



## Legacy of missionaries

(5 July) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš along with Parliamentary Chairman Andrej Danko and Premier Peter Pellegrini today attended the nation-wide commemorations of St Cyril and St Methodius in Nitra. During the Holy Mass, members of the public paid tribute to St Cyril and St Methodius, marking the 1155th anniversary of their arrival in Great Moravia.

On the legacy of Slovakia's most revered and respected missionaries, Minister Gajdoš said: "Even after more than a thousand years since their arrival, the legacy of St Cyril and St Methodius remains still alive. After all, the Cyrilo-Methodian tradition has its place in our Constitution. We can rely and build on the values the Brothers of Thesaloniki spread, especially at a time when there are voices that have nothing to do with peace, tolerance, voices that incite violence and hatred."

St Cyril and St Methodius arrived in Great Moravia in 863. The Byzantine missionaries are credited with spreading Christianity in the language of the people and introducing the first Slavic alphabet (Glagolitic script), as well as stimulating the development of culture and education on a large scale. St Cyril and St Methodius Day is a national holiday which is remembered on 5 July in Slovakia.

## New officers commissioned

(4 July) Altogether 69 graduates of the Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree study at Liptovský Mikuláš-based 'General Milan Rastislav Štefánik' Armed Forces Academy today had their graduation ceremony and passing-out parade, which marked the official end of their first-level tertiary education. Of them, 66 graduates will undertake long-distance follow-on study programmes and work towards their Magister (Mgr) and Master of Science in Engineering (MSc Eng) degrees, whilst concurrently serving in the SVK Armed Forces. The other 3 graduates will continue their studies at the Aviation Faculty, of Košice-based Technical University. They are now entitled to the most junior officer's rank – 'Lieutenant'. In attendance at the graduation ceremony and passing-out parade were General Secretary of the SVK MOD's Service Office Ján Holko and CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko.

Speaking at the ceremony, General Secretary Ján Holko said: "Even though you are not saying good-bye to your school, you are becoming an integral part of the military world. It is young and dynamic people eager to study that we need most today." He further noted that, in addition to being promoted to a higher rank, the first golden star on their shoulder marks means that the SVK Armed Forces have put greater trust and responsibility in them.

In his remarks, CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "The Academy educates officers to meet the needs of the Army and the SVK Air Force. At the same time, it extends its cooperation with civilian universities, where 6 servicemen will start their BSc pilot study programme."

The new officers will be posted, amongst others, as platoon commanders to SVK Armed Forces units in the days to come. They will continue their long-distance studies, whilst concurrently performing their military duties.



## SVK delegation observes the centenary of CZE-SVK legionaries swearing the oath of allegiance

(2 July) A commemoration to mark the 100th anniversary of the handover of the 21st Czechoslovak Rifle Regiment Battle Flag and Czechoslovak legionaries swearing the Oath of Allegiance took place at 14:00 on 30 June 2018 in the grounds of the Czechoslovak Legion Memorial, located at former Camp Kléber, close to Darney, France. The ceremony, conducted with full military honours, was attended by Slovak Premier Peter Pellegrini, Czech Premier Andrej Babiš, French Minister of Defence Florence Parly, Lorraine authorities and Darney representatives, veterans, members of civil associations, and many others. This historic event, which is regarded as one of the most important milestones in the recognition of Czechoslovakia's independence, was also remembered by the SVK MOD/ Armed Forces delegation led by State Secretary of the SVK MOD Róbert Ondrejcsák.



- State Secretary of the SVK MOD Róbert Ondrejcsák met with Deputy Minister and Under-Secretary of State in the Polish National Ministry of Defence Tomasz Szatkowski in Warsaw on 4 July. Focus of their talks was on V4 cooperation in the run-up to the NATO Summit in Brussels. They discussed further options for Iraq, where a SVK team under Polish command is repairing military equipment.

- After a longer recess than usual, SVK military parachutists once again participated in a **parachute water landing training** on 19-29 June. The training, held close to a dredging lake at the village of Sekule (Záhorie) was attended by parachutists from the Transport Wing Kuchyňa, Tactical Wing Sliach, Helicopter Wing Prešov, 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina, and ISTAR Battalion. The training was supported by the Rescue Brigade, of the Firefighting and Rescue Corps Malacky.

