



Tribute to Dukla heroes

(5 Oct) To mark the 81st anniversary of the Battle of the Dukla Pass on Sun 5 Oct, WW2 veterans Vladimír Strmeň (97) and Branislav Tvarožek (99) joined SVK GOV officials and members of the public in honouring the memory of the heroes who gave their lives in defence of their homeland in a ceremony at the Czechoslovak Army Corps Memorial near Vyšný Komárnik.

In addition to commemorative events, the Battle of the Dukla Pass 81st Anniversary celebrations also served as a platform for presentations from the MOD, the NDF, and historical re-enactment clubs.

In his keynote speech to the nation, PM Robert Fico noted that while having a motive to fight is the absolute foundation of a just war, the soldiers of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps and the Red Army knew exactly what they were fighting for. In his address, PRES and CINC Peter Pellegrini highlighted the Dukla heroes' resolve to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles and called on people to find the strength to unite as a nation behind ideas that are more powerful than current disputes, saying: "81 years on, we are gathered here at this historic site that bore witness not only to unquestionable heroism, but also to immense suffering – a site where our present-day freedom was paid with the blood of our fathers and grandfathers. Here, I must express my deepest respect for their heroism, determination and suffering." He then pointed to the colonnade leading to the Dukla Memorial that bears the plates with 1,265 names of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

"Without taking pride in our own history – the heroic deeds of the fallen and the survivors – we are in danger of losing our values as a nation," Parliamentary Chair Richard Raši said. "As with all the major WW2 battles and victories over Nazism, the Battle of the Dukla Pass forms a fundamental pillar of our Armed Forces' traditions," CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko said. Visiting the Dukla Pass is always an emotional moment for him, "Partly because as a young officer I learnt about how the operations were conducted in this mountainous terrain, and partly because the way in which freedom returned to this region was extremely difficult and many people died in this process." The Battle of the Dukla Pass – the largest and bloodiest of the battles of the Eastern Front that is associated with Slovakia – saw the Red Army and 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps soldiers encountering fierce resistance from German troops. The offensive operation, originally designed to enable the insurgent Slovak National Uprising forces to link up with Soviet troops, lasted from 8 Sept 1944 to 28 Oct 1944. It was not until 6 Oct 1944 that the Soviet and Czechoslovak forces took control of the Dukla Pass. This memorial day has been observed in Slovakia as 'Battle of the Dukla Pass Heroes Day' since 2016. Previously, it was known as 'Dukla Victims Day' (until 2015) and 'Czechoslovak People's Army Day' (until 1993).

AUT CHOD Gen Rudolf Striedinger's visit to Slovakia

(3 Oct) Austrian Chief of Defence Gen Rudolf Striedinger arrived for an official visit to Slovakia. The focus of his mission was on strengthening SVK-AUT defence cooperation, generating debate on today's security situation, and receiving briefs on the SVK Armed Forces' capabilities. After the Official Welcome Ceremony in Bratislava, Gen Striedinger was received by DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák. In their discussion, both sides confirmed their interest in making closer defence and security links. During their bilateral meeting, SVK CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko and AUT CHOD Gen Rudolf Striedinger shared perspectives on the current security situation, took a closer look at the procurement and modernisation priorities for the SVK Army and Air Force, discussed supporting international crisis management operations, including the SVK contribution to KFOR in the Western Balkans. Both CHODs agreed on the importance of embracing a common approach to regional security and promoting more intense cooperation between the two neighbours. On the final day of his visit to Slovakia, Gen Striedinger was given a tour of 11 Independent Regiment's warfighting capabilities display at TC Lešť, including shooting demonstrations and a presentation of new technologies used in military training.



- 4-12 Sept 2025 saw an international Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) exercise – involving EOD techs from 905 Specialised Combat Support Centre Nováky, 81 Sítač Wing, and the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Flight – unfold at three locations: Muscatatuck Urban Training Center near Butteville in Indiana, Indiana Air National Guard's 122nd Fighter Wing in Fort Wayne, and Kentucky Air National Guard Base in Louisville.

- Within regional defence cooperation among Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine, the Liptovský Mikuláš-based AOS Simulation Centre delivered a simulator-aided command and staff exercise dubbed *Blonde Avalanche 2025*. The aim was to align the activity of the 'TISA' MN ENGR BN battle staff. On inspection day, the exercising troops were inspected by SVK DCHOD Maj Gen Miroslav Lorinc.

- The SVK Military Academy Liptovský Mikuláš welcomed 12 teams from partner military educational institutions from Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia and Slovakia to *Allrounder 2025*, an international military skills competition held in Slovakia's Liptov region on 21-27 Sept.

- SVK and CZE Military Police (MP) representatives met in Trenčín to evaluate their cooperation so far and discussed how best to move it forward into the future. They focused on reviewing the current MP duties, planning joint exercises, and improving coordination of future activities. They also approved the SVK and CZE Military Police (MP) Bilateral Cooperation Plan for 2026.

- Nearly 370 SVK military personnel partook in *Ex Tatra Freedom 2025* in Zvolen on 22-26 Sept. The aim of the exercise was to secure arrangements for delivering the defence and security of the State, and defending against an armed attack by an enemy force, with the emphasis on fulfilling the obligations arising from the international treaties.

- Members of 11 AF BDE Nitra conducted a *Field Training Exercise (FTX)* unfolded on Nitra Garrison's training ground in Koliňanský Hill. All of the Brigade's CS and CSS units took part. The main goal was to coordinate the Brigade's individual elements in simulated combat situations, with a focus on testing the Brigade's command, support and airspace defence capabilities.

