



Military acts of the year

(23 Apr) A gala evening on the occasion of the Military Act of the Year 2024 Awards was held at the MOD in Bratislava. The laureates were presented the Awards in the presence of President and Commander-in-Chief Peter Pellegrini, DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák, senior MOD and Armed Forces leaders, guests of honour including WW2 veterans, and the serving men and women of the Armed Forces. The aim of the Awards is to recognise and celebrate the good deeds of service personnel and our citizens, who, with their humane character, moral authority and personal sacrifice, go above and beyond their roles and spread the positive values inherent to service in the Forces and patriotism. The Rescue of Life Award went to Cpl Jozef Bodnár and Cpl Lukáš Ivanecký from 20 Log Bn Prešov. While off-duty on a beach in Latvia on 24 Aug 2024, they saved five lives in rough seas off the coast near Camp Ādaži. The Assistance to the Public Award was presented to MSgt Jozef Blaho from 901 Engr Bn Sered'. He has since long been a role model of selfless help and personal commitment for the civilian and military community. He has organised fundraisers for the families of deceased colleagues, social care facilities, children of soldiers, and communities in deployment areas. He has played a significant role in raising funds for charities, building memorial sites, and restoring war graves. President of the CZE and SVK Artillery Association Col (Ret'd) Jozef Kavecký and members of the Association received the Friend of the Armed Forces Award for popularising military and artillery traditions, organising commemorations at home and abroad, ceremonies, exhibitions and patriotic lectures, restoring memorial sites, supporting recruitment campaigns, and promoting the achievements of ex-artillerymen. Their knight officer cadets into the Order of the Knights of Artillery and collaborate with various armed forces and institutions. The Service to the Country Award was won by personnel of 46 Wing Kuchyňa, SVK SOF and 5 SOF Regt Žilina for evacuating 94 Slovak and foreign nationals out of Beirut under threat of airstrikes in Oct 2024. In extremely unpredictable combat conditions, they demonstrated a high level of professionalism, courage and the ability to quickly coordinate evacuation efforts. Aware of the importance of projecting a positive image of the Armed Forces to civilian populations, the MOD seeks to bring the outstanding work of service personnel closer to the public through the Awards, showing that active duty service is not just about defending the country, but it is also about serving others in everyday life.



Zvolen pays tribute to Romania's WW2 Resistance heroes

(25 Apr) Soldiers of the Romanian Armed Forces visited the Royal Romanian Army's Central Military Cemetery in Zvolen on Fri as part of their 'VE Day 80 Memorial March' in the footsteps of Romania's WW2 Resistance heroes who died in the liberation battles in Hungary, Slovakia and Czechia 80 years ago. The Romanian Ambassador to Slovakia, His Excellency Călin Fabian joined the 79-strong ROU delegation, led by Brig Gen Cristinel Colibaba, in paying tribute to over 10,000 fallen compatriots at the WW2 Royal Romanian Army Memorial in Zvolen. Representing the MOD, Head of the MOD Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) Richard Zimányi along with Lt Col Zdenko Baranec and other Slovak Air Force HQ officers laid wreaths at the Memorial. Following their programme in Slovakia, the ROU delegation – involving representatives of the Ministry of Defence, the Defence Staff, the National Office of the Nation's Memory, 30 Guards Brigade, Armed Forces Band, Officer Cadets of the ROU Military Academies, and WW2 Veterans – travelled to Brno for another VE Day 80 event.



■ Commandant of the SVK Military Academy Brig Gen Aurel Sabó and Rector of the Technical University of Zvolen Prof Rudolf Kropil signed a **Framework Cooperation Agreement** on 22 Apr. The aim is to join forces in research, education, technology and innovation, with a focus on joint projects, analyses, editorial and publication activities, organisation of events, and exchange of information.

■ At the MOD Chapel on 24 Apr, military personnel of the Slovak Armed Forces and civil servants of the Ministry of Defence took part in Mass to commemorate **St George** – the Patron Saint of Service personnel, the Ministry of Defence Chapel, the Bratislava Military Parish of the SVK RC Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps.

■ Members of 21 Sp Arty Bn Michalovce completed **rail transport operations training** at the Trebišov railroad. The training included setting up a universal steel loading ramp, directing drivers of Army vehicles such as Tatra 815 and Aktis trucks, Zuzana 2 SPHs, and Land Rovers onto heavy duty flatbed wagons, and using fastening systems to secure the vehicles to the platforms.

■ A **graduation ceremony for graduates of the Initial Military Police Course** for newly recruited MP officers took place at the SNP Memorial in Banská Bystrica. The course covered shooting, driving service vehicles with the right of way, the basics of crime investigation, SOPs for interventions, and other drills. Deputy Director of the SVK Military Police Col Elo Hubač presented the best graduates – Sgt 1C Juraj Barla, SSgt Ján Pacak and Sgt Michal Pemčák – with a Letter of Commendation from the Director of the SVK Military Police.

