



VE Day commemoration

(8 May) The 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe was today observed by the highest constitutional representatives along with SVK Government members and Armed Forces officials at the Czechoslovak Army Corps Memorial at the Háj-Nicovô War Cemetery in Liptovský Mikuláš. On this occasion, Minister Naď paid homage to all victims of war conflicts, whilst at the same time reminding that freedom and peace are among the universal values that we must protect.

On Victory in Europe Day, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "Nor should we forget our war veterans who stand as a living testament to the horrors and hardships the war brought with it. In one of the worst chapters of human history, evil and cruelty had no limits. The road to freedom claimed a huge amount of material and especially human losses. That is why we must never forget what the war meant and what it brought with it," said Minister Naď, with reference to the fondness for totalitarian regimes still existing in our society today.



Paying homage to Gen Štefánik

(4 May) To mark the 101st anniversary of Gen M. R. Štefánik's tragic death, representatives of the SVK MOD honoured his memory during acts of commemoration at the Gen M. R. Štefánik Statue on the Danube embankment in Bratislava and at the Tomb of Gen M. R. Štefánik on Bradlo Hill. Among those paying homage to one of the greatest personalities of Slovakia's contemporary history were Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď, Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Ján Mičovský, Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, and French Ambassador HE Mr Christophe Léonzi. In attendance at the ceremony in Bratislava was also State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marian Majer.

In his remarks, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď underscored the importance of commemorative events thanks to which the contemporary generations can learn more about prominent figures of Slovak history and Slovak military history. "The legacy and work of Gen M. R. Štefánik are of timeless quality because in the ideas which he championed we can, even today, find an underlying message – that of the values of democracy and freedom," he said, recognising the many talents of Gen M. R. Štefánik as an astronomer, a pilot, a diplomat, a French Army general, an organiser of the Czechoslovak Legion, and an advocate of the independent state of Czechs and Slovaks.

Position of Slovak Republic on Ukraine is unchangeable

(6 May) State Secretary of the SVK Ministry of Defence Marian Majer held talks with Ukrainian Defence, Military and Air Attaché Col Bogdan Kharchuk at MOD Main Building. The meeting the primary discussion topic of which was the evolving situation in Ukraine took place at the initiative of the Ukrainian side. During the talks, they also devoted their attention to current security and defence issues and ways to take forward the bilateral engagement between both countries. However, this is now greatly constrained by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It is also for this reason they agreed on the need to restart it as soon as the situation allows.

State Secretary of the SVK Ministry of Defence Marian Majer said: "The position of the Slovak Republic on the subject of respecting the principles of international law, including territorial integrity, is unchangeable. Any violation of the principles by the use of military force is unacceptable. That is why it is important that any bilateral or multilateral disputes should be resolved within the valid agreements without any further escalation of tensions in the region." He underpinned the necessity to pursue a policy focused on resolving security and humanitarian issues in the Donbass, including the protection of civilian populations. At today's meeting, the State Secretary assured the UKR Attaché that Slovakia continues to support Ukraine's efforts to achieve NATO's Enhanced Opportunity Partner (EOP) status. He reiterated that Slovakia is appreciative of Ukraine's efforts to join the Euro-Atlantic structures.



■ On 1 May 2020, the Regional Public Healthcare Office in Spišská Nová Ves decided to lift the quarantine measures imposed on three settlements on Hornádska, Družstevná and Stará Maša Streets in the town of Krompachy. As part of Op UMBRELLA 1, these locations were monitored by members of the ISTAR Bn, 22nd Mech Bn, and Tk Bn. During her meeting with **Commander 2nd Mechanised Brigade Brig Gen Vladimír Kubáň**, Mayor of Krompachy Iveta Rušinová praised the high professionalism of SVK Armed Forces personnel and she asked him to sign the Town Chronicle as a sign of gratitude to the military. Elsewhere, 2nd Mech Bde service members have been continuing to support the villagers of Žehra in quarantine.

■ As part of the battle against COVID-19, 144 members of the **Command Support Battalion** are supporting police forces by manning the Drietoma and Lysá pod Makytou border crossings. And 250 Battalion soldiers are assisting police forces in Trenčín – Kvetná, Trenčianske Teplice and Považská Bystrica. They are also distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) and disinfectants to SVK Armed Forces units. Elsewhere, trained military personnel are working as sanitary personnel at the wards of the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok, as well as taking samples and transferring them to COVID-19 testing labs.

