



## Minister visits president

(9 July) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš met with President and Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces Zuzana Čaputová at Grasalkovich Palace for talks on the current tasks being taken on by the Ministry of Defence. On this occasion, they paid close attention to the ongoing modernization programmes, the engagement of service personnel in international crisis management, and Slovakia's commitments vis-à-vis the EU and NATO.

Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "The Ministry of Defence is now delivering on its historically largest modernization of armed forces. Alongside new equipment, we are working towards improving the Service conditions for military professionals, while at the same time being active on international crisis management missions and operations, where over 470 members of the Slovak Armed Forces are currently engaged. Of course, we also lay adequate emphasis on training, because any state-of-the-art equipment would be useless without trained soldiers." He added that the MOD is committed to fully supporting the President in her capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces. According to President Čaputová, it is important that all purchases in Defence meet the criteria for transparency and that public money is spent economically. She noted that, in her role as Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces, she plans to be in active contact with the Slovak Armed Forces.

That day at Grasalkovich Palace, President Čaputová also received laureates and founders of the Military Deed of the Year Awards. Over the past 22 years the accolade has recognised exceptional contributions of military professionals and members of the public towards forging a positive relationship with the Armed Forces. On this occasion, the President praised the heroic actions of the awardees, the human dimension of the Awards, and the tradition itself as it evolves in Defence.



## Black Hawk battling fire

(10 July) For three days, airmen of the Helicopter Wing Prešov assisted in extinguishing a forest fire within the cadastral boundary of Bystrá, a village at the foot of Mount Chopok in the Low Tatras. After undergoing prescribed training, a SVK AF UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter, fitted with a Bumbi Bucket, was deployed for the first time to contain the fire across difficult mountainous terrain. This is another example that the Slovak Armed Forces utilise new modern platforms to carry out missions to the benefit of SVK citizens at any given time.

## 72 cadets earn Bachelor's degree at Armed Forces Academy

(12 July) 72 cadets have finished their Bachelor's degree studies by attending the official graduation ceremony at the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš. They all will continue their studies with the Master's (postgraduate) degree programme, on conclusion of which they will pass out and move on to different roles in the Armed Forces. By passing the final state examination, the cadets earned their Bachelor's degree in National Security and Defence; Electrical Weapons Systems; Military Signal and Information Systems; and Weapons Systems, Weapons and their Components. They now meet the pre-conditions for serving in basic command appointments. To qualify for officer appointments, cadets must complete Master's degree studies. Therefore, over the next two years all of them will continue their studies to achieve a Master of Science in Engineering (MSc Eng) or Magister (Mgr) degree. 69 officer cadets will follow the study programmes so far at Liptovský Mikuláš and join the compulsory internship scheme with military units across the Slovak Armed Forces. 3 officer cadets will undertake a full-time Master of Science in Engineering (MSc Eng) at the Aviation Faculty, Technical University, Košice. Of them, one female cadet will follow the 'Air Traffic Management' study programme, which will predestine her to serve as a helicopter pilot, and two cadets will pursue the Aircraft Operation study programme and become specialists of the Aircraft Repair and Maintenance Service.



- A Change of Command (COC) ceremony for **Chief of Staff of 13th Mechanised Battalion Levice** took place at Levice Barracks on 8 July 2019, with Cpt Ivan Moravský being promoted to Major and taking over as COS 13th Mech Bn.

- At the Junior & U23 Canoe Slalom European Championships held in Liptovský Mikuláš on 4-7 July 2019, slalom canoeist Marko Mirgorodský (SVK), of the Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica (VŠC Dukla), won the European Vice-Champion title in the U23 category on 6 July, kayaker Eliška Mintálová (SVK) placed 3rd in the U23 finals on 6 July, and kayaker **Jakub Grigar (SVK)**, of VŠC Dukla, became the **European Champion** on 7 July.

- On 8-12 July 2019, 21st Mechanised Battalion organised the 3rd edition of **Trebišov-based Wolf Puppies Camp** for kids of service personnel and civilian employees from the Trebišov-based military units, i.e. 21st Mechanised Battalion, 23rd Motorised Battalion, and Tank Battalion.

- To celebrate 75 years of the Slovak National Uprising, the SVK Ministry of Culture's Entrance Hall opened its doors for a preview of **Army in the Uprising – Slovak National Uprising 1944 Exhibition** on 11 July 2019. The exhibition is organised by the SNP Museum in Banská Bystrica in partnership with the Institute of Military History and the SVK Ministry of Culture.

