



Kalište remembered

(23 June) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš paid homage to the victims of the village of Kalište that was burnt down by Nazis at the end of World War II. The commemoration ceremony, which came part of the 13th Meeting of Generations, organised by the Slovak Anti-Nazi Fighters Union, was also attended by Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini.

As Minister Gajdoš stressed, freedom and life in peace must never be taken for granted. In his statement on the WWII victims of Nazism in contrast to today's proponents of extremism, he said: "Sadly, even 73 years on after the end of the bloodiest conflict in the history of mankind there are still people amongst us who would like to see the return of the regime that was so unhealthy for society. They indulge in the ideas of Fascism and Nazism, dream about the dominion of the white race, and look down on their fellow citizens who may be different from them on grounds of their origin and the colour of the skin. We must never allow ourselves to be driven to another senseless war," he added.

Off to Latvia on eFP

(21 June) Additional 150 Slovak personnel are leaving for Latvia to undertake allotted tasks. This is a follow-on deployment after the engagement of Task Force Štefánik in NATO's eFP in the Baltics last year. The personnel will join another two liaison officers who have been serving in the NATO eFP BG HQ since November 2017. Minister Gajdoš and CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko came to bid their farewell to the departing troops during a pre-deployment ceremony at Martin-based 11th Mechanised Battalion.



On the role of SVK troops on eFP, SVK Minister of Defence said: "I want to make clear that our troops will undertake no combat missions. On the contrary, they are heading for Latvia to carry out tasks on the principle of solidarity. They will play their part in eliminating whatever threats the Alliance may face, and train together for a joint response to a potential aggression." With this move, he noted, Slovakia confirms that it is an active contributor to NATO's collective defence.

According to Chief of Defence Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko, the deploying personnel are fully ready at all levels to take on their role. "That is why I firmly believe that all demanding tasks, be they training or operational, will be accomplished to the full extent," he added.

The SVK force contribution is comprised of a Mechanised Company, a Military Police team, a National Support Element, a Repairs Platoon, and a team of medics. They will operate under the Canadian-led eFP BG Latvia on Ādaži Training Area for 6 months and will be replaced by another rotation of troops in January 2019.

The multinational NATO eFP BG Latvia comprises service members from 8 countries: Canada (eFP Framework Nation), Albania, Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

By building a memorial we are living up to our pledge

(19 June) At a foundation stone unveiling ceremony on Háj-Nicovô Hill in Liptovský Mikuláš, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš unveiled the foundation stone for the memorial dedicated to the 58 SVK personnel who have died while serving on missions and operations abroad. On giving the servicemen and women who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty the respect they deserve, Peter Gajdoš said: "We need to remind our entire society that the modern world has its heroes who have died while serving on duty in support of peace," adding that he believes the memorial will be a place of commemoration and reflection for the families of the departed soldiers, service personnel, Slovak citizens and all who appreciate the contribution of soldiers to society. As 2nd DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Miroslav Kocian said, the memorial for the departed Armed Forces personnel is a place of uncontested importance. Thanks to this, we will have a point of focus for remembrance of our colleagues who have died on missions and operations. Mayor of Liptovský Mikuláš Ján Blcháč appreciated the MOD's decision to install the memorial in Liptovský Mikuláš. The foundation stone unveiling ceremony was symbolically attended by Brig (Rtd) Ján Ilanovský, WWII veteran. The central motif of the memorial complex is a memorial chapel with the names of the departed soldiers and their symbols carved into its walls. The construction work is due to be complete by the end of October.



- The two-week training for the 40-strong **Active Reserves unit of the Engineer Battalion** Sereď was successfully concluded on 22 June, with the active reservists being recognised as pontoon system operators ready to play their part in setting up and operating amphibious pontoon ferries. The training was judged a success by the Commander of the Engineer Battalion.

- State Secretary of the SVK MOD **Róbert Ondrejčák** welcomed Canadian Chargé d'Affaires John von Kaufmann, Office of the Embassy of Canada in Slovakia, to the SVK MOD on 19 June. J. Kaufmann thanked for the SVK contribution to the Canadian-led eFP Battlegroup in Latvia and expressed his interest in looking into different options for promoting the cooperation between Canada and Slovakia on their eFP role.

