



Chair of the NATO Military Committee visits Slovakia

(22 June) The Chiefs of Defence from Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia met in the V4 + Ukraine format in Bratislava. In addition to taking stock of the year-long SVK V4 Presidency, they received an update on the military situation in Ukraine. "We discussed military assistance issues, mainly in the form of ongoing training for UKR troops in our countries, and our future of cooperation on training & exercises to make the best of joint training activities for the development of our forces. Stepping up joint exercises simulating today's battlefields is the way forward to improving the quality of our cooperation. I firmly believe that Gen Rehka, who has taken over the V4 Presidency, will continue the trend started," Gen Zmeko said. At his invitation, Chair of the NATO Military Committee Admiral Rob Bauer addressed the heads of the V4 Armed Forces, saying: "The Alliance supports Ukraine's legitimate right to self-defence. We realise that we need to change the decade-old approach to collective defence, while moving away from the focus on expeditionary operations and giving our utmost attention to building capabilities with a very short reaction time." Defence Minister Sklenár met Admiral Rob Bauer at the MOD on 22 July. In the presence of CHOD Gen Zmeko, they discussed several topics of fundamental importance ahead of the NATO Summit in Vilnius, such as reinforcing NATO's defences on the eastern flank and updating the Alliance's defence plans. On Slovak and NATO air defences, Minister Sklenár said: "Whilst looking for its own solution, Slovakia also supports the proposal to establish a permanent mechanism of the Alliance in this field, wherein Allies would deploy air and missile capabilities to the eastern flank on a rotational basis. It is, in particular, the use of a systemic approach that might significantly add to a further strengthening of collective defence."

On Europe's AMD capabilities

(19 June) In Paris, Defence Minister Sklenár took part in a conference of defence ministers on Europe's air and missile defence (AMD), seeking a common European approach and strategy to build up the continent's air defences capable of defeating the air threats of the 21st century. This topical issue is of extreme importance, even to Slovakia, which has launched a long-term and gradual process of finding the best solution to its own air defences. The MOD is working to get the programme ready for government approval as soon as possible. "It will be an IAMD system with many networked platforms, which will allow full compatibility with the Alliance's capabilities and will be ready to protect European and NATO airspace," Minister Sklenár said. Under Stage 1, a mobile medium-range surface-to-air missile system and 12 man-portable crew-served air defence units are to be procured along with logistics support, trucks and other components, worth up to €200m. Fully aligned to the MOD's Long-Term Development Plan with Outlook to 2035, the programme will be funded from the Defence budget. The MOD has approached 11 countries. Bids must be submitted by the end of July. Mr Sklenár made it clear that the priority is to deliver "high quality and high efficiency [technologies] to suit the requirements of the Armed Forces, as well as ensuring transparency and promotion of bilateral cooperation, which should be guaranteed by a government-to-government (G2G) agreement."

The pullout of Soviet troops brought an end to occupation

(21 June) During a ceremony in the town of Sliac, Defence Minister Martin Sklenár commemorated the 32nd anniversary of the pullout of the Soviet occupation forces from Czechoslovakia. The last of over 900 transports left Czechoslovakia on 21 June 1991. "The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia was the culmination of the Gentle Revolution – confirming that Czechs and Slovaks now had an opportunity to freely go their own way of life in democracy. The courage of the people and the impact of their actions during Nov 1989 can only be fully grasped when we look at the numbers representing the sheer strength of the Soviet oppression here for almost 23 years – 73,500 Soviet officers and soldiers, almost 40,000 family members, 1,220 MBTs, 2,500 IFVs, over 100 aircraft, almost 200 helicopters, and 95,000 tonnes of ammunition..." Sklenár said, noting that in addition to the loss of sovereignty, restriction of rights and freedoms, and ecological damage, the Soviet occupation caused the loss of human lives. A total of 108 died in Czechoslovakia, of whom 38 died in Slovakia, between 21 Aug and 31 Dec 1968. The commemoration culminated with a 'Twenty-Year Occupation Temporariness' panel discussion in Banská Bystrica, with participation from Defence Minister Martin Sklenár, Interior Minister Ivan Šimko, and former officials overseeing the Soviet troops' withdrawal from Czechoslovakia.



► The Flight Training Dept, Aviation Faculty, Technical University of Košice, celebrated **50 years of higher military aviation education in Košice**. Although the local SNP Military Aviation School ceased its operations after 2000, the Flight Training Dept, as its successor, has trained SVK AF airmen since 2016. Seven Officer Cadets (OCs) successfully graduated from it in June, with four pilots completing their five-year studies with distinction. 43 OCs are currently studying there – 24 OCs are being trained as military pilots, 11 OCs as air traffic controllers, and 8 OCs as flight engineers. This Sept will see the target attendance rates at the Dept fulfilled for the first time since 2016 as two dozen OCs, including 12 pilots, take up their studies.

► Following a pause over the coronavirus pandemic, the "Laugaricio Tank Days - A Day with the SVK Army" event will take place under the auspices of CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko and with the Laugaricio Military History Club as the main organiser in Trenčianske Stankovce between 27 June - 3 July. The event will be open to the public on 1 July. The programme features demonstrations by military history clubs and the SVK military. The SVK Forces, including MP, will show their skills and capabilities and provide static and dynamic demonstrations. The public programme will start at 10:00am with a gun salute fired from the HD-30 howitzer.

