



## Commemorating the Legacy of Darney



Prepared by Jan Procházka



On 30th June this year exactly 90 years had elapsed since 6,000 Czechoslovak legionaries swore allegiance to their homeland in the French town of Darney (1918). Darney witnessed the establishment of the first independent Czechoslovak military unit. Subsequently, the French government recognized the right of Czechs and Slovaks to declare their national independence.

Since 2002, this momentous event has been celebrated as The Czech Armed Forces Memorial Day. This year's anniversary celebration was attended by the Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, the Chief of the General Staff, ACR, Lt Gen Vlastimil Pícek, senators, parliament members, as well as war veterans. The French government was represented by Ms Nadine Morano, the Minister of Family Affairs and the State Secretary.

"This 90th anniversary is very symbolic for our country," stated Mirek Topolánek in his opening speech. Further he emphasized: "France, our traditional ally, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic have been through many trials and tribulations and presently they are partners in NATO, the European Union and Schengen. It is symbolic that on 31st December of this year French President Nicolas Sarkozy will hand over the European Union presidency to the Czech Republic, just as his predecessor, President Poincaré, handed over the standard to the battalion of Czechoslovak legionaries many years ago. It is a very meaningful symbol."

Mr. Topolánek also highlighted the importance of combat activities of our legionaries in light of the present days. "Even today not every country is fortunate to live in peace, therefore, we will always need heroes in operations like the one in Afghanistan or elsewhere."



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## 90th Anniversary of the Establishment of Independent State of Czechoslovakia

On October 28th this year, we will remember the ninetieth anniversary of the birth of the independent Republic of Czechoslovakia. The most important public holiday of our country is always an opportunity to think about our recent history and current orientation. This year is no exception. The birth of the Republic of Czechoslovakia and the restoration of its independence after many centuries in which the country was a part of the Habsburg Empire was the first and essential prerequisite of our future free development. The relatively quick and smooth takeover of power in 1918 and the next twenty years were a success. The unquestionable symbol of the birth of our free and democratic republic is President T. G. Masaryk. A former university professor, he emigrated at the age of 64 as the leader of a small political party and achieved what many thought almost impossible. The civilian with "humanitarian ideals", who had always believed that wars were an anachronism of the barbarian past, found enough determination to bring off revolutionary and constructive actions. He managed to turn the political attention of the world to the birth of the independent Czechoslovakia.

We could say today that the future president T. G. Masaryk became the Commander-in-Chief of the "Czechoslovak troops" there and then. He not only devoted a lot of time-consuming, travel-burdened, yet regular and concentrated attention to the formation of legions from ranks of Czech and Slovak prisoners of war and later to their valiant performance in the Battle of Zborov and other fights on the side of the Entente.

The extraordinary moments of our history were followed by ordinary days, with many different problems. The political developments in Bohemia and Slovakia were following divergent courses; the problematic nature of the idea of a united "Czechoslovak" nation was overlooked or underestimated; the influence of the revolution in Russia was also misinterpreted, as many of us can remember from their school days (as if the republic would not have been born without it).

The world in 1918 was indisputably different from that before the war. When looking for a suitable model of a national and democratic army, our country was drawing mainly from French experience, which was a valuable contribution to the process of building the Czechoslovak armed forces, one that the army of the First Republic could hardly have done without. Let us not forget that the first Chief of Staff of the Czechoslovak Army was an experienced French officer, General Maurice Pellé, who participated in the organization of the Ministry of Defence, was at the cradle of the military educational and school system, helped promote the introduction of conscription and, last but not least, arranged the necessary know-how and expertise for the new corps of officers of the Republic of Czechoslovakia.

Thanks to Maurice Pellé and the high level of professionalism, expertise and patriotism of our officers and soldiers and our highly developed defence industry, the army of the First Republic was a first-class fighting corps, with deeply imbued determination to defend the motherland against



increasingly imminent threats, coming mainly from the Nazi Germany in the 1930s. In spite of its readiness and high morale, the army, as a result of the Munich Agreement, could not fulfil its duty. Our soldiers thus became involved in combat actions of WW2 only as a part of armies of the anti-Hitler coalition. Their heroism and combat skills contributed to the ultimate victory and liberation of our country.

All these and other historical connections and implications are a permanent and lasting part of our historical memory and traditions of today's military professionals. Citizens and soldiers of our army were fighting and dying in the global war conflict – on the banks of the Ondava River, over the Atlantic Ocean, at Sokolovo and Tobruk, over Normandy, in the Carpathian Mountains and Savoy Alps, and in many other places in Europe and overseas, sacrificing their lives for the country we all now live in.

However, there has been a different kind of experience as well, experience with forty years of a totalitarian rule during which the power was usurped by a single party and a single ideology. On the other hand, however, we have had almost two decades of freedom. Although Europe is presently our most natural cultural and civilization background, no less important is our transatlantic partnership within the North Atlantic Alliance and our relations with the United States, the country which manifests both its resolve to face today's threats and challenges and its ability to stand up to its extraordinarily important status of the world's number one democratic power. I would wish we would flesh out the partnership with tangible deeds and contribute our capabilities to the elimination of the threats.

Soldiers of the Czech professional army have already been doing this, and I am pleased they do. The present Army of the Czech Republic is a modern, mobile force, capable of responding to threats and challenges of today's world in a flexible manner, and has repeatedly manifested its capabilities particularly in foreign missions, in the Balkans, Afghanistan or Iraq.

At the time we live in, our soldiers are not an isolated and hostile force unknown to their fellow-citizens. The public is kept informed about their dedicated work, and the recent casualties sustained in deployed missions have shown that our people react to every heroic death of our soldiers with deep emotions and sympathies.

I firmly believe that the men and women serving in the Army of the Czech Republic are professionally skilled, confident citizens who are not indifferent to our country's history in the past ninety years and who also care about the world's fate in the decades to come.

Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic  
and Commander-in-Chief of Czech Armed Forces



# 90 Years of Czechoslovakian Statehood



Karel Straka

**“We are striving for an independent state of Czechoslovakia”. This sentence embraced the meaning of the struggle of Czechs and Slovaks against the central powers in the First World War. It was published as a part of momentous declaration by the Czech Foreign Committee on November 14th, 1915, which initially resounded where it first became public – in France, Russia, Switzerland and the United States of America. The declaration was important, because it was the first time that T.G. Masaryk and his resistance group had publicly proclaimed their antagonist stance against the Habsburg monarchy and its allies, thereby commencing organized official resistance under a unified agenda.**

In agreement with political representatives at home, it was emphasized that the Czechoslovak nation joins warfighting regardless of its outcome. It was a most responsible and binding proclamation, uttered moreover at an unfavorable moment for the coalition of allies. The Russian Army was yielding to the pressure of Austro-Hungarian and German armies, while Serbia fell after a heroic struggle. For the next war years to come, it was important that the declaration unified and helped organize the resistance, which had not been possible before. The Czech patriots on the side of the Entente were absolutely devoted to defeating the enemy. Their dedication that aided them in spontaneous establishing of the first volunteer unit and willingness to sacrifice their lives attested to this fact. On the other hand, they lacked a united political leadership and a comprehensive concept.

The war developments and the military objectives of the central powers convinced the Czech people that they could only exist in the future in an independent state. Before the conflict broke out, Czech politicians had always strived for autonomy of the Czech lands within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They imagined a transformation from the monarchy into a federation as an ideal solution. Representatives of Slavic nations also viewed Austria-Hungary as a shield against German or Russian hegemony. However, this perception had gone with the war. The declaration addressed that: “We have lost our faith in the future of Austria-Hungary; we do not recognize its legitimacy any more. Its lack of competence and independence showed to the entire world that the word of the need for Austria to exist has been outdated and absolutely refuted by this war. Those who have defended Austria-Hungary, including Palacký himself for some time, imagined a federation of equal nations and countries. However, dualistic Austria-Hungary has suppressed all non-German and non-Hungarian nations, stood in the way of peace in Europe and degenerated into a mere tool of Germany in its expansion to the east, without its own positive goal and unable to establish an organic entity of equal, free and culturally continuing nations.”

War rules are unforgiving and those who strived after something must join fighting with arms in their hands. T.G. Masaryk and his colleagues were well aware of this fact, therefore, it became necessary to establish armed forces and include them in the Czechoslovak National Council (ČSNR) pursued with T.G. Masaryk as the chairman. Slovaks were represented by a naturalized Frenchman, astronomer and a French Air Force officer, Milan Rastislav Štefánik. Edvard Beneš, a docent in sociology, was appointed general secretary. Based in Paris, the center ran all political and military activities of the anti-Austrian resistance abroad throughout the war. The Czechoslovak resistance movement had a solid foundation. As early as at the beginning of the war, the first units of volunteers emerged spontaneously, such as the Nazdar Company and the Czech Retinue in Russia. Namely the eastern front provided favorable conditions for forming additional military units. Besides a large community of expatriates, thousands of Czechs and Slovaks gathered in Russian prisoner camps. These prisoners of war volunteered to join the Czechoslovak military units in great numbers. The quantity of prisoners led to the idea to transfer some of the men to the western front due to absence of a significant Czech and Slovak element until 1918 there. The ČSNR, realising the political significance of their military presence on the western front, strived to forge the Brest-Lithuanian peace accord. The objective was to transfer the Czechoslovak corps from the quiet eastern front to France whose military struggled to repel the German onslaught.

Needless to say, ensuring an orderly transfer of the Czechoslovak units from Russia to the western front constituted one of the most significant, comprehensive and serious chapters in the political and diplomatic activities of ČSNR. At the same time, the Czechs and Slovaks received a worldwide attention when they prepared to reopen the eastern front in spring 1918. It was not their fault that the intention did not materialize owing to unfavorable circumstances. Instead, they were compelled to embark on a strenuous journey to Siberia. This exceptional stage in their lives ended many years



Photos: VHU archives



later, long time after the end of the First World War when they stepwise returned to their homeland.

After Italy entered the conflict, the potential for establishing volunteer corps also developed in southern battlefield where compatriots were scarce, and so prisoners of war were the only source for augmenting our units both in Italy and France. Many Czech and Slovak compatriots in the U.S. comprised another ample pool. T.G. Masaryk captured the political importance of the Czech and Slovak active participation in the conflict in his words of February 1915: “If we establish our military, our legal position vis-à-vis Austria and Allies will change; another eventual step could be formal declaration of war on Austria-Hungary. That would create a political situation enabling us to attain maximum in our requirements during the peace talks. In any event, neither the Allies nor Vienna will be able to shun us, should we have our own military; hence both the Allies and our compatriots will possess compensation instruments to achieve concessions for our national cause, even if the overall result would eventually be a failure. However, without determined fighting, including militarily, we will not achieve anything.”

The turning point occurred with the battle of Zborov. The deservedly resounding combat success of the Czechoslovak Rifle Brigade of 2nd July 1917 generated a tremendous political capital used by ČSNR officials during complex, demanding and lengthy negotiations with Entente powers, as a proof evidence of the Czechoslovak military's active warfighting. That is where Masaryk's anchor argument stemmed from that through Zborov we became a fighting nation. Highly challenging efforts supported by clear successes of the Czechoslovak soldiers on fronts reflected in the Entente powers' gradually taking more accommodating steps. We should take into consideration that Czechs and Slovaks and their wants were initially unknown to the greater world. ČSNR had managed to create conditions leading to foundation of national military units in the territory of France in December 1917; simultaneously, the French government had issued a decree of establishment of the independent Czechoslovak Army in France. In spring 1918, T.G. Masaryk declared the army corps in Russia to be incorporated in the Czechoslovak Army. The importance of this decision, apart from others, rested in the fact that the Entente perceived ČSNR as a representing body of a future

independent state, yet to come into being. By virtue of this, the Entente recognized the claim of Czechoslovaks for their own state and national existence. The political and diplomatic activities resulted in another accomplishment of ČSNR. On 29th June 1918 the French government recognized the right of the Czechoslovak nation to be independent, while ČSNR was seen as a foundation for the future government. Another great achievement was attained on 15th October 1918 as the French Government, first of the Entente powers, recognized ČSNR as the interim government of Czechoslovakia.

The dreams of the nation came to a head on the glorious day of October 28th, 1918. Nevertheless, it was still merely a starting point in light of exceptionally complex geopolitical matrix. The state founders were to tackle a great number of difficult and demanding challenges. The independence called for an immense responsibility and the art of governance to be learned step by step as there were no individuals with prior first-hand experience of leading a country. It should also be noted that shortly after gaining independence, Czechoslovakia was compelled to defend its sovereignty in skirmishes along its borders. One of them was a clash with Poland in Teschen and a war against the bolshevik Hungarian republic.

The Czechoslovak diplomacy skilfully secured national borders by the means of time-conditioned international treaties. The political confession of the newly emerged state was an uncompromising plurality of political parties, linking it closely with the two greatest western European democracies of France and Great Britain. Czechoslovakian officials, aware of the size and compass of their country, did not embrace a passive political approach. The state applied a befitting security concept that eventually place itself within the Little Entente, not relying however solely on international treaty guarantees. After initial hardships, the state developed and maintained an appropriately strong military that aspired, despite all teething troubles, to become a model of a democratic and republican military. Most importantly, the newly established state needed time to develop understanding and confidence among all elements comprising the Republic as well as peace and democratic order in neighboring and farther regions of the world.



