



## Heroes deserve our respect

(6 October) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and Prime Minister Robert Fico paid their tribute to the heroes of the Carpatho-Dukla Offensive. In attendance at the ceremony were Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim, Deputy Minister of Defence Tomáš Kuchta leading a delegation from the Czech Republic, representatives of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Slovak Republic, officials of the state government, the local government from the Prešov self-governing region, and the district and town of Svidník, as well as representatives of the Slovak Anti-Nazi Combatants' Union, surviving WWII combatants, and local citizens.

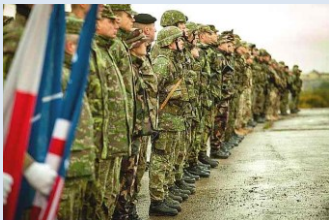
This year the Carpatho-Dukla Offensive was commemorated under a new name as Carpatho-Dukla Offensive Heroes Day. 72 years have passed since it occurred. Speaking at the Dukla Memorial, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "At this place our nation – small in number, still yet great in its spirit – rose up against the Nazi occupation, with massive support provided by troops from the East. It is an indisputable fact of reality that liberation came from there. All combatants deserve to be remembered by us for what they did for us. I am convinced that it is our obligation to preserve the message of this place."

The Minister of Defence presented the veterans František Orlovský and Juraj Kollárik with awards. Also recognised was a member of the SVK Armed Forces, while a military policeman was exceptionally advanced to the rank of Master Sergeant. "Dušan Krížan saved human lives from a burning house. And Peter Očenáš was promoted for his exemplary commitment to service duties and high quality work. I am convinced that they are our contemporary heroes," explained Peter Gajdoš.

The Minister also took part in wreath-laying ceremonies at the Army General Ludvík Svoboda Statue and the Soviet Army Memorial in Svidník. He also had a tour of the Military History Museum Svidník and visited a lookout tower at Dukla. For the excellent long-time co-operation with the town authorities from Svidník, the Minister awarded a commemorative medal to the mayor of Svidník, Ján Holodňák, emphasising that the medal symbolically belongs to all local citizens.

## Exercise Slovak Shield 2016 puts to the test soldiers' abilities

(9 October) At the Training Centre Lešt on 6 Oct, exercising troops formed up for the opening ceremony of Exercise Slovak Shield 2016, officiated by Lt Gen Pavel Macko, the officer in command of the exercise. A total of 1,400 SVK Armed Forces servicemen and women teamed up with 480 V4, DEU and US troops to conduct this year's largest international exercise on the territory of Slovakia. The series of training activities that have taken place in Slovakia throughout this year are now being capped off with Exercise Slovak Shield 2016.



"As part of the individual phases of the Slovak Shield series, soldiers have been tested comprehensively on their abilities to respond to a variety of threats, ranging from the non-military ones through to the necessity to deploy a multinational task force in

## Minister meets with Chairman of the EU Military Committee

(4 October) Under the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (CEUMC), General Mikhail Kostarakos, shortly before the EUMC Away Day meeting in Bratislava. The head of the MOD appreciated the presence of General Kostarakos at the Conference on the Follow-up to the EU's Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) – Defence Policy Aspects in Bratislava. The meeting allowed them to discuss the need to step up co-operation between NATO and the EU. This message had also been acknowledged by EU High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the defence ministerial in Bratislava. During the meeting with Minister Gajdoš, the CEUMC commended the Slovak EU Presidency for providing an outstanding platform for discussions on security issues as part of the SK PRES scheduled events. He expressed his support for the joint international exercises that Slovakia organises on a regular basis. Also, the EU Military Representatives arrived in Bratislava to participate in the EUMC Away Day. During the EUMC Away Day on 3-5 October, conducted under the guidance of General Kostarakos, the EUMC Mil Reps addressed current defence and security issues in Europe. The EUMC Mil Reps were briefed by SVK Armed Forces personnel on the SVK military's selected defence capabilities and engagement in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations. As part of the programme, the EUMC received a tour of the CBRN Training and Analytical Centre Zemianske Kostofany.



- The SVK Air Force Headquarters (SVK AF HQ) staffers held a ceremony on 6 Oct to mark **Carpatho-Dukla Offensive Heroes Day**, known until 1993 as Czechoslovak People's Army Day and until last year as Dukla Victims Day. The ceremony culminated with the awarding of commemorative medals and badges to the SVK AF HQ staffers. Brig Gen Miroslav Lorinc, Deputy Commander of the SVK Air Force, presented Letters of Thanks to the female civilian employees – Mária Hudáčková and Jana Dobrodenková – for their 30 and 25 years of work, respectively, in favour of Defence.

- On 6 Oct, the doors to the Training Battalion Martin opened for the last time this training year for the 123 Preparatory State Service candidates who, having successfully passed the selection process, are now to undergo **basic military training (BMT)**. Among the candidates are 14 female soldier trainees. On successful completion of the BMT, they will have a passing-out parade in December and move on to follow-on training in military specialities.

