



## Slovaks on the Champs-Elysees

(14 July) 15 years on since their last participation in France's Bastille Day celebrations in Paris, SVK military personnel joined the ranks of soldiers marching down the Champs-Elysees. France celebrates its national holiday with a military parade which traditionally opens with a march of dismounted units. This year, multinational troops from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary paraded alongside the French Armed Forces. Soldiers of 52 Airborne Battalion Trebišov represented Slovakia, having prepared for the parade a week in advance. Assigned to the front position, they marched in an 8x8 formation that involved soldiers from eight other nationalities. The motto of this year's Bastille Day parade – Share the Flame – underpinned the importance of sharing defence on the EU and NATO's eastern border and supporting Ukraine in the fight against the Russian aggressor, which is why the Eastern European Allies close to Ukraine were invited to attend.



## AOS has another professor

(13 July) President Zuzana Čaputová conferred the title of Professor in Armed Forces Weapons and Equipment on Assoc Prof Ján Ochodnický PhD, on the recommendation from Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď. Assoc Prof Ján Ochodnický has focused his scientific work on active and passive radar systems, radar surveillance, electronic warfare and the processing of signals through AI. He represents Slovakia at international organisations and is a regular member of technical committees at international, MOD and intradepartmental conferences. The level of the Cadet Officer programme at the Armed Forces Academy rests on the quality of its teaching staff. Minister Naď congratulated Prof Ochodnický on being awarded the title of Professor and wished him every success in his next endeavour.

## New DEUCON Commander

(14 July) Slovakia's defences have been greatly reinforced by NATO's eFP. Over the past four months, nearly 1,500 military personnel from 5 countries with equipment, including the most advanced PAC 3 Patriot batteries, have arrived in Slovakia. Our security and that of NATO's eastern flank is also supported by German troops. On 13 July, Commander Bundeswehr Operations Command Lt Gen Bernd Schütt presided over the change of command ceremony for the DEUCON Commander, with Col Jörg Sievers handing over to Col Dirk Kraus. In attendance at the ceremony was Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer who came to thank the outgoing commander on behalf of the MOD and wished him every success in his new role.



## COC ceremony for Commander 5 Special Forces Regiment Žilina

(13 July) Lt Col Peter Žochňák has been appointed Commander 5 Special Forces Regiment Žilina. He took over from Brig Gen Branislav Benka in a change of command (COC) ceremony. Lt Col Žochňák has returned from a posting abroad. With this appointment, he has taken great responsibility for leading and modernising the Regiment. One of his ambitions is to step up cooperation with partner Special Operations Forces. "I've always been a proud member of 5 Special Forces Regiment. The success of the Regiment and our SOF personnel consists in the professionalism of individuals and subject matter experts in all specific roles. We all work as a team and we can do so only with mutual respect and trust," the new commander said. CHOD Gen Zmeko backs the vision of building SOF capabilities, saying: "Replacing a commander is a natural element in building the Regiment, since this marks a generational step-change. On his return from a prestigious military school in France, the new commander has taken command of the Regiment to deliver on the intents and goals of the Armed Forces."



- The companies operating under state-owned DMD Group - ZTS Speciál, KONSTRUKTA - Defence and ZVS Holding achieved positive economic results last year, Director General of DMD Group Štefan Škultéty said. He also announced massive investments in Defence manufacturing infrastructure. Two workshops will be refurbished in Dubnica nad Váhom, a chrome plating line and a photovoltaic power plant will be set up, while the capacity to repair Army assets will be extended.

- The SVK MOD and the ROK MND are drafting a MOU to enable the development of bilateral defence links and cooperation between both countries, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer confirmed after hosting a Korean delegation led by Deputy Minister for Political Affairs Yeo Seung Bae of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. Among others, they discussed cooperation on cyber defence.

- Members of 2 Mech Bde Prešov raised money in UNFICYP to buy a swimming pool, a sand box and soccer balls for kids of the children's home in Svidník. The kids were full of joy and rewarded the donors by reciting poems and singing songs for them.

- Sts Cyril and Methodius Day celebrations at Valy Hillfort in the village of Bojná culminated with a Holy Mass, concelebrated by Bishop of the Forces Mons František Rábek and Chaplain of 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany Capt Ján Ostopáček. A rich programme of side events was prepared for participants. Representatives of the Slovak Armed Forces and Armed Corps were also in attendance.

