



M. R. Štefánik Memorial Plaque unveiled in Famagusta

(23 June) While at Camp General Štefánik in Famagusta, Cyprus, where Slovak soldiers discharge their duties, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš unveiled a memorial plaque dedicated to the prominent figure after whom the camp bears his name. The idea originated from and was put into action by the M. R. Štefánik Society – Club Partizánske. This is why the memorial plaque was unveiled by the head of the SVK MOD and Sergeant 1st Class Štefan Šefčík, with the latter serving on active duty as a professional soldier.

"General Štefánik has inspired many of us towards action, hard work and service for the sake of the nation. Therefore, we are pleased that the initiator of the idea to place a commemorative plaque in tribute to General Štefánik at Camp General Štefánik was a society whose members are also professional soldiers. Today all service personnel should find inspiration in General M. R. Štefánik's message," said the head of the SVK MOD. The memorial plaque unveiling ceremony was attended, among others, by the UNFICYP Force Commander, Major General Kristin Lund.



- When on Exercise Anakonda 16 in Poland, Sergeant 1st Class Ľuboš Fides and Sergeant Martin Drobec, members of the SVK Military Police, based at the Police Enforcement Section Nitra, were returning from the Zagaň Training Area, they spotted a woman lying on the side of the road, displaying the signs of shivers and uncontrolled movements. Suspecting these were the symptoms of an epileptic seizure, together with their Czech colleague, Petr Herman, they rendered first aid to the victim and called in a medical ambulance. They also alerted their Military Police colleagues, being on a patrol in close vicinity, who came to help divert traffic. Their **prompt action to rescue a human life** was highly appreciated by SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš.

- The SVK Armed Forces member Pte Lukáš Kučerák, of the 13th Mechanised Battalion Levice, gained the **World Champion title in the Kumite Male Team category** at the World Karate Championships in Dublin, Ireland. He was also successful in the Kumite Male Individual 70-75kg category, winning the second place. SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš called him to congratulate him on his victory.

- The main theme of the **Multinational Corps North East (MNC NE) Commander Conference**, held on 21-22 June in Szczecin, was the current progress status of the individual NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs), including their levels of readiness, evaluation and certification. Also evaluated were multinational exercises with the participation of NFIUs. The Slovak Republic was represented at the event by the SVK NFIU Commander, Col Jozef Zekucia. Lt Gen Manfred Hoffmann, Commander MNC NE, expressed his satisfaction with the status of the SVK NFIU's preparations.

- Working in the grounds of the Training Centre Lešt in June, specialists from the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Centre of Excellence (EOD COE) trained 32 participants from 13 NATO and PIP countries as part of the two one-week **Home-Made Explosives Detection and Disposal Courses**. During the training, the EOD operators and specialists used a variety of detection devices and area control, home-made explosives search, and disposal equipment.

- On 17-21 June, as part of the SVK MOD's preparations for the performance of tasks under the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union, PSA Peugeot Citroën, based in Trnava, hosted **training for designated drivers** in support of transportation services and protocol events. A total of 85 members of the SVK Armed Forces and Military Police participated in the training event. They familiarised themselves with convoy composition/order, tasks and procedures for driving in a police-escorted convoy, and put their knowledge into practice at the company's driver training grounds.

- On 22 June, members of the 2nd Mechanised Company and Dressing Station of the 21st Combined Mechanised Battalion Trebišov paid a **visit to an elementary school in Sečovce**. They briefed the junior pupils on what it means to be a professional soldier. Besides displays of weapons and equipment, children had an opportunity to try their hand at treating injuries and giving first aid.

- On Saturday, 18 June, led by Mons František Rábek, members of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps Ordinarate went on a **pilgrimage to Hungary's Zalavár**, former Mossaburg, the Slavic ruler Pribina's seat of power and a site visited by the Christian missionaries Cyril and Methodius on their way to Rome. An act of remembrance at their statues was followed by the Liturgy of the Eucharist, celebrated in the ruins of St. Hadrian Basilica. The main celebrant was the Ordinary of the Hungarian Armed Forces, Mons Laszlo Bíró, with Mons Rábek acting in the role of a co-celebrant and preacher.

