

MILAN RASTISLAV ŠTEFÁNIK (1880-1919)**MILAN RASTISLAV ŠTEFÁNIK (1880-1919)***I had wonderful life, I lived eternity in each second of my life.**M.R. Štefánik¹*

Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University has been maintaining excellent relations with the Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik. Last year the higher educational institutions renewed the existing bilateral educational and scientific agreement. This connection and tie placed General Milan Rastislav Štefánik in the centre of interest, and we decided to get to know and let others get acquainted with his adventurous life better. Milan Rastislav Štefánik, a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, then of France, scientist, astronomer, fighter pilot, politic, Czechoslovak Minister of War, leading figure of the modern Czechoslovak statehood, a world traveller was born 130-years ago.

Štefánik was born on July 21, 1880 in Kosaras (Nitra County, now Košariská, Kingdom of Hungary.). He was the sixth of 12 children, (2 siblings died early). His father was a local Evangelic pastor called Pavol Štefánik and his mother was Albertína Jurenková.

In the Kosaras Evangelic Church register his birthplace, birth date, first and last name, parents' name, religion, godparents name (István Fajnor, lawyer and his wife Emília) and Baptist pastor's name (László Vannay Evangelic pastor of Mijava) can be found. In the newborn child's christening register a second first name can be seen. His father - in honour of the ruler of Great Moravia, who tried to raise his nation with wisdom through respect and education - decided to give him Rastislav as a second Christian name.²

He began studying in Kosaras. According to his teacher Martin Kostelný, Štefánik was diligent and smart, the best among all. In the Austria-Hungary territory, three Slovak secondary schools were closed due to active and forced assimilation. Milan was sent to Somorja (Šamorín) by his parents in order to learn Hungarian before his gymnasium studies. He lived with Sidó lawyer's family and finished the fourth grade of elementary school there.

In 1890 he enrolled to Pressburg Evangelic Lyceum where his brothers Igor and Paul had studied. His teachers had a predominant role in his life at the lyceum e.g. Ján Kvačala Slovak pedagogue, ecclesiastic historian, Evangelic pastor, Ferdinand Hirschmann mathematics teacher, and Samuel Markusovszky form master. Hirschmann described the 10-year old Štefánik as a small, fragile, whey-faced, blond and fearsome child. Ján Kvačala was known in the lyceum as the main patron of the Slovak pupils. Milan was eminent prentice, so he was entitled to free of charge lunches at the educational institute, and in the second and third year he got gratuity from Michal Institoris-Mošovský Foundation.³

In 1893 Štefánik continued his studies in Sopron, then in Szarvas (1894-1898) where he graduated. The legal basis was provided by 1790/1791 XXVI. law about religious affairs, according to which the Evangelist community was authorized to establish schools where it was needed. In Békés-Bánát county there wasn't a secondary school of that character. Young people had to find in remote cities like Sopron, Eperjes (Prešov), Lőcse (Levoča) or Késmárk (Kežmarok) schools. On March 28, 1796 the Evangelic church turned to governmental bodies to get authorization for the establishment of the school. Intelligentsia was badly needed in the education and in the local administration, too.

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On May 19, 1802 ecclesiastic gathering held in the Szarvas church officially announced the establishment of county gymnasium. Donations from wealthy noble families (Wenkheim, Podmaniczky, Prónay and Földváry) provided the necessary financial resources. During 1802-1834 the school functioned in the city of Mezőberény, but with continuously shrinking financial circumstances, and was moved to Szarvas. As a result of Sámuel Tessedik's activity Szarvas became a cultural centre in the region, and Count József Bolzai donated substantial amount of money to the secondary school.⁴ Štefánik was taught by professor-director Gyula Benka⁵ of the Szarvas Evangelist Gymnasium. At that time talented pupils were invited to Sunday lunches to the director and teachers. He was very diligent and as a sign of appreciation he was given Teleki stipendium of 70 golden forints.

During the fabulous 1896 millennial ceremonies he studied in Szarvas. In spite of his successes he gathered life-long negative memories about ethnic minority suppression by the ruling Hungarian majority.

After finishing secondary school he had several options to study – Budapest, Vienna, Beograd, Zagreb and St. Petersburg. Bearing in mind his father's wish he applied to the Prague Technical College to study civil engineering. After two years of study professor Karol Zenger⁶ encouraged him to change not only the university but also the subject of the study. He started at Universitas Carolina in 1900-1901 school-years with great enthusiasm. At the university he met exceptional professors like Ján Jessenius, the rector of the university, Ján Rohoň the historian, and professor Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk.

