



### Visit by Air Chief Marshal Peach

(2 July) Slovak Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš held talks with Chairman of the NATO Military Committee Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach at MOD Main Building on 2 July 2019. Air Chief Marshal Peach visited Slovakia to take part in the Military Leaders Conference in Bratislava. During the meeting, they discussed current issues of shared interest in the field of international security and assessed the performance of Slovakia's commitments deriving from its NATO membership status.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "The Slovak Republic is delivering on its international commitments in the field of defence in a responsible manner, which is evidenced by the fact that we will manage to increase our defence spending earlier than initially planned." He went on to explain that Slovakia's planned target of spending 2 per cent of GDP on defence by 2024 will already be met by 2022.

Head of the MOD informed the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee about the deployments of SVK personnel on international crisis management missions and operations. In this context, Air Chief Marshal Peach praised the engagement of SVK service personnel in NMI in Iraq, RSM in Afghanistan, and eFP in Latvia. He also expressed his appreciation for Slovakia's increases in defence spending and for the modernization programmes being pursued by the MOD in line with the 2030 Long-Term Defence Development Plan.

As part of his visit to Slovakia, the CMC saw a demonstration of Slovak SOF capabilities before giving a keynote address at the Military Commanders Conference in Bratislava. Air Chief Marshal Peach, CHOD Gen Zmeko and Slovak Ambassador to NATO Radovan Javorčík then took part in a panel discussion on current security challenges and future conduct of military operations in front of the audience of Slovak commanders.

### VMT continues in Martin

(2 July) With an opening ceremony on Monday, 1 July 2019, the Voluntary Military Training (VMT) scheme has been underway at the Training and Mobilization Manning Base Martin. Of 122 applicants, 44 met the entry conditions and reported to the Base. The figures reflect the trend towards growing numbers of applications to join the Armed Forces, which have gone up considerably since the launch of the SVK MOD's recruitment campaign.



Over the next 11 weeks of the VMT training, trainees will acquire the active duty soldier's complete basic skillset necessary in combat operations. This encompasses military drills, marksmanship, topographical, signal, engineering and combat first aid training. Along with this, they will undertake CBRN Defence training, build and reinforce positions, work with camouflage netting, practise operating in a dangerous zone, and exercise in field conditions.

Each VMT graduate will get a reward of over 1,100 euros. The MOD will also provide for free accommodation, catering, military clothing and equipment and reimburse travel costs.

### International Senior Enlisted Seminar for NATO CSELS

(3 July) At the invitation of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Tod D. Wolters and Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) of Allied Command Operations (ACO) CSM Siim Saliste, CSEL of the Slovak Armed Forces SMG Vladimír Beluš attended the International Senior Enlisted Seminar (ISES) for NATO and invited CSELS at the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. ISES was attended by CSELS from over 40 countries and NATO and U.S. HQs from all over the world. The ISES seminar focused on stepping up the readiness and cooperation amongst top representatives of the NCO Corps from NATO and accession countries following changes to the operational and strategic landscape, as well as on resolving issues related to the NCO Corps structure in the field of training and transformation.

At ISES, SMG Beluš delivered a presentation on the Slovak Army's course for NATO NCOs – Battle Staff NCO Course. Several NATO and Partner countries, including Ukraine and Finland, showed interest in attending the course.

Apart from ISES, SMG Beluš held a series of bilateral meetings with the highest representatives of the NCO Corps from the CZE, HUN, POL, and UKR Armed Forces. These were conducted in the spirit of traditionally good cooperation in the Central European region.



- Army Headquarters Trenčín has had two Deputy Commanders since 1 July 2019. In the presence of CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, an appointment ceremony for Brig Gen Martin Michalko as **Deputy Commander of the SVK Army** was held at the headquarters. The outgoing commander of the Strategic Crisis Management Centre (SVK General Staff), Brig Gen Michalko, is succeeded by Col Štefan Kovács.

- The practical phase of the course designed for **specialists in command, operation and control of artillery fire systems** was held in the last week of June and the first week of July 2019. This phase included training on artillery simulators and firing the Zuzana 155mm Self-propelled Gun Howitzer. It was attended by 12 members of the Self-propelled Artillery Battalion Michalovce and the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) Battalion Rožňava and was led by instructors from the Training and Mobilization Manning Base Martin.

- Col Ladislav Dovhun left the post of Commander of the Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra on 1 July 2019, to become **Deputy Commander of the Strategic Crisis Management Centre**, SVK General Staff. On this occasion, Commander of the SVK Air Force Maj Gen Lubomír Svoboda presented the Chief of Defence Commemorative Cross to Col Dovhun in recognition of his achievements. The post of Commander of the Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra was taken over by Col Dovhun's SinC, Col Jozef Paňko.

