



Adventure, training and special experiences

(7 Aug) The Lešť Summer Camp 2025 – organised by the Slovak Defence Ministry – welcomed a total of 60 physically active boys and girls from all over Slovakia to the Training Centre (TC) Lešť. With two start dates available (21 July – 25 July / 28 July – 1 August), the camp was designed for those wanting to experience the authentic atmosphere of military training by working on their skillset in a team under the leadership of military professionals. Each camp was attended by 30 children who were assigned to three teams, led by experienced Slovak Armed Forces instructors. Adapted to the children's age and abilities, the programme was designed as close to real military training as it could be.

The campers' daily routine began with reveille, an early morning physical training (PT) session, room cleanup and inspection before breakfast, followed by an all-day intensive programme at several thematic stations covering a wide range of military skills across: marksmanship, self-defence, helicopter insertion, and rock climbing (Jacob Climbing Wall/Bralce Rock Climbing Facility).

In addition, they took on the challenge of basic tactical drills (BTD), close quarter battle (CQB), basic casualty drills (BCD), a water obstacle course, and survival drills – including map reading and navigation with a compass and a GPS receiver. As part of the programme, they had a go at moving across a contaminated area with the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Among the most demanding activities – yet absolute favourites – was the NATO CISMA obstacle course through which they were guided under the watchful eye of three-time Men's World Fitness Champion Michal Barbier. They also tried out paintballing and observed a series of the SVK Military Police's capability demonstrations. For many, a simulated night ambush was a powerful experience, which tested their ability to handle stressful situations in an unfamiliar environment. Aside from the training activities, the programme was enriched by evening discussions as well as trust and team building games. The culmination of the camp was a Spartan-style race – where the campers put all the acquired skills and knowledge to good use.

The participants of both camps, taking home a wealth of experiences and the pride of surpassing their limits, all agreed to say: "It was challenging, yet still so much fun! What we enjoyed the most was tackling the obstacle course, abseiling from the helicopter, and conducting the night ambush. We have learnt to work effectively as a team and handle things that seemed impossible in the beginning." Camp Lešť is not just about adrenaline and action; it instils in children the responsibility and discipline they need to work as a team. They have learnt to look out for each other, help each other, control their actions and reactions, and watch their words and gestures. They always had the option to say "STOP" to any activity they did not feel comfortable about. Instructors of the Training Centre Lešť once again demonstrated their expertise and determination to put together a programme that was engaging, enriching and safe for everyone. The event thus confirmed the uniqueness of MOD-organised military and adventurous training for young people.

Brig Gen (Ret'd) Ivan Čierny Memorial Plaque unveiled

(8 Aug) A memorial plaque to Brig Gen (Ret'd) Ivan Čierny (1938 – 2022), a prominent representative of the SVK Army Sports, was unveiled in Banská Bystrica. This leading "master of athletics", distinguished coach, and long-time functionary of the Army Sports, Athletics and Canoe Slalom Boards was a recipient of several sports awards, a member of the SVK National Olympic and Sports Committee, and an inductee in the SVK Athletics Hall of Fame and the Dukla Military Sports Centre Hall of Fame. He passed away three days before his 84th birthday in Apr 2022. "The SVK National Olympic and Sports Committee, the SVK Athletics Federation, and we at Dukla had, for some time, been considering to commission a memorial plaque in his memory since he was the longest-serving commander of Dukla. It is an honour for me to continue in his footsteps. I am pleased we went ahead with the idea of placing the plaque next to that of the first commander of Dukla," Director of Dukla Gabriel Baran said. In attendance at the unveiling ceremony were officials of Slovakia's Athletics Federation and National Olympic and Sports Committee, and other guests.



■ **Commander SVK Army Maj Gen Ivan Balog**, joined by Cdr 5 Arty Regt Rožňava Col Ján Hric, visited Dukla Barracks – home to 21 Sp Arty Bn Michalovce – on 6 Aug. In a ceremony, the head of the Slovak Army took the salute from Cdr 21 Sp Arty Bn Lt Col Michal Németh. During his visit to the barracks, Maj Gen Balog highlighted the importance of the tasks and activities planned for the next two years, expressed his satisfaction with the fill rates of the artillery and engineer units based at Dukla Barracks, emphasised the need for the units to maintain their operational readiness and capabilities.

■ As blood donors enjoy their time off work during the summer months, hospital blood stocks drop to low levels. Therefore, the SVK Special Operations Forces (SOF) are now hosting the "Jozef Gabčík's Drop of Blood" donation campaign in honour of Slovakia's WW2 Resistance hero in the fight against Nazism to motivate people to donate the life-giving fluid. You, too, can also become a hero, if you come to donate blood free of charge, from 07:00 to 14:00 on 11-17 Aug. You can find the nearest blood collection centre [here on the National Blood Transfusion Service \(NBTS\)'s website](#).

■ In the presence of Cdr 1 Mech Bde Brig Gen Štefan Acsai, a Change of Command (COC) ceremony took place at Levice's Dukla Barracks, with Lt Col Miroslav Osif transferring command of 13 Mech Bn Levice over to Lt Col Martin Doležal, and MSgt Tomáš Janovič handing over the role of Command Sergeant Major (CSM) of the Battalion to MSgt Miloš Miškela.

■ On the orders of CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, 4 Log Regt Trenčín was renamed as 4 Logistics Regiment Command Trenčín (4 Log Regt Com Trenčín) with effect from 1 Aug 2025.