- On 10 July 2019, the Supply Base II (SB II) Martin hosted a **SB II Commander's meeting** where Base Commander Col Marián Filip presented the Assessment Report for the 2nd training period 2019, in the presence of military and civilian staff.

- A graduation ceremony for graduates of the **OR-7 NCO Course** was held at the NCO Club of the Training and Mobilization Manning Base Martin on 4 July 2019. 37 course members completed the course.

- 25 members of the Slovak Armed Forces and the Slovak Military Police went on pilgrimage from Prešov to the National Marian Sanctuary in Levoča. In two days, they covered 60km and linked up with other pilgrims and members of the Polish Armed Forces and the German Bundeswehr who joined the **National Pilgrimage to Levoča**. This culminated with a Pontifical Mass celebrated by the Ordinary of the Slovak Armed Forces and Armed Corps, Mons František Rábek.

- During the first summer holiday week, the Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra organised the 1st edition of **Children's Summer Camp** for 37 kids of the Brigade's military and civilian staff.

- Drivers are asked by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be **8 Allied road movements** from 15-21 July 2019. They will mostly involve U.S. troops in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve. SVK Army convoys will also ferry oversized cargo on the Kuchyňa – Nemecká and Martin – Krupina routes. There will also be a rail movement on the Zemianske Kostolany – Vlkánová and Zemianske Kostolany – Kuchyňa routes.

## Farewell to Ambassador



(11 July) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš welcomed the Israeli Ambassador to Slovakia, His Excellency Mr Zvi Aviner Vapni to the Ministry of Defence for bilateral talks, as his Diplomatic Service appointment in Slovakia draws to an end. At the farewell

meeting, they paid close attention to current issues of bilateral cooperation between both countries and reflected on its results so far.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "The areas of cooperation between the Slovak Republic and the State of Israel represent an opportunity to mutually strengthen the capabilities of both states. I think both countries have something to offer in order that this common goal may be attained."

Topics of discussion included the ongoing modernization programmes in the Slovak Armed Forces. On procurement, Minister Gajdoš thanked Ambassador Vapni for the official offer of 3D medium, short and very short range radars by the State of Israel as part of the G2G selection process for 3D radars replacement.

Minister Gajdoš informed Ambassador Vapni about the stand-up of the new Slovak Special Operations Forces Command (SOCOM). In this context, he highlighted the possible areas of cooperation for both countries in the field of education and training of SVK and ISR SOF personnel, including the capabilities of the Training Centre Lešť and the CBRN Defence Training and Testing Centre Zemianske Kostolany, and in the field of defence industry.

## Ex CENTRAL HAWK 2019

(11 July) Ex CENTRAL HAWK 2019 has brought together members of the Tactical Wing Sliač and personnel of 100 Squadron RAF for a joint training activity at Sliač Air Base on 8-20 July 2019. The activity is centred on training pilots in air combat manoeuvres as part of a joint formation. A Distinguished Visitors Day of Ex CENTRAL HAWK 2019 was held on 11 July 2019, with the participation of UK Defence Attaché to Slovakia Colonel David Catmur, members of 100 Squadron RAF led by Station Commander of RAF Learning Group Captain Blythe Crawford and Squadron Leader Paul Ma Thy-Watkins, Deputy Commander of the Slovak Air Force Brig Gen Róbert Kleštinec, and Deputy Commander of the Tactical Wing Sliač Lt Col Marián Bukovský. As part of the DV Day programme, guests received a tour of the MiG-29 flight simulator and saw a MiG-29 fighter, an Aero L-39 Albatros trainer, and a BAE Hawk trainer at the northern aircraft stand at Sliač.

## Students of Children's Comenius University learn more about military jobs in Sered'

(8 July) Active duty soldiers of the Engineer Battalion Sered' and 12th Mechanised Battalion Nitra prepared a programme for students of Children's Comenius University for the next two days. They had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with military equipment and capabilities of the Slovak Armed Forces. On this occasion, they were visited by Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš at the Engineer Battalion Sered'.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "First of all, I appreciate that the children who have joined the project show enthusiasm and commitment for education even during the summer holidays. Every year we try to prepare a different captivating

programme to make them realise that if they connect with the military, they do not have to be afraid of stereotypes." He further underlined that the SVK MOD is giving a high priority to deepening patriotism and young people's interest in homeland defence.

During the two-day programme, demonstrations of individual capabilities of the Slovak Armed Forces are awaiting the students of Children's Comenius University. They will learn more about CBRN, tactical and topographical training. And they can also go through a series of physical challenges at the obstacle course.

