



Life stories are inspiring

(28 July) Slovak Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš today received a participant of national struggle for liberation and a veteran of the Western Resistance Movement, Brig Gen (Rtd) Milan Píka, and the widow of a prominent Czechoslovak Army officer, Mrs Ailsa Domanová. He congratulated them on their jubilees and expressed his appreciation for their contributions to Slovak society during WWII and in the post-war era. Today it is Milan Píka's 95th birthday and Mrs Ailsa Domanová celebrated her 90th birthday earlier this May. Brig Gen (Rtd) Milan Píka, a son of the well-known Czechoslovak officer Heliodor Píka, joined the anti-Nazi Western Resistance. After his return to Czechoslovakia and the execution of his father in a fabricated trial, he was persecuted. He moved to Bratislava, where he has lived up until now. Mrs Ailsa Domanová of the United Kingdom found her second home in Slovakia after getting married to paratrooper Alexander Doman. In former Czechoslovakia she selflessly helped the widows and spouses of the persecuted Western Resistance veterans when they most needed it. "I am proud that Brig Gen Píka and Mrs Domanová have stayed to live in Slovakia and that they consider it to be their home, though they went through a period of awful adversity during the former regime. I find it of crucial importance that we continue to underscore their contributions to Slovak society and to keep their message alive among the members of the public. Especially the young generation should know personalities of our history, as their life stories may be inspiring for them," said Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš.

Extremely topical memories

(29 July) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš visited Starý Tekov to participate in the 12th edition of the Battles on the (River) Hron 2017 event, a historical reenactment of the battles of March 1945,



which takes place under the auspices of the Minister of Defence. To support the main programme, the SVK Armed Forces and Military Police had prepared a line-up of side events. Also in attendance at the event was the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security and Deputy Chairman of the Slovak National Party, Anton Hrnko. "It is in our interest that we support events that bring our military history and uneasy struggle for liberation closer to Slovak citizens, and in particular, to young people in an attractive form," said the Minister. While in Starý Tekov, he took part in a commemoration ceremony at a local military memorial. According to Anton Hrnko, commemorating events such as the defeat of Nazism and the victory of the Anti-Hitler Coalition in the Second World War is extremely topical. Traditionally, military history clubs from Slovakia and abroad had been involved in preparations for the Battle on the (River) Hron – Tekov 2017 reenactment.

General Milan Maxim in working visit to the USA

(26 July) SVK Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim departed on Wednesday (26 July) for a State Partnership Programme (SPP) trip to Indiana, USA. Gen Maxim, accompanied by a delegation of the SVK Armed Forces, and Maj Gen Courtney P. Carr, the Adjutant General of Indiana, will address issues of common interest, including joint training, exchange of lessons learned from overseas deployments, deployments of forces on domestic disaster response operations. At the beginning of his visit to the USA, Gen Maxim received a tour of the STARBASE Scientific and Research Centre, where basic and applied research on most advanced technologies, which may be applicable to the armed forces environment, is underway. The working trip of Gen Maxim is taking place at the invitation of the Adjutant General of the Indiana National Guard, which is among the oldest and most frequently deployed National Guards in the system of the US Armed Forces.



- The SVK MOD informs the public of the upcoming **movements of Allied military assets** across Slovak territory between 31 July to 6 August 2017. Over the period, a total of 15 road moves of foreign militaries and two railway movements will occur across Slovak territory. In particular, US ARMY troops and vehicles will continue transiting Slovakia, as they return from Exercise Saber Guardian 2017.

- The US Defence Attaché to Slovakia, LTC Jonathan Dunn and, the US Air Attaché, MAJ Adrian Patrascu, paid a visit to the Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade (AAMB) Nitra on 25 July. They familiarised themselves with the AAMB's history, mission, structure, training tasks, participation in multinational exercises. Col Ladislav Dovhun, Commander of AAMB Nitra, briefed the visitors on the AAMB's role in international and domestic crisis management operations. The visitors also saw a static display of assets in service with AAMB. The final discussion touched on the options on further advancing the defence engagement between the SVK and US SBAD forces.

- As a **US ARMY convoy** was crossing Slovak territory as part of Exercise Saber Guardian, one of its vehicles was involved in a road traffic accident (RTA) near Giraltovce on the evening of 26 July. To avoid an incoming Turkish lorry, the US Army vehicle went off the road. Nobody was injured in the RTA. The convoy was heading towards the border crossing at Vyšný Komárnik. The scheduled US convoy was escorted across Slovak territory by members of the SVK Military Police. The RTA is being investigated by police.

