



To Believe - To Love - To work

(3 May) In Ivanka pri Dunaji, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and President of the Slovak Republic Andrej Kiska honoured the memory of Gen Milan Rastislav Štefánik, on the occasion of the 97th anniversary of his tragic death.

"In Gen Štefánik, we, as a nation, had a strongly patriotic personality, for whom achieving the ultimate goals of liberty and independence of the Slovaks was of paramount importance," said the Minister of Defence. He also reminded Štefánik's time-honoured motto to Believe, To Love and To Work. "Even today, all the members of the SVK Armed Forces should abide by this motto and translate its message into all their acts in the best interests of Slovakia," he stressed.

The Minister appreciated to see so many children and young people at the solemn gathering. "It is most important to clearly support the ideas leading to increased understanding and patriotism and suppress those leading to extremism of any kind," he emphasized.

According to the words pronounced by Peter Gajdoš at the solemn ceremony held on the very same day at the Gen M. R. Štefánik's burial mound in Bradlo, the march of progress in Slovakia will continue if we hold onto and promote the values and ideas that were so close to Gen Štefánik. Peter Pellegrini, Slovakia's Deputy Prime Minister for the investments, took part in the ceremony, too.

"Gen Štefánik believed in indestructible inner strength and maturity of the Slovak nation. Its destiny was very near to his heart and, as he said, he dearly wished his work would prove beneficial for our nation. Professional soldiers should derive inspiration from his message even today," he accentuated.

Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš also attended the commemorative ceremony held on Wednesday, May 4, at the Gen M. R. Štefánik Memorial on the Danube bank in Bratislava. "His resoluteness and determination, his patriotism, perseverance and resilience should serve as an inspiration for us even today," he said.

He reminded that Gen Štefánik was convinced that the Slovak nation had every right to freedom and was committed to the idea of sovereignty of the Slovak nation. "He knew that nobody but the Slovaks should fight for freedom and sovereignty of the Slovak nation. That is why we must do our best to preserve them. Equally, we must have modern and responsibly prepared armed forces, capable of ensuring protection and defence of our country," emphasized the Minister.

1st Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Maj Gen Pavel Macko was also present at the ceremony.

Discussing priorities with ambassador

(5 May) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš received in audience Ambassador of the Republic of France Didier Lopinot. The focus of their discussion was on the Slovak Republic's top priority issues in the field of defence and security. The Minister informed the Ambassador of the preparations for creating the multinational NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU) in Slovakia. "In this respect, allow me to point out that the Slovak Republic would greatly welcome participation of the Republic of France within the SVK NFIU," added Peter Gajdoš.

Defence Minister's congratulations to mother of four soldiers

(6 May) In Rajec, on the occasion of the Mother's Day, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš expressed his congratulations to Matilda Šýkorová, whose all four children serve in the SVK Armed Forces. "This is rare and unique and I would very much like to thank you for contributing thereby to the development of our armed forces," told the Head of the Defence Department to Mrs Matilda Šýkorová, who was taken by surprise to find out that the Minister turned up to see her at work and invited her and her family to lunch. "We have organized this meeting as a surprise, so that all your family may have a chance to slow down for a while in these hurried times. As far as I know, all of your children serve in different locations of Slovakia, which means there are not many opportunities to meet together," said the Minister. In the Šýkora Family, all four children serve in the SVK Armed Forces – SSG Martin Šýkora (35), SSG Jozef Šýkora (34), PV2 Tomáš Šýkora (24) and Monika (21), a cadet at the M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy. It cannot be ruled out then that Monika, who will attain the officer's rank after finishing her studies at the Academy, will exercise the command over some of her brothers one day. The Minister of Defence, on behalf of the Defence Department, presented Mr and Mrs Šýkora with a voucher for a weekend break away in one of the defence facilities, as a token of appreciation and respect for the upbringing of the four members of the SVK Armed Forces.