- On 22 Sept - 3 Oct, the *Defence Language Institute Liptovský Mikuláš (DLI LM)* delivered a military English language course for the SVK SOF personnel undertaking a KFOR pre-deployment training package. Maj Gen (RetD) Ivan Pach stepped up to support the course with practical KFOR-tailored Military Operational English (MOE) terminology and activities.

- Technicians of Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN) have begun the training process of converting to the UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters.

- This year's fourth intake of basic military training (BMT) for 269 training soldiers began at 7 Trng Regt Martin on 1 Oct. They are expected to pass out of training on 21 Nov.

- Secondary students of Class I.V on the "Personal and Property Security Programme" at Sečovce Joint School have completed their first week of work placements with 21 Mech Bn Trebišov. After becoming familiar with the military base and instructors, they worked on military drills, map reading and navigation, and combat tactics.

- Dukla karateka Roman Hrkča won the men's kata final at the Croatia Karate Open 2025 in Rijeka (HRV).

- In the men's kayak cross event at the 2025 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships in Penrith (AUS), Dukla slalom canoeist Jakub Grigar missed out on 3rd place, only to finish 4th. In the men's kayak team event, Dukla slalom canoeists Jakub Grigar, Martin Halčin and Adam Gonšenička achieved a fourth place finish, missing bronze by 1.95sec and gold by 2.05sec. In the men's C1 event final, Michal Martičan and Marko Mirgorodský took 10th and 12th places.

- Dukla judoka Marius Fizeľ brought home 2nd place in the men's +100kg category at the 2025 Judo Grand Prix in Qingdao (CHN).

- In the final round of the F500 Powerboat World Championships in Boretto (ITA), Dukla powerboat racer Marián Jung won bronze and placed 3rd in the overall F500 WC series rankings.

- Dukla powerlifter Ivana Horná captured 4th place in the women's Classic Bench Press 69kg category at the European Classic Bench Press 2025 in Valette (MLT). She improved on her SVK record by 2.5kg.

- At the World Trail Running Championships 2025 (Long Trail 82km) in Canfranc (ESP), Dukla athlete Peter Fraňo took an excellent fifth place with a time of 9:01:37. Team SVK placed 8th in the team race.

SVK CHOD Gen Zmeko attends NATO MCC 2025 in Latvia

(29 Sept) Gen Daniel Zmeko partook in the NATO Military Committee Conference (MCC) 2025 in Latvia's Riga on 26-27 Sept 2025. The 32 NATO CHODs and SCs discussed military developments within the Alliance, in face of increasingly worrying threats to the Euro-Atlantic security, and in light of the decisions taken at the historic NATO Summit in The Hague.

During the first session, SACEUR Gen Alexis G. Grynkevicz, updated the MC on the status of Operations, Missions, Exercises, noting the regional plans to bolster the Alliance's Deterrence and Defence posture, against NATO's recognised threats, especially Russia.

In the second session, SACT Adm Pierre Vandier and the CHODs reviewed the ongoing progress on the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP), while assessing the need to swiftly adopt new technologies and enhance NATO's capability, interoperability and defence industrial base.

The NATO MC meets in Chiefs of Defence Session twice

MH Prešov is growing in size



(5 Oct) On their visit to the construction site of the new Military Hospital (MH) Prešov, PM Fico and DPM and MINDEF Kaliňák saw first-hand that the construction works were progressing extremely quickly. Speaking at a press briefing onsite,

Mr Fico said: "It is admirable to see at what pace the planned goals are being delivered. This is a monumental piece of work that will serve the needs of all citizens." Mr Kaliňák added that construction space has grown by 20,000m² over the past year and that the hospital will go up one storey more than planned. Once complete with over 200,000m² of modern space, the new hospital – one of Slovakia's most significant healthcare projects ever – will provide top-notch health services to all patients.

SVK F-16 fleet now at seven

(2 Oct) The latest arrival of two F-16 Block 70s – a single-seat C-model and a two-seat D-model – at Kuchyňa AB has brought the total number of the SVK F-16 fleet to seven. The remaining seven jets are scheduled to be delivered into service by 2027. Administrative and technical procedures required for aircraft operation will now be performed before the F-16s are made available for flight training.

New impetus to U.S.-SVK defense ties



(2 Oct) A SVK MOD delegation led by Igor Melicher made an official visit to the USA. A major highlight of the program saw David Baker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for European and NATO Policy, and Igor Melicher, Deputy Minister of Defence, co-chair the U.S.-Slovakia High Level Defense Group (HLDG) – a strategic format of cooperation – framed by the U.S.-SVK Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA). The Pentagon meeting allowed both sides to discuss strengthening defense capabilities, joint military exercises, NATO commitments, and ways to take our defense ties forward. Elsewhere, he also met Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča at the United Nations before wrapping up his trip with a visit to the SVK Consulate General in New York.

Matriculation ceremony for OCs

(1 Oct) The Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš welcomed 204 first-year Officer Cadets (OCs), 171 men and 33 women, on the undergraduate BSc programmes for the annual Matriculation Ceremony. After receiving the Certificate of Matriculation from the hands of AOS COMDT Brig Gen Aurel Sabó, OCs took their oath of allegiance. A PhD diploma was presented to Lt Matej Adamec. The Matriculation Ceremony opened the 2025/2026 Academic Year for a total of 594 OCs on the Academy's Bachelor of Science (BSc), Magister (Mgr), and Master of Engineering (MEng) programmes.

a year at NATO HQ in Brussels, and holds a Conference, co-organised and hosted by an Allied nation once a year. The next plenary meeting is scheduled for January 2026 in Brussels.