- The nation-wide **14th Military Revival of Slovakia Association Conference** was held at the MOD on 3 July. On behalf of the Minister of Defence, the ex-service personnel who were discharged from the military on political grounds during the Communist purges at the beginning of the 1970s were welcomed by Director of the Human Resources Department (MOD) Radoslav Ivančík. On behalf of the Chief of Defence, they were addressed by Chief of the Personnel Management Branch (General Staff) Col Maroš Briáš. 8 members of the Association received the Commemorative Medal marking the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the SVK Armed Forces.

- Lt Col Milan Cvik, former Commander 11th Mechanised Battalion Martin, was promoted to Colonel and took up the appointment of **Commander 1st Mechanised Brigade Topoľčany** with effect from 1 July 2018. Lt Col Jozef Csáky, former Chief of Planning and Operations Control (until 30 June 2018), assumed the appointment of Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations with effect from 1 July 2018. His position was taken over by Lt Col Ján Medved, former Chief of the Training and Classrooms & Training Facilities Section, of the Combat Training Branch in HQ Land.

- On 2 July, Deputy Chief of Staff HQ Land Col Ján Dreveňák introduced the incoming **Commander Command Support Battalion** Lt Col Michal Rážga, who was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and assumed the appointment of COM CS Bn with effect from 1 July.

- The SVK MOD wants to alert the drivers in Slovakia to take caution as there will be **23 Allied military movements** across Slovakia over the period from 9-15 July 2018. They will mainly involve POL, HRV and US troops. There will also be SVK Army convoys along the routes Nitra – Training Centre Lešť and Rožňava – Michalovce, as well as SVK Army convoys transporting oversized cargo of equipment along the route Nitra – Training Centre Lešť and within Prešov.

## VMT soldiers transition into their first days of military training

(6 July) Voluntary Military Training (VMT) soldiers have transitioned into their first days of military training. 87 volunteer soldiers, of whom are 23 women, have been undertaking military training since Monday (2 July) at the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin. Over the next 11 weeks they will gain basic military knowledge and skills. On completion of the training they will receive more than 1,100 euros. SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko came to Martin to show their personal support to them.

Speaking in front of the VMT soldiers, Minister Gajdoš emphasised that patriotism and a personal interest in the defence of the Slovak Republic should be the main motivation factors for undertaking the VMT training. In his statement, CHOD Lt Gen Zmeko reminded that the VMT scheme is an important element in



generating the reserves. Base Commander Col Lubomír Podhorec explained that the trainees have been through the initial administrative in-processing and medical checks. They have been issued with military clothing and equipment and have by now begun to carry out their training tasks. The training will run until 14 September 2018.

The trainees will have acquired knowledge and skills as marksmen, engineers, decontaminators and signallers, and will be promoted to the rank of 2nd Degree Private. Civilian volunteers as VMT soldiers are a source for the generation of the reserves. If interested in serving with the SVK Armed Forces, they can join the Army without having to undergo basic military training. The SVK MOD supports the VMT scheme by providing free accommodation, catering, clothing and equipment, and reimbursing travel costs to and from the place of training.

## Special interest organizations

(3 July) CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko welcomed representatives of special interest non-profit organizations and associations. This has been the first such meeting for Lt Gen Zmeko as CHOD. During the meeting, they were briefed on the Armed Forces Cooperation Development Plan for the near future. Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko reassured them of his personal support and interest in promoting the cooperation between the Armed Forces and the public.

## NATO Air Chiefs Symposium



(3 July) SVK Air Force Commander Maj Gen Lubomír Svoboda and CSEL of the SVK Air Force Sgt Maj Peter Kuk participated in the NATO Air Chiefs Symposium at NATO HQ AIRCOM, Ramstein Airbase, Germany. General Tod D. Wolters, Commander of AIRCOM, presented his views on today's security environment and NATO's strategic shift from assurance to deterrence. The main themes of the symposium covered 'Airpower's Unique Contribution to NATO's Success', 'Challenges to the Delivery of Air Capabilities', and an update on modern fighter aircraft integration into existing fleets. NATO CSEs met in a separate session to discuss current issues of interest.

## Military historians recognised



(3 July) CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko received two employees of the Institute of Military History on the occasion of their birthday jubilees. On the occasion of his 65th birthday, military historian Imrich Purdek was awarded the Commemorative Cross, 2nd Grade, and on the occasion of his 60th birthday, Deputy Director of the Military Museum Piešťany Peter Kadlec was awarded the Commemorative Cross, 3rd Grade. In their face-to-face conversation with the CHOD, both military historians appreciated Lt Gen Zmeko's personal support for the Institute of Military History and for promoting military history and traditions.