



## Record-breaking interest in joining SVK military

(19 May) Interest in joining the Armed Forces has reached a record-breaking decade high this year. Over the first five months of this year, the MOD has received a total 2,613 applications for the 2nd Degree Private positions, which exceeds all annual average figures since 2011. There is also lots of interest in pursuing studies at the Armed Forces Academy (AOS), with 854 applications received as of today. In response to this, there was an increase in the number of AOS cadets – students up to 195. According to the SVK Armed Forces Personnel Office, most in demand are drivers with Category C and E licences in the other ranks, and IT specialists, electrical engineering specialists and medical professionals in the officer ranks.



## NATO Military Committee

(18 May) CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko took part in this year's second session of the NATO Military Committee in Chiefs of Defence format at NATO HQ, Brussels. In his opening remarks, Chair of the NATO Military Committee Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach emphasised the need for NATO adaptation, social change, partner cooperation and advanced innovative technology. During the meeting of the Allied Chiefs with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, more clarity was provided about the political intents for the forthcoming Summit, and NATO's operations, missions and other activities. The CHODs also devoted their attention to NATO 2030 and the implementation process of Allied strategic planning through the Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area and the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept. In this context, they also delved into the issues of deterrence and defence and ongoing operations, missions and activities. As part of a separate session with Ukraine and Georgia, the Allied Chiefs addressed the security developments in the countries. In his statement, Gen Zmeko gave support to the ongoing planning initiatives at the military level. On operations, he confirmed the SVK Contingent's drawdown from Afghanistan, consistent with the Operation Commander's withdrawal plan, and informed that the SVK military was considering the option to strengthen its contribution to Iraq. In response to the current security environment, he expressed concerns over Russia's recent military presence close to the Ukrainian border. Gen Zmeko also met with SVK Permanent Representative to NATO Peter Bátor and SVK service personnel posted to DAO, EUMS and IMS. During a brief meeting with the UKR CHOD, Gen Zmeko and Col Gen Khomchak discussed the potential areas of bilateral military cooperation with an outlook to 2022.

## MOD to replace Support Vehicles fleet in service with SVK Armed Forces

(20 May) In the near future, the Ministry of Defence is planning to procure new Support Vehicles (SV), built on a single chassis platform, in different modifications and sizes for the Slovak Armed Forces within the funds available for this modernisation programme. The MOD has begun to monitor potential offers. Director General of the MOD's Modernisation Department and National Armaments Director Jozef Zekucia attended a presentation of the first potential military trucks supplier at Rheinmetall MAN Military Vehicles (RMMV) Austria, based in Vienna. Mr Zekucia said: "Military trucks form an inseparable part of the logistics of the combat service support (CSS) units in delivering the international capability target – to stand up a Heavy Mechanised Brigade." The aim of the meeting was a presentation of the company's manufacturing capacity and cooperation options for vehicle deliveries. As part of the presentation, they viewed practical demonstrations of the military trucks in the company's portfolio. Representatives of RMMV Austria highlighted the strong points of the new HX3 chassis of the Rheinmetall MAN military vehicles, which was unveiled just earlier this month. As part of the official programme, the off-road driving properties and technical parameters of the military trucks were displayed in a live action demonstration.



- Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer, Minister for European Neighbourhood and the Americas at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) Wendy Morton and UK Ambassador to Slovakia Nigel Baker gathered to pay **tribute to the WW2 heroes** at the Western Resistance Memorial in Šafárik Square, Bratislava.

- **Holy Masses** have resumed with the participation of HQ Bratislava Garrison personnel. A Holy Mass to mark Ascension Day and to bless the new premises was celebrated by Senior Chaplain of HQ BA GAR Maj Slavko Ganaj, the new administrator of St George Military Parish at SVK MOD and Bratislava Garrison and the outgoing administrator of St John Paul II Military Parish Kuchyňa.

- English language testers from the Defence Language Institute tested the **English language skills** of the military personnel to be deployed to UNFICYP at the Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin on 18 May.

- Built around the theme of "CSS and CIS Company within CSS BN, Logistics Support, Medical Support, and Signals Support and Activities in Support of Mechanised Brigade Units", the CSS and CIS Company (CSS Bn) attended **specialist tactical training**, at CSS Prešov and on Prešov Garrison's Training Ground at Ruská Nová Ves. The Field Services Company (CSS Bn) attended specialist tactical training as well.

- On 19 May, the Social Sciences and Languages Department (AOS) organised an international scientific conference titled **New Trends in Professional Education and Career Progression of Service Personnel**, to contribute to enhancing the quality of the SVK Armed Forces in the field of management processes and to increasing the level of military competences in professional education and training. The conference was attended by specialists from HUN, CZE and POL. All papers will be published in the conference proceedings.