► Kuchyňa AB hosted **railhead operation training** on 21-22 June. Members of 46 WG Kuchyňa practiced setting up the vehicle loading ramp and guiding vehicles onto the heavy duty flatbed wagons.

► The head of the Military Police Crime Detection and Documentation Section led a **workshop for MP personnel** on the detection of criminal activities and criminal proceedings at TC Lešt on 20-21 June. The Deputy Head of the Regional Prosecutor's Office Trenčín and a prosecutor of the Regional Prosecutor's Office Trenčín briefed them on current practices, changes and shortcomings in criminal investigation proceedings involving members of the Armed Forces. The participants also deepened their understanding of environmental crime.

► Banská Bystrica-based school students participated in a discussion with WW2 veterans Capt (Retd) Vladimír Srmeň and MSgt (Retd) Miroslav Staník at the SNP Museum on 23 June. The programme was supported by MP personnel with a static display of weapons and a dynamic demonstration of capabilities.

► On 20 June, 2nd-year, 3rd-year and 5th-year OCs on the **Weapons Systems, Weapons and their Components Programme** at AOS's Engineering Dept along with instructors visited MSM LAND SYSTEMS in Trenčín, where they familiarised themselves with the Alligator Master II 4x4 vehicle and the Zuzana 2 SPH, as well as taking a tour of the repair workshop for tracked and wheeled vehicles and a military container manufacturing facility.

► Athletes of the **Dukla Military Sports Centre** competed at the Czesław Cybulski Memorial, a World Athletics Continental Tour Silver Level Series, in Poland's Poznań, with Viktória Forster placing 2nd in the 110m hurdles, Matej Baluch and Daniela Ledecká 3rd and 6th in the 400m hurdles, respectively.

► 16-year-old **Patricia Tománková**, Dukla judoka, brought home a **gold medal** from the European Judo Championships in Portugal's Odivelas.

► **Margaréta Vráblová**, Dukla triathlon athlete, took **first place** at the European Triathlon Cup in Austria's Wels, with a time of 01:00:41.

► **Gabriela Gajánová**, Dukla runner, won the **bronze medal** in the 800m race at the European Games in Poland's Chorzów.

FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit presents Active Reserves (AR) training at the Kráľová nad Váhom Reservoir live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

Veteran Ascent of Mt Ďumbier

(24 June) To mark the 143rd anniversary of Gen Štefánik's birthday, the Slovak Defence Ministry held the 5th Veteran Ascent of Mt Ďumbier. In keeping with tradition, the Defence Minister joined veterans, soldiers of the SVK Armed Forces and the NATO Battlegroup in Slovakia, employees in Defence, and members of the public in taking the hiking route to the top of Mt Ďumbier. A perfect place to stop along the way was the SNP Memorial at the Štefánik Chalet, where the minister along with other event participants paid tribute to the heroes who took part in the national struggle for liberation.



DIANA to drive innovation

(20 June) The NATO Alliance launched the pilot phase of its programme for funding R&D projects of start-ups and small-sized enterprises to unlock the innovation potential in new technologies. Thanks to the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA), grant funding to support dual-use technology development is available for technology areas such as big data, AI, autonomy, quantum, biotechnologies, hypersonics and space. Those interested can now sign up for DIANA's first three Pilot Challenges: Energy Resilience – the use of systems and subsystems to distribute reliable electricity in places where the distribution of power from remote power stations is limited in the aftermath of a natural disaster or during a crisis; Secure Information Sharing – the exploitation of technologies for reliable and secure transfer of data in a difficult environment; and Sensing and Surveillance – sensing the coastal undersea environment. Companies can submit their innovative solutions to DIANA's three focus areas by 25 Aug 2023.

U.S. and UK victims honoured



(20 June) The members of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the UK's Special Operations Executive (SOE) who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Slovak National Uprising were

honoured in a commemoration in Polomka. In attendance were Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer, U.S. Ambassador Gautam Rana, British Ambassador Nigel Baker, and members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Farewell to DEU and NLD troops



(19 June) 81 WG Sliac hosted a farewell ceremony for the outgoing DEU and NLD troops. In attendance at the ceremony were DCHOD

Lt Gen Lubomír Svoboda, Commander German Air Force Ground Units Brig Gen Volker Samanns, Commander 81 WG Sliac Col František Pytlík, and Commander DEUCON Col Michael Skamel. Lt Gen Svoboda presented the NATO Multinational Battlegroup Slovakia Medal to the Allied air defenders. Maj Marian Dzurjo and Capt Ján Duják, members of 81 WG Sliac, received commemorative coins from Col Skamel. So far, five rotations totalling some 1,500 DEU and 370 NLD troops have deployed to 81 WG Sliac since Mar 2022.

Deep recce troops in water



(23 June) Based on cooperation between 65 Reconnaissance Battalion's Deep Reconnaissance Company and the Armed Forces Academy (AOS)'s Physical Training and Sports Department, a water-based training activity was carried

out under the specialist PT programme, the content of which covered military swimming, swimming in a strong current, water rescue challenges, and handling of non-powered vessels. As part of the activity at the Liptovská Mara Reservoir, recce troops practiced basic swimming styles and skills, combat swimming techniques, water rescue procedures, and handling of non-powered vessels in open water. Part 2 of the programme saw them moving to the White Water Facility Liptovský Mikuláš, where they improved on swimming in a strong current, crossing a white water course, saving a drowning person in it, and moving down a white water course in a non-powered vessel. The week-long training of deep recce teams culminated in a tactical open water activity during the early evening and night.