



**Zväz vojakov
Slovenskej republiky**

Prezident



Mr. General, soldiers of the Slovak Armed Forces,
Distinguished foreign guests and members of NATO Multinational Combat Group in SR,
Special guests,

The international military climb to Kriváň already has its own solid tradition, and every year convey an important message of thanks and respect to all the victims of the Second World War, but especially to the victims of the Slovak National Uprising.

The Slovak National Uprising has an inestimable value for our democracy in modern history of the Slovak Republic. It represents an exceptional example in national history that can be relied on especially in today's battles with enemies of peace, enemies of freedom, with distorters of history and doubters about the meaning, purpose and mission of the Slovak National Uprising. **Today we are witnessing an unprecedented suppression of historical contexts and value attitudes towards history are more a matter of opinion than a matter of historical facts about the global movements and processes in tragic 20th century.**

The uprising participants were never considered heroes themselves. They did not wait for others, but took matters into their own hands and stood up to Nazism and participated in the liberation of our homeland from fascist occupation, despite knowing that they faced not only the enormous superiority of the occupying forces, but also domestic flatterers and collaborators with fascism. They were not intimidated and it cost many their lives. People were dying in the Slovak trenches and forests.

Due to its border location, the High Tatras were destined for the development of illegal activities and later also for armed anti-fascist resistance. Tatra patriots began to become active in 1939 after the attack on Poland. They selflessly helped Polish refugees crossing the border on their journey to freedom.

Alpine huts became a temporary shelter for persecuted Poles, Jews and Soviet refugees. The citizens of the Tatra villages selflessly supplied them with food and clothing. In August 1944, the rise of resistance had already acquired such a dimension that the uprising could not be suppressed or concealed.

Ján Rašo built a resistance group from members of the gendarmerie and the financial guard, which on September 22, 1944 joined the partisan detachment of the High Tatras. On the twenty-third of September, he was followed by Štefan MORÁVKA's group.

Immediately after the arrival of the occupying troops and the occupation of the entire area of the High Tatras, the reprisals of all those who took part in the Uprising began. The executions took place in Kežmarok, Ľubica, Lendak, Matejovce, Poprad and other places. In September, 20 death sentences were handed down and subsequently carried out at Kežmarok Castle. They also arrested and imprisoned those who helped the insurgents in any way.

This monument at Štrbské Pleso commemorates the heroism of the Slovak National Uprising participants in the High Tatras. Since June 1945, partisans of the High Tatras Partisan Section, member of the financial guard Ján Rašo and Slovak gendarme Štefan Morávka have been buried here. Ján Rašo died on September 26th, 1944 in the battle at "Tri studničky". Štefan Morávka died on January 14th, 1945 at "Grúnik pod Kriváňom".

Despite these reprisals, the resistance did not disappear. Individual partisan groups joined together and from September 26, the "HIGH TATRA" partisan unit, which was integrated into the **partisan brigade "FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE SLAVS"**, began resistance in the territory of the High Tatras area. The partisans eagerly expected help from the Carpathian - Duklian Operation coming from the east from soviet through polish territory.

At the end of January 1945, most of the occupying troops left the High Tatras area under the pressure of the advancing Soviet troops. During night January 27th, 1945, soldiers of the 3rd brigade of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps in the USSR entered the High Tatras, and on the following day other troops followed.

The High Tatras were free on January 28th, 1945. In April 1945, the GRANDHOTEL in Starý Smokovec became the temporary residence of the president and government of the Czechoslovak Republic.

The Slovak nation has a lot to thank not only for the domestic heroes of the uprising, but also for the heroes from other nations who, with the determination to defeat Nazism in Europe, did not hesitate to bring up the highest sacrifice to this most holy altar - their lives. It was also thanks to these victims that Czechoslovakia at the time was accepted among the winners of the Second World War, and also thanks to this, the worst mass killing the world has ever known ended.

We must never forget the courage, patriotism, moral credit and sacrifices of the participants in the uprising. **We must never allow history to be distorted, to doubt the meaning of these sacrifices. The legacy of the Slovak National Uprising is gaining importance and strength, especially today, when fascism, nationalism, extremism, and various dubious trends in the interpretation of historical contexts are gaining strength in Europe and the world.**

We must respect history, because it is unchangeable. Today, we must oppose any ideology whose representatives do not hesitate to destroy everything they feel hatred for.

We are grateful to other nations that actively joined the uprising and thus made their sacrifice for the future of Slovakia. This uprising also shaped the value attitudes of the nation and had an impact on the state-building character of the Slovak Republic.

Freedom is a word with a deep meaning in all shades of its meaning. True freedom, however, also lies in the willingness to fight for its maintenance and to bear responsibility - responsibility for the future.

The Association of Soldiers of the Slovak Republic is determined to contribute to the preservation of freedom and bear its share of responsibility for the future of the Slovak Republic.

**WE PAY THE HONOUR TO THE MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE
SLOVAK NATIONAL UPRISING!**

Association of soldiers of the Slovak Republic
Dipl. Eng. Gabriel Merňák Col. Ret., president