



Nationwide VE Day 80 celebrations

(8 May) As part of the nationwide celebrations to recognise VE Day 80 and the heroism and sacrifice of the WW2 generation, the MOD-organised VE Day 80 Event in Piešťany attracted a total of 35,000 visitors on 8 May 2025. Among the 700 guests in attendance were the surviving WW2 veterans, the SVK President, the SVK Prime Minister, Ministers of the SVK Government, MPs, Ambassadors and other representatives of the Diplomatic and Military Corps.

In his keynote speech, President Peter Pellegrini said: "We are obliged to build our historical memory so that Nazi evil never returns and never finds new preachers of hatred." He went on to extend his thanks to the SVK WW2 soldiers, partisans, and members of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps in the Soviet Union, the SVK airmen in the Royal Air Force, and all those who gave their ultimate to defeat the Nazis.

Addressing the nation, PM Robert Fico stated: "The Slovak National Uprising orders us not to remain neutral during the VE Day 80 celebrations. Because the Uprising commands us to be a nation of clear anti-Nazi orientation."

In a statement, WW2 veteran Vladimír Strmeň said: "Stop the fire of war from burning again across our dear Slovakia. Because in war, blood flows, innocent people die, and families fall apart. Indeed, war is the greatest evil in the history of mankind."

Highlights of the special VE Day 80 programme included the Official Wreath-Laying Ceremony at the Memorial to the Fallen Romanian Soldiers, flypasts featuring the Slovak Air Force's air assets, the Slovak Armed Forces Capabilities Demonstration, and the Oath of Allegiance sworn by 221 SVK Military Academy officer cadets.

President Peter Pellegrini, DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák, CHOD Gen Zmeko then pinned commemorative ribbons on the Colours of six military units – 22 Mech Bn Michalovce, 46 Wng Kuchyňa, 5 SOF Regt Žilina, 12 Mech Bn Nitra, 405 Rpr Bn Martin, and 51 Wng Prešov.

Crowds were also treated to a WW2 battle reenactment involving 300 reenactors and a flying display of WW2-era aircraft.

The official programme concluded with Martin Gyimesi, Peter Cmörík, Gypsy Devils, and KALI & Peter Pann delighting the audience with live musical and vocal performances. 640 organisers and 875 military personnel were on hand to make sure the celebrations went smoothly.

On the VE Day 80 Event in Piešťany, Robert Kaliňák said: "We have commemorated not only this historic victory, but also the values upon which a free society is founded. I would like to thank everyone who came here today to pay their respects to our heroes."



80 years on from VE Day, we pay respects to WW2 heroes

(6 May) Deputy Minister of Defence Igor Melicher joined Prime Minister Robert Fico for a Victory in Europe (VE) Day 80 Event at the Red Army Central Military Cemetery in Michalovce in the Košice region. This place for reflection and remembrance is not only a symbol of historical memory, but also a testament to the ultimate sacrifice that thousands of soldiers made in liberating Slovakia. Over 17,000 Red Army soldiers lie at rest in this cemetery – young men and women from various nations of the former Soviet Union who laid down their lives in the War. Speaking about the wartime generation, DEPMINDEF Igor Melicher said: "The liberation of Michalovce was secured at the end of 1944. Many of these fallen heroes fought here, on the territory of Slovakia. Let us never forget the heroism of those who paid the highest price for our freedom. Their courage and sacrifice will remain inscribed in our history and collective memory for all time."

■ On his visit to Uzbekistan on 7 May, DEPMINDEF Martin Vojtašovič met with Uzbek Deputy Minister of Defence for Armaments Alisher Tukhtayev Norboev for talks on the future SVK-UZB Cooperation Agreement regarding defence, defence industries, and personnel development.

■ At the Armed Forces Academy (AOS)'s Education Centre, Spanish officers delivered three International Security and Defence lectures to the participants of Basic Command and Staff Course No 30. Defence Attaché Capt Francisco Carlos Martínez Vázquez (ESP N) introduced the ESP National Defence Policy, defence capabilities generation, today's security challenges, and diplomatic and military cooperation with partner countries. Col Jesús Marco Vila (ESP A) focused on the tasks of the Headquarters NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Spain (HQ NRDC-ESP) and on the ESP troops operating with NATO's Forward Land Forces. Commander of the NATO Multinational Brigade Slovakia Col Jesús Manuel Martínez Victoria (ESP A) presented the Brigade's mission, capabilities, tasks, and challenges.