# Transformation Is an Open-ended Process

Prepared by Jan Procházka

**JIŘÍ ŠEDIVÝ**

NATO Assistant Secretary General for Defence Policy and Planning

Ambassador Jiří Šedivý assumed his post at NATO Headquarters in Brussels in October 2007, in the time of preparations for the NATO Summit in Bucharest. Currently he is the highest official coming from a post-communist country serving in NATO. Shortly before his appointment, he worked as a deputy of the Vice Prime Minister for European Affairs; before that he held the post of the Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic. Some of his current colleagues also remember him as a professor at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Germany. We interviewed Dr. Šedivý in his Brussels office in order to learn more about his current professional life and tasks at NATO Headquarters.

**Sir, you have been working at your current post in Brussels for nine months now. Have your expectations of this high position within NATO matched everyday reality?**

I have to admit that reality has surpassed my original assumptions and expectations. Working in the NATO International Secretariat may be compared to driving a Formula One car after being used to driving an ordinary passenger car. I was unaware of how intense the work pace could be until I found out first-hand. Moreover, I had just an incomplete idea of the extent of the scope and

complexity of my division's activities. On the other hand, and what is also exceptional, is the excellent expertise and dedication of my hard working colleagues. Thanks to them and to their support, I have not experienced any serious problems during my immersion period in my new work.

**Speaking of your division – could you, provided your security regulations allow, elaborate on the scope and objectives of your work?**

Most importantly, we are responsible for defence planning, force planning and the development of military capabilities. In all those aspects we work not only with our Allies – NATO members – but also with Partner nations. With the Allies, we consider their individual plans and develop force goals for them, and, every two years, scrutinize and assess them – both individually and collectively, i.e. with other Allies – against the overall longer-term level of ambition of NATO as well as our current operational requirements. The assessment also provides an evaluation of the extent to which the burdens of contributing to the Alliance are shared. Similar processes are undertaken with the Partners. Bearing in mind the number of our Allies and Partners, we speak altogether with around 40 different countries.

Another very important issue that we deal with is weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – not only as to NATO's traditional nuclear planning and related activities but also in terms of analyzing trends in that area and contributing to NATO's policy of preventing



WMD proliferation. Also, we cover a very heated current issue – missile defence. Our department also includes a logistics section. In my experience, logistics is usually seen as a “small fry” or a Cinderella within the military. However, today, when we sustain more than 70,000 troops in several operations and missions on three continents, it is virtually impossible to conduct business without robust and well organized logistics.

Apart from these activities, my responsibilities include other duties such as chairing the Terrorist Task Force – a co-ordination committee that meets once every two or three weeks, where different parts of the headquarters share information, learn of their activities and compare their respective “sheets of music”. To complete the array of my responsibilities, I am also NATO's senior coordinator for combating human trafficking. Alliance troops are deployed in areas where this deplorable business thrives. We have designed our own policy of zero tolerance to fight these activities.

Another feature of my job description that I was not able to assess in advance, is the “executive core” of my work: besides managing my department, I chair different working groups – especially the Executive Working Group – that are accountable for drafting reports for meetings of defence ministers and for advancing the Alliance's politico-military agendas (for instance, a report that supported the concluding statement on missile defence in the communiqué of the Bucharest summit). My tasks also embrace drafting various conceptual documents pertaining to new areas that concern NATO. Recently, for instance, we worked on a NATO concept for cyber security.

**You have raised the issue of cyber security. The term “energy security” has also appeared in several NATO documents recently as well as in connection with approaching debates about a possible updating of NATO's Strategic Concept. What is the current status of this document?**

So far we have conducted only internal and procedural talks, i.e. rather on how to approach the possible review of NATO's Strategic Concept than about concrete possible changes. We have also commenced a discussion about a Declaration on Allied Security. This document is scheduled to be adopted at the 2009 summit to be organised jointly by Germany and France in Strasbourg

and Kehl. Firstly, it should be designed to reflect the previous sixty years of NATO activities – we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Washington Treaty at that Summit. Secondly, it should outline the main tracks and directions for subsequent debate from which a review of our Strategic Concept may result.

**In one of your interviews, you stated that you have been in the process of designing the optimal portfolio of NATO military capabilities, a job similar to “putting a jigsaw puzzle pieces together”. How have you fared? Is the final image taking shape?**

One cannot speak about the final picture whatsoever. We work and operate in a security environment that has been in constant change, and possible risks and threats have been changing as well. Defence requirements stem from different types of operations that have also undergone transformation. Therefore, the picture that we have been attempting to piece together never remains the same, and has been ever changing. We claim that the Alliance has been undergoing a transformation; however, this slogan has been around for ten or fifteen years. At the same time, we realize that transformation is an open-end process. In fact, we have been putting together a sort of a puzzle from the military capabilities of allied countries in order to have a pool of military tools from which we can tailor and properly calibrate our multinational task forces for our current operations. And, indeed, we must not lose sight of the mid- and long-terms requirements of the Alliance. We will never attain any final or ideal capability portfolio as the chief challenge we have to be constantly addressing is the imperative to be permanently adaptable to the ever changing and developing security environment.

**So you have said that it is impossible to attain any final or ideal status in developing the portfolio of NATO nations' capabilities. Is there, at least, a way to optimize it?**

To answer this question, one should have in mind the following determinants: at the moment, the Alliance is composed of 26 countries, which means about 26 different, sometimes quite similar but sometimes very different, perceptions of threats and risks. And it will soon be 28 Allies. Moreover, we now deal with 26 diverse – and sometime very diverse – internal political configurations, strategic cultures, defence





# Transformation Is an Open-ended Process

establishments and military structures; and one should add the 26 different geopolitical situations and geostrategic outlooks of the member countries. Last but not least, there are 26 military budgets that are part of 26 national budgets derived from 26 economies that perform differently. Combined, these variables mean that we contend with tens, perhaps, hundreds of factors that often complicate our efforts and our endeavour to create the optimal picture. Despite all of this, I believe that we have been relatively successful in our attempts to proceed to a point that might not be optimal, but is the best possible and attainable under the present circumstances. The main determining or, if you like, restricting factor, is indeed the financial one. And this is not pertinent merely to the Czech Republic. On the other hand, in the case of deploying forces on operations, it is the political situation in the respective countries and the political will of their governments to send their soldiers in the harm's way, that is crucial.

**You have mentioned 26 different points of view. It is presumed that the number of Alliance members will increase in the future. Does that mean that the possibility of reaching a unanimous consensus will become even more complex?**

Probably yes. As I said before, every Allied country is specific in its priorities. The more Allied partners there are, the more difficult it is to piece the puzzle together. On the other hand, we need to bear in mind that this sort of concern was shared by the original Allies before the first post-Cold War enlargement in 1999. They feared that the overall fighting power and decision-making flexibility could diminish. This has not happened. Indeed, some of the newer nations are sometime more flexible, progressive and open to transformation than some of the older ones.

**You have mentioned the process of transformation several times – not only of Allies' militaries but also the transformation of the Alliance itself, including its Brussels headquarters. How far has this process advanced here, in Brussels?**

We are responsible for the element that has been presented as one of the most important, i.e. the transformation of the defence planning process as such. This process is very complex. It has been influenced by a wide array of defining and limiting factors and has been on the agenda of dozens of different committees and working groups. We have been attempting to reach an accord among the individual Allies on its rationalization. It is a huge challenge as the current planning structures and procedures show a number of features reminiscent of the Cold War as our current planning model has been developing incrementally, since the 1960s in a rather organic way. It is overcomplicated, which creates various redundancies and overlaps; and it is a complex conglomerate of not always transparent procedures,

processes and structures. Another problem we have to tackle is that this process has its roots in a different planning situation – for example, it did not include the experience from ongoing operations, which is one of the fundamental factors that need to be considered in the process of our current planning. Like the situation in the Czech Republic, we also lack the integration of civilian and military components within the Brussels headquarters. I see this as one of the keys to the gate leading to a more effective planning process.

**Given the fact that you were appointed relatively recently, is it less difficult for you to identify some of the duplications and see the process more realistically?**

No, it is not at all! Actually, I cannot claim a full understanding of the system by any means. We are still in the beginning of this endeavour. We have been discussing with the Allies what should be the direction and scope of the revision, and how radical and far-reaching the reforms in defence planning should be. As a first step, we have described the current state of the internal processes. Two experts who have worked at Brussels for well over a decade were responsible for a resulting report of about fifty pages. Even these “veterans” were surprised to discover the wide array of features or various functions that this process contains. Even they had difficulty seeing all the pieces to the picture and understanding the structural and procedural “monster” – as one of them put it succinctly – that comes along with the current planning model.

**Apparently, planning goes hand-in-hand with success in foreign operations. Recently, requests for increased numbers of troops in unstable regions have been heard. Have these requests been addressed?**

By and large, Allies respond adequately and do their utmost. Looking back at the Bucharest summit, perhaps the most impressive event was the meeting of presidents, prime ministers and other representatives of countries contributing to the ISAF Operation in Afghanistan. Twenty six Alliance members met at one table together with fifteen partner countries (including nations such as Australia and Japan, Sweden and Finland), high officials of the UN, EU and the World Bank, and the President of Afghanistan, Mr. Karzai. This gathering of top-level figures from a variety of nations and organizations under the auspices of NATO attested to the fact that all participants were well aware of the importance of their task and demonstrated their sense of responsibility, dedication to the task and solidarity with this organization. A number of them announced at the meeting their intentions to make new contributions or increases in their current ones – be it in the military, financial or other in-kind sphere – for the purpose of reconstruction or building the Afghan National Army and security sector at large. That was another encouraging moment.

**How is the Czech contribution – the establishment of the national provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in Logar – perceived in this context?**



First of all I would like to stress that the Czech Republic is in general terms perceived very positively in NATO. I have to admit that in a way it is viewed much better than I would have imagined before, given my domestic perspective and experience. This is not only because the Czech contribution to operations is proportionally above the overall NATO average in numbers (from the viewpoint of the size of the Czech military and the size of population). But the quality and high value added of the Czech contribution is perhaps even more important. The Czech PRT in Logar is a good evidence of that.

**One of the Alliance issues pertaining nearly exclusively to the Czech Republic is the development of an anti-ballistic missile system. What is the current status of the proposed interconnection of the Alliance system with the American one?**

This issue is not “pertaining nearly exclusively to the Czech Republic” as you say; it is now firmly embedded in the Alliance agenda. Yet the Czech Republic together with Poland plays a specific role in this topic. Regarding this issue, the Bucharest Summit was instrumental in making a great leap ahead. Its final communiqué states, among other things, that ballistic missile proliferation poses an increasing threat to the Allies and that missile defence forms part of a broader response to counter that threat. It also recognised the substantial contribution to the protection of Allies from long-range missiles to be provided by the planned deployment of the elements of the US system in Europe, i.e. including the radar that might be built in the Czech Republic. Now the ways to link this US capability with current NATO missile defence efforts need to be explored. At the summit of 2009, in nine months, a sort of comparative study of the strong and weak points of various options of the interconnection of the two systems is scheduled to be presented for a review, in order to inform any future political decision.

**You have been talking about the summit and thus, about the 60th anniversary of NATO's existence. If we look back in history, NATO was perceived in its first 50 years of existence, as a very conservative, nearly hostile organization. However, considering the past ten years – the period of NATO enlargement into nearly double**

**the number of members – it is obvious that the open door policy has transformed the outlook of the Alliance. Where is NATO headed in future decades?**

The fundamental principle that governs the evolution of the Alliance in the current, ever changing environment is an open-ended transformation. I have already touched upon that and it is not just the question of enlarging the Alliance. Yet enlargements have contributed substantially to the over-all democratic transitions in the post-communist space and enhanced the security of the new Allies. Furthermore, remember – just ten years ago, when we were engaged only in one operation in the Balkans, hardly anyone would be able to imagine the current operational tempo and its territorial scope – our operations extending as far as Afghanistan. And, indeed, the open door policy remains on the Alliance's agenda. The doors of NATO are still open to other countries, although we cannot expect such large waves of new members as joined NATO in 1999 and 2004, respectively.

**Sir, allow me to ask you a personal question. Some may not know that you are an accomplished guitar player, a former rocker and jazzman. In one of your answers you mentioned that you have been performing “tune-ups” in your committees. Have you been successful in tuning up the Alliance “orchestra”?**

That is a crafty question but quite misleading. Why? I would not want the readers to embrace the idea that the NATO International Staff runs or even rules those 26 countries – it is exactly the opposite. NATO is 26 states – signatories to the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) – that collectively task this organization (O). They rule us, and through this “O”, which has been established for the purpose of following the North Atlantic Treaty principles and fulfilling its objectives, the Allies carry on the political consultations and decisions, organize their forces and co-operate with the Partners. The “O” is thus completely in the hands of those countries. And we provide to them expertise and advice as well as information support. At the same time, we supervise discussions and serve as mediators of opinions. And I am just a NATO bureaucrat and, although being in the top echelon of the Alliance hierarchy, the only thing that I manage is my division.



# NATO, Czech Republic and Missile Defence

Vladimír Abrhám Photo: Jiří Hokův

We are bringing information on recent developments in the area of missile defence. A significant move forward has been made in this regard during the past six months. Whereas the first half of this period was under the banner of intense preparations for the NATO Bucharest Summit, the second quarter of this year was focused on the successful conclusion of Czech-U.S. negotiations on draft treaties governing the legal status of the prospective missile defence radar site and its personnel in the territory of the Czech Republic.