His trip to Zurich in 1902 was an extraordinary intermezzo in his life. He wanted to escape from Prague for several reasons (lack of money, weakening health, and two wasted years at the college). In Switzerland he found peace and worked hard. The travel costs and tuition fee was paid by a Czech architect, Antonín Dvořák.

The young Slovak student - who was interested in astronomy, was supported by Professor Alfred Wolfer⁷ - worked in the Zurich Observatory. Half a year later he went to Milan in order to improve his knowledge, and then another month of study – this time in Geneva, Switzerland – in the workhouse of the astronomer Emile Schaer⁸ he studied the grinding of the lenses of binoculars.

After returning back to Prague he continued studying at the university, the dynamic of the atmosphere and the movements of the orbs in the solar system were the main areas of his interest. His thesis, doctoral dissertation was written on Tycho Brahe's exploration of the explosion of the supernova in the Cassiopeia constellation in 1572⁹. He graduated on 9 June 1904 with a doctor's degree in philosophy, and on 10 October with thorough knowledge of astronomy and physics (he finished his studies with a thesis in astronomy). In October 12, he became doctor of philosophy (dr. phil.). The ceremony was attended by his father.

During his university years he was active participant and founder of the Czech cultural and scientific life. First he became a member, then the president of the Detvan Society of Slovak students.¹⁰ He published in Hlas, Umelecký hlas¹¹ and Čas journals articles on cultural and political matters.

WORLD TRAVELLER SCIENTIST AND EXPLORER

"I believe in the development of science, and all those acquisitions that are beneficial and admirable to human mankind."

Štefánik's scientific career was supported by Nicolas Camille Flammarion¹² and Pierre Jules C. Janssen,¹³ and he Štefánik owed his social, political and scientific career to them, as well.

On November 18, 1904, he travelled to Paris, and started to work with Professor Janssen in the famous Meudon Observatory. The observatory was the most important centre for astronomy at this time, and brought great prestige to work there.

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Between 20 June and 4 July in 1905, Štefánik climbed Mont Blanc as a member of the Mont Blanc expedition, his goal/task was astronomical monitoring, and observation of Mars and the Moon from the top of it. He was the Slovak record holder of the mountaineering (4808 m).

He was a member of the French expedition, observed, described and depicted total eclipse of the Sun in Alcossebre, Spain. During 1906-1908 he was the co-director of the Mont Blanc Observatory. His main area of scientific research was the Sun, and the outer atmosphere's spectral analysis.

On November 19, 1906 he travelled from Paris to Russia, in December to Turkistan, there in Ura-Tjube (the settlement is located approximately 160 km south from Tashkent, now part of Tajikistan). He stopped in Samarkand, Buhara, Tashkent and Orenburg. In Jasnaja Poljana he paid a visit to Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy.

In 1907 the French Astronomy Society honoured him with Janssen-award.

In May 1908 Štefánik wanted to be a member of Jean-Baptiste Charcot's¹⁴ Antarctic expedition. The French Academy of Sciences authorized his participation, but financial support was not given to him, because at that time he did not hold French citizenship. Later on he got the affirmation for the necessary financial subsidy, but it was too late, he missed the expedition.

Thanks to his acknowledgement in the French astronomical society since 1908, he had been charged by the French authorities with the establishment of meteorological and astronomical observation stations all over the world.

Between September 17-21, 1908 he carried on meteorological observations on Grands Mulets (3057m), the lower peak of Mont Blanc. In his diary he recorded that he climbed the mountain six times over. In the course of his scientific career he published seven articles in „Comptes rendus”, the journal of the French Academy of Sciences, but about his journeys around the world only two articles,¹⁵ and the Ecuador memoirs appeared.

Between 17 January and 9 June in 1909, Štefánik worked in Algeria and Tunisia, where he wanted to establish an observatory. In Alger he negotiated the necessary formalities with the governor, and travelled first to Laghouat (in Arabic language Al-Agwat), then to Ghardayatu located one hundred kilometers south by train in order to find the most favourable conditions for the build-up observatory. He failed because the sensitive instruments could not withstand the desert climate, the fluctuations of the temperature between days and nights. The expedition ended in failure.

