVK MOD and Armed Forces leaders and the Romanian delegation at the Romanian Army Memorial at the Training Centre Lešť. Over 240,000 Romanian soldiers participated in the operations to liberate Slovakia. Of them, 10,000 soldiers paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Military Police assess their activity in 2019 in Vlkanoň

(18 February) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš attended the Annual Meeting of Military Police (MP) Commanders in Vlkanoň. As part of the Training Year 2019 (TY19) Assessment, Minister Gajdoš praised the results of military policemen in eliminating crime across Defence, their deployments in response to exceptional emergencies and participation in EU, NATO and UN missions and operations. Defence Minister said: "Military Police is an important part of the Ministry of Defence in the field of security, protection and prevention, while thanks to its wide range of capabilities it is also a significant partner of the SVK Police Corps." He reminded that last year military policemen were deployed on patrolling operations during the International Ice Hockey Championship in Bratislava and Košice and over the festive season. They also participated in supporting international events in Slovakia such as the Bucharest 9 (B9) Presidents Meeting, V4 + Benelux Parliamentary Chairmen Meeting, and the OSCE Meeting held under the SVK OSCE Chairmanship. "Last year, too, we took several significant measures to stabilise high quality personnel not just in the Armed Forces, but in the SVK Military Police as well, especially through the historically highest Service pay increase and improvements in the provision of equipment and clothing for service personnel and military policemen," he said.



■ Through its 8 Recruitment Teams, the Slovak Armed Forces Personnel Office carried out a total of 67 activities aimed at **targeted recruitment at secondary and tertiary schools** across all the regions in Slovakia between 2 Jan and 21 Feb 2020. Students were thus introduced into how to become servicemen and women, as well as being briefed on the study programmes offered by the Gen. M. R. Štefánik AOS Liptovský Mikuláš. Also involved in the activities were other elements of the SVK Armed Forces.

■ A **Basic Military Training (BMT) graduation ceremony** was held at the Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin on 21 Feb. It was attended by 200 successful graduates (37 women), both soldier trainees and cadets, who pledged their oath to the SVK Armed Forces. 12 trainees either withdrew from or failed the training programme. A platoon of soldier trainees predestined for the 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina was formed for the first time.

■ A working session involving fire safety technicians, fire safety chiefs and defence firefighting unit chiefs from munitions depots took place on 18 Feb at the Supply Base II Martin, with the participation of members of the Pipeline Transport Centre (CPD), Supply Base III Zemianske Kostofany. There, CPD members introduced their **firefighting capabilities in support of the defence fire units** operating at munitions depots.

■ SVK Air Force Headquarters Zvolen hosted a **SVK Air Chief's Military Council meeting** on 19 Feb. The meeting was opened by SVK Air Chief Maj Gen Ľubomír Svoboda. To mark his jubilee, Col Vladimír Zastko, Chief of the Special Air and Technical Services Branch, was presented the SVK CHOD Commemorative Cross.

■ Members of the Helicopter Wing Prešov practised **executing their missions under winter conditions** in the Čergov Mountain Range in mid-February. The 4-day winter training incorporated planning and timing movements across hardly accessible mountainous terrain, building shelters and making fire. Physically challenging orienteering in terrain and set in difficult climate conditions tested the soldiers' physical and psychological strengths.

■ Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be 13 **Allied road movements**, mostly involving POL and SLO troops, across Slovakia from 24 Feb to 1 Mar 2020. SVK Army convoys will also transport oversized cargo and conduct road moves on the following routes: Trebišov – Veľké Ozorovce, Sereď – Moldava nad Bodvou, Michalovce – Moldava nad Bodvou, Trenčín – Záhorie and Záhorie – Michalovce. There will also be a SVK Army rail movement from Šarišské Luky to Zlatovce.

Course for AFG instructors



(19 February) An instructor development course designed for Afghan (AFG) service personnel opened early this year. The Special Operations Basic Course (SOB-C) was held under the aegis of the Special Operations Task Force.

It was attended by selected instructors from the AFG National Counterterrorism Unit (KKA), instructors of the General Command of Special Police Units (GCPSU), and instructors of the Commando Qualifications Course (CDOQC). SVK mentors focused on improving combat training techniques and their instinctive use. Passing this joint instructors' training is the first step towards creating an effective training cycle within SOB-C, which is the entry point to all types of SOF instructor training courses in Afghanistan.

Underwater operations training



(17 February) The Slovak Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš hosted a joint military swimming and underwater operations training for SOF and River Police members, with the aim of forming, strengthening and improving their skills to

successfully conduct combat and emergency response operations on and under the water surface. The highly specialist training focused on instructional and methodological preparations for diving and critical situation management. Being part of the cooperation between the Defence and Interior Ministries, it is a platform for exchanging precious experience and contributes to building joint skills. Selected AOS cadets participated in some stages of the training as well.

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 aimed at all soldiers and civilians, you will receive information on veterans Sgt Michal Strenk and Maj Gen (posthumously) Alexander Korda. We appreciate your comments, suggestions and opinions. Please, write to us at plnapolna@mod.gov.sk.

Pilgrimages currently on offer by the Roman Catholic Bishopric of the Forces in 2020



62nd International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes, France
Date: 13-19 May; No. of participants: 90; Transport: Defence/Interior Ministry coaches – free, Prison & Justice Guard – depending on the circumstances; Participant fee: €165 to be paid before boarding the coach; Catering: no food provided en route to and from Lourdes, full board in Lourdes; Registration closing date: 28 Feb 2020.

15th National Pilgrimage

to Rome and the Vatican, Italy

Date: 6-12 Sept; No. of participants: 45; Transport: Defence/

Interior Ministry coaches – free, Prison & Justice Guard – depending on the circumstances; Participant fee: €200 to be paid before boarding the coach; Catering: no food provided en route to and from Lourdes, half board in Rome, lunch not provided; Registration closing date: 31 May 2020.

8th St Cyril and St Methodius Meeting of SVK and HUN Roman Catholic Bishoprics of the Forces in Zalavár, Hungary

Date: 13 June; No. of participants: 45; Dress Code: Service Dress; Transport: MOD coaches – free; Participant fee: €5; Catering: no food provided en route to and from Zalavár; Registration closing date: 31 May 2020.

22nd National Pilgrimage to Levoča, Slovakia

Date: 4-5 July; No. of participants: 100; Transport: MOD coaches – free or individually; Participant fee: €10 to be paid before boarding the coach; Accommodation: J. Vojtaššák

Diocese Seminary in Spišská Kapitula (1 night); Catering: breakfast included; Registration closing date: 31 May 2020.

27th International Military Pilgrimage from Warsaw to Czestochowa, Poland

Date: 4-14 Aug; No. of participants: 20 (Service personnel only); Transport: depending on the circumstances; Participant fee: no fee; Accommodation: free in tents; Catering: field meals; Special requirements: excellent physical condition for the 300km march with full field kit; Registration closing date: 31 May 2020.

National Pilgrimage to Šaštín, Slovakia

Date: 15 Sept. 2020.

To apply for a pilgrimage, contact your military chaplain. Those selected will be informed in due time. For more information, go to <https://www.ordinariat.sk/zavazne-prihlasky-na-jednotlive-aktivitu/>.