



CZE-SVK Legion in ITA

(24 May) General Milan Rastislav Štefánik took over the first Czechoslovak Legion Battle Flag from the hands of the then Italian Prime Minister, Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, in Piazza Venezia. The act of the Battle Flag handover meant that Italy extended de jure recognition to Czechoslovakia still prior to its official establishment. This milestone was today commemorated at the handover place in Piazza Venezia in Rome by a SVK delegation, in the presence of SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Anton Hrnko, and Chief of Defence Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko. Against the background of the commemorative event, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met for an office call with Italian Chief of Defence General Claudio Graziano, to discuss bilateral cooperation, including the upcoming joint deployment of ITA and SVK troops on NATO's eFP role in Latvia and the cooperation between the ITA Carabinieri and the SVK Military Police in Iraq.

Cooperation with Indiana

(21 May) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with Governor of Indiana Eric Holcomb at MOD Main Building. The main theme was Slovakia's bilateral defence cooperation with the United States of America, especially with the Indiana National Guard (INNG), which has been going on for the past almost 25 years as part of the Indiana National Guard's State Partnership Program with the SVK Armed Forces. On the partnership with the Indiana National Guard, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "The cooperation between us has been at an excellent level for long years, which has been evidenced by a large number of international exercises, with Indiana Guardsmen supporting us with their attendance. I am pleased to say that this will be the case this year too during Exercise Slovak Shield 2018." He further underlined the importance of the INNG in the transformation process of the SVK Armed Forces. Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš and Governor of Indiana Eric Holcomb addressed defence modernization projects in light of the SVK Armed Forces' systemic and systematic modernization. Topics of discussion also included the training of SVK Black Hawk helicopter pilots by INNG instructors – Minister Gajdoš thanked for this assistance to US officials, and the expected deliveries of additional UH-60M Black Hawks in the near future. Head of the SVK MOD informed Governor Holcomb about Slovakia's contribution to Iraq, where SVK personnel are training Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) members in mechanical demining and maintenance & repairs of Soviet-era military equipment as part of NATO's Training and Capacity Building in Iraq (NTCB-I), and the SVK troop deployment with the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan, where SVK professionals perform SOF tasks. They also talked about the planned deployment of 152 soldiers on NATO's eFP role to the Baltics.



Military Deed of the Year Award – stories of courage and humanity

(22 May) MOD leaders announced the recipients of the 2017 Military Deed of the Year Award at the 21st Military Deed of the Year Annual Award Gala Evening held at the MOD Club. In his remarks, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "I am immensely proud of our soldiers who serve in favour of our country not only on duty but also off duty. This evening is also about the people from the civilian world who have bonds to our department." Laureate of the Award in the Rescue of Life category is SSgt Lukáš Cmorej, of CSS Bn Prešov. As a medic, he made the best of his medical skills after rescuing a drowning boy. The Award in the Assistance to the Public category went to Lt Col Marián Turanský and the staff of the Training and K9 Military Police Department Vlkánová – Hronek for their dedicated work with Children's Home Liptovský Hrádok – Kráľova Lehota. Laureate of the Award in the Friend of the Armed Forces category is the TV news reporter and author of war documentaries Veronika Homolová Tóthová. The Award in the Special Prize category went to Maj Gen (Rtd) Emil Boček (95), the last surviving pilot of No. 310 Fighter Squadron RAF.



- Having served on EUNAVFOR MED Op Sophia between January – May 2018, the 10-member MP boarding team who undertook the tasks and duties of Op Sophia aboard a German Navy vessel was welcomed home by Director of the SVK Military Police Col Michal Migát at the SNP Museum in Banská Bystrica on 25 May. During the deployment, the boarding team assisted in rescuing over 400 migrants, of whom 41 were women and 9 were children.

- The Security Council and the Cabinet have approved the 155mm ZUZANA 2 Self-propelled Gun Howitzer (SpGH) procurement project for the SVK Armed Forces on 23 May. It follows from the document that a total of 25 pcs of the state-of-the-art Slovak-made SpGH will come into service with the SVK Armed Forces in stages until 2022, to be delivered by Konštruktúra Obrany, the state-run joint stock company and the exclusive certified sole manufacturer of the artillery system. The overall costs for the years 2018-2022, including personnel training, spare parts, and basic munitions, are estimated at €175 million, VAT included.

