



Declaration's anniversary

(17 July) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš was present in Parliament for a ceremony commemorating the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration on the Sovereignty of the Slovak Republic, which laid the foundations for establishing an independent state. Preparations for the solemn ceremony had been made by SVK Parliament under the leadership of Parliamentary Chairman Andrej Danko. Also in attendance were SVK Prime Minister Robert Fico and several MPs.

As Parliamentary Chairman Andrej Danko stated in his speech, the Declaration ushered in the contemporary era of our national life, wherein the Slovak people declared their interest in becoming a full-fledged member of the family of the European nations. "Sovereignty is the ultimate right of Slovak citizens, the right to live a life in freedom, the right to be a proud bearer of the sovereignty of Slovak statehood. At the same time, we perceive sovereignty to be an obligation. It is a commitment of each and every Slovak citizen to defending our national and state independence, to respecting our legal order, a commitment to standing up against just about everything that may result in a loss of or restrictions on our sovereignty," said Parliamentary Chairman Andrej Danko. The original of the Declaration was deposited in Parliament alongside the state symbols of the Slovak Republic, which have been on display for the public.

"The Declaration was a first major step towards an essential prerequisite for the adoption of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, the 25th anniversary of which we will commemorate on 1 September 2017. Undoubtedly, it was also a major step towards establishing the Slovak Republic," said Prime Minister Robert Fico.

Parliament endorsed the Declaration on the Sovereignty of the Slovak Republic on 17 July 1992, whereupon the Constitution of the Slovak Republic was adopted and an independent Slovak Republic came into existence.

Slovak air defenders join in live firings on Exercise Tobruq Legacy 2017

(23 July) TOBRUQ LEGACY 2017, aimed at testing the level of interoperability of Surface-Based Air Defence (SBAD) systems forces, culminated last week. The significance of the exercise for achieving full interoperability and understanding common NATO operational procedures was acknowledged by Lt Gen Ben Hodges, Commanding General USAREUR, and Maj Gen Timothy McGuire, Deputy Commanding General USAREUR.

Inside Area of Operations (AO) North – Lithuania, the last phases of the exercise were conducted with considerable air support by the Air Forces of NATO countries. The training in the northern flank was centred on testing interoperability across all fields.

At AO Centre – the Czech Republic, the interoperability exercise culminated on 21 July with a live firing phase involving Short Range Air Defence (SHORAD) assets and Man-Portable Air Defence (MANPAD) systems. Alongside Czechia, other militaries joined in, including from Hungary, the US, Lithuania, the UK, and Slovakia. The SBAD units formed a joint task force and employed a range of air defence systems, such as RBS-70, Mistral, SA-18 (9K38IGLA), Avenger and SA-6 (2K12KUB), under the unified command of the multinational Surface-Based Air Defence Operations Centre-Centre (SBADOC-C). Members of the Nitra-based Task Group cooperated in conducting live

Minister commemorates 137th anniversary of General Štefánik's birthday

(21 July) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš visited Košariská to participate in a commemoration ceremony on the occasion of the 137th anniversary of General Štefánik's birthday. Head of the MOD visited Štefánik's birthday home, which houses a museum dedicated to the memory of this prominent figure of Slovak history. In his remarks, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Personally speaking, I find it exceptionally important to remind the young generations of General Štefánik's message, so that each and every pupil knows who he was and how much he did for the cause of the Slovak nation and for the establishment of an independent state of Czechs and Slovaks." He went on to remind that today's streets, squares and institutions bear the name of General Štefánik. Proving once again that the Slovak people dearly cherish the memory of the prominent personality. While noting that he would be pleased to see young people and, in particular, professional soldiers live up to Štefánik's personal motto "To believe – To love – To work", he underscored that if they did so, "it would be a lot more difficult for evil to spread in the form of extremism or terrorism throughout our society." Having lived a life of a soldier, a diplomat, a minister of war, and a statesman, General Milan Rastislav Štefánik died tragically on 4 May 1919 when his plane crashed in the vicinity of Ivánka pri Dunaji.



- The Slovak Republic was visited on 18 July by **CZE Chief of Defence Gen Josef Bečvář** at the invitation of SVK Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim. Both Generals witnessed the test firings of the Zuzana 2 Artillery System on the testing range of the Military Technical and Testing Institute (VTSÚ) Záhorie. The Generals reviewed the level of defence engagement between the SVK and CZE Armed Forces, especially in the field of information sharing and training. Both leaders underscored the high level of cooperation on fielding new types of equipment and on training methods.

- Members of the SVK General Staff gathered at the Hall of Honour and Glory on 19 July to bid their farewell to the outgoing Chief of Staff for Strategic Planning, **Brig Gen Ivan Pach**, before he takes up his next appointment in NATO structures. SVK CHOD Gen Milan Maxim thanked him for his share of the workload, wished him every success in his next assignment, and presented him with the SVK CHOD Memorial Cross.

- **Command Sergeant Major Martin Bernáth** will finish his appointment as Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) of the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin (TMRB Martin) as of 31 July. He will assume a new appointment as CSEL of the 3rd NATO Signal Battalion (NSB) in Poland with effect from 1 August. CSM Miroslav Ferenc will be appointed as new CSEL of TMRB Martin. The CSEL change of responsibility ceremony occurred at TMRB Martin on 20 July.

- The critical state of infrastructure at **Sliac Air Base** in July and August necessitated reconstruction works to be undertaken on airport surfaces, including the North Aircraft Stand and a taxiway. The construction and reconstruction works included demolishing cement-concrete composite covers, disposing of construction and demolition waste, cutting cement-concrete composite slabs, repairing potholes, and pouring concrete. The works are being carried out by the Air Base Sliac Support Company. Because of heavy rainfalls, fire crews of Air Base Sliac are pumping the water out of the places ready to be filled with concrete.