- On 28 June 2019, the Training and Mobilization Manning Base Martin hosted a graduation ceremony for trainees of the G-10, G-30, G-40 and L-10 military trades after undergoing **trade-specific training**. A total of 76 trainees from across the Slovak Armed Forces completed the training.

- The **Slovak Contingent UNFICYP** in Cyprus upgraded its motor pool by fielding 16 new vehicles. The replaced vehicles were moved to the port of Limassol to be shipped to Slovakia.

- On 28 June 2019, 11th Mechanised Battalion Martin hosted a homecoming ceremony for 151 members of the Slovak Armed Forces returning from their tour of duty in NATO's **enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Latvia**.

- After a year's break, drivers and spotters practised **getting military wheeled vehicles on and off flat wagons**. On 27 June 2019, they tested their skills in driving and directing heavy lorries at Šarišské Lúky Railway Station. During the training activity, members of the Helicopter Wing Prešov practised how to anchor the Tatra 815 and the Aktis 4x4 onto the flat wagons according to NATO standards.

- On 25 June 2019, the 1st Tank Brigade Commander recognised 22nd Mechanised Battalion leaders for their exemplary work done during **Ex DRAGON 19**, a NATO international exercise, which took place in Poland.

- Drivers are asked by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be 24 **Allied road movements** from 8-14 July 2019. They will mostly involve U.S., HUN, and POL troops. SVK Army convoys will also ferry oversized cargo on the Kuchyňa – Nemecká route. And there will also be a SVK rail movement on the Nováky – Dubová route.

### Gearing up for military parade

(2 July) In preparation for the 75th anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising (SNP), these days members of the Slovak Armed Forces are gearing up for a military parade to be held on 29 August 2019 in Banská Bystrica. In this way, too, the Slovak military wants to remember the heroes who fought for common principles and ideas which today form the pillars of military traditions of the Slovak Republic – the struggle for peace, democracy and equality and especially the fight against fascism.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "In no way should this military parade be a show of force, nor should it promote military solutions to conflicts. In fact, it should be a tribute to our grandparents for standing up with arms in their hands and fighting for their nation and freedom, just as our Slovak Armed Forces are ready to protect the interests of the Slovak Republic and its citizens today." As he pointed out, the military parade offers an excellent opportunity for our citizens to see first-hand the latest advances in the capabilities of the Slovak Armed Forces.

The programme will take many forms, including a spectacular parachute drop by SVK AF and 5th SOF Regt parachutists. 200 vehicles and 15 aircraft will be involved, and so will three historical groups in tribute to the SNP insurgents. The last such military parade of the Slovak Armed Forces took place 10 years ago in Bratislava.

### New military music conductor



(1 July) The Change of Command (COC) ceremony for Commander of the SVK Armed Forces Band was held at the SVK Armed Forces Band Building in Dula Square, Bratislava. The outgoing commander, Maj Boris Hokina, who is to take up the appointment of Military Bands Inspector/Chief Conductor, handed over to the incoming commander of the Slovak Armed Forces Band, 1Lt Jozef Hepner, by symbolically passing on the conductor's baton to him.

### SCIS Base marks 10 years

(1 July) The Stationary Communications and Information Systems (SCIS) Base Trenčín celebrated 10 years since its establishment in 2009. On this occasion, the Trenčín Garrison Club hosted a ceremony for members of the SCIS Base and invited guests. Medals and badges were awarded to selected members of the Base by the Chief of Defence. The 10th anniversary commemoration was concluded with the signing of the Base Chronicle by Chief of Staff for Operations Support (SVK GS) Col Ferdinand Muriň and Base Commander Col Peter Schvarcbacher.

### Slovak and Hungarian engineers dive at Lake Black Water

(2 July) A joint training for divers of the Engineer Battalion Sereď and members of the Hungarian Armed Forces, dubbed OPEN WATER 2019, was held at the Engineer Battalion Sereď and at Lake Black Water. Instructed by one of the Slovak military's most experienced divers Sgt 1st Class Michal Ščepko, Platoon Sergeant of the Reconnaissance Platoon, Command Support Company, Engineer Battalion Sereď, 8 members of the Battalion and 10 members of the Hungarian Armed Forces honed their skills in conducting underwater demolition works, searching and recovering sunken



vehicles, and organizing amphibious reconnaissance teams.

During the assessment phase of OPEN WATER 2019, Sgt 1st Class Michal Ščepko highlighted the work of the exercising unit as a whole. "While observing strict safety measures and complying with the growing requirements on equipment and material, you have demonstrated high levels

of professionalism, excellent proficiency, and outstanding international cooperation. Thank you very much and I am looking forward to our next cooperation," said Sgt 1st Class Ščepko.