■ As part of their **Introduction to Military Medical Healthcare Course**, students of the Medical Sciences Faculty of the Catholic University, accompanied by head nurse of the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok Sgt Maj Silvia Šimová and MSgt Samuel Široň visited the Liptovský Mikuláš-based detached facility of the Hospital's Training, Education and Special Preparation Branch on 25 Apr. They saw demonstrations of treatment and evacuation of the wounded and became familiar with treatment and evacuation systems in the Slovak Armed Forces and NATO as well as with field medical facilities.

■ The final year students of the Public Administration and Crisis Management Dept of the Police Academy in Bratislava underwent training including a CAX on crisis management at the **SVK Military Academy's Simulation Centre** in Liptovský Mikuláš.

■ 1st-year students pursuing studies for a Magister's degree on the 'Security and Defence of the State' Programme at the SVK Military Academy attended **field training in emergency response** at the Mountain Rescue Service Centre in Bystrá. They became familiar with the work of rescuers and avalanche dogs and with rescue equipment. They also tried moving up a climbing wall.

■ The SVK Military Academy's Social Sciences and Languages Dept has been a long-time guarantor of the Supplementary Pedagogical Studies (SPS) Programme. In Apr, **Psychological First Aid (PFA)** was for the first time included in the SPS programme. Under the guidance of SVK Red Cross lecturers, students mastered the basic skills for handling crisis situations in a school environment. Thanks to their positive feedback, Psychological First Aid as a relevant subject for the programme is being offered for consideration.

■ Reopening on 1 May from 09:00 to 18:00, the **Slovak National Uprising (SNP) Museum** in Banská Bystrica invites members of the public to visit the SNP 1944 ■ Multimedia Exhibition and the Museum's Open Depository.

■ The Dukla Military Sports Centre invites you to the **Open Door Day** at the SNP Dukla Athletics Stadium in Banská Bystrica, starting from 09:00 on 1 May. Summer Biathlon World Champion Paulína Bátovská Fialková, 800-metres European Vice-Champion Gabriela Gajánová, Tokyo Water Slalom Olympian Jakub Grigar, and other stars will attend the event.

Military- and Sport-Themed Olympiad Challenge kicks off

(25 Apr) The first regional round of the MOD Personnel and Social Affairs Dept-organised 'Military- and Sport-Themed Olympiad Challenge' for secondary and grammar school students kicked off at the Peter Zatek Business Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš. The event was supported by the National Education and Youth Institute and the Sports Commission of the Self-Governing Regions Association. A total of 73 schools from across Slovakia registered for the first-time event. Each team consists of two male and two female students, two substitutes, and a team supervisor. The Olympiad Challenge is a combination of a knowledge test and practical disciplines that test not only students' physical fitness levels, but also their first aid, topography, life and health protection skills. It consists of seven competitive disciplines: (1) evacuation of an injured person, (2) first aid, (3) use of improvised personal protective equipment (PPE) and movement in a hazardous area, (4) target air rifle shooting, (5) an obstacle course, (6) a knowledge test, and (7) an orienteering run. The first winner

'Štúr's Pen' in green

(26 Apr) As part of the 31st edition of the nationwide 'Štúr's Pen' Writing Competition for school magazines, the MOD gave prizes to the editorial staffs who present SVK Security & Defence. The prize winners included: the editorial staffs of the school magazines from the Secondary Information Technologies School Tvrdošín ('GesTo'), P. J. Šafárik Grammar School Rožňava ('Heuréka'), Jur Hronec Grammar School Bratislava ('Arnoštoviny'), and Leonard Stockel Grammar School Bardejov ('The Phase'). The prizes were presented to the students by Deputy Director of the SVK Service Personnel Office Lt Col Juraj Nyeki, Sgt Klaudia Vilhanová of the SVK Service Personnel Office, and Editor-in-Chief of MOD Defence Magazine Pavol Vitko. The prize recipients also received a brief on the tasks of the Armed Forces from the Army Recruitment Team Banská Bystrica.

Platoons on tactical exercise

(22 Apr) Platoons of 71 Com Spt Bn Trenčín completed a tactical exercise (TACEX) on Sučany Training Area. The Fld Svcs Coy practiced setting up and taking down the Command Post (CP), guiding vehicles across difficult terrain, and handling crisis incidents while on the move. The CSS Coy's tasks included securing a camp's perimeter defence, searching individuals and vehicles at a checkpoint, responding to visual contact with the enemy, as well as practicing other capabilities. After successfully completing the TACEX, 71 Com Spt Bn's resolve and readiness will next be tested in a 72-hour intensive field training activity.

Together against waste dumps

(22 Apr) To mark Earth Day, members of the SVK Special Operations Forces cleared an illegal waste dump in Hájik near the Hradisko training ground in Žilina. They removed some 1,700kg of waste from the site. Elsewhere, on 11 Apr, our soldiers along with almost 50 NATO MNB SVK troops and other partners filled four large-capacity containers with 7,000kg of waste dumped at an illegal site near Banská Bystrica. The clean-up operation continued on 14 Apr, when another 540kg of waste was collected from a dump site in Dačov Lom. To mark the 55th anniversary of Earth Day, officer cadets of the SVK Military Academy (AOS) joined forces with AOS staff to organise a voluntary work party to clean the AOS grounds and atriums.