A few months later, between April 15 and 27, 1910 he crossed the Atlantic-ocean on the deck of SS *Mariposa* a luxury ocean liner. From New York he reached San Francisco by train, and then set sail for French Polynesia Papeete, Tahiti). Commissioned by the French Central Meteorological Research Institution, he wanted to observe the apparition of Halley's Comet passage. The weather conditions were so bad as to preclude the observation. That was a great disappointment for him. In Tahiti, he also built an observatory and a meteorological stations network. He went for a trip to the Marquesas Islands, Tuamotu (formerly known as Paumotu), Easter Island, and island Vava'u. Vava'u is an island chain in Tonga, where in Neiafu he finally managed to observe a total eclipse of the Sun. The photos made of this phenomenon immediately made him worldwide well-known.

On July 20, 1911 he returned to Paris. He received the Wilde award in 1911 from the French Academy of Sciences as sign of recognition his scientific successes, the valuable observations in the Mont Blanc observatory, the build-up observatory in Tahiti, observations of the Halley's Comet and the sun eclipse on Tonga.¹⁶

He had been charged by the French authorities with astronomic and meteorological observations. On August 24, 1912 commissioned by Bureau de Longitudes he got off for another expedition, this time to Brazil. His goal was to observe another eclipse of the Sun. The location was Passa Quatro in Minas Gerais state. The weather conditions were once again bad, the expedition was another failure.

In 1913 he travelled to Ecuador, from New Orleans crossing the Mexican-bay and the Caribbean-sea to Colon (Panama), he continued on the Panama-railway to Balboa, Pacific Ocean. From Balboa he set sail for Santiago de Guayaquil,

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reaching Quito, the destination by train.¹⁷ The trip took him 91 days, at that time there were no railway guides or ocean lanes.¹⁸

On July 27, 1912 he received French citizenship, recognition and access to the French elite. In 1914, he was made a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour.¹⁹

WORLD WAR I AND FOUNDING OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK STATEHOOD

At the time of the outbreak of World War I he was in Morocco. On January 26, 1915 he joined the army, and enrolled into 102nd French infantry regiment. Two days later he ended up in the 1st air wing. At the end of his military training in March he became a combat fighter as sub-lieutenant. He was trained on Maurice Farman MF-11 reconnaissance and light bomber biplane receiving his pilot license on April 11.

He was sent as a pilot to Serbia in May 1915. He flew a total of 30 missions to enemy territories. Although he survived, he could not fight anymore because of his health problems, so he underwent a medical treatment in Rome. In 1915 for his bravery and heroism he was awarded with the French Croix de Guerre (Cross of War) military decoration with palms. He returned to Paris at the end of 1915. Marshal Ferdinand Foch tasked him to build up the meteorological service within the French Air Force.

Back in Paris, he became acquainted with Edvard Beneš and made contact with his former professor Tomáš Masaryk. In February 1916, these three men founded the Czechoslovak National Council (the supreme body of Czecho-Slovak resistance abroad leading to the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918). The chairman of the council became Masaryk, Štefánik and Josef Dürich was the vice-president, and Beneš had the role of the secretary.

Thanks to his diplomatic skills, and scientific acknowledgement Štefánik helped Masaryk and Beneš to meet and obtain the support of some of the most important personalities of the Triple Entente. For example, he organized Masaryk's meeting with the French Prime Minister Aristide Briand.

In 1916, Štefánik and the Czecho-Slovak resistance started to create Czechoslovak Legion²⁰ to fight against Austria-Hungary and Germany. Between 1916-1918 Štefánik recruited Czech and Slovak soldiers deserted at Italian, Serb and Russian front lines, and also volunteers immigrated to the USA. It was largely due to his personal diplomatic skills and contacts that the Allies recognized the Czechoslovak National Council as a government-de-facto and the Czechoslovak troops as allied forces in the summer and autumn 1918.

On July 18, 1918 Georges Clemenceau French prime minister promoted Milan Rastislav Štefánik to brigadier general. The independence of Czechoslovakia was proclaimed on October 28, 1918, by the Czechoslovak National Council in Prague. Karel Kramář was named the country's first prime minister (14 November 1918 - 8 July 1919). In his government Edvard Beneš became foreign minister, Vavro Šrobár minister of health care and Slovak affairs, and M.R. Štefánik minister of war. He was highly disappointed not getting the desired position to be in charge for Slovak affairs.

TRAGIC END

„We have been groaning that life is short, but at the same time improvidently mispending it.”

On May 4, 1919 Štefánik decided to return home, he had chosen the fastest way by airplane not wanting to travel through the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Štefánik's plane circled the Vajnory airport near Bratislava attempting to land, it crashed in unclear circumstances, the whole crew died.

