



## Commemoration at Bradlo

(6 May) A nation-wide commemorative ceremony began with a fly-past of MiG-29 aircraft over the Tomb of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik on Bradlo Hill to mark the 98th anniversary of the tragic death of one of the most prominent figures of our history. SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, too, came to pay his respects to the memory of General Štefánik.

In his statement, the Minister said: "Despite concluding his life's pilgrimage on the threshold of his liberated country at the age of only 39, he did a great deal for our better future." He went on to remind that every nation should be familiar with its roots and history. "Only then can the nation appreciate the struggle for freedom and democracy its predecessors must have gone through," emphasised the Minister.

The commemorative ceremony continued in Brezová pod Bradlom. There, the mayor of the town, Mrs Eva Ušiaková, expressed her appreciation for the cooperation with the MOD. The town plans to organise the nation-wide commemoration also in the years to come.

## Štefánik remembered at Ivanka

(4 May) The State Secretary of the Slovak Ministry of Defence, Róbert Ondrejčák, commemorated the 98th anniversary of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik's death at the Tomb of Štefánik in Ivanka pri Dunaji. It was right there that the aircraft carrying the crew crashed in 1919, with the then Czechoslovak Minister of War onboard.

Addressing the audience at the event, State Secretary Róbert Ondrejčák said: "Štefánik devoted his entire life to driving forward efforts to achieve independence for our nation. For years, he concentrated all his work towards this end. Indeed, he was a soldier – warrior in the true sense. He made the best of his fine-tuned strategic thinking, diplomacy, commitment, adaptability to circumstances and pro-European mindset."

The State Secretary further underscored that it is important to give very clear support to those ideas and personalities who fight for a safer world and society without going to dangerous extremes. Also in attendance at the commemorative ceremony was DCHOD Lt Gen Pavel Macko. Later in the evening, they both paid their tribute to the memory of Štefánik at the M. R. Štefánik Memorial in Bratislava.

## Ceremony in Cyprus

(4 May) General M. R. Štefánik's historical message was saluted on 4 May by members of the United Nations SLOVCON peacekeepers deployed with UNFICYP in Famagusta, Cyprus and based at Camp Štefánik, which bears his name. The SLOVCON members formed up for a ceremony to pay tribute to the memory of M. R. Štefánik at Sector 4 HQ. In his speech delivered at the ceremony after the playing of the national anthem and laying of a wreath at the Štefánik Memorial Plaque, Maj Vladimír Smolej praised the personality of M. R. Štefánik and highlighted his merits in the service of Slovakia.



## Defence Ministers P. Gajdoš and I. Simicskó discuss cooperation

(4 May) Slovak Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with Hungarian Minister of Defence István Simicskó on Hungarian MOD premises. Apart from bilateral cooperation, the topics of discussion that resonated were the Allied bond within the North Atlantic Alliance, the European Union and the V4. Both leaders shared the same view that this outstanding regional-level cooperation is a great message and an inspiration to the wider community. Also addressed was the fight against terrorism. On this and on increased national defence spending, NATO Defence Ministers will hold further discussions at the May NATO summit, where Montenegro, upon its successful accession, will be participating as a NATO Member State. Minister Simicskó informed of his intent to take the total Hungarian deployment in Iraq to 200 service personnel and to prolong their mandate until the end of 2019. The Ministers expressed their satisfaction with the ongoing discussions on the joint V4 EU Battle Group, which is to be on stand-by in 2019. The SVK-HUN defence engagement is presently focused on a Common Airspace Protection Agreement, which is already in force with the Czech Republic and which marks another step towards a similar V4 agreement. Also, the Ministers appreciated the long-term cooperation between both militaries on international crisis management missions and operations. On his trip to Hungary, Peter Gajdoš also met with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó. Among other things, they talked about the intent to reopen the Hungarian Defence Attaché Office in Bratislava, which is expected to reopen in less than 2 months.



- From 24 Apr through 5 May, members of ISTAR Bn and of 2nd Mech Bde HQ participated in **Exercise Screener 2017** on Libavá and CHKO Beskydy Training Area (CZE) with the participation of partners from 22nd Mt Inf Bn (Kłodzko, POL), 3rd Recce Bn (Mistelbach, AUT) and 2nd Cav Regt (USA). The exercising troops practised conducting recce missions under asymmetric and symmetric combat conditions as well as controlling and supporting recce teams in an international environment.

- On 5 May, SVK Land Forces HQ Trenčín hosted a **ceremony to mark the 72nd anniversary of victory over Nazism**. Members of SVK LF HQ Trenčín listened to the Order of the President of the Slovak Republic marking the 72nd anniversary of victory over Nazism and the Order of the Chief of the SVK Armed Forces General Staff, which recognised 10 SVK LF HQ staffers.

