



Gen Štefánik's legacy

(4 May) To mark 100 years of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik's tragic death, Slovak Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš along with French Minister for the Armed Forces Florence Parly and Czech Defence Minister Lubomír Metnar paid respects to his memory at the Tomb of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik on Bradlo Hill. The National Act of Remembrance took place in the presence of Slovakia's highest constitutional representatives.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "General Štefánik loved life, his native land, and his nation. And although he lived a great part of his life abroad, he never forgot his country and always brought credit on it. Everywhere he worked, especially in France and Italy, he opened the doors to freedom of the Czech and Slovak nation." The programme of the National Act of Remembrance on Bradlo Hill was opened by a joint flypast of SVK, CZE, FRA and ITA Air Force aircraft and 20 gun salutes were fired in honour of General M. R. Štefánik.

Earlier on 2 May 2019, Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš attended another remembrance ceremony in Ivanka pri Dunaji, where General Štefánik died. On 3 May 2019, he and Czech Defence Minister Lubomír Metnar paid respects to the memory of General Štefánik at the Štefánik Memorial in Bratislava. During Minister Metnar's official visit to the Slovak Republic, Minister Gajdoš and his counterpart also met for talks on cooperation between the countries in the field of defence and joint training and education for service personnel. Similarly, Minister Gajdoš also met French Minister for the Armed Forces Florence Parly for talks mainly on areas of bilateral cooperation and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects.

General Milan Rastislav Štefánik died aged 39 on 4 May 1919, when on his return flight from Italy the Caproni Ca.33 biplane went down, crashing close to the village of Ivanka pri Dunaji near Bratislava. Sadly, he never got another chance to set foot on the native soil of his liberated country, to the foundation of which he contributed so tremendously whilst abroad.

SHAPE COC ceremony

(3 May) SVK CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko attended the change of command (COC) ceremony for Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) at SHAPE in Mons, Belgium. U.S. General Tod D. Wolters took over command from General Curtis M. Scaparrotti, who had held the appointment since May 2016. Lt Gen Zmeko congratulated General Wolters on his appointment and expressed his full support to him in executing the duties of one of NATO's most significant command positions. He also held brief talks with Chairman of the NATO Military Committee Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach (GBR), Chairman of the EU Military Committee General Claudio Graziano (ITA), and Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) General André Lanata (FRA).

Slovak Republic marks 15 years in European Union

(1 May) The Slovak Republic has marked the 15th anniversary of its entry into the European Union since it became an EU member country along with another 9 countries on 1 May 2004. Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Slovakia supports closer defence cooperation among EU Member States at all levels and directly contributes to the strengthening of it." As he further pointed out, Slovakia's contribution has been visible not only as part of PESCO where our country is participating in 8 projects and where it initiated and is now leading its own EuroArtillery project on indirect fire support, but also for a much longer time as part of the EU's international crisis management. Ever since 2004, Slovak Ministers of Defence and other representatives of the SVK MOD have participated actively in joint meetings with their European colleagues to make Slovakia's voice heard even over such a challenging theme as security and defence. "While on EU-led missions and operations, our service personnel have become a recognised element of international teams, whereas over 900 soldiers have rotated in and out of them abroad to date and 42 SVK personnel are currently deployed," added the Minister.



- To mark the 100th anniversary of General M. R. Štefánik's death, the Institute of Military History staged a media presentation of a **short video film** on the work of General Štefánik on 29 Apr 2019. On this occasion, Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "Today there are a lot of young people who do not know the personalities who have shaped Slovak history. Therefore, I appreciate the initiative of our Institute of Military History, because it wants to bring the life of such a high profile personality as General Milan Rastislav Štefánik closer to the public." He added that, through this initiative, the MOD is delivering on the commitment to promote the public awareness of Slovak military history, as outlined in the SVK Government Manifesto and the SNS Party Manifesto.

- On 1 May 2019, 43 first-year cadets of the **M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy**, led by Dean of the Ordinariate of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps Cpt Tomáš Huďa, went on an educational tour of the sites associated with the Carpatho-Dukla Operation. In Svidník, they visited the Museum of Military History to see the exhibition of WW2 military hardware before visiting the General Svoboda Memorial and the Czechoslovak Army Corps Memorial at Dukla - Vyšný Komárnik along with the adjacent cemetery, where fallen members of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps rest in peace.