Though his death is still debated today, most historians believe it to have been an accident.

One of the official stories was that the Caproni Ca.3 plane's Italian tricolored flag had been mistaken for the similar Hungarian flag and shot down because of it.²¹ There was a version that his plane was shot down by Hungarian Bolsheviks, but the Catholic political circles were behind the scene. Most probably the truth of his death will never be known, and

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there are several factors of uncertainty that might have added to the accident: inexperienced Italian pilot, unfavorable weather conditions, and the weak technical parameters of the airplane.

There is a theory linking the accident to the inexperienced Italian pilot. Reports of the Italian board of enquiry mentioned, that their task was to fully rule out the mistake of the Italian crew and the error of the airplane.

The plane took off from Campo Formido airport near Udine, the destination was Vajnory airport located 12 km from Bratislava. Even though on the fatal day there were a lot of exchanges of messages, from which it had been clear that May 2nd and 3rd because of the heavy rainfall the lay-by was sloppy, the Italian crew had no information about this important fact. According to eyewitness's report first lieutenant Mancinelli-Scotti, Italian pilot, in the course of the first landing attempt, the wheels touched the landing path, after which the cooling water immediately started dripping. That caused the overheating of the engines. During the second landing attempt one of the engines exploded, resulting in catastrophe.²²

In the field of the fatal accident (Ivanka pri Dunaji) a memorial plaque was set up. *"On May 4, 1919 in this place died Dr. Milan R. Štefánik Czechoslovak minister, general and his accompanying crew first lieutenant I. Mancinelli-Scotti, sergeant H. Merlino and observer-gunner G. Agginuti. For eternal remembrance."*

Štefánik's tomb, austere memorial was designed by Dušan Jurkovič. The monumental tomb of Milan Rastislav Štefánik is located on the Bradlo hill (543 metres) in Brezová pod Bradlom, approximately three kilometres from the town, on the road to Košariská. The monument's construction started in 1924, five years after Štefánik's death and was finished in 1928. On the anniversary of his death a pilgrimage set forth to Bradlo. His tomb is a national sanctuary and altar²³ He became a national hero and symbol of Slovakia after the World War I.

On May 18, 1935 a stamp was issued to the memory of General Milan Štefánik in Czechoslovakia.

In 1993 in the independent Slovakia banknotes were issued in denominations of 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1000 korún, 5000 korún notes was added in 1994. The main motifs on the obverses of the banknotes represent important people living in the territory of the present Slovakia in various historical eras. On the reverses, these motifs are completed by depicting places where these people lived and were active. On one side of the 5000 korún note is Milan Rastislav Štefánik, on the reverse his grave in Bradlo is depicted.

On March 15, 1982 Antonín Mrkos discovered a minor planet, in the Crater constellation, after its confirmation, a permanent number and name was given to it, 3571. MilanŠtefánik.²⁴

The National Council of the Slovak Republic, Act No. 455/2004 dated June 30, 2004, established the Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik as a public university in Liptovský Mikuláš in remembrance of the Slovak hero.²⁵ In Liptovský Mikuláš during 2004-2008 two educational institutions functioned and accomplished their mission side by side. The National Academy of Defense of Marshal Andrej Hadik became an educational and training centre for the further education and special training.

Subsequent transformation of the defense department and the national military educational and training system resulted in the integration of these two military educational institutions in Liptovský Mikuláš. The National Council of the Slovak Republic, Act No. 144/2008 dated April 1, 2008 closed the National Academy of Defence of Marshal Andrej Hadik on August 31, 2008. The Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik was named as its successor, taking over all its tasks and commitments.²⁶

Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University has been maintaining excellent relations with the Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik. On February 2, 2009 the higher educational institutions renewed the existing educational and scientific cooperation protocol. The reason was the continuous transformation of both institutions (changes of the strategy and the concept, their mission, structural, educational programs). The basis of the bilateral cooperation is civil and military Erasmus program, which encourages and supports academic mobility of higher education students and teachers, the exchange of information, mutual participation on scientific conferences, seminars and other activities.

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The 1st, 2nd and 3rd class M.R. Štefánik Cross is awarded by the president of the Slovak Republic for those who risk their lives defending the country, save lives and prevent significant material damages.²⁷

Štefánik's life has Hungarian reference, too. In October 1991 Czechoslovakia donated a statue to city Szarvas commemorate one-time, world-famous student. The legend of the statue is the following: „*M. R. Štefánik outstanding Slovak patriot, general of the French Air Force, scientist, who between 1894-1898 studied and graduated in Szarvas.*”

Milan Rastislav Štefánik was born in Austro-Hungarian Empire, later on he became French citizen, general of the French Army, politician and diplomat, and was one of the founders of Czechoslovakia, a true European minded, who was well ahead of his time.