## HOW INTERPRET THE RESULTS OF THE BUCHAREST SUMMIT

“What comes next?” in the area of missile defence was one of the major themes of this year’s meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the Alliance in Bucharest, setting up an important milestone on the path towards eventual deployment of a comprehensive system defending all NATO members against the full spectrum of missile threats. Therefore, let us quote the relevant part of Bucharest communiqué in its totality:

“Ballistic missile proliferation poses an increasing threat to Allies’ forces, territory and populations. Missile defence forms part of a broader response to counter this threat. We therefore recognise the substantial contribution to the protection of Allies from long range ballistic missiles to be provided by the planned deployment of European based United States missile defence assets. We are exploring ways to link this capability with current NATO missile defence efforts as a way to ensure that it would be an integral part of any future NATO wide missile defence architecture. Bearing in mind the principle of the indivisibility of Allied security as well as NATO solidarity, we task the Council in Permanent Session to develop options for a comprehensive missile defence architecture to extend coverage to all Allied territory and populations not otherwise covered by the United States system for review at our 2009 Summit, to inform any future political decision.”

The exact meaning of this conclusion of the Bucharest summit was a contested issue for a while. Let us therefore analyse this a bit “user-unfriendly” diplomatic language, sentence by sentence.

The opening phrase states that a missile threat does indeed exist and may even be on the increase. It is therefore necessary not to develop a strategy based solely on the current state of affairs, but also to calculate into the equation some possible future developments. In other words, to make the prospective defensive system relevant, it is necessary to design it in such a way that it will be able to absorb not only the offensive means we know the potential adversary already possesses today, but also those capabilities that might be obtained by the adversary, should the present trend remain unchanged, at some point in time.

The next sentence anchors missile defence in the wider framework of diplomatic, economic and military measures aimed at prevention or mitigation of the danger that a missile attack against Allied forces or territory might pose. A key role among those measures is played by multilateral treaties (such as the NPT), international control regimes (such as the MTCR), confidence-building and conflict-prevention measures, and continuation and further development of conventional, as well as nuclear, deterrent. Nonetheless, neither diplomatic means nor deterrence can assure that a potential conflict is prevented under all circumstances. And in such a case, an effective missile defence could become the last insurance against irretrievable losses.

If the Czech-U.S. negotiations are successfully concluded and implemented so that the components of the U.S. missile defence are deployed in Central Europe, they will provide defensive coverage of a significant part of Europe against long-range enemy missiles. This would, in turn, allow the Alliance to focus on creation of a complementary system that would extend the coverage over the entire NATO’s territory.

This assumption and the task to design the most efficient defensive architecture are expressed in the following part of the Bucharest communiqué, which acknowledges the contribution of the planned deployment of U.S. missile defence components in Europe to the protection of Allies and defines tasks for various NATO bodies for the next Summit in 2009.

At that time, the final result of negotiations on the deployment of the radar site to the Czech Republic and the interceptors’ base to Poland should be known and thus, it will be possible to base further planning on a more solid foundation.

The final sentence of the Bucharest communiqué reminds us that the final decision on whether the ambitious NATO missile defence system, of which the U.S. missile defence components in Central Europe would form the back-bone, will actually be built, what other components it will include, and how it will be financed and controlled, could have been made only after all above-mentioned preliminary steps are finished.

On the basis of the Bucharest decision, a working plan and a schedule for respective NATO bodies were approved at the June formal meeting of NATO Defence Ministers in Brussels, so that all necessary analyses and the proposed final missile defence architecture based on them could be finished before the next NATO Summit in 2009. The key variable at the moment is the question of whether and when the negotiations on the prospective deployment of the radar to the Czech Republic and the interceptors to Poland will be concluded and the respective treaties ratified.

## PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS ON THE RADAR DEPLOYMENT TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Meanwhile, the Government of the Czech Republic, aware of its responsibility, has concluded the negotiations on the “Draft Agreement between the Czech Republic and the United States on Establishing a United States Ballistic Missile Defense Radar Site in the Czech Republic.” The text of the draft Agreement includes, among other, an expression of the United States’ intent to make its missile defence system interoperable with, and in the future also an integral part of, the evolving NATO missile defence capabilities. The draft Agreement as a whole is thus fully in line with the trend of gradual convergence of policies and harmonized capability development of U.S. and NATO in the field of missile defence.

The eventual deployment of the U.S. missile defence radar would in no way impair the sovereignty of the Czech Republic, which will retain full control of its territory and air space, as well as the property rights to the site, whereas it will grant the United States the right to use, free of charge, the allotted area within the Brdy Military Training Area. The actual missile defence operations would be, of course, under the exclusive command and control of the United States.

The signing by the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Secretary of State is scheduled for July 8, 2008. For the treaty to enter into force, it must also be ratified by the heads of both states. In the Czech Republic, the

presidential ratification is, moreover, conditioned by the consent of both Chambers of the Parliament.

Simultaneously with the draft agreement on establishing the radar site, a “Draft Agreement on the Status of U.S. Forces Present in the Territory of the Czech Republic” (so-called “bilateral SOFA”) is being negotiated. These negotiations are now, while writing this article, in their final phase as well. The whole text is basically agreed upon at the level of the negotiating teams, the only issue still open is the issue of taxes and fees imposed on the U.S. personnel. Nonetheless, it is very well possible that by the time this article is printed, or shortly thereafter, this issue will be concluded as well and the Agreement will be ready for signing. As in the case of the radar site agreement, both Chambers of the Czech Parliament will have to voice their consent before the Agreement can be signed by the Czech President.

## CONCLUSION

The first half of this year has witnessed further significant progress on the issue of missile defence. The negotiations between the Czech Republic and the United States on establishing the U.S. missile defence radar site have reached the final phase. At the same time, NATO Heads of State and Government have confirmed in Bucharest that the trend towards eventual integration of U.S. missile defence components to be deployed in Central Europe with the intended NATO missile defence system into a single comprehensive architecture that would provide defence of the whole Allied territory against the full spectrum of missile threats. It is now up to the political leaders to seriously consider all options open to them, all costs and benefits, and to make their decision. Firstly in the Czech Republic, when the Parliamentary approval of both Agreements with the United States will be discussed, and then throughout the whole Alliance when the decision on whether and what missile defence will be built for the defence of Europe. But let’s leave that for another chapter...





# A Hot Mission

The first contingent comprised mainly of the SOG personnel was deployed in the southern province of Helmand, Afghanistan in April 2007. Six days after their arrival they attained their operation capabilities which enabled them to be engaged in the ensuing operations. The Allies were perfectly aware of our soldiers' skills, and were familiar with their equipment and weapons. The operation was a joint endeavor of our specialists, the British infantry and the US Special Forces. The task was to carry out clean-up operations of installations occupied by the Taliban forces. The ultimate goal was to gain control over a particular area.

From the tactical viewpoint, the Czech soldiers soon adjusted to the guerilla-style war of the Taliban. Initial experiences were obtained from the British and Americans. "Only the first hand experience will teach you the right lesson. You may have practiced fire positioning or breaking into a building a thousand times but a real life situation may be rather different," explains the contingent commander, Maj Petr Krčmář. "Only on-the-spot experience will show you the enemy's strategy in planting improvised explosive devices (IED) near entrances to homes or how the enemy sets up traps and ambushes convoys."

Vladimír Marek  
Jan Procházka

Every operation is preceded by thorough planning and must be concluded ten days prior to the operation. Soldiers are supported by previously collected intelligence and detailed maps. It is critical to become familiar with the target installations and their access roads as well as to evaluate the firepower and capabilities of the enemy. "The Taliban tactics cannot be studied in school. Direct experience provides the necessary know-how. Every soldier has to learn on his own how to react under the enemy fire," adds Maj Krčmář. Soldiers have to find out how to move around in the terrain, what to pay attention to, where explosives may be planted, how to wound their opponents, where streams of water on dried riverbeds may suddenly appear, how to utilize air or artillery support etc. Usually, combat activities can be prolonged for up to three weeks. After that, the combat group withdraws to the base for a stand-by phase. Once an enemy movement is observed, ISAF units respond immediately and vice versa.

## A DROWNED TATRA TRUCK

The intensity of combat operations in southern Afghanistan is influenced by a number of factors which includes the harvest of poppy heads used for opium production – it is the period when activities of Taliban are decreased. Shortly after the harvest season, the combat activities are on a steady increase until late fall. For the winter, the Taliban forces withdraw to Pakistan leaving behind only a few units that are responsible for protecting their territory and supply routes. The intensity of activities may also be influenced by the water level of the Helmand River that cuts virtually through the entire province. It does not snow very often in the winter, nevertheless, rains are very common and the clay soil prevents water from seeping in. "At the beginning of winter, the Helmand River burst from its banks, so we were faced with two meters of water in places where we carried out our task. The width of the river may then increase to as much as four kilometers making it virtually impossible to cross. This factor also has impact on the intensity of combat operations from November to February," elaborates Maj Krčmář.

The Helmand River plays an important role even when the water level is low. On both riverbanks lies the so called green zone with a network of irrigation canals and fertile fields. Most villages located in this area are surrounded by poppy fields and are home to opium producing manufactures. As the Taliban lack their own logistic support, they depend solely on the local population. Therefore, the green zone is a sort of their safe haven.

The variety of landscape is another challenge for our soldiers. The desert suddenly transforms into a six kilometer-wide strip of impenetrable jungle. "At the drop of a hat, you may find yourself up to your neck in water, there are swamps all around. Even a truckload of supplies may be easily swollen up by the mud. Malaria infested mosquitoes buzz over your head," describes the hardships of his contingent Maj Krčmář.

On one occasion, a Tatra truck got bogged down in this area. Attempts to release it by means of a helicopter were in vain. An empty armored truck weighs 15 tons alone; this one was loaded with material. Our soldiers, assisted by the British, were compelled to dig all night and gradually ease the vehicle off its muddy grave by a tow truck. This incident is likely not to occur again as our troops will be provided with inflatable rescue bags.

## REDUCED-WEIGHT PROTECTION

It is necessary to highlight the adverse climate conditions that prevail in southern Afghanistan. Summer temperatures reach 75°C degrees in the direct sun and 55°C in the shade. The soldiers move about clad in flak jackets, goggles and protective gloves. Even the least complex operation requires them to carry ammunition and drinking water (a soldier may drink as much as ten liters of water a day in such conditions). Each kilogram of weight to spare plays an important role.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the contingent commander seeks solutions to decreasing the weight of supplies. "For the future, we will attempt to acquire different ballistic equipment. Full ballistic protection



Photos: SOG archives





## A Hot Mission

equipment that we used in Afghanistan weighed 18 kilograms. But the technologies have paced ahead so fast that currently the total weight of our protective gear, while it retains its quality, is about 12 kilograms,” says Maj Krčmář. “Our objective is to enhance our soldiers’ mobility by decreasing the weight of their equipment as much as possible while their protection against possible threats remains intact.”

The soldiers used tents and soon they realized that life in combat zone does not require much. During the summer, high temperatures were a challenge and the air conditioning inside tents was turned on at midnight and worked until 4 AM, still, the oppressive heat would not go away. A breath of fresh air was a scarce commodity.

Soldiers deployed at forward bases enjoyed the excellent service of the British cooks preparing fish, poultry, beef and pork and plenty of vegetables in many different ways. The British commander, instead of traditional service of cooks of Pakistani and Indian origin, decided to hire experienced local hotel cooks on one year contracts. During combat operations our soldiers depended entirely on British or American food rations. The energy output was so high that some soldiers would lose up to 15 kilograms of their bodyweight. Ammunition supply lines were ensured by the British in accordance with a NATO agreement signed prior to the deployment to Afghanistan. Czech soldiers brought along merely the ammunition that had been available to the former Eastern bloc armies. “Some enemy engagements would last 30 minutes; some would take up to 10 hours, the quantity of used ammunition changed accordingly. A soldier would have fired ten rounds or sometimes two or three thousand rounds. The British support was always exemplary; we never had a shortage of ammunition. Also, our weapons withstood their test of durability,” says Maj Krčmář.

Only the WD lubricant that works fine in European conditions caused minor problems as it evaporated too fast in the high temperatures. Forward bases are not large and soldiers may easily forge a strong combat friendship, regardless of their nationalities, so the

Czechs were given two gallons of lubricant that serves its purpose even in these climate conditions.

Newly gained experience in the field of computer and communication technologies has also been significant for future operations of the Czech Armed Forces personnel. Obviously, their functioning in extreme temperatures differs; nevertheless, personnel of all allied countries have to address this issue.

### LESSON LEARNED FROM THE PRAGUE RESCUE SERVICE

The Czech contingent personnel in southern Afghanistan closely and flawlessly cooperated with the British Army’s 12th Brigade. Maj Krčmář carefully weighs his words when attempting to describe the British counterparts: “It is not the most powerful army in the world, but I think, it is the best there is.”

The thirty-men strong Czech contingent also proved their wide array of skills. The commander, for example, received appreciation letters from British soldiers who lost their legs in one of many operations as our SOG medics managed to save their lives. “Our medics worked on them for two hours before they succeeded in stabilizing their vital functions necessary for airlift,” recalls Maj Krčmář. “Our medics’ expertise was the decisive factor. Not only did they have a medical background both from the Czech Republic and abroad, they also had an opportunity to serve with the Prague Rescue service one year prior to their deployment – and this lesson learned proved to be critical in Helmand.” SOG medics, among other skills, are capable of stabilizing a wounded person, perform simple operations, stitch, take blood, apply cannulas etc. During combat operations every soldier carried morphine, bandages or dressing. Each team had a first aid backpack at their disposal with a content that had been previously consulted on among experts and SOG personnel themselves.