- On 25 – 29 April, the sixth edition of the SVK Land Forces' **Best Rifleman** Competition was held in the AFA' Simulation Centre in Liptovský Mikuláš. Forty four professional soldiers from the 1st and 2nd mechanized brigade units and the 13th artillery regiment Jince, the Czech Republic, took part in the Computer Assisted Exercise. Capt Slavomír Pristaš (self-propelled artillery division Michalovce) won the contest; Sgt 1st Class Tomáš Demeter (12th mechanized battalion Nitra) finished in second place and 1st Lt Jakub Rybář (13th artillery regiment Jince, the Army of the Czech Republic) finished third.
- On 27 – 28 April, at Turecký vrch, troops from the combat service support brigade HQs based in Trenčín underwent **recurrent training aimed at the basic combat skills**. Its focus was mainly on topographical, tactical and shooting preparation. On Day 2, during a march through rugged terrain, the participants' knowledge and skills were put to the test, namely in the field of medical and CBR preparation, as well as in the field of CIS preparation and tactical preparation.
- On 29 April, **Passing-Out Ceremony** was held in the NCO Club at the training battalion Martin for the graduates of the career part of the NCO Course OR-7. Thirty soldiers, to include 6 servicewomen, had enrolled on the course. SSG Andrej Macášek from the Honour Guard of the President of the Slovak Republic was awarded as the best graduate.
- On 2 May, 1st Lt Marek Kormaj took part in the **cooperative meeting of Military Police members** operating in the operation Resolute Support in Afghanistan, at NHKIA Base in Kabul. On the meeting, initiated by Chief of the International Military Police Maj Mikkel W. Petersen, the military policemen from Denmark, Australia, the U.S., Great Britain, Turkey, Italy, Czechia and Slovakia examined in detail possibilities of cooperation and the topical issues.
- On 25 – 29 April, in the military training area Turecký vrch, the engineering battalion Sereď organized **focused specialized training** for members of the 5th engineering barrier-removing company and the 6th engineering company, aimed at using high explosive ordnance and mine laying, using live engineering ammunition. As part of training, the APC Tatrapan crews practised firing from PKT lafayette guns. Among the participants of the exercise were also four cadets – the third-year-students of the Armed Force Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš.
- On 3 May, on the premises of the Reference Chemical Laboratory in Zemianske Kostolany, the Examining Board led by Lt Col Peter Duriš carried out **examination of professional qualification and capabilities** to handle highly toxic agents and compounds. Altogether 15 applicants for the certificate underwent the tests, to include 9 members of the NC EOD and CBRN.
- On 3 – 4 May, the **international workshop** took place on the premises of the SVK MOD, dealing with the issue of military reserves. Guests from Great Britain, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia and Romania, as well as representatives of the SVK MOD engaged in the workshop as speakers. The workshop was an outcome of cooperation between the Institute of Security and Defence Studies (AFA) and the military division at the Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Bratislava.
- In the Jubilee Year of Mercy, on 29 April – 1 May, the members of the armed forces, police and their families made a **jubilee pilgrimage tour** to Rome. The three-day-pilgrimage was concluded by the Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. The Ordinariate of the Armed Forces and Armed Corps of the Slovak Republic was represented by the seven-membered delegation headed by Mons. František Rábek. In Vatican City, prior to the Pilgrimage, the international conference His Door is Still Open – 30th Anniversary of promulgating the Apostolic Constitution Spirituali Militum Curae was held, with the delegates from 37 military ordinariates from all over the world taking part therein.
- On 4 May, Lt Col Rüdiger Heinrich, **Defence Attaché of Germany**, accredited to the Slovak Republic, made a visit to the Bratislava Garrison HQs. He was welcomed by the Garrison HQs Commander Col Ján Marek, who introduced him to the tasks, objectives and activities of the Garrison HQs. On this occasion, the SVK Armed Forces Military Band put on a short concert performance. Subsequently, the talks started on cooperation between the music bands of the Slovak Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany.

I. Máčovský in Trenčín

(3 May) State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence Ivan Máčovský made a visit to the EOD International Centre of Excellence in Trenčín. Commander of the Centre Col Ľubomír Mrváň informed him about the role of the Centre, its program of work, performance of the current tasks and the main events planned for 2016. Some of the events will be organized on the margins of Slovakia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. "I am satisfied that the EOD CoE in Trenčín is very well prepared for the performance of tasks. I also had an opportunity to meet the international participants from Hungary, Poland and Romania in our Centre," said State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence Ivan Máčovský.



New SACEUR

(4 May) Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim attended the change of command ceremony for NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), held in Mons, Belgium. Together with the representatives of the armed forces of the other member countries, he met with Gen Curtis Scaparrotti (the U.S.), who, during the ceremony, assumed command of Allied Command Operations in Europe from Philip Breedlove. Gen Scaparrotti thereby took overall responsibility for the planning and execution of all Alliance operations in the world.

Talks on cooperation

(3 May) SVK Air Force Commander Maj Gen Miroslav Korba welcomed Defence Attaché of the Federal Republic of Germany Lt Col Rüdiger Heinrich to the Air Force HQs in Zvolen. Lt Col Heinrich held talks with Lt Col Peter Baliak, Chief of the Pilot Training Section at the AF HQs, and with Maj Peter Fajčík, member of the Air Defence and Combined Arms Training Section at the AF HQs, on the meeting of Air Force and Air Defence experts from Slovakia and Germany, which meeting is to be held in October. The experts will deal with the issue of cooperation in the field of C2, data-links and training of the dedicated personnel on the CRC level. The German party opened up a possibility for the German personnel to take part in the series of the exercise TOBRUQ LEGACY.

EVA and DIANA howitzers unveiled for the first time at IDEB

(2 May) At the International Defence Exhibition in Bratislava (IDEB 2016), the products of the Slovak defence industry – howitzers EVA and DIANA will be introduced for the first time in Slovakia. These are produced by DMD Group, a.s. (j.s.c.), based in Dubnica nad Váhom, wherein the sole shareholder, as of July 2015, is the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic.

"In the SVK Government's Programme Declaration of Intent we have made a commitment to support the domestic defence industry's contribution to supplying the equipment and materiel for the armed forces, as well as a commitment to do our best to ensure that our products make a move to the international market. IDEB provides a unique forum for exchanging information on the state-of-the-art products and technologies, on the trends and visions of the manufacturers and the users, i. e. soldier, policemen, rescue service, etc. In this context, it is good news that along with the



time-tested products of our arms industry also the newly-developed equipment will be introduced at IDEB 2016, which speaks volumes about the fact that we keep abreast of the progress in this field," said SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš.

The new EVA 155 mm/52 cal. lightweight mobile howitzer, with six-wheel drive, was developed and designed by the Slovak company Konštrukta-Defence, a.s. (j.s.c.). This solely Slovak-made product is a successor to the earlier ZUZANA 155 mm/52 cal. self-propelled gun-howitzer. It will be the first release in Slovakia for the new 155mm/52 cal. tracked self-propelled autonomous artillery system DIANA, which is a

product of defence cooperation between Poland and Slovakia. For the Slovak party, the producer is ZTS Špeciál, a.s. (j.s.c.) IDEB 2016 is being held on 10 – 12 May in Incheba Exhibition Ground in Bratislava, under the auspices of the SVK Ministry of Defence.