■ 5 SOF Regt Žilina bid a fond farewell to Cdr 5 SOF Regt DS Col Peter Žochňák in a ceremony attended by the commander of the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) from the United States. The official Change of Command (COC) ceremony is due to take place at the end of Aug.

■ 12 Slovak Armed Forces soldiers travelled to Poland to attend the 32nd International Military Walking Pilgrimage from Warsaw to Częstochowa on 4-14 Aug. Our military pilgrims – accompanied by Military Dean Capt Stanislav Dulák and Staff Chaplain Lt David Šturák – will walk a distance of 350km in 10 days. The pilgrimage will culminate with them kneeling down before the venerated icon of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa enshrined at the Jasna Góra (Luminous Mount) Monastery.

■ 71 Com Spt Bn Trenčín supported this year's Trenčín Garrison-organised Children's Day Camp. With two start dates available, a rich programme awaited the children of military professionals. Of course, there were demonstrations of small arms and equipment, first aid, military working dogs (MWDs), an obstacle course, and air gun shooting. Military and civilian staff of the Battalion and the Trenčín Garrison Club helped out as camp organisers and animators.

■ Martin Barracks was teeming with "little ponies" and "brave horses" – this is how 11 Mech Bn Martin divided the participants of the Children's Military Summer Camp into two groups according to age – while taking inspiration from the unit's horse emblem. In short, the kids built shelters, made fires, learnt about weapons, searched for hidden treasures, admired MWDs in action, and slept under the open sky. From the camp, they took home new knowledge and skills, and, most of all, friendships and experiences they would never forget.

■ On 1-4 Aug, Senior Chaplain of the Vicariate of the Slovak Armed Forces Lt Mikuláš Jančuš paid a pastoral visit to SVK soldiers serving with KFOR in Kosovo.

■ The Central Military Hospital – Teaching Hospital Ružomberok would like to inform members of the public that the Outpatient Pediatric Rehabilitation Centre is closed due to operational reasons from 8 to 14 Aug. Other outpatient services are running without restrictions.

Gendarme Corps grabs attention

(6 Aug) The MOD is pleased to announce there is great interest from military and police personnel to serve in the Gendarme Corps. After being assigned to the Active Reserves (AR), both serving and ex-service police officers, too, can join the ranks of gendarmes. Currently, the MOD has more than 700 applications for service in the Gendarme Corps. With these personnel, it will be possible to support the Police Forces in areas where police patrols are insufficient, all this in the interests of public safety and security.

Strengthening defence links

(6 Aug) DEPMINDEF Igor Melicher led a SVK MOD delegation to Budapest for an annual meeting of the SVK-HUN Joint Commission on Military, Security and Political Issues. The partners discussed strengthening SVK-HUN defence links, the headline priorities of the HUN V4 Presidency, and ways to modernise the Forces. The discussion block on multilateral affairs dealt with CSDP issues relating to NATO and the EU, as well as topics essential to the effective functioning of the countries' defence structures. The SVK MOD considers dialogue with partners from the countries neighbouring Slovakia to be one of the fundamental pillars of its responsible, pro-active security policy. "Our cooperation with Hungary and other partners from the V4 is key for us. We share common values, security challenges, and interests in the stability of the region. Close partnerships are the basis of strong and modern defence," Mr Melicher said in a statement.

Bronze for Thai boxer Chochlíková

(10 Aug) Monika Chochlíková (SVK), a member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre and the National Muay Thai Team, won a bronze medal at the World Games 2025 in Chengdu (CHN). In Sunday's matchup to secure 3rd place in the 54kg category, she defeated Anna Székely (HUN). In the hard-fought final,

reigning two-time Muay Thai world champion Laura Burgos (MEX) triumphed 29-28 over Martyna Kierczyńska (POL). Chochlíková earned herself a third medal at the World Games, having won gold in the 51kg category in Birmingham in 2022 and silver in kickboxing in Wrocław in 2017. "Paradoxically, the 3rd place match was the easiest for me mentally. I was very stressed out before the quarterfinal, because I really wanted to be in the fight for a medal. And in the semifinal, I faced the reigning world champion, who is an extremely skilled fighter. Anna Székely surprised me a lot, I expected it to be a little easier," Chochlíková summed up her feelings.



Coming up on Day 4 and 5, they had a fast tactical march across mountains, combining fast trekking with map reading and navigation. Both the organisers and the participants passed on their thanks to the AOS Simulation Centre, Fire & Rescue Service, Slovak Electric Utility Company, and Slovak Water Utilities for supporting this OCST.

Officer Cadet Summer Training

(5 Aug) Officer Cadets of the General Milan Rastislav Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš undertook an intensive Officer Cadet Summer Training (OCST) programme, with the focus on building their physical fitness, endurance, and military and sporting skills.

Day 1 and 2 were dedicated to combat military swimming (CMS), the use of two-seater inflatable dinghies to move across water obstacles, and the preparation & planning process for a simulated combat mission under the supervision of the AOS Simulation Centre.

Day 3 saw the trainees' tactical skills being tested at the dam wall of the Liptovská Mara Reservoir. Thanks to Slovak Electric Utility Company and Slovak Water Utilities, the OCs were allowed to enter and secure the dam wall's internal passages. For the simulated operation, a UH-60M Black Hawk was provided by 51 WG Prešov and a rigid inflatable boat by the Fire & Rescue Service Liptovský Mikuláš. Afterwards, the OCs abseiled from the dam tower onto the deck of a boat and down the dam's western wall.