Our contingent also included three sniper teams. They participated in all our operations and on the request assisted the British in specific tasks in the green zone. It would be unfair not to mention two



dog handlers. “We have been cooperating with them for quite some time now. The dogs were comfortable around SOG members. They were instrumental during clean-up operations inside buildings. The dogs were excellent, nothing would distract them,” concludes the contingent commander, Maj Krčmář.

### TREACHEROUS TACTICS

Based on their experience, the SOG personnel suggested the purchase of IVECO armored vehicles equipped with carriage weapons, night vision and other features that are handled from the inside of the vehicle. “We filed a request to purchase these vehicles after our experience from the first operation,” elaborates Maj Krčmář, adding, “Apart from our combat experience we based our request on the fact that the Taliban had changed its tactics. We were looking at vehicles with excellent maneuverability, good armor, and ample firepower so we could ‘keep up the pace’ with the situation in Afghanistan.”

Maj Krčmář sees as a success the fact that within a period of six months the requested vehicles were screened, military tested, approved for deployment and eventually transported to Helmand to the 3rd SOG contingent personnel which has been in Afghanistan since April of this year.

As mentioned, the tactics of the Taliban has changed. “Early on, the Taliban discovered that they

did not stand a chance in a direct engagement of ISAF forces. Therefore, the Taliban resorted, or returned to their old tactics. One tactic involved planting IOD’s and the second was the reemergence of attacks by suicide bombers. We had to adjust to their style as we had previously used fast open vehicles but presently we have to provide more protection to our personnel,” finalizes Maj Krčmář and emphasizes an important point: “Mobility, speed and a moment of surprise must remain on our side.”

IVECO armored vehicles are not the only change that improves the security of the SOG personnel. “After our arrival home, we updated the medical supplies that are needed and included items we had not previously used. We have also been testing a different type of desert boot that conforms better to the type of operations we are involved in. Different types of flak jacket and uniform have been put to test. Personnel of this unit require different attire as opposed to non-combat units and staff personnel,” summarizes Maj Krčmář regarding the changes and suggestions.

In accordance with the approved mandate, the 35 SOG members deployed with the 3rd contingent are scheduled to be deployed in Helmand until October of this year. A possible extension of this mandate and decision to deploy the 4th contingent is in the jurisdiction of the government of the Czech Republic.





# Rapprochement of the EU and NATO Continues

Prepared by Jan Procházka

The Czech Republic is six months away from assuming the six months long presidency of the Council of European Union. Accordingly, the Czech Armed Forces will transfer into a stand-by mode for the upcoming six months and face the possible deployment of joint Czech and Slovak Battle Group for the European Union (CZ/SK BG). We interviewed Brigadier General Petr Pavel, Deputy Military Representative of the Czech Republic to the European Union, to learn about our forthcoming responsibilities and what has been so far accomplished in fulfilling these significant tasks.



Photos: Jan Procházka and AVIS archives

**General, the upcoming year of 2009 will bear a considerable importance for the Czech Republic and its armed forces in regard to the European Union. What are our priorities for this period?**

The European Union (EU) presidency will be important for the Czech Republic beyond the armed forces issue, also in other spheres. Defense is not the single activity of the EU. The priority activities are those pertinent to industry, agriculture and trade and to a number of others. In light of the above mentioned, the EU differs from NATO due to the nature of the EU focus and complexity. NATO's primary agenda is security. Still, the defense dimension of the European politics – a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) – has its priorities. From defense point of view, the Czech Republic, in cooperation with France that holds the EU presidency before us and Sweden who will take over from us, has identified as a priority the continual rapprochement of the EU and NATO. It is rapprochement in the sphere of standards, terminology and, most importantly, rapprochement in interoperability and cooperation in operations and development of capabilities. Presently, this issue poses the most palpable problem in relationship between the EU and NATO. Other defense priorities include participation in operations within the framework of the common security policy, which means that the Czech Republic will have to prepare for the CZ/SK BG stand-by mode which will take effect

immediately after the conclusion of the Czech presidency, i.e. in the second half of 2009.

**Some documents mention the so-called effective partnership between the EU and NATO. You have pointed out the priority to align the agenda of these two organizations. Can you elaborate on specifics of these processes?**

The greatest problem in the EU – NATO relationship is, let us say, the issue of policies. At tactical level – in operations – there is a universal agreement that the cooperation works fine. If human lives are at stake, the political issues and discords become minor and people – soldiers or civilians – are able to get along. Here in Brussels we have been dealing with issues and relationships that are of a long-term nature. Therefore, political aspects prevail. Presently, we are tackling the complexity of mutual relations of Turkey, Greece and Cyprus with the inclusion of Malta who only recently ratified a security agreement with NATO. While NATO uses a specific format for cooperation with partner countries, the EU does not have this sort of format at decision-making level. Consequently, in its effort to collaborate in different operations, for example with Turkey or any other non-member state, all other member countries must approve the decision. Therefore, Cyprus alone may block possible cooperation between the two organizations. Similarly, Turkey has the power to

prevent possible cooperation within NATO – and it has already happened.

**It appears that NATO and the EU compete against each other...**

The strategy of the mutual cooperation has been designed to be complementary, i.e. these two organizations support one another, so possible competitions and duplicities would be prevented. For that reason, at the early stage of the cooperation, the issue of some division of labor was discussed with the idea to empower NATO to provide the “hard power” for high intensity operations, while EU was intended to provide the “soft power” for low intensity operations, especially those related to humanitarian assistance. However, it presently turns out that this format is beneficial neither for NATO nor for the EU, because the practical experience shows that, for example in Afghanistan, NATO conducts both high intensity and low intensity operations, including those branded “soft”, i.e. those supporting development and reconstruction. On the other hand, the EU is involved primarily in low intensity operations; however, their degree of intensity may suddenly change in the event of escalation of the security situation. The operation in Chad, for instance, has been conceived as a humanitarian mission but it could transform into a peace enforcing operation if the security situation deteriorates. Thereby, it becomes obvious that

both organizations must be prepared for either sort of an operation which may, in result, create certain duplicities in the development of capabilities. In reality, more than two thirds of the countries are members of both organizations. Consequently, if specific capabilities are developed, they are developed within a specific country, not within an individual institution. These capabilities then may be utilized for the benefit of NATO or the EU; still, they retain their specifics. The important requirement is to adhere to thorough coordination in light of the unified standards.

**Currently, the Czech Armed Forces jointly with the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic are in the demanding process of preparing for the stand-by period of EU Battle Group. So far, what is the lesson learned from development of these forces and their possible deployment?**

The Battle Group (BG) concept was initiated by France and Great Britain in 2003. It has evolved in terms of a variety of opinions and gradually began to take shape. Today, its agenda is transparent, however, it painfully lacks a critical stage – it has not been proven in practice. None of the Battle Groups has been deployed in an operation that is based on this concept. It takes into account deployment to crisis management operations as a means of the EU rapid reaction, within the scope of tasks defined by the EU Treaty and the European security strategy. The EU is



## Rapprochement of the EU and NATO Continues

responsible for determining whether a security situation deteriorates into a crisis and whether deployment of the BG is required. So far, since the establishment of first BG's, none of the crises have fulfilled the EU criteria outlined by the concept. Only the operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo ensuring peaceful general elections may be partially viewed as relevant experience. The main supporting element was the German BG. Based on their first hand experience, the EU, its military committee (EUMC) and military staff (EUMS) partially revised the BG concept in order to make the training of CZ/SK BG more effective. An intensive exchange of experience previously gained by our partners has been ongoing.

**Despite all this, the Czech Republic views the BG in relation to the EU as an anchor project...**

This approach conforms to its high importance. It is the only feasible project regarding the possible deployment of armed forces and utilization of EU resources. It is a concept of rapid reaction forces similar to the NRF project in NATO. I assume that we should play an active role in engagement in the EU BG's and their future development in the same manner that we have been engaged in the NRF. If the European countries agree on modification or a change in the concept, we have to be a part of this process. Whatever military capabilities we develop, they are designed for the purpose of a common objective which is the successful and effective deployment of our units in operations either under the colors of the EU or NATO.

**The concept of BG is considered viable; still, it has not been yet executed. Do any risks of frustration and concern for the waste of resources and manpower exist?**

This is a valid question. Some frustration has been repeatedly seen even at official level. We may simplify the problem using a quote that was voiced at the latest ministerial meeting of the EU Council: "Use it or lose it". This was endorsed during preparation works for the operation in Chad. During several Force Generation Conferences, the "Nordic" BG, one of the best trained European units geared up for deployment, was at the peak of their training. Later in fall, the Chief of Staff of the Finnish Army regretted the fact that this 1,500-men strong BG – a skilled, motivated unit with certified Headquarters – was never deployed. Namely, Great Britain and Germany strongly opposed the deployment realizing that this course of action would have been in contradiction to the BG concept. As well, a possible deployment to Chad would have created a precedent for other future operations. This was the reason for their unwillingness to adjust the concept to be practicable for the BG deployment to Chad, either as the main force or in the role of strategic reserve.



A certain degree of frustration prevailed given the fact that the member countries had provided extensive financial support. Nevertheless, the British Army has been correct in claims that establishing a BG designed to tackle any challenge or deploy to any operation that would just "support or justify" the entire concept is a risky business and waste of financial resources.

**The EU does not include in its military segment only the BG concept. The EU forces have contributed greatly to the success of different operations like in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Currently the EULEX operation in Kosovo has been in the making. How have the EU forces fared in these operations?**

The lessons learned from operations under the umbrella of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) are evaluated and compiled in reports. It is necessary to stress that there is a vast difference between NATO and EU operations. NATO conducts only military operations while the EU strictly divides operations into military and civilian ones. The number of military operations has decreased. Presently, ALTHEA operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is ongoing and the largest so far operation is being conducted in Chad and Central Africa. The number of civilian operations is much greater, ranging from the smallest, manned by a few tens of staff, such as in Guinea-Bissau to the largest – EULEX, an operation that is forming in Kosovo with a projected personnel strength of 1,800. These operations are geared towards the reform of security sector and the establishment of a system of state administration that is defective or non-existing. Besides others, the EU and NATO operations differ in this element as well.

**Building up and augmenting military capabilities is the obvious number one priority. One of the methods to make this process more effective is to participate in joint programs and projects under the umbrella of the European Defense Agency. Are the Czechs able to compete successfully in this environment?**

Frankly speaking, not exactly. The European Defense Agency is a very dynamic organization with good intentions to make use of financial funds earmarked for acquisition



and research more effective. This effort is vital because the member states utilize their monetary resources largely ineffectively, especially when compared with their overseas partner, the USA. As an example, the project "Soldier of the 21st century" has been on the table in twenty-one countries out of the twenty-seven EU countries. Each country's expenses differ and the coordination is marginal. The European Defense Agency is instrumental in their efforts to effect changes. Apart from this, it is also responsible for scientific research. The Czech Republic could play a more active role in the planned projects. This is also caused by the fact that we accessed to the EU later than to NATO and the EU is still a "new environment" to us. While processes within NATO have worked smoothly and naturally as well as the process of development of capabilities for many years, the EU started these processes later and under different conditions. We have still been incapable of getting fully oriented and finding the "balance" between the two organizations in development of capabilities. Gradually, more Czech companies become involved and we have assumed a more active role in some programs of the European Defense Agency. We are indeed interested to increase our participation; unfortunately, we lack both financial and human resources. It is apparent that some time will elapse before we manage to align our priorities and subsequently provide the staff for all of the respective working groups in both organizations. As a result, the agenda of the Czech Republic could be equally secured both in the EU and NATO.

**Pertinent documents aim at improving availability of helicopters, which play key role in operations. Do Czech companies stand a chance?**

Helicopters remain a problem issue in both the EU and NATO operations. The insufficient number of this sort of aircraft becomes obvious whenever the process of generating forces and equipment for operational purposes occurs. Both organizations have an ample fleet of helicopters usable, for instance, in Africa and Afghanistan. On the other hand, they do not meet the interoperability requirements for flying at night and fulfilling combat tasks. Consequently, a number of

suggestions to resolve this issue have emerged. France and Great Britain proposed to establish a consortium for the centralization of resources and equipment that would aid in modernizing helicopters, especially the Russian made aircraft, to make them usable in operations. The Czech Republic has been participating actively in these efforts and the Aircraft Repairs Company in Malešice is considered a partner representing the country. If these talks will come out in a happy ending, a European consortium comprised of a number of countries that have been in process of helicopters modernization for operational purposes, could be established.

**General, you have used the term "a happy ending". My final question related to my first question is as follows: How do you personally and your subordinates perceive the approaching Czech presidency of the EU?**

Our agenda is not going to change significantly, it will become higher paced. As the presiding country, we will cooperate on a daily basis with the office of the Chairman of the EU Military Committee and with the secretariat of the Council of the EU. We will be involved in document preparation for all meetings; we will organize external sessions and compile reports. Presently, our team attached to the EU, which is a component of the Permanent Representation to NATO and the EU, contains six staff. During our presidency, Lt Col Imrich Luky will chair a EUMC working group focused on military capabilities. This working group cooperates closely both with the EUMS and the European Defense Agency and contributes to designing the Capability Development Plan that has been ongoing for several years now. Among others, this plan should identify all possible shortcomings in military capabilities and draft a timetable leading to their attainment. All in all, the content of our work remains the same while the pace will be higher.