■ The 'General M. R. Štefánik' Armed Forces Academy marked the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2 in Europe with a commemoration on 7 May. The SVK MINDEF Commemorative Medal (3rd Degree) and the SVK CHOD VE Day 80 Medal were presented to Maj Jozef Hraško and Capt Martin Koziak, respectively. Nine OCs were granted the right to wear the maroon beret as a mark of graduation from their first parachute course.

■ 21 Mech Bn Trebišov and Veľké Ozorovce Training Area played host to the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) "B" Course, held under the auspices of S-2 Intel Grp and led by Specialist Training Instructor Sgt Maj Ján Engler from TC Lešť, with a focus on developing survival, resilience and escape skills for high-threat environments. 22 soldiers of 21 Mech Bn Trebišov took part.

■ At the Peace Support Operations (PSO) Training Unit Martin, SVK military personnel completed pre-deployment training (PDT) before being assigned to NATO/EU structures. The training was also supported by SVK Police lecturers. The theory module combined the specificities of present and future possible international crisis management operations, as well as basic medical, psychological and media aspects of operations. The practical module incorporated intensive shooting tasks.

■ SVK Joint Operations Command (JOC) Banská Bystrica celebrated VE Day 80 with a ceremony, in which Comd JOC Maj Gen Martin Michalčo presented accolades to soldiers and civil servants; soldiers were promoted to higher military ranks; and a female JOC officer and nominee for the Military Act of the Year 2024 Award received special recognition.

■ The Armed Forces Academy (AOS) commemorated the 106th anniversary of Gen Štefánik's tragic death on 5 May. The memorial service at the AOS Main Hall was attended by AOS Comdt Aurel Sabó, Deputy Mayor of Liptovský Mikuláš Rudolf Urbanovič, Lt Gen (Ret'd) Marián Áč, Lt Col (Ret'd) Peter Kramáček, and Chair of the Liptovský Mikuláš-based Štefánik Club Kvetoslava Staroňová.

■ Under the leadership of instructors from the Mobilisation Force Generation Unit Poprad, 7 Trng Regt Martin played host to a course for the Chiefs of the Mobilisation Points – the Equipment and Materiel Reception Group, with a focus on mobilising equipment and materiel. The aim was to improve the participants' theoretical knowledge and practical skills and to train those selected to take on the role of Chief of the Mobilisation Workplace.

■ The Armed Forces Personnel Office and the MOD Defence Magazine Editorial Office have announced the 16th iteration of the Defence-wide PhotoAttack and Gallery MIL 2025 Competitive Displays for soldiers, civil servants, family members, military retirees, and veterans. The PhotoAttack 2025 competition is divided into the 'Armed Forces in Photography' and 'Open' categories, and the Gallery MIL competition into the 'Painting & Sculpture', 'Applied Art' and 'Children's Works' categories. Competition entries must be sent to the MOD no later than 12 Sep. The results will be announced in a ceremony on 12 Nov. More details can be found on the internet.

■ Members of the Slovak Soldiers Union from the Nitra-Zobor Club paid tribute to WW2 Army General Ludvík Svoboda, the then Commander of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps in the Soviet Union, at his grave in Kroměříž. Along with members of the Military Retirees Club and the Ludvík Svoboda Society, they also participated in the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of Kroměříž's liberation.

■ SVK officer cadets on the AOS 'Security and Defence of the State' Programme commemorated the tragic events of the Second World War with a visit to the Holocaust Museum in Sered on 7 May.

■ Under the auspices of DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák, the Institute of Military History will participate in the 21st annual European Night of Museums and Galleries 2025 on 17 May. The programme is available on the Institute's website.

■ To mark World Hand Hygiene Day on 5 May, the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok joined the 'Clean Your Hands' campaign, drawing attention to the need for proper hand hygiene across all hospitals. Visitors, patients and hospital employees could try the correct hand disinfection method. Trained consultants provided hand washing instructions, tested disinfected hands under a UV lamp, handed out educational materials, and conducted a survey.

