



Battle flags as a symbol

(23 May) Commanders of five military units of the Slovak Armed Forces took over battle flags on loan from President and Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces Andrej Kiska during a ceremony at the Presidential Palace. The battle flags – a symbol of military honour, valour and glory – were presented to the Repairs Battalion Martin, Tactical Wing Sliac, Helicopter Wing Prešov, 12th Mechanised Battalion Nitra, and 21st Combined Mechanised Battalion Trebišov.

Speaking after the ceremony, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Receiving a battle flag on loan [from the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces] is a recognition of the successes they have achieved for exemplary performance of tasks, be it at home or on crisis management operations. From the viewpoint of symbolism, the battle flag is the highest recognition that may be accorded to a military unit."

The battle flag is one of the main symbols of military units and formations of the Slovak Armed Forces. The act of giving a flag on loan to a military unit is grounded in historical traditions, especially in the existence and operations of the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia, Italy and France throughout WW1.

In line with applicable legislation, battle flags are given on loan by the President of the Slovak Republic at the proposal of the SVK Minister of Defence. Historically, only 18 military units and schools have received the battle flag to date. Of them, 11 still exist today in the current organizational structure of the SVK Armed Forces. The remaining 7 battle flags of the military units, formations and schools which were either disbanded or ceased to exist have been deposited at the Museum of Military History in Piešťany.

Dynamic Visegrad

(21 May) On 21-22 May 2019, the State Secretaries of the V4 Ministries of Defence met in 'Senior Body' format in Tomášov, Slovakia. This was the final meeting in this format under the Slovak V4 Presidency, before the Czech Republic takes over in July 2019. In the opening session, State Secretary of the SVK Ministry of Defence Róbert Ondrejčák summarised the activities throughout the Slovak V4 Presidency. Then, Secretary Ondrejčák, along with his counterparts Jakub Landovský, István Szabó and Tomasz Szatkowski, paid close attention to current NATO, EU, and V4 issues. Partners also agreed to consider a possible V4 brigade-sized contribution to the NATO Readiness Initiative.

Highlighting the outcomes of the Slovak V4 Presidency, State Secretary of the SVK Ministry of Defence Róbert Ondrejčák said: "I appreciate the very good and dynamic cooperation we have in the V4. During the Slovak V4 Presidency, we have made advances in several areas such as the stand-up of the V4 Battlegroup, capabilities planning and development, and we have started discussions on joint modernization projects at the expert level." During the final session, Secretary Ondrejčák wished his Czech colleagues the best of luck with the Czech V4 Presidency, starting from 1 July 2019.

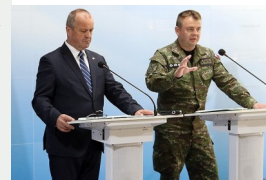


NATO science and research at Armed Forces Academy

(20 May) Under the aegis of Slovak National Armaments Director Col Vladimír Kavický, the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš hosted the 43rd Applied Vehicle Technology (AVT) Panel Meeting with over 450 NATO Member and Partner scientists and experts in attendance from 20-24 May 2019. The 5-day meeting was organised by the Collaboration Support Office (CSO), an executive body of the NATO Science and Technology Organization (NATO STO), in cooperation with the SVK MOD and AOS Liptovský Mikuláš. The NATO STO AVT Panel Meeting is organised bi-annually, with the aim of exchanging information on the progress and outcomes of ongoing projects, as well as defining the requirements for future joint R&D projects in the field of AVT. As part of the AVT Panel Meeting, expert teams meet for working sessions to improve vehicle affordability, performance and safety, platforms, propulsion and power systems operating in all environments (land, air and sea), as well as newly developing and fielded systems through latest innovative solutions and progressive technologies.



Focus on crime prevention



(24 May) The SVK Ministry of Defence, working in cooperation with the SVK Military Police, has adopted a number of measures to eliminate crime across Defence. In essence, the focus of the measures is

on putting crime prevention into practice. Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "In this connection, we have adopted several internal rules and regulations as well as new methodical guidance on the control of activities done by individual components of the SVK MOD, which is aimed at bringing the number of illegal offences down and eliminating any recurrence of such activity." Director of the SVK Military Police Col Michal Migát emphasised that, thanks to the Military Police Amendment Act, the tasks and powers of military policemen have been extended, contributing to more efficient performance of service duties and improving the security environment across Defence.

Verification on water range



(23 May) A successful Rescue and Recovery Group (RRG) verification exercise was conducted on the Water Training Range at the Training Centre Lešť.