In April, approximately 1,300 soldiers from three battalions of the Žatec rapid reaction brigade, supported by personnel of additional Czech Armed Forces units, participated in this year's first exercise of the 4th Rapid Reaction Brigade. Two further exercises of a similar scope with an increased level of intensity are scheduled for this year. The exercises will be aimed at practicing the skills that will enable Czech soldiers to be deployed in foreign operations, namely, the Battle Group in Africa.

# Gearing up for the Battle Group

Jan Zeman  
Photos: Jiří Hokův

As of July of next year, nearly 3,000 Czech and Slovak troops earmarked for the CZ/SK Battle Group EU will be on stand-by for six months. "This has been the first exercise within the CZ/SK Battle Group EU framework. The skeleton staff has been in place to begin the most important phase of the exercise – FHQ staff coordination," describes one of the tasks the Commander of the 4th Rapid Reaction Brigade, GS Col Ladislav Jung. Another significant assignment is the training of the Battle Group's "combat core"

which will be partially composed of the 43rd Airborne Mechanized Battalion personnel from Chrudim. "This is an upkeep exercise. Its objective is the harmonization and coordination among units that will be deployed along with our personnel," adds Col Jung. "The two remaining brigade battalions have been preparing for foreign operations that are scheduled for next year." The Battle Group training activities have been, in many aspects, similar to the brigade task force training that was organized in 2006. The training culminated in October of 2006 as a large



scale exercise dubbed 'the Strong Campaigner'. "Given its structure, the Battle Group is comparable to a brigade task force, paradoxically, the FHQ staff is somewhat larger as it comprises additional posts," explains Col Jung.

Each task has its specification. Col Jung compares the EU Battle Group to a modular purpose-built organization that may be shaped according to specifications of an assignment. Therefore, military personnel must be flexible to respond to varying specifications of foreign operations. "We have been practicing five different scenarios-from the worst case, which is enemies separating and conflict averting, to stabilization and evacuation operations including humanitarian missions," elaborates Col Jung. Also, the Battle Group units are likely to be deployed in a large territory; therefore, monitoring of the area of responsibility (AOR) would be performed by troop task force units.

The objective of the exercise in April was mainly the upkeep of training of company personnel and was geared towards shooting practice and basic tactics. The exercise also included specifics of asymmetric conflicts and movement of troops in forested and mountainous areas. "I believe that the brigade readiness in this training stage is good, so is the motivation of soldiers," evaluates the level of readiness Commander of Joint Forces, ACR Major General Jiří Halaška, who observed the final leg of the exercise. "Some problems surfaced within the FHQ as a number of its personnel had no previous experience with the corresponding procedures. On the other hand, the high methodological level of training provided the

newcomers with a chance to get the hang of things," maintains Maj Gen Halaška. Another objective of the exercise was to evaluate the level of logistic support available to the Battle Group. "After the exercise the brigade commander will draft an analytical report that will address the issue of logistic needs," promises Maj Gen Halaška, adding that, for example, a number of combat Land Rovers will be procured. The lesson learned by the 43rd Airborne Mechanized Battalion personnel from their deployment in Fayzabad calls for reinforcement of their chassis. "Driving in the Afghan countryside showed that the current vehicle version is not suitable. Also, armor plates need to be placed on the most vulnerable parts of the vehicle body. Last but not least, different sorts of weapons are necessary to be mounted on vehicles, such as 7.62 mm machine guns, 12.7 mm machine guns and AGS grenade launchers. This will provide the necessary firepower while the ability to transport the team remains intact," specifies Col Jung. "We have scheduled brigade exercises for 2008 with additional task force exercises for individual battalions organized in between. The final exercise will take place in September," provides details of the Battle Group timetable for this year Col Jung. For this year's fall CREVAL certification, four different operations at the Chrudim battalion are planned. The training activities will culminate around March and April 2009 in a joint exercise with units of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic. The remaining units will receive their Battle Group certification during this large scale exercise.





On 1st July 1938, at the time of a tumultuous political situation, the new Masaryk Military Hospital was ceremoniously open. This act was not termed to signal rosy prospects for this modern facility. The international political crisis was at its worse. Efforts of Czechoslovakian foreign policy were on the brink of collapsing. On October 29th of the same year, the Czechoslovakia government was confronted by the "fait-accompli" of the Munich Agreement and in March of 1939 the country was invaded by the Nazis.



Photos: Jan Kouba  
and ÚVN Prague  
archives

In commemoration  
of the 70th  
anniversary  
of the Central  
Military  
Hospital  
existence

# A Hospital on the Outskirts

Looking at the earliest black and white poor quality photographs of the hospital, emotions cannot be helped. Its history actually began as "a blank sheet" on a deserted, treeless, slightly elevated hillock. Its vicinity was sparsely populated and the tram line terminated at the Sřešovická stop, immediately next to the hospital. It is believed that the name of this stop branded the hospital built, on territory of the borough of Břevnov, "Sřešovická" and this nickname has remained until the present time.

The hospital vicinity looked completely different it does than today. The Hvězda villa was accessible by a narrow dusty field path. As contemporaries recall, merely one family house, a cornerstone of a future city borough, stood at its opposite end. Still, in the pages of the Lidové noviny newspaper, a Prague city physicist had to persuade local dwellers that the new hospital did not pose any health threats to them.

In the spring of 1939, the hospital was taken over by the occupying German military. The hospital capacity was increased by the construction of nine wooden oblong houses. The bed count rose from the previous 400 beds to 2,000. It was converted into a reserve hospital (Reserve Lazaret I Prag) treating mainly patients with urological problems and performing facial reconstruction surgeries.

After the liberation of Prague, the German Army left behind in the hospital 2,000 war prisoners and 50 dead. After it was evacuated and a three month long interlude during which the major hospital installations were used by the Soviet troops, the military health service took control over the hospital at last. The first hospital employees were numerous doctors and nurses retuning from war, so the hospital was blessed with qualified, devoted and hardworking, personnel. In 1947, the first department of anesthesiology in Czechoslovakia was established. Two years later, a transfusion department was incepted as one of first to open in the country. With the end of the war, the hospital also served as a training facility.

Josef Gajda  
Jan Procházka

After February 1948, the period of the "only and one righteous" ideology, the only and one role model and the only and one way geopolitical orientation began. The turbulent international situation and saber rattling accelerated the adoption of new-fangled fundamental changes in the military structure which followed the Soviet model. In 1950, the Masaryk hospital was renamed as the Central Military Hospital (ÚVN) and together with the entire military medical service it fell under the Supreme Command of the Ministry of National Defense. Among the priorities stemming from the military and political ambitions of the period was research and evaluation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their medical impact. Besides this, the hospital made its name due to successes in the fields of radiology, neurology and research activities of the personnel of the newly established Central Medical Laboratories. At the end of 1957, the hospital surgeons performed the first closed operation involving a defect of a heart valve. In 1960, the first heart surgery using the extracorporeal circulation was performed. The department of neurosurgery performed stereotactic surgeries on the central nervous system. Opening a clinic within the hospital facility was another exceptional historic milestone. The neurosurgical clinic of the Faculty of General Medicine of Charles University



ÚVN



had retained its singular exclusivity for many years. Its first professor, Zdeněk Kunc, MD (an academician, honorary member of 12 international scientific and medical societies, holding the rank of Major General) is credited with establishing an exquisite medical facility that performed a number of high priority surgeries in the following years. Due to its excellent reputation, both our patients and those from abroad sought the service of the hospital staff. Needless to say, 95 per cent of these surgeries contributed to health improvement in civilian patients.

The accomplishments of the hospital staff were appreciated not only by the experts but also by those who benefited from the introduction of new methods – its patients. In August 1968, the hospital was impacted by the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact armies. On the 1st of January 1971, one of the longest serving and most successful hospital commanders was removed from his post. Lieutenant General František Engel was an Eastern front veteran and a talented manager. Over eleven years, he helped establish the hospital's high reputation and vast popularity.





After the Velvet Revolution, the hospital clientele began to include patients from the immediate area. Since 1994, the hospital personnel has attended to thousands of civilian patients and clients of medical insurance banks and provided nearly a complete scope of medical service to them. The “ancient” clinic of neurosurgery from 1959 has seen its new “siblings” grow in the past six years to include eye, internal, surgical and ORL clinics. All these facilities have collaborated with the medical faculties of Charles University.

The Ministry of Health endorses the current priority of the hospital in Střešovice which is emergency medicine and surgical operations on patients with serious injuries. This includes injuries to the central nervous system. A helipad on the roof of pavilion CH2, designed to accommodate landings at night and under unfavorable weather conditions, is instrumental in transporting patients via the emergency hall to the operation theater as fast as possible. Another indispensable component of the hospital is a state-of-the-art receiving area which enables immediate and efficient treatment. The hospital also plays a significant role in medical training, postgraduate medical studies and provides preparation for surgeons scheduled to be deployed in foreign peacekeeping operations.

The motto of the hospital personnel is ... “bonum aegroti suprema lex” – ... “a patient’s well-being is the highest law”. Towards the end of 1999, the hospital management made the decision to commence preparation works for the international accreditation by the Joint Commission International. This compelled all those concerned to meet the demanding system requirements of an evaluation process in each of their departments. This included the conformation to more than 1,500 rigorous indicators of quality service and to the security of patients. Four years of hard work yielded its result. ÚVN became the first hospital in the Czech Republic and in Central and Eastern Europe to be granted the certificate. As well, it became the first medical facility to be authorized to retain the certificate after the period of three years – at the end of 2007.

“I am turning ninety next year. I have been hospitalized at ‘Střešovice’ several times now and the doctors and nurses have always treated me very well. I live alone with my wife, our relatives have died. Five years ago the hospital management allowed me to occupy a hospital room for five months,” gives words of appreciation retired Lieutenant General Stanislav Hlučka, a pilot of the 313th Fighter Wing in Great Britain during the Second World War and currently the chairman of the Foreign Pilots Association.

It is no secret that some years ago ÚVN’s Ilja Kotík, MD attended to the ailing President of the Czech Republic Václav Havel in the capacity of attending physician and head of the medical consultation team.

ÚVN’s manager, Colonel Stanislav Brunclík, MD who has contributed significantly to the recent accomplishments of his facility was awarded the title Manager of the Year in 2006. In an interview for the Hospital Special magazine he stated: “A hospital can be compared to a bride. Her reputation is very important. I am convinced that our hospital has boasted a deservedly excellent reputation. However, the quality of medical care in a hospital is not determined by exquisite attention tended to celebrities, it depends on the quality of care that is rendered to any elderly lady that is brought in an ambulance at 4 o’clock in the morning to the emergency ward.”



# Future Soldier - NATO Nations' Armed Forces & Leading Combat Equipment Manufacturers to Meet in Prague

On October 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Prague PVA exhibition center will host a unique event – FUTURE SOLDIER Czech Republic 2008 exhibition. For the second time in the history of the Czech Republic, officials will meet of most NATO nations' armed forces and Partnership for Peace countries with manufacturers of military field equipment and personal equipment items. The exhibition follows on successful events such as the NATO CCPE 2000 Prague and NATO Exhibition Slovakia CCIE 2003, this time organised under the auspices of the National Armaments Director of the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic.

International exhibitions of individual combat equipment entering service with NATO armed forces and Partnership for Peace nations have been held every three years from 1985 already. The first run took place in Portugal, then in France (1988), followed by the United Kingdom (1991), Canada (1994) and Norway (1997), but without private sector, which only became involved in 1999, when Mr. Jan Sajdl, the present manager of FUTURE SOLDIER exhibition, presented to the then NATO AC-301 committee (chaired by George McEwen and later by George Zakhem) an outline of an international specialised exhibition project that would serve as a venue for military specialists to meet also the representatives of industries and other businesses, plus private and public entities from NATO nations and invited countries.

The ground-breaking concept met not only with a highly positive response from NATO nations' officials, but especially with an important organisational and financial support of the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, which made it possible for such a unique project to provide common ground for military and manufacturing specialists in personal equipment items to take place in Prague in 2000.

The FUTURE SOLDIER exhibition concept is highly specific and has a narrow focus, seeing the attendance of specialists active predominantly in defence standardisation and representatives of individual national acquisition centers, industries and other businesses, scientific as well as educational institutions from all NATO nations, and PFP as well as Mediterranean Dialogue countries. Private and public sector come together to appreciate ever more demanding requirements for modern military equipment with revolutionary capabilities furnished by advanced technology and share them among partner armed forces to increase interoperability, operational readiness and high-quality protection of troops in increasingly urgent counterterrorism efforts.

## Future Soldier EXHIBITION & CONFERENCE

Central Europe and it crystallised, chiefly thanks to interest and understanding by the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic and relevant NATO bodies, and effectively combining NATO Workshop and CCIEP exhibitions, into the 7<sup>th</sup> International NATO Exhibition Slovakia 2003, accompanied with a session of NATO AC-301 committee in Nitra, Slovakia.

Consequently, the next run also came to be organised in the region of

the first FUTURE SOLDIER 2000 international exhibition was a major success among exhibitors and subject-matter specialists alike.

As the pace of technological advances in the sphere of materials permanently increases, a number of clients raised the requirement to shorten the event's periodicity (best to be held on biennial basis), setting a fixed date and a permanent location, where the potential of

manufacturers and designers could meet with military lessons-learned.

