



No concessions to the aggressor

(20 July) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' took part in a virtual meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group (UDCG) in the format of defence leaders of the participating nations, led by the USA. Security assistance packages to Ukraine, which has been fending off the Russian aggression for months now, topped the agenda. Of Slovakia's commitment to helping Ukraine, Mr Nad' said: "Neither Ukraine nor the international democratic community will accept Russia's violent actions. We refuse to give up on democratic principles, freedom and sovereignty by making no concessions to the aggressor. That's why we are united and ready to support the right of an invaded Ukraine to defend itself as long as it takes." He continued: "Even today we discussed ways to provide Ukraine with assistance – both current and future over the longer term if the situation requires it." He noted that there is still Soviet-era military equipment that Slovakia or other countries could transfer to Ukraine, if they secure a replacement. He made clear that such talks must fully respect individual national capacity for self-defence and collective defence.



Our thanks to Slovenian Minister

(19 July) Minister of Defence Jaroslav Nad' welcomed his Slovenian counterpart Marjan Šarec to the Training Centre Lešt'. They both used the occasion to speak with service personnel on deployment with NATO's eFP in Slovakia. This marked Mr Šarec's first official visit to Slovakia since taking up his new role. While at Lešt', the leaders had a bilateral meeting to discuss the security situation in Europe against the backdrop of the Ukraine war, the ongoing processes in the trans-Atlantic partnership, and SVK-SVN bilateral defence cooperation and opportunities.

Speaking at the meeting, Jaroslav Nad' said: "Slovenia's contribution to the Allied forces in Slovakia is an exceptional expression of unity and solidarity – and this is something we appreciate very much. The presence of Allied forces in our country makes us more resilient against security threats, thanks to them stepping in to backfill gaps in our defensive capabilities, on which we would otherwise be spending considerable funding. That's what friendship is about, that's what alliance is about – we protect together our territory, homes and citizens, while building public trust in the European pillar of trans-Atlantic security and defence."

Mr Šarec thanked the Slovak side for providing suitable conditions and infrastructure for SVN troops to serve in Slovakia. He emphasised that SVN service personnel are here in Slovakia to undertake tasks in the interests of preserving peace, stability and prosperity. The ministers took stock of SVK-SVN defence cooperation so far. Two successful examples are joint education & training activities and operational deployments of both armed forces. Both sides can see there is still space for stepping up their joint engagements, especially in the sphere of Defence industry. If so, this would give both countries the benefits of boosting their defence capabilities.

SVK military personnel help put out fires at home and abroad

(24 July) SVK military personnel helped put out fires at home and abroad. In Slovakia, while two UH60M Black Hawk and one Mi-17 helicopters were deployed to suppress fires near Košice and in the Low Fatra Mountains, soldiers with firefighting assets put out a fire at the village of Malá Lodina. Elsewhere, a UH60M Black Hawk equipped with a Bambi Bucket, operated by 51 Wing Prešov, deployed to the scene of the emergency in Slovenia, and so did six firefighters of the SVK Fire and Rescue Service with three fire engines and one water tanker.

Mr Nad' said: "Yesterday evening I was informed of the serious situation by Slovenian Defence Minister Marjan Šarec. A number of villages have had to be evacuated as the wildfire has crossed from Italy into western Slovenia." The SVK deployment to Slovenia was approved earlier that morning by the Cabinet at its extraordinary meeting.

In Slovenia, the pilots flew 91 sorties on Friday alone, dropping 200,000l of water on fires. On Sunday, they flew as many as 113 sorties. Three days on from their arrival, the SVK airmen and firefighters were getting ready to return home after an overnight storm had extinguished most of the fire and the situation calmed down.



- **Military Forests and Estates (MOD Forestry Department)** has informed the public that there is an increased risk of fires in military woodlands and that no entry into the Levoča Hills forests is allowed over fire concerns due to the current spell of hot and dry weather. The wildfire warning and no entry into the forests will be in effect until further notice.

- As the pandemic situation at the **Central Military Hospital Ružomberok** deteriorates, no visits to the patients on the hospital wards have been permitted since 20 July. The wearing of face coverings – FFP2, KN95 or N95 respirators – inside the hospital's buildings is compulsory. This applies to the medical staff, visitors to the medical facilities, patients waiting for treatment in the waiting rooms, patients having appointments in the surgeries, and customers. Patients with COVID-19 symptoms must take an antigen swab test for free on the spot.

- Head of the AOS's Military Tactics and Operational Art Department Assoc Prof Jaroslav Varecha has, for the first time, recognised the **Department's best graduates** of the Magister (Mgr.) study programmes with a coin. For their excellent study results, Officer Cadets Lt Šimon Matisovský (Inf, Mtd, Mech and Tnk Trps), Lt Terézia Dubovcová (Arty), and Lt Katarína Lichvarčíková (Engr Spt & EOD) have received the Military Tactics and Operational Art Department Commemorative Coin, supplied by the Military Support Foundation.

