



In memory of victims

(9 May) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and SVK President and Commander-in-Chief of the SVK Armed Forces Andrej Kiska commemorated the 72nd anniversary of Victory Day over Nazism on 8 May in the village of Kalinov, East Slovakia.

"Kalinov was the first village to be liberated on Slovak territory, yet we should realise that it was not an easy road and it did not come for free. The military operations against Nazis claimed large numbers of lives, not only those of soldiers but also of local residents. For us, the events that occurred in Kalinov are also a symbol of liberation that came to us from the East indeed," said the Minister.

While in Kalinov, SVK President Andrej Kiska awarded the state decoration Order of the White Double Cross, Grade III, to two Russian and two Ukrainian war veterans – Vitalyov Viktorovich Rybalkov and Nikolai Alexandrovich Melnikov, and Ivan Ivanovich Selifonov and Bronislav Sergejevich Adamovich.

On 9 May, Minister Peter Gajdoš participated in an official commemorative ceremony to mark the 72nd anniversary of Victory Day over Nazism at Bratislava's Slavín. There, the memory of the victims of the most destructive conflict in the history of mankind was also honoured by Slovak Parliamentary Chairman Andrej Danko, Prime Minister Róbert Fico, and other Government members, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Anton Hrnko, as well as representatives of foreign embassies and public and political life.

Victory Day over Nazism and the end of WWII were also remembered on 9 May by SVK MOD civilian staff and service personnel. Speaking at a commemorative gathering at the MOD Club, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš emphasised that we owe a debt to the war veterans who fought for our future. "They are a brilliant example of how crucial unity, endurance and courage are," he said.



Defence duel in Trnava

(12 May) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš visited Trnava to support secondary school students at what was yet another event in the Students' Defence Duel series. The MOD organised this competition to promote patriotism and to raise awareness of national defence. It is one of the ways the MOD seeks to spark students' interest in the defence of the country. The Students' Defence Duel, held at the Dušan Samuel Jurkovič Secondary Construction Building School in Trnava, marked sixth such event. There, the participants tested their physical fitness, knowledge and skills levels. "Today we linked the event with a presentation of the Voluntary Military Training," reminded the Minister.

Ironmen battle it out at Lešť for 12th time

(11 May) Training Area Lešť hosted the 12th Ironman Competition on 10-11 May. The event brought together almost two dozen representatives of the Defence and Interior Ministries and the Mountain Rescue Service. Neither age nor weight were taken into account for the competition. In the cold weather the ironmen competed in 10 gruelling categories. After a speed march while dressed in uniform and carrying a personal weapon, they were faced with a new discipline – lifting a 50-kg wood log over the head, which was followed by the traditional disciplines, including pulling an all-terrain vehicle and moving a 200-kg tyre, chest-to-bar pull-ups after a jump onto the bar with an overhand grip, carrying two logs with a total weight of 120kg, a "CIZMA" obstacle course, carrying a 100-kg load and a 75-kg mock firefighter casualty across a distance of 100m, swimming across a water obstacle in full combat uniform, and climbing a rope ladder up to a helicopter. Just as a year ago so also this year Chief Superintendent Peter Ursiny, of City of Banská Bystrica Police Flying Squad Unit, became the winner of the competition, coming in ahead of Superintendent Michal Sklárčik, of the Interior Ministry's Office of Constitutional Members and Diplomatic Missions Protection, and Sergeant Juraj Boroth, of City of Košice Police Flying Squad Unit. They confirmed this year's dominance of the Interior Ministry. The best representative of the SVK Armed Forces, PFC Martin Bedeš, of Levice-based Mechanised Battalion, placed 6th. The most senior participant was Capt Martin Matúšek, of the Mountain Rescue Service Vysoké Tatry, who, despite his age of 44, managed to keep up with the rest of his younger competitors in many disciplines.



- On 2-12 May, the CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre, based in Martin, hosted a training for CIMIC specialists led by members of the CIMIC Centre Nienburg, Germany. This pilot project is a follow-up to the SVK-DEU mil-to-mil talks held in November 2016 in Liptovský Mikuláš. Taking part in the training event were also members of the CZE Armed Forces.

- The Chief of Logistics 21st Cmbd Mech Bn Trebišov, Capt Radoslav Oláh, directed a training on railway movements on 4-5 May. Alongside members of 21st Cmbd Mech Bn Trebišov, 23rd Motorised Bn Trebišov service personnel took part in the training activity as well.

- The Deputy Chief of Defence – Chief of Staff, Maj Gen Miroslav Kocian, visited HQ Bratislava Garrison on 4 May, with the aim of familiarising himself with its mission, tasks and structure because he is the direct superior of Commander HQ BA GAR. He expressed his support to the HQ BA GAR commanders and members in finding solutions to taskings.

- 3 May saw a gathering of Fire Support (FS) specialists from the Slovak and Dutch (NLD) Armed Forces, chaired by Lt Col Pavol Barančík, Chief of SVK Armed Forces Artillery/Fire Support Coordinator, Operations Combat Support Branch at Strategic Planning Staff of SVK Armed Forces General Staff. They discussed options for holding joint training activities involving the Multiple Rocket Launcher (MRL) Unit Rožňava, a Radio Relay (RL) Unit, an Acoustic Measurements Recce Unit (NLD), and the Military Technical and Testing Institute Záhorie. The Dutch side expressed interest in holding a joint training activity as early as June 2017.

