

# Survivor's Guide to the Czech Republic

An Unofficial Setting Sourcebook for Twilight: 2013

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This document contains release v1.0 (05 July 2010).

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# **Introduction**

*We'd been on the run since the brigade's last push into southern Poland fell apart and it looked like our number was up. Our truck was a few klicks back, its smoldering remains left broadside across the road, but that hadn't bought us more than a minute or two. I was driving the Toyota while Llewellyn rode shotgun. Kozlowski was in the bed, alternately cussing me and trying to rig IVs on the wounded. The rest of the squad was behind us in the humvee, burning off the last of the fifty-caliber ammo every time our pursuers popped into view.*

*Without warning, something the size of a small warship lumbered across the road in front of us. I slammed on the brakes, triggering a metal-on-metal shriek of protest and another round of obscenities from my passengers. We skidded to a halt in a spray of mud; the humvee stopped about two meters short of ramming us. The mist settled to reveal a rusty BMP with its turret slewed in our general direction, the main gun looking as big as a sewer pipe. In the rearview mirror, I saw Koz make an abortive lunge for our last rocket, then freeze as the treeline bristled and a half-dozen AKs swung in his general direction. How the hell did they get in front of us?*

*One hard-faced bastard detached himself from a shrub and stalked over to my window, keeping his rifle leveled. He sized us up, taking in the blood, the bullet holes... his eyes slid over to Llewellyn and the stony expression relaxed about a millimeter. He let the rifle slide down to low ready and jabbed a callused finger at the Union Jack on Llewellyn's shoulder. "You. British? NATO?"*

*I silently willed Lew not to smart off. Either my telepathy worked or the amount of firepower pointed at us was enough to quell her usual mouthiness, because she contented herself with a terse nod. "Yeah. Royal Navy. The rest are all NATO too." Then she reverted to type. "Look, mate, what the bloody f--"*

*The hiss and slam of RPGs, followed by short, rattling bursts of fire, cut her off. A hungry almost-smirk violated the structural integrity of our new friend's visage. He turned his head and called out in something that sounded Slavic but not quite Russian. A fellow with a medic bag trotted over and vaulted up next to Koz.*

*The newcomer banged a fist on the roof of the pickup's cab and leaned down to the rear window. "Hey, guys. I'm Radek, I'll take you in. Master sergeant says to keep moving, we'll handle the Russians. Our aid station's another two klicks down the road."*

*I nodded to the sergeant and put the pickup into gear. He stepped away and waved us past the BMP, which was cranking around to head toward the fight. "Done soon. You buy first beer." I couldn't quite tell if he was joking.*

*And that was our welcome to the Czech Republic.*

Central Europe experienced a minor renaissance after its emergence from Soviet domination in the early 1990s. New countries arose from the ashes of the Warsaw Pact – some violently, some peacefully. Political reform, economic growth, and rediscovery of cultural identities resulted in a flowering of nations eager to savor their newfound independence and establish ties with the rest of the world.

All too soon, the party ended. The 2010s brought a worldwide wave of catastrophes, from natural disasters to those wrought entirely by the words and deeds of men. Caught between the expansionist crusades of Russia and the European Union, the Central European nations became some of the Twilight War's bloodiest battlegrounds. To a generation raised outside the shadow of the Cold War, the shift from hope and prosperity to desperation was

shattering. To their elders, the return of the bad old times *they'd* grown up expecting was a nightmare deferred.

Before the onset of the troubles, the Czech Republic was one of the most successful post-Soviet states. A near-universal demand for self-determination brought down the Czechoslovakian Communist Party and led to the peaceful, voluntary dissolution of Czechoslovakia into the separate Czech Republic and Slovak Republic. The subsequent transition to a democratic government and a capitalist economy spurred unprecedented growth, which enabled the country to endure the early 2010s better than many of its neighbors. Gross domestic product never stopped a bullet, though, and the Twilight War and its resulting turmoil wrought havoc on the nation.

Now, as the Last Year draws to a close, the Czech Republic is balanced on the edge of the proverbial knife. The central government still retains a semblance of control over the western and central parts of the country. Much of the local infrastructure is intact or recoverable, as are vital industrial and agricultural capacities. Its central location puts it on the route of almost any movement across Central Europe. But hostile military forces – one still fighting the Twilight War, another whose intentions are not so transparent – occupy large swaths of land. Former allies are gathering on the border, casting the shadow of history in what may be preparation for another land grab. And dissent over the government's conduct during the war threatens to tear the country apart from within. The Czech Republic has the potential to become a major power in the new Europe emerging from the rubble – if it can survive next week.

## What This Book Is

Survivor's Guide to the Czech Republic is a setting sourcebook for **Twilight: 2013** campaigns set in Central Europe. It's intended as a toolbox for GMs and a sandbox for players, allowing several different play styles within the same geographic area.

**Chapter One: *Pravda Vitezi*** (Truth Prevails) summarizes Czech history and examines in detail the events of 2007-2013 that impacted the Czech Republic and its neighbors.

**Chapter Two: *Kde Domov Muj?*** (Where Is My Home?) is a high-level view of the Czech Republic's status as of mid-2013, including geography, resources, and the look and feel of the land and people.