According to Commander of the Engineer Battalion Sereď Lt Col František Mihalovič, the aim of the assignment was to respond to the loss of communications with an IFV while fording and to an evacuation request for a vehicle crew member. Lt Col Mihalovič said: "Such assignment is preceded by the Theory Phase, preparatory works, and preparation of vehicles for fording. This is followed by the Field Phase, where soldiers first practise on Sereď Garrison's training ground before exercising at Lešť. A successful RRG control exercise is a pre-requisite for execution of swimming and fording operations with vehicles from individual military units."

2018 MOD Yearbook

(24 May) The Communications Department, Office of the SVK Ministry of Defence, has released the 2018 MOD Yearbook. This is the sixth time the book has been prepared by the MOD Press Section. This illustrated large-format publication with 178 pages maps out the events across Defence for the past calendar year. Individual sections of the Yearbook are dedicated to components of the SVK MOD, General Staff, SVK Army, SVK Air Force, Military Office of the President of the Slovak Republic, and Presidential Guard of Honour, <http://www.mod.gov.sk/rocnka-mo-sr/>.

- The new recruitment campaign of the SVK MOD has contributed to a markedly **increased interest in active duty service in the Armed Forces**. Since its introduction and launch, the number of applications to join the Armed Forces has gone up almost twice, with 1,472 applications received in March and April 2019.

- On 22 May 2019, SVK CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko participated in the **NATO Military Committee in Chiefs of Defence Session** for the second time this year in Brussels. The main topics of the meeting were NATO's new Military Strategy and the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture. A day earlier, Lt Gen Zmeko attended the regular meeting of the EU Military Committee in Brussels.

- A two-week deployment of members of 1st Mech Coy, Mech Bn Nitra, along with assigned units to a training area, representing the 4th rotation of the Slovak Contingent to enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia, culminated with a **successful certification** at the Training Centre Lešť on 22-23 May 2019.

- **Veterans' Hike to Mount Ďumbier** and M. R. Štefánik Mountain Lodge, organised by the Human Resources Department, SVK MOD, took place on Saturday, 18 May 2019, to commemorate General Milan Rastislav Štefánik, the prominent personality of our history on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his tragic death.

- The Mountain Hotel Šachtička, located in the vicinity of Banská Bystrica, hosted a **congress for rescuers** and a competition for 22 rescue teams, including military ones, in mid-May 2019.

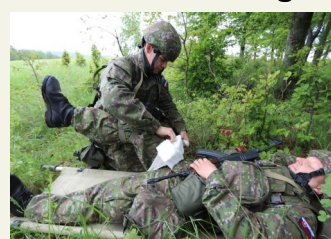
- On 18 May 2019, through its Museum of Military History Piešťany and Museum Section Svidník, the Institute of Military History Bratislava participated in the 15th pan-European **Museums and Galleries at Night 2019** festival, held under the aegis of Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš.

- After successfully completing a coordination exercise and a company-level tactical MILES 2000-assisted exercise, members of 1st Mech Coy, 11th Mech Bn Martin, attended **final marksmanship training** on 20-24 May 2019.

- Drivers are asked by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be 48 **Allied road movements** and 1 railway movement between 27 May and 2 June 2019. They will mostly involve POL and U.S. troops in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve, Ex Saber Guardian 2019, and Ex Capable Logistician.

CBRN active reservists return to Training Centre Lešť after year

(20 May) Part I of training for the active reservists who have reported to the CBRN Defence Battalion Rožňava, located in the Gemer-Malohont region, will culminate at the Training Centre Lešť. According to Unit Commander Lt Col Oliver Toderiška, 14 active reservists have joined the programme. In the past, some of them attended Voluntary Military Training (VMT), others passed through compulsory military service, and some used to serve as active duty soldiers.



On the Active Reserves training programme, Lt Col Oliver Toderiška said: "After last year's initial experience with the training of active reservists in our unit, we adapted the training programme for them. During Week 1, they will

review their all-arms skills at the Training Centre Lešť. During Week 2, alongside marksmanship, tactics and other types of training, they will undergo specialist training at the Training and Testing Centre Zemianske Kostolany. They will work with training chemical substances under the leadership of experienced instructors and section members of our Battalion."

Over the course of the training programme, active reservists will familiarise themselves with specialist CBRN equipment, material, protective equipment, and the entire system and activities of the CBRN Battalion. After the end of training all active reservists will receive the CBRN Defence Certificate of Training.