Exercise Live Shield 2016

(23 June) The certification exercise Live Shield 2016, held at the Training Centre Lešt, is being attended by nearly 900 professional soldiers representing the 11th Mechanised Battalion Group (11th Mech Bn Grp), the 1st Mechanised Brigade, and its subordinate units. The intent is to demonstrate the 11th Mech Bn Grp's readiness as an integral element of a NATO-led Multinational Task Force (MTF). Over the course of three weeks' intense field training, the units are to validate their capabilities, to include tactical drills, shooting, military occupational specialty (MOS)-specific missions in near-real conditions corresponding to today's operational environment. The culmination point of Exercise Live Shield 2016 will be a combat live-fire exercise at the MTF level – a decisive training stage for the 11th Mech Bn Grp, before undergoing the Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL) process. Speaking on the occasion of the exercise, SVK Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim said: "I am convinced all of the 11th Mech Bn Grp units will reach the required capabilities for a future deployment of their soldiers on international crisis management operations in compliance with NATO standards."



Canoeists now European Champions

(26 June) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš congratulated Martin Jankovec, the sportsman from the Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica (MSC DBB), who together with Gábor Jakubík, of the Sports Police Centre, became the European Champion title holder in K2M 500m at the 2016 ECA European Canoe Sprint and Paracanoeing Championships in Moscow. For both sportsmen, this is the first time they have clinched the gold medals in senior category at the European Championships.

"Based on the merit of their performances, our sportsmen and women prove again and again that they deserve we create the best training conditions for them, because this will pay off and their successes will represent the MSC DBB and Slovakia as a whole," said the defence chief.

Minister in Cyprus

(23 June) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš paid a visit to members of the Slovak Contingent (SLOVCON) serving with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). This has been his first visit to the SVK Armed Forces personnel deployed on this international crisis management mission since assuming office as the Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic. He also used this occasion to hold talks with the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Christoforos Fokaides. On his trip to Cyprus, Minister Gajdoš was accompanied by the 2nd Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, Brig Gen Jindřich Joch.

Reflecting on the visit, Peter Gajdoš said: "I consider the visit to our soldiers as my duty and an expression of my appreciation for their work. In Cyprus, they work in demanding climatic conditions and are separated from their relatives. Despite this, they carry out their tasks responsibly and their work stands a testament to them as real professionals." He went on to confirm that the SVK Armed Forces units are committed to continuing to serve with UNFICYP under the umbrella of the United Nations.

Speaking with the SVK service personnel based at the UNFICYP Headquarters and Camp Tatry, located in the UNPA in Nicosia, and those at Camp General Štefánik in Famagusta, the head of the SVK MOD listened to the soldiers' demands and remarks on how to improve the working conditions there. As his ministerial gift, the Minister presented the service personnel with soccer jerseys: "Just recently you made me extremely happy by winning the Military Skills Competition. I hope that this time I will make you happy as much as I hope that at the upcoming soccer tournament you will represent us in new soccer jerseys, so that everyone can see you come from our beautiful Slovakia."

In meeting with the Cypriot counterpart, Minister Gajdoš addressed the current topics of relevance and possibilities of cooperation, the NATO Warsaw Summit, and the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union. "The Republic of Cyprus held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2012. At the time I held the appointment of Military Representative of the Slovak Republic to the NATO Military Committee in Brussels, and I can say you accomplished your tasks with honour," said the Minister. The Minister of Defence of the Republic of Cyprus highly appreciated the long-term presence of Slovak soldiers in Cyprus.

As part of his visit to Cyprus, Peter Gajdoš also met with the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Cyprus and Head of Mission of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, Mrs Elizabeth Spehar, and the UNFICYP Force Commander, Major General Kristin Lund.

Preparations for SVK EU Presidency culminate at Military Police

(20 June) The Military Police are using their last days to finalise their intense preparations before the beginning of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Alongside other law enforcement units, the Military Police members will participate in protecting VIPs, supporting convoys, protocol events, and other tasks. In this connection, they have been synchronising their procedures with personnel from the Constitutional Members' Protection and Diplomatic Missions Office, of the SVK Interior Ministry. They are focused on practising standing operating procedures (SOPs) for executing close protection and for escorting designated VIPs.

Also, the Military Police personnel have undergone training for dispatchers/



operators and drivers to support the transportation tasks during the SVK EU Presidency. "Not only across Defence but also across the whole territory of Slovakia, providing smooth support to our Presidency of the Council of the European Union is

the one of the most important tasks to be accomplished in the second half of 2016. It is, therefore, inevitable that the Military Police, as well as other SVK MOD components, devote adequate time to preparations so as to be responsibly prepared to execute all tasks," remarked SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš.

"Members of the Military Police are getting ready for joint action alongside the SVK Interior Ministry's components in supporting a safe and smooth SVK Presidency of the Council of the European Union," added the Director of the Military Police, Col Milan Hamar. In connection with the SVK EU Presidency, the Military Police staff have also participated in a conference aimed at pyrotechnic support and controls of transport routes and hotels.