- While returning from TDY on 18 July, the route took members of the **Military Police Operations Departments Nitra and Topoľčany** on 2nd Class Road No. 512 from Prešov to Trenčín, when just behind Zarnovica in the direction of Partizánske they spotted a road traffic accident (RTA). Two vehicles had collided and blocked both lanes. The MP personnel used the flash lights on their military vehicle to signal an RTA, checked those involved in the RTA for injuries at the crash site, and controlled the traffic flow until a SVK Police Corps patrol vehicle arrived on the scene.

- The MOD informs the public of the **scheduled road and railway movements** of military Allied troops and equipment across Slovak territory until 30 July. A total of 25 road and 9 railway movements are scheduled for the upcoming period. These will mainly include the already announced onward movement of US Army troops and equipment in support of Exercise Saber Guardian 2017, as well as other ordinary road moves. Military vehicles will cross different border checkpoints in western, central and eastern Slovakia. Most railway movements are scheduled to pass through eastern Slovakia.

Children's Comenius University

(18 July) Soldiers of the "General Milan Rastislav Štefánik" Transport Wing Kuchyňa put together a rich programme for child students of Children's Comenius University. They had the opportunity to see a static display of weaponry and equipment, followed by a dynamic demonstration of a fire incident response by the Defence Fire and Rescue Service. The MOD has supported Children's Comenius University since 2011. While at Kuchyňa Air Base, the students were also visited by Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. Speaking in front of the child audience, Head of the MOD said: "It is in our interest that we give children an idea of what the work of military professionals is like, so that we can stimulate their interest in learning more about Homeland Defence and in playing a role in the defence of our country." Besides a line-up of displays and competitions on the programme, children were also treated to a military lunch.

Grigar defends K1 World title



(21 July) Whitewater slalom kayaker Jakub Grigar defended his last year's World Champion title from Krakow at the Čuňovo Water Sports Centre (SVK), when in his final race he came in first in the U23 K1 (Men's Single Kayak) category, despite being penalised

by two seconds. His performance at the venue was closely followed by Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. "Jakub's performance was fantastic and I was delighted I could congratulate him on his success in person. Undoubtedly, he is among the most talented sportsmen of our Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica we are so proud of. I would also like to offer my thanks to his parents, coach and entire team," said the Minister.

C1 World Champ Mirgorodský

(22 July) The Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica is delighted with yet another U23 World Champion title after Jakub Grigar's success. This time thanks to the brilliant performance of Marko Mirgorodský in the C1 (Men's Single Canoe) category. Just like Grigar, he, too, defended his last year's Gold from Krakow. In addition, Eliška Mintálová, the contracted sportswoman of the MSC DBB, snatched Silver at Čuňovo. "In water sports, representatives of the MSC DBB have always been among the best. That's why I am pleased that this is the case even with the new generation of whitewater slalom paddlers," said Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš.

firings with Czech platoons in a combined CZE-SVK Battery under the command of the Romania-based SBADOC. The air defenders employed SA-18 systems and a platform-mounted PKT machine gun to destroy air targets. For the first time a command data link network was put in place, allowing commanders to issue orders and distribute air picture updates immediately across the range. All 12 air targets were destroyed by 12 SA-18 MANPADS. The live firing phase confirmed excellent interoperability levels between the SVK Air Force and the Czech Air Force.

At AO South, an SBADOC-S C2 centre was set up to command SBAD forces from the US, Slovenia and Romania with the use of Patriot PAC-3, Avenger, SA-24 IGLA-S, MIM-2000 HAWK, SA-6 2K12 KUB, and Gepard Anti-Aircraft Cannon Platform air defence systems. Concurrently, a Joint Force Air Component Command (JFAC) was stood up as a multinational NATO command structure for C2 of air assets, manned also by SBAD subject matter specialists from the United States, Germany, Lithuania, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the UK, and working under the specialist guidance of the CAOC UEDEM and in collaboration with NATO AWACS platforms. During the exercise, the Romania-based Exercise Control (EXCON) Directorate and the JFAC managed to establish communications with

the SBADOCs in Romania, the Czech Republic and Lithuania, to command and control them and subordinate units, as well as connecting with the national Control and Reporting Centres (CRCs) in these countries to receive a Recognised Air Picture (RAP). As a result, a Unified Air Picture (UAP) was compiled from all available resources and sensors. At the same time, Romania hosted a live fire exercise involving MIM-2000 HAWK, SA-6 2K12 KUB, Avenger, Stinger and Gepard SBAD systems.

In Lithuania, the exercise was supported by a range of aircraft, including L-39s (LTU), F-16s (POL), AH-64 Apaches (USA), F/A-18s (ESP). In the Czech Republic, it was supported by Gripen (CZE/HUN), L-159s, Mi-24s, Mi-17s (CZE), and AH-64 Apaches (USA). In Romania, air support was provided by IAI-99s (ROU) and UH-60 Black Hawks, AH64 Apaches and F-15 Eagles (USA). Also involved were British Typhoons, which have been engaged in Romania as part of the NATO Black Sea Air Policing Mission. Of utmost significance was the integration of NATO AWACS platforms into the exercise setting. The exercise tested information exchanges between the AWACS platforms, the QRA LTU and the QRA ROU, and the connectivity to the JFAC set up as part of the exercise and to the PATRIOT systems. The concept will be further developed with the aim of gaining a new AF/SBAD capability.