- On the last Sunday in September, personnel from across the SVK MOD participated in the **NATO RUN 2016**, an international sport event in Budapest. They have attended the running event for the second time in its history. This year, over 2,500 participants tried their strength against each other, competing in three races: 4km, 10km and 10km relay. The culmination was the 10km-run for three-member teams. The SVK Armed Forces team placed 7th, ahead of their competitors from the Army of the Czech Republic, the UK Armed Forces, and the Austrian Bundesheer.

- Members of the Operations and Policing Activities Department and the Police Duties Support Department formed up on the premises of the Military Police Trenčín for a ceremony introducing the **new Director of the Military Police**, Col Michal Migát. To mark SVK Armed Forces Day, the incoming Director presented MSgt Patrik Štefek with the Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic Medal in Bronze.

- A four-member team of the SVK Air Force Headquarters took part in the **International Peace Marathon** in Košice on 2 Oct. This has so far been their third participation in the event in the history of the run. Maj Róbert Senčák, Capt Slavomír Adam, Capt Mikuláš Bystriansky and Capt Ladislav Abrahám achieved an excellent 3rd place amid fierce competition from among the 213 relay teams.

- A **Combat Tracked Vehicles Driver Course**, aimed at the future drivers of the BVP Infantry Fighting Vehicles, OT-90 Armoured Personnel Carriers, and T-55 tanks, was held from 12 Sept to 10 Oct 2016 on Sučany Garrison Training Area. Following the week-long theory phase, the attendees undertook practical training, learning to clear obstacles and sections with restricted passability of the terrain, and to recover, maintain and load vehicles onto heavy equipment transporters, as well as driving in nighttime conditions. Along with soldiers, three members of the Fire-Fighting Corps, of the SVK Ministry of the Interior, were instructed in driving the T-55 tank. The course was rounded off with a final examination.

- On 12-23 Sept, 12 members of the SVK Armed Forces attended the debut **Combat Life Saver Course I and II** at the Training Command, of the Military Academy Vyškov. Having mastered Levels I and II, they are now fully fledged combat medics ready to provide first aid while deployed on international crisis management operations under combat conditions.

## Slovak Security Forum



(3 October) The 10th edition of the conference entitled Slovak Security Forum 2016, devoted to the topic of drafting the Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic and the Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic, was opened by the SVK MOD State Secretary, Róbert Ondrejcsák, at the University Library in Bratislava. "Just as the 2005 Security and Defence Strategies were adopted by a broad political consensus, I would be delighted to see the current strategies' preparation process and approval conducted in the same spirit," said the State Secretary, adding that the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry of Defence will lead a debate on the strategies with NGOs, experts from across the political parties, and the public. As part of the conference, 1st CHOD Lt Gen Pavel Macko participated in the NATO Panel After the Warsaw Summit as a panellist.

## Meeting of CHODs in Gdańsk



(5 October) Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim participated in the meeting of the V4 Chiefs of Defence on 4-5 Oct in Gdańsk. The meeting was organised under the Polish V4 Chairmanship. The CHODs focused on elaborating and delivering on the outcomes of the Warsaw Summit, with emphasis on NATO's northern flank region, the joint training activities in the Baltic countries, the unification of capabilities generation while using the existing EU and NATO programmes, and the preparations for the V4 EU Battle Group, to be on stand-by in the second half of 2019.

## New French Defence Attaché



(6 October) 2nd DCHOD Maj Gen Jindřich Joch received the incoming French Defence Attaché, Col Roland Delawarde, and the Deputy Defence Attaché, Lt Col Daniel Kopecky, on the GS premises on 6 Oct. Topics of discussion included co-operation between the Slovak and French Armed Forces and the Slovak contribution to the EUTM in Mali. Col Delawarde expressed his thanks for Slovakia's assistance to France in the aftermath of the Paris attacks at the end of last year. The new Defence Attaché replaced Col Christine Chaulieu, who finished her posting on 12 July 2016. Lt Col Daniel Kopecky replaced the outgoing Deputy Defence Attaché, Lt Col Marc Forterre, who completed his diplomatic mission on 31 August 2016.

## Cadets compete at AFA



(7 October) On 4-7 Oct, the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AFA) in Liptovský Mikuláš hosted a knowledge-based competition for military college cadets from across the EU countries, dubbed the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Olympics. A total of 40 cadets from 15 EU countries participated in the event, which was opened by the State Secretary at the SVK MOD, Róbert Ondrejcsák. The knowledge of the cadets was evaluated by an international board of experts, led by Dirk Dubois, the Head of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), Brussels, and Col Harald Gell, the Chairman of the Implementation Group (IG) for the European Initiative for Exchange of Junior Officers. The knowledge-based competition was won by a team of cadets made up of Haldo-Rait Harro (EST), Daniel Poplawski (POL), Marcelo Aparicio (PRT), Ionut-Sebastian Enache (ROU), Alexander Botoš (SVK), Joaquin Alfaro Pérez (ESP), Alexander Ivanov Monov (BGR) and Georgios Karavias (CYP). Cadet Joaquin Alfaro Pérez (ESP) was named the overall winner of the competition.