- The Trenčín Garrison Club is hosting a day camp for kids of soldiers, civil servants and civilian employees from Trenčín Garrison. The first group of kids was visited by Commander of the SVK Army Maj Gen Ivan Pach on 11 July. He also used the occasion to congratulate the head of the Trenčín Garrison Club, Ms Mária Huszliczková, on her jubilee.

- The academic year of the M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) concluded with a special Mass of Gratitude, concelebrated by Bishop of the Forces Mons František Rábek and Dean Capt Tomáš Huda. On this occasion, six parishioners – four cadets and two family members of the AOS staff received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

- Bishop of the Forces Mons František Rábek paid a visit to a group of children in the first in a series of three Bishopric of the Forces Summer Camps in Smrekovica. Being welcomed to the camp by over 40 kids, he answered their questions during an hour-long discussion. The kids are being taken care of by military chaplains Capt Ján Čupalka and Capt Slavomír Krajňák.

- At the 11th World Games in Birmingham, Alabama, USA, Monika Chochlíková defeated Meriem el Moubarik (MAR) and won the gold medal in the women's 51kg category in the Muay Thai event. Kickboxer Alexandra Filipová won the silver medal in the women's 70kg category. The 11-strong Team SVK is taking home 1 gold, 1 silver and 2 bronze medals.

## Tennis player Alex Molčan becomes Dukla's newest strength

(14 July) After Filip Polášek, tennis player Alex Molčan has joined the ranks of the top sportsmen and women at the Dukla Military Sports Centre. With his 44th slot in the world's tennis rankings, he is currently Slovakia's No 1 tennis player. He was welcomed to the Dukla team by the director of the Centre, Lt Col Matej Tóth. Speaking of cooperation with Alex, Matej Tóth said: "Dukla aims to create the best possible conditions for the elite Team SVK athletes. Alex is just such an athlete. Slovakia's No 1 tennis player is a very talented and promising sportsman. He has been training honestly and purposefully to rise up the tennis ladder. He has an excellent team thanks to which his chances of joining the absolute tennis elite are real. DUKLA will be here for him all the way as he pushes himself and goes for his personal bests."



## Medal for WW2 resistance fighter

(13 July) Director of the Social Policy Branch Ľubica Fúsková and Director of the War Veterans and Military Retirees Branch Richard Zimányi, both from the MOD's Human Resources Department, presented the SNP and End of WW2 75th Anniversary Commemorative Medal to war veteran František Vach as he celebrates his 98th birthday. František Vach (\*9 July 1924) undertook basic military service in the Signals Company Žilina, part of the Signals Battalion. From 29 Aug to 5 May 1945, as a member of the 1st Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia he served and fought in the Slovak National Uprising in defence of Strečno, Vrútky and Martin. In Sept 1944, he sustained serious injuries with permanent effects and was discharged from the Army on medical grounds on 2 Oct 1945.

## Swimming in uniform



(14 July) Members of the Combat Support (CS) Coy of 11 Mech Bn Martin underwent intense training over the first two weeks of July. They completed

a speed march, patrolling tasks, incident response scenarios, section- and platoon-level combat action, as well as practising getting into and retreating from firing positions. One of the tasks was to swim in uniform and boots across a 60m water obstacle, while carrying a Bergen with replacement uniform items and boots and keeping a weapon ready for self-defence.

## MP team against submarines



(11 July) Members of the SVK Military Police took part in Ex Dynamic Mongoose, NATO's anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercise in the Norwegian Sea. Among the surface ships

on the exercise was the German Navy's FGS Mecklenburg Vorpommern (F218) with an 11-strong SVK MP Boarding Team on board. Their main mission was to protect the frigate and to inspect foreign vessels. As part of the exercise, they practised both methods of insertion for the team to get on to the ship's deck – by boat and by helicopter. Their marksmanship training involved firing the mounted Browning M2 and HaK MG5 machine guns, with eyes on protecting the frigate against small enemy vessels or low flying targets. After the conclusion of the exercise, SVK MP BT will continue to perform duties on board the FGS Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.