We would like to remind that our offer of self choosing the exhibition space position from January 2008 is still valid, but because of the nearly filling the Hall 3 is self choosing the space in this Hall valid until the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

In the following years, the International Coordination Center concentrated its activities on intensive communication with prominent businesses around the world and participants in the previous exhibitions. Such feedback from exhibitors and subject-matter experts generated many useful ideas, relating both to the exhibition's specialisation in components of current battledresses, as well as in further expansion of the coverage, mainly with the matters in relation to the ever more sophisticated and integrated future soldier systems, command systems and future battlefield equipment.

In cooperation with the International Center for organising the exhibition, the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic declared its interest to create an environment favourable for the Czech Republic to become a host country for regular meetings of specialists in the above fields of expertise in 2008-14.

The overarching goal and keynote idea for the exhibition was always to maintain the "BE VISIBLE!" strategy. What does it entail? In the FUTURE SOLDIER 2008 exhibition, manufacturers of battledresses, accessories, protective equipment, communication technology and all other components of integrated future soldier systems will never be lost among weapon systems and heavy military hardware. The structure of visitors fully observes the principle that the FUTURE SOLDIER exhibition in Prague is to become a venue, where real needs meet true experts, which is indeed the keynote of the exhibition:

### The Place Where The Needs Meet The Experts

## See you in Prague

On behalf of the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic and the International exhibition coordination center, it is our pleasure to invite you to attend the 8<sup>th</sup> International Exhibition meant for NATO nations and Partnership for Peace and Mediterranean Dialogue countries. The FUTURE SOLDIER Czech Republic 2008 project follows on previous successful exhibitions, such as NATO CCPE 2000 Prague and NATO Exhibition Slovakia CCIE 2003, and is organised under the auspices of the National Armaments Director of the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, at PVA Letnany exhibition center in Prague, the Czech Republic, on October 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The exhibition specialist sponsors include the Association of Defence Industry and the Guns and Ammunition Manufacturers and Sellers Association of the Czech Republic.

The whole event is unique by combining direct representation of most NATO nations' and some PFP countries' armed forces with displays of commercial sector active in those countries. Thanks to a specialised subject-matter conference and particularly to the regular session of the NATO AC/225 (LCG/1-CCIEP) working group in Prague during the FUTURE SOLDIER Czech Republic 2008 exhibition, an attractive attendance will see the exhibition, including experts, representatives of acquisition centers from individual nations, businesses as well as public officials and institutions relevant in the context of "Dismounted Soldier".

Today, with seven months to go, we are pleased to inform you that a whole number of countries confirmed their interest to have an official national armed forces representation in the exhibition, including the Czech Republic, Austria, Germany, the Slovak Republic, Italy, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Canada, Switzerland, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, South Africa, Armenia, Denmark, The Netherlands, Sweden and the USA. So far, we have received booking orders for exhibition area from more than one hundred of companies from nineteen countries. At the same time, a close cooperation was established with the European Defence Agency for preparing the conference and an official plan was published of exhibition areas with the possibility to book individual displays at the exhibitor's discretion, before all space is occupied.

On behalf of the whole exhibition coordination team, we would like to thank you very much for your interest and we are looking forward to mutually beneficial cooperation, and business and friendly meetings in preparation of the FUTURE SOLDIER Prague 2008 exhibition.

by Michal Dráždanský, International Project Coordinator

**PRAGUE**  
**16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**October 2008**

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FUTURE SOLDIER EXHIBITION CONCEPT BUILDS ON MILITARY OPERATIONAL LESSONS-LEARNED AND BOLD VISIONS OF EXHIBITORS

## One of the Best



Jan Zeman  
Jan Procházka  
Photos: CPO (USN) Crystal Raner



Sergeant Major Luděk Kolesa of the Czech Armed Forces has been inducted in the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy Hall of Honor, at Fort Bliss, Texas – the first-ever Czech and second foreigner to have received such recognition.

Sergeant Major Luděk Kolesa, currently working as a senior enlisted leader, NATO Supreme Allied Command Transformation at Norfolk, followed in the footsteps of his Dutch predecessor Willem Tanis, a graduate of class 37 in 1990-1991.

Only the most accomplished individuals may be inducted in the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy Hall of Honor. Many American graduates received this recognition in memoriam, for overseas students it is an exceptional mark of respect. After his graduation in 1991, Willem Tanis became the first-ever Sergeant Major of the Royal Ground Forces of the Netherlands. In 2003, Sergeant Major Luděk Kolesa was selected for the newly established position of the Czech Army Command Sergeant Major. Several weeks after his appointment, he was delegated to attend the U. S. Army Sergeants Major Academy Course along with Dušan Rovenský. Since its inception in 1971, the Academy boasts to have produced more than 30,000 graduates. Sergeant Major Luděk Kolesa has been the most successful of the Czech graduates attaining the tenth best exam result in his class of 54 in 2003-2004 and as well, the best of all overseas graduates. As a result, the International Leadership Award was presented to him.



Introducing





# We Are Friends, not Foes

Prepared by Jan Procházka

Logar province lies in about 6,000 kilometers faraway Afghanistan. Half a year ago we barely had an idea of its existence, let alone its climate and population numbers. How has this perception changed? We, the journalists have done our homework in learning more about this corner of the world and the Czech soldiers of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) that has been deployed in this Afghan province since February have already become familiar with the local conditions. "For us, Logar was a blank sheet of paper, a new, unread book that we have been trying to understand," says 1st Lt Martina Štěpánková of the 103rd CIMIC/PSYOPS Center in Lipník nad Bečvou, head of CIMIC within the Czech PRT, after concluding her fourth month of deployment with ISAF. Back in the Czech Republic we are talking over a cup of coffee about her work in Afghanistan. While sipping our java, I noted the chapters to be read from an already written book of ISAF that Martina recounted.

## CLIMATE SOMERSAULTS

"You are asking me how I am, how life is in Afghanistan," repeats Martina my question half whispering, putting down her too hot cup of coffee on the table. Then she gives me a disarming smile: "Personally, I am fine and I think that the Czech contingent is relatively fine, too. At this time the weather is tolerable. When we arrived in Logar in February, it was unbelievably cold with freezing temperatures, even our B-huts, a sort of log houses,

could not protect us from the chill. For worse, presently spring is turning into summer and the temperature will increase, so we can be sure we will be hot. Our work is limited by the security situation. Those who have followed the news of Afghanistan and understand the global context know what I am talking about. Despite this, we have been performing our tasks outlined for the PRT. Of course, before our deployment a few reconnaissance units had been dispatched to ensure all the necessary support for our stay at the base; to find out about the local life outside the base was left up to us."

## CIVILIAN EXPERTS

"Everybody has their specific task within the PRT. Besides the Czech soldiers and us, the CIMIC staff, a number of civilian experts is attached to the contingent constituting a very important part of the entire PRT. All eight of them who are currently with the PRT are amazingly enthusiastic, hardworking individuals with astonishing expertise in their respective fields. The team includes water-supply and construction engineers, agriculture experts as well as a project manager. We have been cooperating very closely because we are not able to design a bridge or a building, water or agricultural projects are not our cup of tea. On the contrary, for example, we are able to secure an area, gather information about the local community, about their sentiments towards us, and about the degree of their willingness to support us. With no support from locals for a possible project implementation, it would be useless to even start one. It has happened before that a finished project was damaged or burned down. Besides other activities, CIMIC personnel take part in the so called Quick Impact Projects (QIP). For each QIP, a maximum sum of 200,000 CZK is earmarked and it is up to us to decide whether we will buy a microscope or



Photos: PRT Logar archives



implement reconstruction of an underground irrigation system, or use the funds for school equipment. The only limit for a QIP to be executed is the above mentioned amount."

Before Martina takes another sip of her slowly cooling coffee, I am quick with a question about the microscope... "We received information that some soldiers of the Afghan National Army had contracted malaria and that their doctors were unable to identify the diagnosis. They did not have the necessary equipment at their disposal, so we used one of our QIPs to purchase a special microscope. Other QIPs were used for reconstruction of a local irrigation system for a number of the tiny fields that, in many cases, are the only source of livelihood for villagers. We have been assisting in repair works in schools, either on classrooms or chalkboards and supplying the school furniture. Among others, projects for construction of security perimeter walls around school are largely popular. Given the fact that school toilets are usually located outside the school building the children use the excuse to use a toilet for cutting classes and teachers then complain about this. Yes, it sounds funny, but most importantly, the security walls also protect school against attacks from the outside, against those for whom education is thorn in their side."

## DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

"All our projects are based on the Provincial Development Plan (PDP) that was approved by the central government of Afghanistan. This plan entails priority projects in the province and directs us in our efforts. This is a very positive fact, on the other hand, the more we become familiar with this plan the more we recognize the realistic requirements for the province and find out that the plan also includes projects equivalent to castles of sand. For example, the idea to establish a private television company is not farfetched, nevertheless, given the fact that electricity is available to only ten per cent of population leaves you wondering about the possible TV ratings.

We do our best to respect the approved plan and conduct our activities accordingly for a simple reason – the plan comes from the central government and the PRT, whose primary objective to provide support to the Afghan government is deployed on their official invitation. We cannot afford to conduct business on our own, that would not be a correct approach."

## KNOWING THE ROPES

"Before we start a project we contact the local people and local officials responsible for the respective sphere.





## We Are Friends, not Foes



If a project is education related we contact the head of the education division, the same approach applies to agriculture etc. Therefore, each project is preceded by numerous meetings; consequently we personally inspect the site of the future job. If possible, a local representative accompanies our team. For security reasons, he is notified of the trip only one hour prior to the departure. Also, before we start a project, it is necessary to consult the people living near the project site in order to find out whether they support our intention or if there are additional problems to tackle. On-site inspection is very important before the puzzle pieces are put together back at the base. It is not about designing a fantastic dam fitted with powerful turbines that would provide energy for a neighboring village and its vicinity. The main issue is to find people who are able to manage and maintain it. Otherwise, one damaged sealing ring worth a few crowns could put the turbines out of order if there would not be anyone around to identify and fix the problem. Of course, this scenario is a little stretched, but not too far

from reality. We are also responsible for operating and maintaining the facility and identifying an individual to put in charge of the finalized project. We need to teach the local people how to take care of things. Currently, we are in the middle of the construction of a hospital wing and we are already aware that a maintenance worker will be needed – a person who would be able to exchange a light bulb, fix a broken rain gutter or remove a faulty sealing ring on a washbowl. A scenario of a hospital being without electricity for a couple of months, only after someone finds out that a circuit breaker has been off for the entire period, should not occur. Our efforts are likely to have a two-fold impact as a trained hospital maintenance worker may use his skills in another job should he decide to work for a different institution someday.”

### LOCAL PEOPLE, LOCAL HABITS

Martina becomes so absorbed in her story telling that I have to remind her of her cooling coffee. She continues: “It is very critical to understand the sentiments of the locals. Sometimes the initial contacts go off with a slow start, some people are friendly, and some are not. After all – we are the first foreign soldiers to be deployed in the area. Whenever possible, local officials travel with us. Interpreters are a must because none of my staff are able to speak the two local languages – Dari and Pashtu. Having a local official in our group makes things much easier. When we are traveling on our own, we usually stop and wait at the village square, which is usually a small open area with a shop, well and cattle-bin. We do not venture to local markets as it is still risky. Slowly the villagers begin to gather, children are the first to appear. As soon as the adults arrive we explain our agenda to them and who we would like to talk to. It takes about thirty minutes before the village elders turn up. Sometimes we are invited into their houses or on other



occasions we simply lead discussions sitting down out in the field. Yes, in the field. They take off ‘blankets’ – large pieces of textile typical for Pashtu attire – off their shoulders, spread them out and a meeting begins. On one occasion, we sat in the center of an intersection. So far, we have not encountered an absolutely negative reaction, however, there have been cases when we were unable to reach an agreement on a project. Despite these drawbacks these encounters and experiences are invaluable. Time plays no role in local meetings – you may talk for an hour or two repeating the same until you receive the necessary information within the last five minutes. The first good impression does matter here more than anywhere else. I think that the Czech soldiers fare very well – they are polite, friendly, some of them do not hesitate to give a smile or show their human side – it contributes to creating a positive atmosphere. We are able to be relaxed and respect the local habits. We wear our heart on our sleeve and we are open about our intentions. We share their plans and ideas so they feel involved in the process of development and see themselves as our partners.”

### THE ORANGE SCARF

Before Martina takes the last sip of her already cold coffee, my curious question about her position as a woman and a soldier in the Logar province comes up. “I have not noticed any problems during our meetings for being a woman in the uniform. I cannot expect a handshake because of the local culture and tradition. A woman usually greets a man by a touch of her hand on the chest close to her heart and bows a little. On the other hand, sometimes those who refuse to shake my hand at a public meeting are quick to shake my hand even three times during a visit to our base. Local habits and traditions have their meaning. You have asked about my orange scarf and blond hair. I am convinced that

most locals do not have the slightest idea that my hair is fair as I always wear a helmet or cover it tight with the scarf. It would be impolite to walk around with my hair uncovered as it would attract unnecessary attention and that is something that we do not need. All Czech soldiers never forget to mention during the local meetings that we are in the country on invitation from their government and that we do not intend to impose our habits and traditions as we respect their way of life, their culture. It also translates into the fact that I cover my hair and my male colleagues grow full beards. It is a small gesture that might irritate those who take their stand on military neatness but it works very well with locals who see it as a sign of our respect. I have brought with me several scarves but I have been wearing only the orange one. Locals that I meet regularly can recognize me by my ‘orange head’ and it pays off. And when a photo in local newspaper includes an orange dot somewhere, everyone has an idea who that might be.”