- On 28 Apr, Aviation Technical Secondary School Trenčín hosted another event as part of the **CAMP 2017 series**. On the school's premises, members of Command and Control (C2) Bn alongside Military Police (MP) and SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour (GoH) prepared a range of activities, including an airsoft weapon shooting session, grenade throw, obstacle course, orienteering, circular training while wearing the MOLLE system, training with personal protective tools, familiarisation with CBRN threats and medical training. Static and dynamic demonstrations were also staged.

- While in the presence of Brig Gen Vladimír Kubáň, COM 1st Mech Bde, Topolčany-based Bde HQ leaders bid their farewell to the **outgoing Bde HQ members** – Lt Col Peter Bačač, DCOs Operations, and MSgt Richard Husár, Senior Assistant of Operational Planning Section, who were transferred to the Reserve Component of the SVK Armed Forces as of 30 Apr.

- On 26 Mar, members of CSS Battalion in collaboration with members of Military Police Prešov welcomed **secondary construction building school students** to the CSS Bn base. They introduced their tasks and ways of delivering the tasks. Military Working Dog (MWD) handlers put on demonstrations of how to search for explosives and detain a suspicious person. The students learned more about the unit's weapons and equipment, CBRN protection, signals training, and self-defence techniques.

- The 7th edition of the **SVK Land Forces Best Artilleryman Competition** was held on 24-28 Apr at the Simulation Centre of the SVK Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš. It was attended by 33 artillerymen of 1st and 2nd Mech Bde (SVK) and of 13th Art Regt Jinč (CZE). The competition's theory phase was focused on artillery recce, topography, firing, fire control, weapon systems handling. The practical phase covered simulated firings using a rocket launcher in the form of an individual firing task. 1st Lt Peter Kalna, of Multiple Rocket Launcher (MRL) Detachment Rožňava, placed 1st and won the challenge cup, 1st Lt Marcel Leferovič, of Self-Propelled Artillery Detachment Michalovce, finished 2nd, while 1st Lt Peter Bystriansky, of 12th Mech Bn Nitra, took 3rd place.

## P. Gajdoš: Promotion binds Generals to performing their tasks better

(2 May) SVK President Andrej Kiska appointed one new Brigadier General of the SVK Armed Forces, while two other general officers were promoted to higher general officer ranks.

The Director of Military Intelligence, Maj Gen Ján Balciar, was advanced to the rank of Lieutenant General. The National Armaments Director – Director General of the SVK MOD's Modernisation and Support Department, Brig Gen Daniel Zmeko, was promoted to the rank of Major General. The President appointed the Deputy Commander SVK Land Forces, Col Karol Navrátil, to the rank of Brigadier General. According to Minister Gajdoš, being appointed to a general officer rank or promoted to a higher general officer rank is an honour for those selected: "This marks a recognition of the work they have done to the benefit of the SVK Armed Forces and the Slovak Republic as a



whole. I believe this binds them to fulfilling their tasks better and at the highest standard. So that they can serve, in performing their duties, as role models for the other Service Members to follow." At the same time, he thanked their family members for their support.

According to President of the Slovak Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the SVK Armed Forces Andrej Kiska, promotion and appointment are, undoubtedly, a recognition of one's contribution to and work in favour of the Armed Forces. "It is generally expected not only by me, the SVK Government and other public administration bodies – but above all by our citizens – that the considerable weight your rank carries will also become manifest in the near future and in delivering the roles you are called upon and will be called upon," said the Slovak President. On behalf of the three generals, Brig Gen Navrátil thanked the President for the trust and respect extended to them.



## Minister receives US Ambassador

(5 May) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš was pleased to receive the United States of America Ambassador to Slovakia, His Excellency Mr Adam Sterling, in an office call to discuss current topics of bilateral cooperation as well as the upcoming movements of US Army troops and vehicles across Slovak territory in support of Ex Saber Guardian 2017 in June and July. Also discussed at the meeting was defence spending. On this, Minister Gajdoš confirmed the Slovak commitment made at the Wales and Warsaw NATO Summits. The Head of the MOD assured the US Ambassador that the fight against terrorism is among the priorities of the SVK REP. In this respect, they discussed Slovakia's intent to deploy demining specialists to the training mission in Iraq, as announced by the Coalition Government a day earlier.

## NFIU SVK staff at Sliac

(3 May) Members of the NATO Force Integration Unit Slovakia (NFIU SVK) paid a visit on 3 May to the SVK Air Force's AIRCOM HQ and the Tactical Wing Sliac. On the AIRCOM HQ's premises, they were greeted by Brig Gen Miroslav Lorinc, DCOM SVK AF, and Col Adolf Uličný, Chief of SVK AF Support. They were informed of the newly established unit's mission and tasks by Col Jozef Zekucia, COM NFIU SVK. During their visit to the Tactical Wing Sliac, the NFIU SVK staff were briefed by Capt Marián Dzurjo on the Host Nation Support (HNS) concept and capabilities.