



## Ministerial visit to Lešť

(3 May) Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Robert Kaliňák and Spanish Defence Minister Margarita Robles Fernández visited MTC Lešť, where the ESP Contingent is operationally deployed as part of the NATO BG in Slovakia. Spain will take over command of NATO MN BG SVK from Czechia this July.

Minister Kaliňák thanked Minister Fernández for Spain's vital contribution to this multinational task force, and praised its decision to assume command of NATO MN BG SVK as the Framework Nation. As such, ESP troops participate in joint exercises and play a part in deterring the realistic threat of a physical attack on Alliance territory.

"The Spanish service personnel praise the hospitality of Slovakia as the Host Nation, our mutual cooperation, and the conditions and facilities for the soldiers stationed at MTC Lešť, which is a modern military training area of European format," Mr Kaliňák said, adding that Slovakia cannot rely on collective defence only, but, under Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty, it needs to ramp up its efforts to make substantial upgrades to the country's individual warfighting capabilities as the basis for collective capacity to resist any armed attack.

Both Mr Kaliňák and Ms Fernández were interested in the coordination and synchronisation of all troops engaged in the defence of Slovakia. According to him, ESP and SVK military personnel along with other BG soldiers confirmed their readiness to defend Alliance territory during Ex Strong Cohesion 2024 – the BG's NATO Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL) – which demonstrated the compatibility of their SOPs for defensive operations.

The ESP Contingent has been arriving in Slovakia in stages from the start of this year. Up to 780 ESP service personnel along with equipment will have been deployed to Slovakia by July 2024.

## Keeping Gen Štefánik's legacy alive

(4 May) 105 years on after his tragic death, Milan Rastislav Štefánik's legacy as a scientist, diplomat, soldier and politician was paid tribute by DEPDEFMIN Igor Melicher and CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko at the Armed Forces National Event at the Tomb of General Štefánik on Bradlo Hill overlooking Brezová pod Bradlom.



"Milan Rastislav Štefánik remains a great inspiration to me as well as a symbol of the Slovak Nation's unity," Mr Melicher said and continued: "His legacy is certainly worth following and should serve as a beacon to all people of Slovakia who value our common State, who want to keep improving it, and who will not give up on its sovereignty."

A commemoration service for M. R. Štefánik, supported by the Slovak Armed Forces Guard of Honour and the Slovak Armed Forces Band, also took place in Ivanka pri Dunaji, which saw veterans, MOD representatives, members of the Diplomatic Corps in attendance alongside government officials and local authorities. Another commemoration service was organised by the Chaplaincy Service at General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš.

## Dukla Military Sports Centre opens its doors to the public

(1 May) A new Olympians Wall honouring Slovakia's successful Olympians was unveiled in a ceremony at the Main Building of the Dukla Military Sports Centre Banská Bystrica during its Open Day, which brings the Centre closer to the public through sporting activities and personal meetings with top athletes.

Director of the Dukla Military Sports Centre Lt Col Matej Tóth said that the new memorial wall symbolizes that the path to success is never straightforward, but there are falls along the way, while adding that the event also saw the opening of the 'Training and Diagnostic Building Block', which brings significant improvements to how athletes are trained and diagnosed. The renovated facility features a modern diagnostic centre with hypoxic training (HT), a judo hall, a gym, other training amenities, and a small dining room.

Dukla's Open Day event returns annually with a rich programme of activities. This year, visitors to the Centre were treated to different sporting activities and viewed dynamic demonstrations and static displays. They also met Dukla's top-performing sportsmen and women for public autograph signings.



- Under the leadership of the MOD, the **NATO Battlegroup in Slovakia** joined the 'Preparation of the Population for State Defence' educational project. Soldiers of the NATO Battlegroup delivered lectures for students, with particular attention to a wide range of military topics, including international humanitarian law, civil-military cooperation, military psychology, chaplaincy service, self-defence, and survival skills.
- Slovak paras of 52 Abn Bn along with their partners from Portugal, Romania and Spain have been honing their skills on **Ex ORION 24** at Santa Margarida Camp in Constância, Portugal. The Portuguese Army's largest tactical exercise provides a space for the synchronisation of Allied Forces to conduct defensive and offensive operations at a tactical level. The exercise opened with bilateral live firing and close combat activities with the Portuguese Commandos.

- Machine gunners of **21 Mech Bn Trebišov** completed concentrated training aimed at mastering basic tactical and marksmanship skills at Trebišov Garrison and on Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area. The aim of the shooting session was to check the machine gunners on the zeroing and firing the vz.59 universal machine gun and the FN MINIMI light machine gun. A machine gun trophy was handed over to the best shots represented by Cdr 1st Mech Coy Capt Erik Chovanec.

- Improvement training for **21 Sp Arty Bn HQ and Staff** was directed by Chief of Staff Maj Quecke on Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area. The first session was dedicated to throwing live RG F-1 grenades and the second session to firing the Pi CZ P-09 pistol, handling weapons, and practicing medical skills.

- Starting from 1 May, the Slovak National Uprising (SNP) Museum Banská Bystrica has made its **museum depository** accessible to visitors for educational purposes, with more than 1,500 new collection items such as the SNP fighters' uniforms, weapons, equipment and personal items. The depository is open to the public during the opening hours of the SNP Museum's main exhibition.