Despite his tragic end, Štefánik had a life of adventure, heroism and triumphs that few others can rival. He never lost his love of the stars, either. When asked he said he would “*gladly exchange my stars of general for the real world of stars.*”

His memory lives on, not only in Slovakia but in the Czech Republic, France, Italy and Hungary.

Keywords: Milan Rastislav Štefánik

Kulcsszavak: Milan Rastislav Štefánik

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¹ Žil som krásny život, prežíval som večnosť v sekundách.

² In 862 Rostislav asked Byzantine emperor Michael III to send a bishop and teachers who would bring the Gospel to the Slavic people in their own language. The emperor decided to send the two brothers Cyril and Methodius to lay the foundation of the Slavonic script which also became the script of Slavonic literature.

³ See Milan Rastislav Štefánik životopis, Source: http://referaty.atlas.sk/prakticke_pomocky/zivotopisy/4215/

Michal Institoris-Mošovský (1733-1803) – was a writer and maecenas, he donated his rich library to Pressburg Lyceum.

⁴ See A Vajda Péter nevét viselő gimnázium első ötven éve (1802—1852) p. 74.

http://epa.oszk.hu/01500/01577/00009/pdf/bmmk_1985_2_174-247.pdf

⁵ Benka Gyula (Békéscsaba, 8 April 1838 – Szarvas, 10 April 1923): professor, writer, poet, journalist, and editor. He studied philosophy and theology in Sopron and Pozsony, then he continued his studies in Berlin. He started his career in 1862 at Szarvas Evangelic Gymnasium, later on was appointed to the director of the school, and served in this position during 1884-1908.

⁶ Karol Zenger (1830-1908) was professor of the Catholic Gymnasium at Banská Bystrica. He performed astronomical observations, established a meteorological station in 1855, which functioned until 1906 in the city Lyceum.

⁷ Alfred Wolfer was born in Schönenberg near Zürich 27 January 1854. Although Wolfer is best known to astronomers for his work on sunspots, he did valuable teaching and administrative work at the university. He took an active part in Swiss Geodetic Commission and in the Swiss Meteorological Commission, too. His name was for fifty years associated with the Federal Observatory at Zurich.

⁸ Emile Schaefer (1862-1931) was a Swiss optician and astronomer. The Swiss telescope making has been dominated by his work. In 1898 he became the director of the Geneva Observatory. In 1913 he received permission from the French to operate the telescope in a temporary solar observatory on Mont Salève. Between 1926 and 1930 at a temporary station at Jungfraujoch a telescope made and designed by him was installed.

⁹ Tycho de Brahe (Knudstrup 14 December 1546 – 24 October 1601 Benátky) was a Danish nobleman known for his accurate and comprehensive astronomical and planetary observations. In Helsingbor on the night of 11 November 1572 he recorded a new star "brighter than Venus" located in the constellation Cassiopeia. He called others to witness it and gave it the name "Stella Nova", the new star. Brahe published his findings at Copenhagen in 1573 „De Nova Stella” (De nova et nullius aevi memoria prius visa Stella), and these became the basis for his fame as an astronomer.

¹⁰ Detvan was an academic club in Prague, founded in 1882, which greatly contributed to awakening of the Slovak students' national self-awareness.

¹¹ Hlas was an outstanding Slovak journal, the first issue came out on June 30, 1898 in Szokolca (Skalica). The monthly journal dealt with literary, political and social problems. The general editor of the journal was

dr. Vavro Šrobár.

¹² Nicolas Camille Flammarion (1842 - 1925) was a French astronomer. He was a prolific author of more than fifty titles, including popular science works about astronomy, several notable early science fiction novels. His best-selling work was *Astronomie populaire* (popular astronomy), and *La Fin du Monde* (The End of the World).

He believed that there had to be life on other planets, universe was created by determinate purpose, in order to be dwelling of living beings and creatures. He was a founder and the first president of the *Société Astronomique de France*. Flammarion lunar crater and crater on Mars are named after him.

¹³ Pierre Jules Janssen (1824-1907) was a French astronomer, one of the pioneers of the astrophysics. In 1876 he founded in Meudon an observatory, which later on became the section of the Paris Observatory. In 1891 he set up an observatory on the mountaintop of the Mont Blanc.