- After concluding his three-year posting as **Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) of the 3rd NATO Signal Battalion (3NSB)**, CSM Ján Břida is succeeded by CSM Martin Bernáth in Poland's Bydgoszcz. Previously, he had taken over responsibility for the unit from CSM Jeffrey Grel (USA A) of NCISG. The Battalion Commander, Lt Col Michal Klement, thanked the outgoing CSEL for the job well done, welcomed the incoming CSEL, and expressed his full support to him.

- The **Exhibition Military Paratroopers**, held in the small lounge (1st floor) at the Garrison Club, 6 Dulovo Square, Bratislava, has been prolonged until 31 August. Visitors are invited to see the exhibition during the working days between 8.00am and 14.30pm.

- 26 soldiers from Slovakia (10), Hungary (12), and Serbia (4) underwent regular **key UNFICYP personnel training** at the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin before deploying to UNFICYP in Cyprus. It was centred on standard operating procedures, manuals for force deployments, and on the facts and realities of the place of deployment.

Takeover of operational task



(24 July) Troops formed up for a ceremony on 21 July to hand over the operational task to the next 22nd rotation of the Czecho-Slovak Air Advisory Team (AAT), which is also staffed by ground technical personnel, including members of the SVK Air Force's Helicopter Wing Prešov. During the ceremony, MSgt Andrej Berdis and SSgt Patrik Oľšavský received the NATO Non-Article 5 Medal and the CZE Contingent Memorial Medal. While on a four-month tour of duty on the Afghan side of HKIA in Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan, they completed all their operational tasks excellently. Besides their AAT-specific tasks, the AAT members secured their own protection and defence. During their tour of duty, the ground personnel participated in supporting 373 sorties, of which 76 were night vision aided sorties, logging a total of 70 hours and 25 minutes.

International PSYOPS training



(24 July) A training activity for PSYOPS specialists, which has been underway since 10 July in Martin, has marked its conclusion. The training saw specialists from the CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre, of the SVK Land Forces HQ, and members of the 103rd CIMIC

and PSYOPS Centre, of the Army of the Czech Republic, engaged in rehearsing tactics, techniques and procedures for psychological operations under the command of a team of specialists from the Centre for Operational Communications, of the Federal Defence Forces of Germany. The two-week training contained a theory phase and a practical rehearsal of specific PSYOPS procedures. The theory phase covered tactical planning for small team-sized units, principles of face-to-face communications, procedures for assessing enemy propaganda, and techniques to combat such propaganda. It also incorporated preliminary and final tests of PSYOPS (visual, audio, audio-visual) products, the testing of the target group's understanding of the products and their impact on the target group, as well as distributing products with the aim of achieving a desired change in the behaviour of the target group. The CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre Martin was not the only venue for the training directed by specialists from the Bundeswehr's Centre for Operational Communications. The core programme of the PSYOPS training was delivered by day and at night on Garrison Sučany's training ground. At the training's conclusion, specialists addressed issues related to the PSYOPS planning process at the command staff level of a supported unit.

Exercise Tobruq Legacy 2017 marks a transition to a new era

(25 July) The Distinguished Visitors Day was held at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Romania on Saturday, 22 July 2017, marking the end of NATO's largest multinational air defence exercise, Tobruq Legacy (TL) 2017. The DV Day provided a presentation of the exercise's greatest successes, to include the ability to share information on a common air picture across three markedly distant regions in Europe, the viability of 10 NATO countries operating shoulder to shoulder in a joint task force, the first successful test of the SBAD forces' connectivity with the AWACS system, and the live fire exercises in the Czech Republic and Romania.

In Romania, the conclusion of the DV Day saw the highest representatives of the participating agencies and countries giving a press conference. It was announced that more NATO countries had expressed their interest in joining the exercise. Also discussed was the possibility of involving Navy forces in future joint operations under the unified C2 of AIR-COM Ramstein via CA-OC in collaboration with air forces and ground troops.

During the closing ceremony, Col David Shank, Commander of the 10th Army Air & Missile Defense Command (AAMDC), handed down the ceremonial Tobruq Legacy totem to Col Pal Szuchs, Commander of the Hungarian Air Force. Hungary will prepare TL 2018.



At the conclusion of the ceremony, the best participants were recognised as Heroes of the Exercise. Among them was Sgt Marcel Richňavský (SVK F). The NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence Committee (IAMDC) recognised those who played a major role in the planning and execution of the exercise, including Maj Peter Fajčík (SVK F).

In Latvia, the DV Day was held on 20 July. In her speech, the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Her Excellency Mrs Dalia Grybauskaitė, underscored the importance of the exercise for NATO partner states and confirmed that Lithuania will take over the organisation efforts for TL 2020. Poland will host TL 2019. The Commander of the Multinational Task Group in Lithuania named Capt Stanislav Vaník (SVK F) of HQ AIRCOM as the best SBAD officer at SBADOC-North.