### SECURITY SITUATION

“The security situation poses the greatest problem for us. Development and reconstruction go hand in hand with security. Everyone realized this after a tragic incident in which one of our colleagues and a good friend, died. Whenever a mobile team heads out of the base, we all hope for their safe return in a few hours’ time. We must fulfill our assignment and we are doing just that. One never knows what to expect out in the country. So far we have not been given warnings by the locals not to travel, we have not seen crossed branches set up on roads with a message – No ISAF, No PRT, go home. During patrolling, soldiers must stay alert and vigilant at all times as local life reality is very harsh. We know that our operation has been no bed of roses but we are doing our utmost to fulfill our task.”





The modernization works on the Náměšť nad Oslavou Air Force Base have created a great leap forward. Since the beginning of this year, military pilots have been able to use a brand new maintenance hangar with workshops that have catered to the needs of the airbase fleet let alone the aircraft of other NATO countries.

# A Generation Leap



Tomáš Soušek  
Photos: Jiří Hokův

Apparently the largest hangar in Central Europe has been built in Náměšť nad Oslavou



The Náměšť nad Oslavou Air Force Base had never been a state-of-the-art facility, quite the contrary. Its construction began as late as 1956, in the period when nearly all other military airports had been fully operational. The main reason for building a new airbase was the large number of Air Force units and the lack of locations that could accommodate them. The first Air Force unit – the 20th Fighter Battalion – relocated their fleet to the airport, which was still under construction as of January 1960. At that time, the military was compelled to cut their funding and construction of the airport was never actually finalized.

One of the typical features of the airbase in Náměšť nad Oslavou was a decades-long absence of a suitable maintenance hangar. A wooden shed left behind by construction workers served as the first makeshift hangar; later on a small workshop facility that could accommodate two MiG-15s was constructed. Given the large number of aircraft, this tiny hangar soon proved to be insufficient and a fast solution to address the issue was sought. At the end of the 1960's, a dismantled structure erected as a temporary hangar was brought from Ostrava to Náměšť. After it was assembled, it provided three positions for L-29 and Su-7 aircraft. "With the arrival of the advanced Su-22 aircraft we were faced with a problem of enough space as they turned out to be too large to fit in the hangar. We had to abandon a few offices and classrooms to provide the extra room, nevertheless, our ability to house the aircraft did not improve significantly. For example, when lifting a craft we needed to be extra careful to steer the rudder between the hangar beams," recalls Maj Oldřich Lokaj, the chief of logistics at the Náměšť

airbase. Years went by and the temporary hangar has remained in place until today.

A change occurred in 2003. In modernizing the air base, operational requirements of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) were implemented. Also evident became NATO standards of developing an installation which would ensure the repair and maintenance of aircraft as well as the renewal and replacement of aircraft engines. The project was dubbed "Repair and Maintenance Hangar". This project was included in a package of another 11 airport facility-related projects in Náměšť and an additional 14 projects in Čáslav. All these projects come under the program of NATO NSIP investments. Following a public tender, the Unistav Brno, Inc. won the bid and the new facility was built between March 2006 and November 2007.

The newly built hangar will be fully utilized by Czech military personnel. In case of an emergency, the Alliance aircraft may be deployed at the airbase as Náměšť is included in the network of Operational Bases for the purpose of deployment (DOB – Deployment Operating Base) of two tactical wings. The entire project includes construction of the main hangar, a few two-story extensions, a number of operational workshops, parking facilities and additional servicing facilities.

The original design called for eight fighter positions – three of them would be for the Czech aircraft while the rest would serve the Alliance aircraft, hence the original square area 8,060 square meters. In 2004, a decision to relocate the helicopter base from Přerov to Náměšť was made and therefore, the original project had to be altered. The newly designed layout

accommodates four Mi-17 helicopters with attached blades of the supporting rotor and another two helicopters stripped of blades. As a result, the square area has been increased by approximately 8% to a total of 8,690 square meters. This enlargement provides the necessary work space to transport individual helicopter engines to the specialized workshops. Conditions for the maintenance of tactical aircraft remain intact.

The project also comprise a wide array of the latest gadgets and technologies that enable personnel to work more efficiently. The hangar gate alone stands seven meters tall and is a technological marvel. Its eight segments are powered by electricity along two rails, thus hermetically shutting off the 142 meter-wide front wall. The gate may be controlled either manually or remotely from a control room. Hangar technicians have several pulley blocks powered by electricity and two bridge trolley conveyors with lifting power of 5 tons at their disposal.

The arrangement of positions in the hangar enables personnel to work directly on the aircraft be it engine dismantling, repairs, or replacement of parts, units or entire engines. The extensions are comprised of workshops, storage rooms, test rooms and operational and collective facilities. Beside the main operational building a two-dimensional indoor area, a garage housing a special purpose truck and a metallurgical material warehouse are located. Among other facilities adjacent to the parachute jump training tower belongs a drier room that accommodates as many as twenty parachutes at a time. A large flat concrete area in front of the hangar will be used as open-air maintenance positions for as many as eight aircraft.



Obviously, the project includes facilities for the hangar personnel such as new offices and social facilities. It is worth noting that the project planners recognized the fact that as many as 20% of the personnel could possibly be women. The entire installation is capable of housing approximately 200 members of the permanent staff and 135 members of visiting units.

The Air Force Base personnel in Náměšť are eagerly awaiting the date of moving into the new installation. According to Maj Oldřich Lokaj, it is tantamount to leaping one generation ahead. Until recently, the bulk of the work at the base was done manually. Another advantage is that various workplaces that were previously scattered around the base can now be concentrated in one building. Despite all this, a great deal of work is still to be done. Namely, some technologies located in Čáslav will have to be shifted to Náměšť for the purpose of maintenance and repair of L-39 aircraft. The same applies to Mi-24 fighter helicopters presently located in Přerov. For all this effort, the hangar at Náměšť Air Force Base is being transformed into a modern and progressive military installation.



# History Must Never Be Forgotten

Jan Procházka  
Photos: Radko Janata

In April of this year at Les Invalides in Paris, the Senate Chairman of Parliament of the Czech Republic Přemysl Sobotka and the First Deputy Minister of Defense of the Czech Republic Martin Barták participated in the festive opening of the “France and Czechoslovakia 1914 – 1945, Years of Hope, Despair and Combat Comradeship on Fronts” exhibition.

The Deputy of the Chief of Staff of the Czech Armed Forces Brigadier General Josef Bečvář and the Czech and Slovak Ambassadors to France Pavel Fischer and Ján Kuderjavý also looked on.

“The history of our relations must speak out,” declared the director of Les Invalides Musée de l’Armée, General Robert Bresse during his opening speech in front of scores of guests and journalists. General Bresse also stated that he holds the skills and craft of the Czech museum workers in high regard. “The exhibition exquisitely fits into your new presentation of two world wars and has attracted large crowds of visitors.”

While General Bresse highlighted a certain exceptionality of the exhibition, Přemysl Sobotka emphasized the fact that history must not be forgotten. “This is a great example of presentation and exhibition of skills of Czech military experts; it is the first time Les Invalides has displayed their exhibits.”

According to Mr. Sobotka, the general disposition of displays and exhibits attested to the high expert skills of museum workers and military historians involved, both

of the French Musée de l’Armée and the Czech Military History Institute (VHÚ). “The theme of the exhibition is very interesting, honorable and instructive,” maintained Mr. Sobotka, after seeing the exhibition.

Les Invalides belongs among the world’s most renowned and reputable museums and the opportunity to display such exhibits on its premises is a matter of great honor and high esteem. It is the first time in the history of our bilateral relations that the Czech military museum has been offered to display their exhibits.

“We perceive the opportunity to present our exhibits at les Invalides as very prestigious. With this in mind, we fashioned the concept and selected individual items for the exhibition,” said Capt Michal Burian of the Military History Institute, together with Karel Straka one of the exhibition co-authors – shortly before the exhibition’s public opening. “Most of the exhibits displayed in showcases and on boards, covering the area of 300 square meters, come from the Military History Institute, some items are borrowed from the Musée de l’Armée, Musée du sous-officier de Saint Maixent in Paris and from the Silesian Provincial Museum in Opava. “Visitors have the unique opportunity to see, for instance, the sword of Milan Rastislav Štefánik, the epee of General Maurice Pellé as well as an array of collectibles previously owned by the late generals Louis Faucher, František Peřina, Alois Vašátko, Capt František Novák and many other Czech and Slovak soldiers who fought on the French battlefield. “

The exhibition also features an interesting 15-minute long documentary which provides visitors with an insight into the activities of the Czechoslovak legions during the First World War and actions of Czechoslovak troops in France between 1940 and 1945. The film includes footage acquired from various archives which was compiled in collaboration with the Military Information and Service Agency.

The exhibition is divided into three sections; one of them is devoted to the activities of legions in France from 1914 to 1918. The next section is devoted to the interwar period of 1918 to 1938 with the inclusion of undertakings by the French military diplomatic mission in Czechoslovakia. The exhibits include a replica of an entire text of the Munich Agreement in French. The replica was procured by the French military archives. The final section is dedicated to the Czech and Slovak soldiers that were deployed in different units within the



French territory from 1939 to 1940 and later at the end of the Second World War from 1944 to 1945.

Martin Barták, the First Deputy Minister of Defense, one of the very many observant visitors, considers the exhibition a great feat and accomplishment of the Czech military museum. “This is clear evidence that efforts exerted by the Military History Institute to explain the military’s past have contributed to augmenting the conspicuity of our country, thus making it an important player on the international turf.”

The exhibition at Les Invalides is not the only project that the employees of the Military History Institute are aimed to participate in this year. “The exposition

in Paris provides us with the opportunity to show how the Czechoslovak Army made its imprint in the history books,” elaborated Col Aleš Knížek, Director of the Military History Institute adding: “Further twenty-eight projects are ahead of us. An exhibition depicting the affairs around the period of 21st August 1968 and a thematic exhibition pertaining to the mobilization of 1938 will decidedly belong among the most distinguished events of cultural life. The pinnacle of our efforts should become apparent in an exhibition dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the Independence of Czechoslovakia that is scheduled to open on 27th October 2008 in the National Museum in Prague.





# Revenge Interpreted as Treason



Vladimír Marek

In May 1948, General Heliodor Píka was recuperating after an operation on his gall bladder in the Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (TGM) Military Hospital (presently the Central Military Hospital) in Prague-Střešovice. When military intelligence officers arrived to detain him, he was convinced that an error had occurred and that the misunderstanding would soon be explained.



## General Heliodor Píka's last wish was the national unity

Nine months later, at the trial closed to the public, Otakar Matoušek the Chairman of the Military Court in Prague, read the verdict: "The defendant has been found guilty of military treason and is sentenced to death by hanging." Only at this moment, General Píka realized that he had become a victim of the tragic and unrelenting contemporary circumstances triggered by the events of February 1948, or even those from some years before.

An exceptional individual and outstanding officer, Heliodor Píka, was born on 3rd July 1897 to a family of a wheelwright in Štítín, a town located in the Opava region. A rumor had it that when the baby boy was being brought to the local church to be baptized a heavy storm burst out. Was it a sign of a stormy life ahead? The boy was given quite an unusual first name. He was named after a Greek bishop Heliodor. This name was listed in the contemporary calendar on the boy's day of birth.

The Píka family was poor, so Heliodor was the only one among his five siblings to have the opportunity to attend the Czech National Grammar School at Opava. He was said to have talent for languages. He mastered not only Latin, German and Greek but also French, Russian and Romanian over the course of time. At the beginning of the First World War, Czech schools and universities were closed down and young Heliodor started to work as a pharmacy apprentice in Nový Bydžov. Despite the fact that he managed to finish merely six grades, he graduated in 1915 and joined the army as a one year volunteer with the 15th Regiment in Opava. After graduating from a three month cadet academy, he became an instructor at the same place. In June 1916 he left for the Russian front with the support transport. Soon after his arrival in July 1916, he surrendered to the Russians near the town of Berestechka. Immediately after that, he attempted to enter the Foreign Legion and consequently he joined the 1st Czechoslovak Rifle Battalion. At the end of September 1917, as one of the first legionaries, he departed to France via the port of Arkhangelsk. After a short deployment with the 33rd French Infantry Battalion, he was transferred to the 21st Czechoslovak Rifle Battalion in March 1918. Given his medical background, he was appointed as the commander of a medical platoon. With his battalion, he fought fierce battles on the Alsatian front in Champagne, on the Aisne River, at Terron and in the Ardennes. The French General Guilenin, commander of the 53rd French Army Division, awarded him recognition for his exemplary service. Píka's qualification testimony read: "At his own request he was deployed with the medical corps on the front line. His ardor to treat the casualties with absolutely no regard to impending peril is commendable."

Heliodor Píka wanted to be transferred to the Air Force but before it materialized the war ended. He returned to his homeland with the rank of Lieutenant in January 1919. He participated in military campaigns in Teschen, Silesia and Slovakia. In November 1919, he enrolled in the Military



Infantry School in Saint Cyr near Paris. Later on, he continued at the War College in Prague and at the War University in Paris. In the 1930's, he was based in Bucharest, Romania, as the military attaché of Czechoslovakia and simultaneously responsible for Turkey. Connections that he managed to establish during his mission were to come in handy during the Second World War.