¹⁴ Jean-Baptiste Charcot was born in 1867 in Neuilly-sur-Seine. His father was the well-known neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot. He followed the family tradition and became medical doctor, too. After his father's death he inherited substantial wealth. By this time he devoted his life scientific investigation and marine exploration, and was very successful. Jean-Baptiste Charcot was appointed leader of the French Antarctic Expedition with the ship *Français* exploring the west coast of Graham Land from 1904 until 1907. From 1908 until 1910, another expedition followed with the ship *Pourquoi-Pas*, exploring the Bellinghousen Sea and the Amundsen Sea. Robert Scott called him „Polar gentleman”.

In 1903 all whole Europe got around that Otto Nordenskjöld Swedish Antarctic Expedition and the ship *Antarctic* was lost. Charcot decided to go in quest of him, thus the idea of the French Antarctic Expedition was born. The expedition was whole-heartedly supported by the French president Émile Loubet, the French Academy of Sciences, the Geographical Society and the Naval Museum, too.

¹⁵ Štefánik published two scientific popular articles. *Z cesty po severnej Afrike* (Trip in North Africa), 1907. in *Tranovský evanjelický kalendár*, Pól mesiaca na vrchole Mont Blancu (Half a year on the top of the Mont Blanc), 1910. in *Tranovský evanjelický kalendár*.

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¹⁶ František Kele: Najväčší slovenský cestovateľ prvej polovice 20. storočia, Bradlo, Monotematické vydanie k 90. výročiu tragickej smrti M.R. Štefánika, Máj/Jún 2009. str. 14-16.

¹⁷ He wrote diary about his trip to Ecuador, Ekvádorský zápisník, M. R. Štefánik, úvod Vladimír Polívka (podľa I. vydania Vladimíra Polívku z roku 1928), vydalo Vydavateľstvo Spolku slovenských spisovateľov spol. s r. o. 2005.

¹⁸ See František Kele: Milan R. Štefánik – významný cestovateľ. Najväčší slovenský cestovateľ prvej polovice 20. storočia, Realizáciu projektu LPP-0130-09 „Geovedy pre každého“, 2009. p. 7.

¹⁹ The French Legion of Honour (Ordre national de la Légion d'Honneur) is the highest decoration in France, established by Napoleon Bonaparte. The order's motto is Honneur et Patrie (Honour and Motherland).

²⁰ The Czechoslovak Legions (*Československé legie* in Czech, *Československé légie* in Slovak) were Czech and Slovak volunteer armed forces fighting together with the Entente powers during World War I. Small armed units were organized from 1914 onwards by volunteer Czechs and Slovaks. Their purpose was to help the Entente and win their support to the creation of an independent country of Czechoslovakia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Later, many Czechs and Slovaks captured during the war joined these units; with help of émigré intellectuals and politicians (Tomáš Masaryk, Milan Rastislav Štefánik, Karel Pergler and others) the Legions grew into a force of tens of thousands. After three years of existence as a small brigade in the Russian Army (*Česká družina*), the Czechoslovak Legions in Russia were created in 1917 (see below). Other units had been fighting in France since the war's beginning (including volunteers from America), and later in Italy and Serbia.

²¹ Italian WWI heavy bomber. The Caproni three-engine bomber appeared in 1914, powered by three Gnome rotary engines.

²² Jozef Husár: Prečo zomrel Štefánik, 30. máj 2007,

http://www.izumal.sk/index.php?Itemid=89&id=463&option=com_content&task=view

²³ Történelmi régiót kapott a szlovák nemzeti hős, Source: http://www.mult-kor.hu/20071011_tortenei_regiot_kapott_a_szlovak_nemzeti_hos, 2007. október 11.

²⁴ Mária Gallová: Astronóm Dr.M.R. Štefánik, Bradlo – Monotematické vydanie, 2009. Máj/Jún str. 7-8.

²⁵ Akadémia ozbrojených síl Generála Milana Rastislava Štefánika

²⁶ For more information about the Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik see Siposné Kecskeméthy Klára: A szlovák katonai felsőoktatás, Honvédségi Szemle, 2009. március 63. évfolyam, 2. szám p. 29-32.

²⁷ Decorations of the president of the Slovak Republic can be viewed at the following webpage <http://www.prezident.sk/?zakon-nr-sr-o-statnych-vyznamenaniach>