■ The **Institute of Military History** informs that the Dukla Lookout Tower will be closed to the public between 6 May and 30 June "for operational and investment reasons". In line with the easing of coronavirus lockdown measures, the outside exhibition grounds of the Military History Museum Svidník have been open to the public since 8 May 2020. After disinfecting their hands, individuals and groups of up to 5 people wearing face coverings (e.g. masks, shawls and scarves) are allowed to enter the indoor exhibition spaces.

■ JUDr. Martin Jakál assumed the appointment of **Director General of the Human Resources Department** of the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic with effect from 1 May 2020.

■ The **SVK MOD Outpatient Clinic** informs that it will conduct compulsory vaccination programmes and medical checks for selected service personnel. For this reason, working spaces will be disinfected from 10:00 to 10:30 and soldiers will be vaccinated from 10:30 to 11:30. No regular medical checks will be provided during the latter period.

■ **Slovakia Against Fascism, Slovakia On the Side of Democracy** was officially launched at the Institute of Military History (VHÚ) Bratislava. This collective monograph was co-written by the first VHÚ director and an important representative of SVK military history, Col (Rtd) Jozef Bystrický, on the occasion of his jubilee. The publication provides an insight into the history of mankind, from ancient history to contemporary history, and is predominantly focused on the military history of Slovakia and Slovaks.

■ Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be **SVK military road movements** scheduled from 11 to 17 May 2020. SVK Army round trip convoys will transport oversized cargo from Prešov to TA Valaškovce and from Kamenica n. Cirochou to TA Biela Hora. There will also be a SVK military rail movement from Zemianske Kostofany to Vlkánová.

Continued repatriations

(4 May) After repatriating SVK nationals from Lebanon on 1 May and Cyprus on 2 May, on Monday evening a SVK Air Force C-27J Spartan brought home another 12 repatriates who were left stranded in Cyprus without being able to return to Slovakia. Among them was also one Austrian national.

Medical staff are always present on all repatriation flights. Besides their duties, they also look after passengers who suffer from air sickness.



Hospital supportive of soldiers

(5 May) As part of a mobile unit posted to the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš, employees of the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok have provided medical care for the service personnel, returning from tours of duty abroad and from the quarantine centres, subject to the mandatory quarantine period, as well as taking swab samples for COVID-19 testing. Quarantine includes observation stays with continuous surveillance of all aspects of infectious diseases. On return from epidemiological high risk zones, soldiers are subject to the measures eliminating threats to their home units before leaving quarantine and reporting back to their units.

New Chaplain General appointed

(6 May) Following the decision of the Steering Committee of the Ecumenical Council of Churches as of 25 March 2020, Chaplain General Col Marian Bodollió resigned from his post at his own request and will move on to serve as an EPS chaplain at the SVK Ministry of Finance. He is succeeded by the acting military chaplain and dean of the Gen M. R. Štefánik SVK Armed Forces Academy, Viktor Sabo, who was promoted to Colonel and appointed Chaplain General of Ecumenical Pastoral Service (EPS) in the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps with effect from 1 May 2020. He has long-time experience of pastoral service and is well familiar with the demands and possibilities of pastoral service in military and police forces.

Refurbishing Nová Polianka into climatic spa

(7 May) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď along with State Secretary of the SVK Ministry of Defence Marian Majer today visited a facility run by MOD-owned HOREZZA JSC in Nová Polianka in the High Tatras. They were informed of the status of the ongoing refurbishment works and the investment into this project, as approved by the previous MOD leadership.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "Last October, SNS Party nominees along with their leader tapped the foundation stone, launching the refurbishment of this facility into a climatic spa at the cost of €6 million. I decided to check the progress of the refurbishment works so that in case of any deficiencies we could act as soon as possible. Considering the amount of work

that still needs to be completed, it is now clear that the planned refurbishment period will be extended."



Minister Naď explained that the priority of the acting MOD leadership is to proceed with each project in respect of the transparency criteria. It is inevitable that all processes associated with the procurement and implementation of whatever contract should be in line with applicable legislation, whilst ensuring the purposeful and efficient use of funds.

Equally important, we will not tolerate overpriced and late deliveries of goods and services," he added.

The facility in Nová Polianka, which is a cultural heritage site, will have 141 beds and create favourable conditions for treating a variety of diseases, mainly respiratory diseases.