- The **Czech and Slovak Field Artillery Community Presidium (ČASOD)** hosted an act of initiation for the best G-20 MOS Artillery Officer Cadets. Seven 4th-year and seven 5th-year AOS Officer Cadets joined the ČASOD as Arty apprentices and Arty journeymen, respectively. In attendance at the ceremony were: ČASOD President Col (Retd) Jozef Kavecký, ČASOD Honorary President Maj Gen (Retd) Dušan Humený, Chief of Field Artillery Col Roman Bobaľ, and Head of the AOS's Military Tactics and Operational Art Department Col (Retd) Jaroslav Varecha. During the ceremony, Col (Retd) Lubomír Belan and Col (Retd) Vojtech Neumahr were knighted by the ČASOD President.

- Air Base Kuchyňa will host the **Slovak International Air Fest (SIAF) 2022** on 27-28 Aug 2022. All service personnel, military pensioners, veterans, civil servants and civilian employees will be allowed to attend free after producing respective IDs.

- **Rail operations training** took place at the Deployable CIS Base Ružomberok and at the railhead in Ružomberok. The aim of the training was to guide military vehicles onto heavy duty flatbed wagons.

- The **Judo team of the Dukla Military Sports Centre** earned excellent placements at the Junior European Judo Cup in Prague. Viktor Adam picked up the gold medal in the U100kg category, Benjamin Maťašeje won the bronze medal in the same category. Alex Maruška missed out on the bronze medal in the U90kg category by a hair's breadth and finished 5th.

Štefánik is a permanent inspiration

(21 July) To mark General M. R. Štefánik's 142nd birthday anniversary, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer, Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, and Secretary General of the SVK MOD's Service Office Peter Kozák attended a ceremony in Štefánik's native village of Košariská. Marian Majer said: "Even 142 years on from his birthday, it is indisputable that the life of this politician, scientist, diplomat, general and spiritually rich person has remained a permanent source of inspiration for us. Štefánik's successes, which have crossed the borders of our homeland, are a valuable legacy not only for the Slovak people, but also for other nations in Europe and worldwide." According to him, General Štefánik's legacy reminds us of how important it is that we must not let up in the struggle for universal values of a free and democratic world.

Medals for WW2 veterans

(21 July) Five WW2 veterans were awarded the SNP and End of WW2 75th Anniversary Commemorative Medal in a ceremony in Piešťany. Among the recipients were: SNP participant Viera Bedmová, SNP participants and partisan aides Alžbeta Zollerová and Monika Lietavová (Holocaust survivor), and two SNP fighters Anna Boorová and Tibor Urbánek (posthumous award). Due to pandemic restrictions, the medals, awarded two years ago, have not, until now, been presented to them by Richarda Zimány, Head of the MOD's War Veterans and Military Pensioners Branch.

Ex Dynamic Front 2022

(21 July) Ex Dynamic Front 2022, a rocket artillery live fire exercise, took place at Germany's Grafenwoehr Training Area ranges from 6 to 25 July, with the participation of SVK field artillery units. A battery of 79 gunners from 54 MLRS Bn Rožňava along with support elements was embedded into the U.S. Army's 1-41 Field Artillery Battalion (1-41 FA Bn), which operates under MN FA Bde, subordinate to the fire component of NATO's ARRC. Among DF22's aims was to test the execution of live firing tasks by the automated DELOSYS C2 Artillery System in service with the SVK FA batteries. During the exercise, the Arty Recce Teams of 54 MLRS Bn practised synchronising multi-echelon fires with NATO's FA troops, testing their ability to fully participate in the planning, coordination and conduct of joint tactical and theatre-level fires. The SVK exercising gunners were visited by COM SVK Army Maj Gen Ivan Pach and Chief of Operational Planning and Control Col Rudolf Ďurník.



SVK Air Force pilots undergo water survival drills

(24 July) While undergoing three-day water survival drills at Lake Guláška in Senec, SVK AF pilots practised the skills and capabilities necessary in an emergency crash landing after an aircraft or helicopter hits the water, causing it to submerge with an underwater rollover. A SVK AF Mi-17 helicopter was involved in the simulation training. According to Director of the TC Lešt' Specialist Training Branch Maj Juraj Antol, the pilot project incorporates a theory module on the physiology of the human body in and under the water, the effects of the cold water on the human body, and the body reactions essential to survival. In the words of Lt Col Miroslav Dupal, the initiator of the project, a dozen pilots of 46 Wng Kuchyňa

and 51 Wng Prešov undertook the practical module, directly in the water. They practised escape actions in a submerged



helicopter cabin and different swim techniques. A simulator replicated the full submersion and rollover of the helicopter. Aided by emergency breathing systems, the pilots went through the underwater escape techniques. The simulation training incorporated a scenario with an Mi-17 helicopter, where the pilots deployed and boarded a life raft. Also included was the use of flares and the provision of water and food. Military divers, too, were involved in the training. After jumping into action from the helicopter, they swam to the pilots and rescued them.