



Slovak and European

(10 August) Building up functional and operational armed forces is an undoubted priority for the current leadership of the SVK MOD. "As Minister of Defence for the Slovak National Party, I want to emphasise that the security of our citizens is of utmost importance to us, and the development and modernisation of the SVK Armed Forces go hand in hand therewith," said Head of the MOD Peter Gajdoš, following a meeting with Prime Minister Robert Fico on 10 August 2017. At the same time, he highlighted that in this field he has the full support of the Chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak National Party, Andrej Danko.

During their meeting, the Defence Minister and the Prime Minister agreed on keeping a pro-European direction, so that Slovakia, also thanks to the steps it has taken in the field of security, can be at the core of the EU. "This autumn the European Union is launching a special programme for the countries interested in broader cooperation in the field of defence. I think we cannot hesitate and it is our obligation to be part of this initiative," emphasised Prime Minister Robert Fico, while, according to his words, it is important to purchase new assets for the SVK Land Forces, especially 4x4 and 8x8 vehicles. Furthermore, a decision must be taken on the future of Slovak airspace protection.

In this connection, Minister Gajdoš assured Prime Minister Fico that the purchase of military equipment will go ahead in accordance with the document entitled Long-Term Defence Development Plan with Emphasis on Building and Developing the SVK Armed Forces until 2030, which the MOD is to submit to the SVK Government and Parliament for approval. At the same time, he confirmed that the Slovak Republic firmly subscribes to the EU Common Security and Defence Policy. "No way are we going to build the EU Army. On the contrary, as part of our cooperation, we are going to build the capabilities of armed forces, the combat capabilities of the European Union. This means our own Armed Forces must be built first and then we can offer our capabilities to be used as common resources," emphasised the Minister, while arguing that the SVK Armed Forces should be particularly strong on the capabilities of the SVK Land Forces.

9th meeting of friends of historic military vehicles and equipment

(7 August) The 9th annual get-together of friends and collectors of historic military vehicles and weapons, entitled Slovak Sands 2017, culminated on Záhorie Training Area on 5 August. The event brought together many enthusiasts of military history not only from across Slovakia's regions but also from abroad. The organisers prepared a very interesting programme, including a display of vintage vehicles and equipment used by the Czechoslovak Army, the Wehrmacht, the Red Army, and the U.S. Army. The highlight of the event was a reenactment of the WWII Battle of Stalingrad. For the public, soldiers, dressed in Soviet, German and American uniforms and equipped with period vehicles and weapons, realistically reenacted the situation which had happened 73 years earlier. Visitors to the event could view in action T-34 tanks, a German tracked armoured personnel carrier, different types of tracked and wheeled vehicles, all-terrain vehicles, and motorcycles with sidecars. Pyrotechnic effects helped to add a sense of reality to the historical battles. The SVK Armed Forces' Recruitment Team Bratislava provided visitors with information on the Active Reserves and the career possibilities in the SVK Armed Forces.

Last farewell to Lt Gen (Rtd) Jaroslav Klemeš

(8 August) It was with deep regret that we received the news of WWII veteran Lt Gen (Rtd) Jaroslav Klemeš passing away on Monday, 7 August, at the age of 95. Jaroslav Klemeš was born on 31 January 1922 in Cadca. He grew up and studied in Skalica. Following the outbreak of WWII, he emigrated via Hungary and the Middle East to the United Kingdom. He completed a parachute course in Scotland, became a member of the Czechoslovak Resistance Movement abroad, and participated in Operation Platinum-Pewter, a paratroopers' insertion [into the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia]. At the end of WWII he served as a radio operator in Prague and maintained wireless communications between London and Košice. He was the last surviving paratrooper deployed from the UK to Czechoslovakia during WWII. For his military merits, Lt Gen (Rtd) Jaroslav Klemeš was awarded the Czechoslovak War Cross, the State Defence Cross of the Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic, the Czechoslovak Medal For Valour in the Face of the Enemy, and other decorations. He was also awarded the Medal for Bravery (1997) and received the nation's highest honour – the Order of the White Lion (Oct 2016). The last farewell ceremony will take place on Monday, 14 August 2017, at 3pm at the Large Service Hall of Strašnice Crematorium in Prague.



- On 8 August, CHOD Gen Milan Maxim received the outgoing Defence Attaché of Hungary to the Slovak Republic, **Col István Talián**, whom he presented the Commemorative Cross of the Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, 2nd Grade, for his excellent long-term cooperation. During the farewell office call, Col Talián was also received by DCHOD Lt Gen Pavel Macko, who is responsible for international military cooperation.