- The SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM Zvolen hosted the **SVK Air Force Commander's 3rd Military Council Meeting** on 20 June 2018. The Military Council was chaired by Maj Gen Ľubomír Svoboda, in the presence of Chief Inspector of Flight Safety Col Ján Salaj and Chief of the SVK Air Force Support Branch (SVK GS) Col Adolf Uličný. The next SVK Air Force Commander's Military Council Meeting is scheduled for September.

- On 21 June, State Secretary of the SVK MOD **Róbert Ondrejčák** welcomed the **Ambassador of Georgia** to Slovakia, His Excellency Mr Revaz Gachechiladze, to the MOD for talks on preparations for the upcoming NATO Summit in Brussels. Georgia's prospective membership in NATO, and NATO-Georgia cooperation. R. Ondrejčák confirmed that the Slovak Republic has been a long-time advocate of NATO's open door policy and that NATO enlargement did not stop with Montenegro's entry into the Alliance. Equally important, the Slovak Republic backs the efforts of Georgia and other countries to integrate into NATO.

- A week-long deployment to and a specialist tactical exercise involving a company of **CBRN Battalion Rožňava** culminated on 21 June at the Training Centre Lešť. The company has been earmarked as a multifunctional company for the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) NATO, ready to deploy on 5 days' notice. The Officer in Command of the exercise was Lt Col Oliver Toderiška, Commander CBRN Bn Rožňava.

- An **international cooperative training for MWD handlers and military working dogs (MWDs)**, of the SVK Armed Corps and Military Police, was held on 18-22 June in Krpáčovo, situated at the foothills of the Low Tatras, and at two other locations in Brezno and Podbrezová. The Officer Commanding the exercise was Maj Peter Šoltés, Chief MWD Handler of the SVK MOD and Chief of the K9 Section, Training and K9 Branch, Military Police Department Vikanová Hronsek. The training was attended by over 70 MWD handlers and 80 MWDs.

- The SVK MOD wants to alert the drivers in Slovakia to take caution as there will be 39 road and 1 rail **Allied military movements** across Slovakia over the period between 25 June and 1 July 2018. They will mostly involve US and POL troops. Also scheduled are the transfer of SVK troops and assets to Latvia, SVK military convoys along the Martin – Trenčín route, and rail movements along the Rožňava – Nemecká and Martin – Čadca routes.

School students become soldiers for 48hrs at Camp 2018

(23 June) Winners of the Defence Challenge, organised by the Slovak Ministry of Defence for secondary school students, got a taste of basic soldiering skills during Camp 2018 at the Training Centre Lešť on 22-24 June. The students were given an opportunity to improve their knowledge of topography, medical care, and signals trade. They were also instructed on self-defence and tactical marches, and enjoyed night training, living in the tented camp, and eating military food.

Addressing the issue of trainees, Maj Igor Lišaník, of the Training Centre Lešť, said with satisfaction: "Compared to last year, this year they exhibited better physical fitness. Most importantly, we managed to turn their sections into real teams who helped each other whenever it was required." The secondary school students were visited by Defence Minister

Peter Gajdoš. He wished them every success and expressed his wish to meet some of them in the Armed Forces one day.



Among the students were two school bulletin contributors/reviewers from a secondary school in Bardejov who had been recognised at the Slovakia-wide "Štúr's Pen" Essay Writing Contest. All participants were successful in tackling all challenges of Camp 2018.

At the conclusion of the event, Director of the Training Centre Lešť Anton Maštalský handed over the Camp 2018 Cups to the best members of individual sections: Matúš Bezák, of Grammar School Topoľčany, Jakub Votlik, of Secondary Technical Aviation School Trenčín, Šimon Mikuláš Havaš, of Sports Grammar School Banská Bystrica, and Rastislav Širilla, of Secondary Technical School Košice.

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