- **Training of the Defence Firefighting Unit**, Transport Wing Kuchyňa, focused on the activity of incident response commanders and individual action of firefighters, took place on 29 Apr 2019.

- Working in close cooperation with the U.S. Civil Affairs Team (CAT), the CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre Martin prepared a short-term course on the **tasks of civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) and psychological operations (PSYOPS)** in the planning process for its own personnel in the second half of Apr 2019.

- The **Dukla Observation Tower** is closed to the public from 1 to 31 May 2019 due to operational reasons. In Svidník, the exhibition 'Military History of Slovakia 1914-1945' remains open to the public.

- The Central Office of Ecumenical Pastor Service in the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps held the 5th edition of the **Fathers and Sons** event in the Liptov region from 26 to 28 Apr 2019.

- On Sunday, 28 Apr 2019, **Cpl Tomáš Klobučník**, of VŠC DUKLA, won the men's 100m breaststroke with the event's record time of 1:01.84 at the 21st Orca Cup International Swimming Competition in Bratislava.

- Drivers are asked by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be 16 **Allied road movements** between 6-12 May 2019. They will mostly involve HUN troops in support of Ex COMMON CHALLENGE. Over the period, SVK Army convoys will also ferry oversized cargo on the routes: Hlohovec – Sereď, Martin – CV Lešť, Rožňava – Vyšný Komárnik and Kuchyňa – Prešov.

Appreciation from allies

(30 April) A meeting of allies took place at the premises of the Permanent Delegation of the Slovak Republic to NATO, as Slovakia's successful project on demining training in Iraq, financed from a NATO Trust Fund, drew to a close. Thanks to the volume of financial contributions by donors, it became one of NATO's biggest projects aimed at building partner security capacities. Among the countries that financially contributed to one of NATO's biggest projects aimed at building partner security capacities were Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Luxembourg and Croatia, which allowed Slovakia to deliver savings of 1,023,000 euros. During the meeting, Director of the International Relations Department Bohuľ Kuchta (MOD) emphasised that the success of the project had consisted in Allied solidarity and mutual support. The said training activity confirmed Slovakia's permanent commitment to supporting NATO's partner policy and building the capacities and defence capabilities of affected countries in order to project stability beyond the Alliance's borders. SVK service personnel trained 77 Iraqi personnel at Camp Besmayah in Iraq. Of them, 42 were instructors who would continue to pass on their expertise on demining. The NATO International Secretariat called the project an example of Allied cooperation in the field of burden sharing and highly appreciated the level of flexibility and professionalism demonstrated by Slovak specialists.



Support for technology

(29 April) Col Vladimír Kavický, Director General of the Modernization Department (MOD), met with Pavel Žúna, Director of the NATO STO Collaboration Support Office, based in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France. The Office is an executive body of the NATO Science and Technology Organization (STO) with responsibility for coordination, synchronization, and support activities in the field of security and defence technology development among NATO Member States and Partners. The Office is currently coordinating 337 projects, involving approx. 5,000 scientists from all over the world. Through AOS L. Mikuláš, the SVK MOD is participating in 6 projects and is represented on 4 Technical Panels. Pavel Žúna expressed his conviction that the SVK MOD will deepen its participation in NATO's STO projects to the benefit of the Alliance and the Slovak Republic.

MOD makes health care more effective at its Sliach Outpatient Clinic

(30 April) The SVK MOD has made the provision of occupational health (OH) care more effective at its Sliach Outpatient Clinic, which falls under the Ružomberok Central Military Hospital – Faculty Hospital. While until recently assessment of medical fitness of flying personnel for Air Service was done by external contractors, under the new arrangements this can be delivered by the Clinic under its own direction and control. The Sliach Air Medical Centre provides easier access to OH services, including during crisis situations, while at the same time saving taxpayer money.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "For the past 10 years,



we have paid approx. 250,000 euros a year for the services delivered by civilian contractors, with the prices of the services going up on a year-to-year basis. The provision of medical services under our own direction and control makes us self-reliant even in the case of potential crisis situations." As he explained, the main task of the Centre is to provide specialist screening and assessment of

medical fitness of flying personnel for Air Service and of candidates for active duty service in selected branches/trades of the SVK Air Force, including future pilots, flight engineers, stewards, observers, air traffic controllers, SOF specialists, and other trades in military aviation.