- The **children's stationary camp**, organised by members of the Self-Propelled Artillery Unit (SPAU) Michalovce for children of professional soldiers and employees in Defence, is reaching its mid-point these days. The third edition of the summer camp, which lasts from the beginning of July until the end of August, saw the attendance of 187 children in July. Senior Military Chaplain 1st Lt Simon Czap of SPAU Michalovce and its members have prepared an interesting programme during which children are familiarising themselves with the work of soldiers, firemen and policemen and are learning about the historical curiosities of the town and the region of Zemplín.

- On 9 August, SVK CHOD Gen Milan Maxim received the outgoing Chief of the U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation, **LTC Walter Richter**. For his personal contribution to the SVK Air Force's helicopter fleet replacement and his coordination efforts in relation to the courses and study programmes for professional airmen run at the U.S. training facilities, the SVK CHOD awarded him with the Commemorative Cross of the Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, 2nd Grade.

- From 10 July to 4 August, employees of the **Institute of Military History (IMH) – the Museum Section of the Military History Museum in Svidník**, working in cooperation with members of 21st Combined Mechanised Battalion Trebišov and 22nd Mechanised Battalion Michalovce gave nine of the museum collection's large-scale exhibits a new coat of paint and carried out other maintenance works at the national heritage sites operating under the governance of IMH.

- On 9 August, Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base (TMRB) Martin organised a **blood donation event** in cooperation with the Mobile Blood Collection Station (SNP Central Military Hospital Ružomberok) and the First Aid Station (TMRB). Of the 39 soldiers giving blood, 7 were members of TMRB, 23 were participants of voluntary military training, and 9 were soldier trainees and officer cadets under basic military training.

- The SVK Ministry of Defence announces the upcoming **movements of Allied military assets** across Slovakia, which are scheduled for Week 3 of August (14 – 20 Aug 2017). These will include 18 Allied road moves and 2 railway movements. Especially the U.S. Army vehicles and equipment will continue crossing into and across our country, as they return from Exercise Saber Guardian 2017.

Professionally and with a clean slate

(7 August) For the first time since taking office as SVK Air Force Commander, Brig Lubomír Svoboda addressed the military and civilian staff of the SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM Zvolen: "After six years I have returned to the HQ AIRCOM. I must say that a lot has changed. Several new projects have been worked out and we will ensure their continuity. Not so long ago two Black Hawk helicopters were handed over to the SVK Air Force for operation. Our task is to incorporate the air assets into the inventory of the SVK Armed Forces, and to provide the flying and technical personnel with high quality training, so that the helicopters can serve the needs of the SVK Armed Forces and, if necessary, those of all Slovak citizens. At the end of the year we are expecting the delivery of a new C-27J Spartan transport aircraft." In conclusion, Brig Svoboda said: "I am convinced we will accomplish the tasks that lie ahead of us professionally and with a clean slate. In doing so, I expect to see mutual support, cooperation and the job well done. To end, let me wish you a lot of patience, professional success and, above all, sound health and inner harmony."



Legion train's 3rd stopover

(11 August) The SVK Ministry of Defence, working in cooperation with the Czechoslovak Legionary Community, Legion 100 Endowment Fund, Railways of the Slovak Republic, Milan Rastislav Štefánik Foundation Bratislava, Historic Vehicles Club Zvolen, Slovak Technical Museum, and the Museum and Documentary Centre Bratislava, showcased a unique historic Czechoslovak Legion train on 11 August in the town of Poprad.

Addressing the audience at the train's opening ceremony were Deputy Commander of the SVK Land Forces Brig Karol Navrátil as the main representative of the SVK Armed Forces and Mayor of Poprad Jozef Švagerko. The presence of the Honorary Platoon of the Deployable CIS Base Ružomberok added a special ceremonial atmosphere to the train's presentation.

On its journey across Slovakia, the Czechoslovak Legion train will show up in nine cities. Poprad was its 3rd stopover. The train's next stopover will be in Medzilaborce on 15 August.

The main idea of the project is to restore to public consciousness the legacy of the founders of the modern [Czechoslovak] state and Gen Milan Rastislav Štefánik's contribution to forming and building the Czechoslovak Legion. In the Poprad region, it is important to remember the Slovaks who were substantially engaged in the battles in Russia as members of the 7th Czechoslovak Rifle Regiment "of the Tatra Mountains", which was established on 25 June 1917 and the formation of which was completed by the end of December 1917. Subsequently, it was placed under the command of the 2nd Czechoslovak Rifle Division. Following the Battle of Bakhmach, it participated in the Battles of Mariinsk, Novonikolayevsk, Irkutsk, Chelyabinsk, Tomsk, and Krasnoyarsk.

The Czechoslovak Legion train's next stopovers are:
15 – 16 August: Medzilaborce, Railway Station,
18 – 20 August: Humenné, Railway Station,
22 August – 3 September: Košice, Main Railway Station,
5 – 10 September: Zvolen, Railway Station,
12 – 17 September: Nitra, Railway Station,
19 – 28 September: Bratislava, Transport Museum.