With the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, he left the country by way of Poland and Romania and in 1940 he was directly delegated by then president Edvard Beneš to organize international resistance from Romania. Using the codename Dora, he established an advancement military resistance unit abroad. Dora assisted in liberating Czech and Slovak Jews from a concentration camp located by the Black Sea and made it possible for one hundred Czech weapon experts to immigrate abroad instead of having to return to the Nazi Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia. In cooperation with the British, Dora sabotaged supply lines to Germany. Most importantly, the group organized the exit of Czech officers to France by way of the so called Balkan Route. In October 1940, the so called Iron Guards seized power in Romania and jeopardized Dora's existence. Thus, Dora was compelled to shift its activities to Istanbul, Turkey. On order of the London headquarters, Píka established a connection with the Soviet Union; consequently, in April 1941, Dora relocated to Moscow. Píka did not hesitate to continue in his activities as he had been entrusted with initial talks and favored the Military Accord between the high command of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. He participated in establishing of our units and organizing the anti-Nazi resistance. These events apparently ushered in the circumstances of the tragic end of Píka's life. He became embroiled in discord with the Czechoslovakian ambassador to the Soviet Union, Zdeněk Fierlinger, commander of our units Ludvík Svoboda and, above all, with a number of communist officials.

Píka returned to Czechoslovakia after the end of the war. He was appointed the Deputy Commander of the Military headquarters for special purposes. Given his position he was delegated to attend a peace conference in Paris. After his return, Píka became the deputy commander of the General Staff and was responsible for military education, service regulations, mobilization plans and partially for training. At the same time, Píka's archenemy Bedřich Reicin, Chief of the 5th



department of the General Staff set his eyes on him. Reicin's subordinates began to monitor Píka's actions. Intelligence officers researched the so-called London archives with the aim to find evidence of his anti-Soviet and anti-communist activities. In March 1948, Reicin masterminded a plot to intoxicate General Píka by chloroform and transport him via Austria to Russia. This plan did not materialize. Instead, General Píka was arrested.

In 1953, attorney Karel Vaš, Píka's investigator and prosecutor and the author of his impeachment, testified about his meeting with Mikhail Makarovich Khazanov, a Soviet advisor and a directing officer of NKVD the following: "He requested me to pay full attention to the case as Moscow headquarters was extremely eager to sentence Píka so he would not be able to immigrate to the West as he knew a lot of Soviet secrets. He pointed out that the case against Píka was very weak and asked me to remain in touch with him at all times regarding this matter."

The investigation proceedings corresponded with the above mentioned quote. General Píka, in his letters in code from the prison cell, complained to his son that everything he testified Vaš turned inside out and interpreted differently. He said that he signed the investigation records only to expedite his case to be brought to court. Heliodor Píka was unaware of the fact that the judge would be as biased as his investigator.

General Heliodor Píka was executed on 21st June 1949 at 6:08 AM at the Bory prison courtyard in Pilsen. His last words were: "My last wish is for our nation to remain united and for everyone to contribute to our national unity."



Josef Gajda



# Praga Mater Urbium

PART I

Three years ago in a nationwide inquiry, the Czech public elected Charles IV “The Greatest Czech” of all time, despite the fact that this king of the Luxembourg dynasty, actually, was not Czech. The result came as no surprise. For almost thirty years, the great ruler had showered with gifts and pampered Prague – the love of his life. His idea was to transform Prague into a gothic metropolis whose beauty would compare to Rome, Florence and Paris. It is understandable that we should begin our tour of Prague in the 14th century, the time she had become the “caput regni” – the crossroads of great historic events, the seat of the Czech Kingdom and the Roman Empire – the fourth most populated city in the world covering the largest square area of all other cities in Central Europe.



Photos: Radko Janata



Some may ask why Charles IV, brought up in France from the age of seven, showed so much affection for Prague. We should be thankful to his mother, Elisabeth I of Bohemia, historians say. It was no secret among the European royal courts that Charles’ father, John of Bohemia, paid more attention to international diplomacy and jousts than to the Czech affairs. People of Bohemia viewed John of Bohemia as a stranger from the very beginning after he was enthroned in 1310. However, his frequent trips abroad did not irritate as his diplomatic missions proved to be invaluable for the kingdom; admiring poems of mediaeval French poets about a great Czech ruler attest to this fact. “Without the King of Bohemia nobody is able to handle their affairs,” wrote abbot Petr Žitavský, not exactly one of the king’s staunch supporters, in the renowned Zbraslav Chronicle.

After Charles IV was installed as the King of the Roman Empire, his father knew his days had been numbered. He found the opportunity to die gallantly in the Battle of Crecy, one of many in the long lasting war between France and England, later dubbed the 100 Years War by historians. The quote “By God, never will the Czech King surrender to his enemy!” made it to the history books. Allegedly, the already six-years blind king used these words before he and the suite of his knights began an onslaught against the English enemy.

Even Czech schoolchildren know that Charles IV founded a university in Prague and the imperial court, promoted the episcopate to archiepiscopate, had the Stone (Charles) bridge and the Karlštejn castle built, and on his order remains of his Přemyslid predecessors were deposited in the St. Vitus crypt. The importance of Charles IV does not rest only in the development of Prague. During his reign, the city also became a flourishing cultural and political center of the Lands of the Czech Crown. The Lands consisted of Bohemia Moravia, Silesia, Bavaria, Upper and Lower Lusatia, Brandenburg and Luxembourg.

Charles IV was an educated humanist, fluent in several languages and very religious. Unlike his father, he was not a hard-bitten soldier. On the other hand, his strength and resolve was not to be underestimated. His father’s upbringing left scars on his body and soul. His health had been weakened by spinal injuries suffered in battles fought side by side with his father. A legend has it that Charles himself hanged an outlaw who he had knighted some years before.

The great ruler was very sensitive about the power struggle in the Roman-German Empire. He founded the New Town of Prague and connected it with the Old Town by the Stone Bridge. He also had new city walls constructed, which laid the foundation to a more sophisticated defense system. The wall towers were

manned by guards who were excluded from paying taxes; city defense emergency corps was established, and became also “responsible” for weapons training, as historians claim. These early endeavors may be viewed as the beginnings of the Prague garrison founded many years later.

Skipping half a century, we meet another great figure of the Czech history, whose life and struggle are a part of Prague history – the brilliant army leader – John Žižka of Trocnov. The final stage of this great soldier’s life is lined with spectacular battles and heroic deeds. He was always at the right place at the right time. Once outlaw, and later a poor yeoman or a “bodyguard” serving at the court of Wenceslas IV, it is hard to believe that this half blind elderly God’s warrior for church reform and a disciple of John Hus could command the numerous crowds of simple villagers. Moreover, he faced the military might of virtually all of Europe, yet, he was never defeated.

Since 1932, an equestrian statue of John Žižka standing nine meters tall, one of the largest sculptures in Europe (the work of B. Kafka), has reminded visitors of this grand



# Praga Mater Urbium

leader. It dominates the Vítkov Mountain, the place of Žižka's epic victory over the enemy of crusaders despite being largely outnumbered. Žižka's monument includes the Unknown Soldier's Grave which was erected in 1945.

Unfortunately, the Czech public in their votes have omitted another great Czech – George of Poděbrady. An ambitious individual, sometimes called the Hussite King, stands out among rulers of the Czech origin. In 1452, the land assembly appointed him bailiff. Six years later, after the death of Ladislaus the Posthumous, he became the King of Bohemia. Despite the expectations of Catholic aristocracy that George would be a weak and submissive ruler and that he would convert to Catholic Church – a move that the pope Pius II anticipated, George stood his ground. In his effort to avert disagreements with the Pope Curia and build an alliance, George of Poděbrady opted for a remarkable and unprecedented act. Between 1462 and 1464, he sent a message to all Western European rulers in order to convince them to establish a union of European nations for peace. His idea was that every member of the union would have possessed the same rights and that all possible conflicts would have been resolved peacefully. European rulers were confronted with such a grand idea for the first time ever. Unfortunately, for a lengthy period, it was for the last time. Despite the fact that this idea of George of Poděbrady stemmed from the impending Turkish danger, it was obvious that he drew his experience from the contemporary situation in the Czech Kingdom that was under the threat of the Pope. George's efforts turned out to be fruitless. Also, the wheel of fortune turned against him and in March 1471 he died prematurely. Nevertheless, it is necessary to highlight the fact that the text of George's message to his European partners became a cornerstone of the present European Union.



During the reign of the Jagiellons in the following years, the Czech lands flourished economically, culturally and religious freedom existed. However, after the Habsburgs took over, a clash between Protestant estates and towns on one side and absolutistic agenda of the Habsburgs on the other side became inevitable. The almost one-hundred-years-lasting struggle of the Czech estates to “rule the roost” culminated in an anti-Habsburg uprising, followed by the Czech and the Thirty Years Wars. The breeding ground was the event of 23rd May 1618 dubbed the Prague defenestration. The imperial governors including their writer were thrown by an angry crowd out of the Prague castles windows. The victims who did not suffer any serious injuries took their revenge three years later.



On 8th November 1620, a minor short battle of the White Mountain decided the destiny of the country for three centuries to come. Disunited estates relied entirely on foreign mercenaries who lacked motivation and their fighting morale depended on “cash”. Some of them liked Prague pubs too much and were unable to make it to the battleground. It turned out to be preposterous to rely on help from the English King, Protestant allies and the “Winter King” Frederick V, the main figure of the German Calvinists who made a cowardly retreat from Prague.

After the defeat, the estates did not manage to protect Prague although their financial situation was still favorable. The exemplary execution of 27 Czech aristocrats, burghers and knights staged at the Old Town Square on 21st June 1621 was a typical medieval bullying show. John Jessenius of Essen, once a personal doctor of the Emperor Rudolph II and the King Mathias, who had performed the first public autopsy in Prague suffered the most. Before his beheading, his tongue was pulled out and cut off. Looting of imperial troops, confiscation of property with subsequent re-Catholicization and an exodus of non-Catholics abroad brought about hard times for the city.

The significance of Prague diminished; however, she did not lose her political and military importance. Gradually, the city was converted into a Baroque bastion with a remarkable citadel of Vyšehrad located to the south. Two special banners made for the purpose of the protection of the castle are considered to be the first signs of a permanent garrison. Until 1644, a Prague garrison battalion was responsible for the city's defense and protection.

In the following decades, the face of the city was decorated by works of Baroque architects and sculptors who endorsed the power of the Catholic Church and at the same time they imbued the city and her skyline with inimitable, typical features. In 1707, an estates engineering college was established – the very first technical university in Europe.

In 1760, an embarrassing or rather amusing incident of a minor importance occurred. A few carriages, belonging to two aristocrats Černín and Špork, got bogged down in the city center inside a sewer, it was realized that the situation became intolerable. The uninviting ditch which had gathered domestic waste from all toilets in the neighborhood was finally filled up and lined with two rows of trees. Today, hardly anyone would imagine that the well-known Na Příkopce Avenue, the 17th richest in the world, had such a smelly origin.

The latter half of the 18th century was the period of Maria Theresa's and Joseph's II reforms implementation. Maria Theresa revised and centralized local governments while Prague was not among her favorites. Her son, Joseph II, an enlightened monarch struggled to introduce

a unified official language – German. His endeavor activated the national revival movement that became instrumental in laying the firm foundation of the Czech culture.

Centralization originating in Vienna had an unfavorable impact on Prague. Despite this, Prague was able to retain her status as a national and cultural center. The world premiere of Mozart's Don Giovanni in 1787 included the quote “My Praguers understand me”. National revival efforts concentrated on research and protection of the Czech language, opening a general hospital in 1788, and an industrial exhibition in 1791. All these events indicated that Prague would fare well in the upcoming century of steam, electricity, railroad and gas lamps.

On 11th March 1848, the St. Wenceslas spa was the gathering place for Prague citizens. A petition that was drafted requested the Emperor to establish a new national entity composed of the Lands of the Czech Crown. The petition also called for the freedom of press, freedom to gather, and freedom of religions and equality in all spheres of public life. Unfortunately, good intentions fell on deaf ears. The June uprising was suppressed and the Bach absolutism era that emerged meant another period of frustration for Prague and her people.

History of Prague shows the amazing spirit of her inhabitants. The National Theater that had burned down was readily rebuilt; the pillars and arches on the Charles Bridge were repaired soon after the devastating flood of 1890. In 1891, the National Jubilee Exhibition reopened to highlight the immense industrial, craft, scientific and cultural progress.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the political scene witnessed the arrival of an elderly Prague university professor, a member of the parliament in Vienna. In 1910, on the occasion of his 60th birthday, his friends and students joined their efforts to publish a special memorial volume to summarize his lifetime work. None of the initiators would have imagined that the professor, a supporter of evolution who had always despised war and revolution had yet another masterpiece to accomplish – independence of Czechoslovakia.

After Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo, almost all of Europe fell into war turmoil resulting from allied treaties. The great Czech, T.G. Masaryk, a Prague university professor, left the country at the age of 64. Due to his activities in exile, Czech and Slovak prisoners of war fighting on the side of the Triple Entente became loyal legionaries. The great victory over the armies of the central powers at Zborov, which occurred within the so-called Kerensky's offensive, sent a loud message to the entire world that Czechs and Slovaks were also prepared to fight for their homeland.

(To be continued)