- Chaplain-in-Chief of the **Ecumenical Pastoral Service Office** in the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps Col Viktor Sabo visited Prešov Garrison to hold meetings with Metropolitan Rastislav of Prešov Orthodox Eparchy, Senior Chaplain Capt Vlasta Kovačová at CSS Bn Prešov, and Bishop of the Eastern District of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession Peter Mihoč.

- The makers of the latest **Azimuth 24/7** edition, available on YouTube, jumped out of the C-27J Spartan aircraft from the height of 4km, aided by instructors from the SOF Training Base and members of 5 SOF Regiment, and an instructor from the Parachute, Airborne and Rescue Service (HW Prešov), and members of the Transport Wing Kuchyňa.

- The MOD has issued a **traffic warning** to motorists as 30 Allied road movements are scheduled to take place in support of DEFENDER 2021 mostly overnight across Slovakia from 24 to 30 May 2021. Over the same period, the SVK Armed Forces will conduct road movements across Slovakia from/to: Sklené – TC Lešť and back, Zemianske Kostolyány – Rašov and back, Trenčín – Aleškiny, Zemianske Kostolyány – Bratislava and back, Zemianske Kostolyány – Trenčín and back, Nováky – Sklené, Topoľčany – Nitra, Trebišov – Kamenica nad Cirochou, Sereď – Rožňava, Rožňava – Trebišov, Trebišov – Žilina, Trebišov – Veľké Ozorovce, Hlohovec – Koliňanský vrch and back, Žilina – Mokrad, Mokrad – Veľké Ozorovce, Veľké Ozorovce – Trebišov, Turecký vrch TA – Sereď, and within the city of Zvolen. Also scheduled is a SVK military rail movement from Zlatovce to Trebišov.

## Minister meets Japanese Ambassador

(17 May) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď welcomed the Ambassador of Japan to Slovakia, HE Makoto Nakagawa to the Ministry of Defence. They had a discussion about potential areas of cooperation that could be developed between the countries in the field of defence and security, as well as addressing political developments on the international scene. The Minister briefed the Ambassador on the MOD's ambitions and plans for modernising the SVK military's aging equipment and for leveraging effective change to Service conditions. There was also a space to discuss the new SVK strategic defence and security documents and defence spending in keeping with Slovakia's international commitments.

## Cadets pass FRA Commando Course

(20 May) Cadets of the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy – Pte Jakub Nyéki and Pte Samuel Legerský successfully passed the month-long Commando Course at the French National Commando Training Centre. Pte Jakub Nyéki was named the 2nd best course graduate in the platoon. The organisers recommended both graduates for a higher level Commando Course to be held next year.

## Military Strategy Draft

(20 May) Building on the recently published SVK Security and Defence Strategies, the MOD is working on the new SVK Military Strategy Draft. This military strategic framework for employing the SVK Armed Forces sets out a variety of factors impacting on the operational environment of the SVK Armed Forces and outlines conflict scenario design and Slovakia's military reaction to different attacks, as well as listing the requirements for readiness and capabilities development of the Armed Forces. The document has been sent to the ministries for review. Subsequently, it will be referred to the SVK Cabinet and Security Council for formal agreement.

## Continued investments in clothing

(19 May) Last year, the MOD set aside approx. €17.8 million, a 30-per cent rise against 2019, to purchase military clothing for soldiers. This year, the MOD is committed to keeping the positive trend going by setting aside €18 million.

A comprehensive review has established that the current military clothes and footwear no longer meet the requirements in terms of quantity and quality. As a result, the MOD is working towards delivering all military gear of highest standards and modern design, so that our service personnel are proud of wearing it. Additionally, work is underway on a new ordering & delivery system via a phone application, allowing military clothing to be delivered directly to the soldier's unit.

## Soldiers clean up in aftermath of flooding in Rudno nad Hronom



(18 May) 25 soldiers were deployed in efforts to assist local residents after a flood barrier gave way in the municipality of Rudno nad Hronom in County Zarnovica. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and Prime Minister Eduard Heger, joined by other ministers and DCHOD Lt Gen Ľubomír Svoboda, reached the municipality to make sure that local residents receive urgent and immediate assistance. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "At the request for assistance from the Crisis Management Staff, we have made personnel and equipment available to the municipality to clean up in the aftermath of the flooding. Our military personnel and members of the Fire and Rescue Corps will assist as long as they are needed. We will do everything to stabilise the situation in the municipality, the earlier the better." Alongside maintaining a high level of readiness to deliver their main task – to defend the Slovak Republic, members of the Slovak Armed Forces are ready to deploy specialist equipment and capabilities anywhere they are needed across Slovakia to protect the lives and property of SVK citizens.