- On 2-4 May, members of the SVK Air Force's AIRCOM HQ Zvolen and the Anti-Aircraft Missile (AAM) Bde Nitra participated in the Final Planning Conference for Ex TOBRUQ LEGACY 2017 on the premises of the Defence University of Brno. The conference was attended by representatives of 10 NATO countries, CAOC Uedem and the exercise observers. As part of the conference, the key personnel were trained on command and control (C2) procedures for Ground Based Air Defence (GBAD) systems. It was confirmed at the conference that the exercise will be backed by NATO AWACS early warning systems. Aimed at enhancing the interoperability of Allied GBAD units, the exercise will take place in Lithuania, Czech Republic and Romania.

- On 3-4 May, Mech Bde Prešov hosted a specialised training in support of the Saber Knight 2017 command post exercise (CPX), which will be unfolding from 25 May to 6 Jun at Võru Garrison in Estonia. The CPX, organised by HQ Danish (DNK) Division, will also include personnel drawn from across the SVK Land Forces components, especially from 2nd Mech Bde.

- On 3 May, 3 service personnel, 1 civilian employee and 18 course members from the SVK Armed Forces Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin donated blood during a blood donation activity organised in collaboration with the Mobile Blood Collection Station of the Central Military Hospital SNP Ružomberok and the Base's First Aid Station.

- Specialist Qualification Tests for Aviation Pilots (APs), Air Traffic Controllers (ATCs) and Ground Control Interception (GCI) Controllers to achieve class distinction as 1st and 2nd Class specialist members of the units subordinate to the SVK Air Force were held on the premises of the SVK Air Force's AIRCOM HQ on 5 May. They were attended by 7 APs and 2 ATCs from the Helicopter, Tactical and Transport Wings.

Visit to MOD by CZE AMB



(11 May) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Slovakia, Her Excellency Mrs Livia Klausová, and the new Czech Defence Attaché, Maj Gen Ján Gurník, to address current issues of

bilateral defence engagement, especially the joint exercises of the SVK and CZE Land Forces. The Minister informed the guests of the deployment of SVK military policemen to Op Sophia in the Mediterranean Sea, the VMT Amendment Act, and the Active Reserves pilot project. He underscored the CZE troops' participation in our largest exercise Slovak Shield last year. The two leaders also discussed next year's celebrations to mark the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the joint state of Slovaks and Czechs – Czechoslovakia, as well as the upcoming NATO Summit in Brussels, the IDET exhibition in Brno, and NATO Days in Ostrava.

Military policemen in MED



(10 May) The SVK Parliament gave consent to the deployment of 10 MP personnel to EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia in the Mediterranean Sea (MED). The military policemen will

assume the role of a Boarding Team aboard a ship under the command of the German Navy, with two rotational deployments each lasting 6 months. They are expected to deploy on Op Sophia in August 2017. The main task of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia is to disrupt human trafficking from the African countries to Europe in connection with the migration crisis and the global threat of terrorism. Op Sophia also oversees the compliance with the embargo on arms exports into Libya.

Pay attention to Ex LOGEX

(11 May) The Ministry of Defence hereby issues a notice informing the public of the upcoming larger movements of SVK Armed Forces vehicles. Scheduled from 11 to 19 May, convoys of military vehicles will be moving along the lines of communication across the Trnava, Trenčín, Žilina and Prešov regions in support of Ex LOGEX 2017. During the exercise, the SVK Armed Forces Combat Support Service (CSS) units will practise supporting the activity of troops as well as the movements and transport of troops, vehicles, equipment and materiel. The exercise is aimed at supporting the entire spectrum of the Armed Forces' missions, ranging from execution of assistance tasks to Host Nation Support. The movements of military vehicles will be supported by the MOD Military Police.

Voluntary Military Training will be more attractive

(10 May) The Voluntary Military Training (VMT) will be more attractive and will be conducted in improved conditions. The VMT Amendment Act was approved by the SVK Parliament along with the Slovak National Party Club's amending proposal, thanks to which the trainee's monthly pay while under training will be up to €1,101.10, which accounts for nearly €730 more than originally agreed.

The entire amount is equivalent to the military pay of 1st Degree Private, the rank held by VMT soldiers over the course of the training. The VMT soldier's pay will not be taxed. Nor will VMT soldiers lose their entitlement to social benefits provided that they have been the recipients of them. The VMT Amendment Act shortens the length of training from 12 to 11 weeks. If interested, VMT graduates will have easier access to join the Armed Forces and other Security and Rescue Services. The Amendment Act was supported across the entire political spectrum. MPs approved it by 122 votes.

"By adopting the Amendment Act and making the project more attractive, we are delivering on the Slovak National Party Manifesto Commitments," stated the Minister of Defence. He

further emphasised that he continues to consider patriotism and commitment to the defence of the Slovak Republic crucial factors in the motivation of the candidates to participate in the project. To enter the SVK Armed Forces, VMT graduates will no longer be subject to the requirement to undergo basic military training (BMT). Upon graduation from the VMT, they will enter the Reserve Component of the SVK Armed Forces.

The recruitment drive for new VMT soldiers began on 2 May and will run until 9 June. Those interested in the VMT can contact the local Army recruitment teams in each regional capital city. The MOD plans to train up to 150 VMT soldiers each year. This year's training will take place from 2 August to 17 October at the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin. On the matter of the VMT, the Minister underscored the importance of bringing up the young generation in the spirit of national defence. "We are convinced that young people should be led towards patriotism in order to be prepared to defend their country. If we fail to do so, we will be faced with complications because different illegal groups may try to influence them," he said.