- On 22 May, the Trenčín Garrison Club hosted a ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of the **Slovak Association of Soldiers**. President of the Association Lt Col (Rtd) Eugen Bitera welcomed Director General of the Human Resources Department (SVK MOD) GS Col Radoslav Ivančík, Commander SVK Land Forces Maj Gen Jindřich Joch, President of EUROMIL Emmanuel Jacobs, and other guests to the ceremony.

- Organised under the auspices of the Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš, the Topographic Institute Banská Bystrica organised a **training session for Image Intelligence (IMINT) Specialists** on 21-25 May 2018, aimed at upgrading IMINT skills in line with NATO standards.

- The Training and Mobilization Replenishment Base Martin hosted a pre-deployment ceremony to bid farewell to 34 SVK personnel bound for the **Resolute Support Mission (RSM)** in Afghanistan on 18 May 2018. Also in attendance were Deputy Commander SVK Land Forces Brig Karol Navrátil, Commander Crisis Management Strategic Centre (SVK GS) Col Marián Kurilla, and CSEL of the SVK Armed Forces Sgt Maj Vladimír Beluš.

- **UK Defence Attaché G/Cpt Michael Longstaff** had an office call with SVK Chief of Defence Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko on 18 May. Topics of discussion included SVK-UK defence cooperation and SVK deployments on international crisis management missions and operations.

- The SVK MOD wants to alert the drivers in Slovakia to take caution as there will be **27 Allied and SVK military movements** across Slovakia over the period between 28 May and 3 June 2018. They will mainly involve POL and SVK troops deploying to Hungary for an international exercise.

Inspections by SVK CHOD



(23 May) SVK CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko inspected two exercises and a training activity before visiting NATINAMDS and QRA facilities. First, he paid a visit to a live fire exercise involving MiG-29 fighter jets at the Záhorie Air Weapons Range, where he saw first-

hand the readiness of MiG-29 fighter pilots training in air weaponry. After that, he inspected a live ammunition drill, where his subordinates from the SVK General Staff fired small arms on Turecký Vrch Training Area. Still in late evening hours, he went to Lešť Training Area to witness the live firing of 12th Mech Bn through the night. Earlier on 18 May, Lt Gen Zmeko made a previously unannounced 'snap' visit to military units assigned to NATINAMDS and QRA.

In a seamless way with US



(24 May) State Secretary of the SVK MOD Róbert Ondrejcsák met with Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Aaron Wess Mitchell at MOD Main Building. US Assistant Secretary Mitchell praised

Slovakia's commitment to the Defence Investment Pledge as well as its clear plan to achieve NATO's 2 per cent benchmark on defence until 2024. He referred to Slovakia as an "excellent Ally", one whose example he uses when speaking with other Allies about the need to be on track to step up investment in defence. The partners also addressed the Defence Cooperation Agreement between Slovakia and the US.

Promotion to Professor

(22 May) Acting on the recommendation of SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, SVK President Andrej Kiska announced the promotion of doc. [Rdr] Ing. [MScEng] Marcel Harakal' Ph.D., Vice-Rector for Sciences at the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš, to Professor of Military Signals and Information Systems. "Today's promotion of Marcel Harakal' to Professor shows that our military education is at a high level, be it in pedagogical, research or scientific activities." Prof Harakal' is Chairman of the Board of Editors for Science & Military, an international military journal, Guarantor for the Communication and Information Technology KIT IEEE Conference, and a recipient of several medals awarded by AFCEA.

Ironmen put to the test in 10 challenging disciplines



(24 May) The Training Centre Lešť hosted the 13th Annual Ironman Competition, with the participation of contestants from

the SVK Interior, Justice and Defence Ministries. The contestants competed against each other regardless of their age and weight. After taking part in 10 disciplines, winner of the 13th Annual Ironman Competition was MSgt Juraj Boroth, of the Prešov Police Flying Squad. Among other things, he was the only person to pull an 8-tonne Aktis lorry. He found the last discipline – swimming across a lake after jumping into the water from a boat – the toughest one. The disciplines included, a speed march in uniforms, boots and with submachine guns; lifting up a 60kg log; pulling an Aktis lorry; overturning a 200kg tyre; moving a 75kg mannequin; chin-ups on the pull-up bar; carrying two logs of 120kg both; the CIZMA obstacle course; and a water obstacle. In his 7th competition, SSgt Tomáš Barborík, of AAM Bde Nitra, placed 5th this year and came in as the best representative of the SVK Armed Forces.