- A farewell ceremony for **MSgt Marián Chomišák**, who served as First Sergeant of Com Spt Bty of 21 Sp Arty Bn and is retiring from the Service, took place at Dukla Barracks in Michalovce on 29 Apr.

- The Slovak Armed Forces Personnel Office has launched the **PhotoAttack and Gallery MIL Competitive Displays 2024** for soldiers and employees in Defence and their families, military retirees and members of garrison clubs. The main themes and the application form can be found at [osveta.mil.sk](http://osveta.mil.sk) and [personal.mil.sk](http://personal.mil.sk).

- Maj Miroslav Majtner and Maj Ján Sedliak, of M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy's International Courses Section, participated in the 4th Annual Discipline Conference (ADC) for **Operations Planning, Operations Assessment, and Alternative Analysis (OPOAAA)** in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

- 1 May saw the opening of the Summer Visitors Season for the **Institute of Military History's Military History Museum branches in Svidník and Dukla** until 31 Oct. For visitors, the exhibition in Svidník and the Observation Tower exhibition at Dukla are open from Tue to Sun every week and during public holidays from 9:00am to 5:00pm.

- Michal Barbier, athlete of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, claimed the **Men's Fitness European Champion** title at the European Championships in Santa Susana, Spain. He also added two second places to the title – in the Fitness Challenge GOLD and Speedfit GOLD competitions.

## International Rescue Teams Conference & Competition by Salus Vitalis

(3 May) A gas explosion in a restaurant, a terrorist attack on a secondary school, and an armed bank robbery – these all were the scenarios for the 11th annual International Rescue Teams Conference and Competition held at MTC Lešť on 2-3 May. Both activities, organised by the Salus Vitalis Civic Association, were supported by the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces.

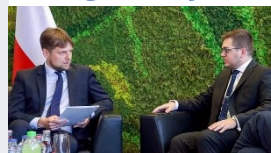
A total of 340 rescuers and 80 mock casualties from the Catholic University of Ružomberok attended the conference on the challenges of mass casualty incident (MCI) management.

Four dozen rescue teams, formed of military medics, professional rescue teams with emergency doctors, members of the Red Cross, emergency medicine students from Slovakia and Czechia, joined by members of the Slovak Police Force, the Firefighting Service, and the Civil Defence community, took

## Seminar on State Defence Planning

(30 Apr) Deputy Defence Minister Igor Melicher opened an interdepartmental seminar on State Defence Planning. He focused his opening remarks on the SVK Government Manifesto, which commits to deepening the security and defence of the State by building specific capabilities to resist an armed attack as per Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty. The seminar, organised at the MOD by the MOD Crisis Management Branch as part of the programme to train state bodies for the defence of the State, was attended by representatives of all ministries and experts from state institutions and academia.

## Strong friendly ties with Poland



(29 Apr) Deputy Defence Minister Igor Melicher received Polish Ambassador Maciej Ruczej at the MOD in Bratislava to discuss the situation in Europe and the upcoming EU Parliament

election. They also touched on issues relating to the V4, national representation in the international organisations' leading positions, the security situation in Europe, and the European defence industry's ability to compete globally. They agreed that Slovakia and Poland share the same views on most areas of common interest and expressed their belief that it is right to develop a strong SVK-POL relationship, based on them.

## Ex Locked Shields 2024

(29 Apr) SVK cyber security specialists once again proved that are among the world's best. The SVK-HUN team, comprising representatives of the state, private and academic sectors, gave exceptionally high performance at Ex Locked Shields 2024, the world's largest and most complex CDX. Only a few points separated them from a medal. The NATO-Latvia team became the highest-scoring team. Slovakia's participation in LS24 was led by SVK Military Intelligence's Defence Cyber Centre. The SVK state sector was represented by the MOD, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Transport, and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

## SVK AF HQ has a new Dean



(30 Apr) An induction ceremony for Lt Katarína Zatková, of the Central Office of Ecumenical Pastoral Service in the Forces and Armed Corps, took place at the SVK AF HQ Chapel in Zvolen. She was inducted as

Dean by Chairman of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Slovakia and Bishop General of the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession (ECAV) in Slovakia Ivan Etko, in the presence of Chaplain General of Ecumenical Pastoral Service Col Viktor Sabo and DCOS SVK AF HQ Col Adolf Daubner.



part in the competition. The rescue teams were assessed in five categories. The Rescue Team of Trenčín and the Combat Medics Team of 5 SOF Regt Žilina emerged as the best out of the competitors.

MSgt Jozef Smutný, Chief Nurse of ROLE 2 Hospital with 23 years of experience in the Armed Forces, including his tours of duty with military medical teams, one in Lebanon and four in Afghanistan, said: "My assessment of the competition is such that it is excellent. I wish no one would ever experience in real life what we went through, but if they do, they will be much better prepared for future interventions."

"I want to thank the MOD for going out of its way to keep the Integrated Rescue Services (IRS) trained to deal with emergencies," Dagmar Tomčányiová, representative of the Salus Vitalis Civil Association, said.