■ Throughout Jul and Aug, the SVK Roman Catholic Bishopric of the Forces will organise three ten-day Children's Summer Camps at the Smrekovica Mountain Hotel, intended for children aged 7-16 from Armed Forces families. Details and applications can be found on the RC Bishopric website.

■ In the Small Bore Rifle - 60 Shots Prone Event at the 'Grand Prix of Liberation' Pilsen, Czechia, a team of Dukla Military Sports Centre rifle shooters – Patrik Jány, Ondrej Holko, Štefan Šulek – won an excellent second place, with a total score of 1,873.6 points! They only narrowly fell behind the home Czech team and overtook India by less than two tenths.

■ At this year's prestigious Transvulcania Ultramarathon on Spain's Canary Island of La Palma, athlete Peter Fraňo of the Dukla Military Sports Centre won the extremely demanding 73km race, with a cumulative elevation gain of 4,350m.



Remembering Gen Štefánik

(6 May) On behalf of the Ministry of Defence, Secretary General of the MOD Service Office Peter Krajčirovič and Deputy Chief of Defence/Chief of Staff Maj Gen Slavomír Verčimák honoured the memory of Gen Milan Rastislav Štefánik in Ivanka pri Dunaji. To mark the 106th anniversary of his tragic death, they laid wreaths at the Štefánik Memorial – at the site of the plane crash where Gen Štefánik tragically died on landing while returning home from Italy on 4 May 1919.

Stronger partnership with Greece

(10 May) DEPMINDEF Martin Vojtašovič met with Deputy Minister of National Defence of the Hellenic Republic Athanasios Davakis in Athens for talks on reinforcing cooperation and security in the region. The main topics on the agenda included: SVK-GRE cooperation on the F-16 and UH-60M Black Hawk programmes and the development of bilateral ties, activities on international missions and operations, and national defence industries. On the latter, the two DEPMINDEFs discussed the links between the nations' defence manufacturers associations. While in Athens, Mr Vojtašovič also took a tour of the Defence Exhibition Athens (DEFEA) 2025.

Exercise Toxic Lance 2025

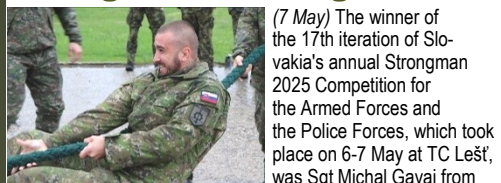


(8 May) 103 CBRN Bn Rožňava organised a national CBRN exercise with international participation – Ex Toxic Lance 2025 – at the Training Centre Lešť from 28 Apr to 8 May. 100 Slovak Armed Forces troops and 118 soldiers from Czechia, Poland, Spain and the United States drilled procedures for CBRN support to manoeuvre and combat support elements, dealing with several types of scenarios from disasters and accidents, through to releases of toxic industrial substances within crisis management (CM) operations.

Among the participants were SVK officer cadets on the CBRN programme at the University of Defence in Brno. In addition, 22 members of the 'Volunteer Civil Protection' organisation attended the first week of the exercise.

"The commander of the NATO Multinational Brigade Slovakia, based at the Training Centre Lešť, provided us with manoeuvre troops for some incident scenarios. This brought us closer to real life conditions on the exercise," Exercise Director and Commander of 103 CBRN Bn Lt Col Anton Kardoš said with satisfaction.

MP Sergeant is the 'Strongest Man'



(7 May) The winner of the 17th iteration of Slovakia's annual Strongman 2025 Competition for the Armed Forces and the Police Forces, which took place on 6-7 May at TC Lešť, was Sgt Michal Gavaj from the Military Police Dept Hronsek. Officer Cadet of the SVK Military Academy Július Holík finished in 2nd place, and WO Matej Herich from the Police Emergency Response Unit Banská Bystrica took third place.

The competition was attended by 26 competitors from Slovakia's Defence, Interior, Justice and Finance Ministries and by one CZE Army member of the NATO MNB SVK.

Because of being pushed to the limit in 10 strongman events, only 19 competitors managed to finish the competition. Among the biggest challenges were: a 'CIZMA' obstacle course, an AKTIS truck pull, a 40m run with a 110kg load, and a 100m cold water swim in boots and field uniform.