**Chapter Three: *Factions and Forces*** presents the first- and second-tier power blocs influencing present and future events within the Czech Republic, including the military forces and other significant agencies and assets at their command.

**Chapter Four: *City of a Hundred Spires*** takes a close look at Prague, the nation's capital and largest population center. Having survived the Twilight War relatively intact, Prague is once again a major economic, political, and espionage hub of Central Europe. This chapter also describes the shadow war of espionage now raging in Prague and throughout the rest of the region.

**Chapter Five: *Power Struggle*** looks at one of the Czech Republic's most valuable reconstruction resources – Nuclear Power Station Temelin – and the Russian-occupied zone surrounding it.

**Chapter Six: *Moravia in Ruins*** provides details on the war-torn eastern portion of the Czech Republic. It also examines the Czech-based portion of the Central Group of Forces, the Russian military command occupying Moravia and the Slovak Republic.

**Appendix: *Steel Fist, Velvet Glove*** presents unit profiles for notable units of the ACR and its local allies, as well as character creation resources and other relevant information for building Czech PCs.



~~In addition, 93 Games Studio offers two supplements usable with any **Twilight: 2013** campaign but particularly appropriate to this setting. **Shooter's Guide: Weapons Czech** examines the fruits of the Czechoslovakian (and later Czech) defense industry, providing background information and game traits for both civilian and military small arms common throughout the country. **Driver's Guide: Czech Your Engine** examines Czech, Russian, and British military vehicles that PCs are likely to acquire or face in the theatre. Both of these are available as electronic documents.~~

### What This Book Isn't

This is not a travel guide, nor is it a textbook on Czech culture or history. Much as those subjects intrigued us during our research for this work, we didn't have the space to present them in great detail, and doing so would have diluted our primary focus. If you're interested in such topics, check the 93 Games Studio forums (<http://www.93gamesstudio.com/forum/>) for our recommended information sources – or visit your local library or preferred online or brick-and-mortar bookstore.

Additionally, this book is not meant as a social or political commentary on real-world events. As we established in the **Twilight: 2013** core rulebook, our game history diverges from that of the real world on 01 January 2007. Writing this in early 2010, we have the advantage of a few more years of parallel history on which to draw, but any resemblance between events in this book and those through which we're living today is purely coincidental.

For the record: we apologize for any inaccuracies in portraying Czech culture, history geography, military or intelligence capabilities, or political processes. If you feel the need to set us straight, feel free to visit those aforementioned forums and share your expertise. Seriously. We and our players are always interested in firsthand verisimilitude.

### Restricted Access

Throughout this book, the "Restricted Access" header on a sidebar indicates an expansion or clarification of setting material that may be of interest to you, the reader, but isn't necessarily something any player character knows. With us? Good.

## Glossary

**112:** The prewar phone number for Czech emergency services, now used as both a Morse code radio call (•---- •---- ••----) and general slang for an emergency request for aid.

**ABM:** Anti-Ballistic Missile.

**ACR:** *Armada Ceske Republiky* (Army of the Czech Republic), military and intelligence shorthand for both the overall Czech combined armed forces and their ground forces component. In the context of this book, not to be confused with Armored Cavalry Regiment, a U.S. Army designation for a mechanized/airmobile reconnaissance and strike force.

**AFV:** Armored Fighting Vehicle, general term for any purpose-built combat vehicle capable of withstanding more than small arms fire.

**AO:** Area of Operations.

**BIS:** *Bezpecnostni Informacni Sluzba* (Security Information Service), the Czech counter-intelligence agency.

**Bohemia:** A region of Central Europe now generally synonymous with the western Czech Republic.

**CD:** *Ceske Drahy* (Czech Railways), the primary Czech rail transport operator.

**CEZ:** CEZ Group (yes, it's recursive), the Czech national energy collective.

**CGF:** Central Group of Forces. Originally the Soviet designation for the five divisions and affiliated units stationed in Czechoslovakia after 1968. Later appropriated by the commanders of the Russian forces occupying Slovakia and the eastern Czech Republic in the later phases of the Twilight War.

**CRo:** *Cesky Rozhlas* (Czech Radio), the Czech government-funded radio network.

**CSSD:** *Ceska Strana Socialne Demokraticka* (Czech Social Democratic Party), a major Czech political party with a left-leaning socialist focus.

**CT:** *Ceske Televize* (Czech Television), the Czech government-funded television network.

**CZ:** *Ceska Zbrojovka* (Czech Armory), former Czechoslovakian designation for the companies nationalized into the government-owned small arms industry. In the post-Communist era, used as a trade name by several successor corporations, typically differentiated by home city – e.g. "CZ Uhersky Brod," "CZ Strakonice," "CZ Brno."

**.cz:** The top-level Internet domain name for the Czech Republic. Starting in 2012, colloquially used by younger Anglophone troops to refer to the country as a whole – e.g. "welcome to the see-zee, boys, have a beer."

**GRU:** *Glavnoye Razvedyvatel'noye Upravleniye* (Main Intelligence Directorate), the Russian military intelligence service.

**KDU-CSL:** *Krestanska a Demokraticka Unie – Ceskoslovenska Strana Lidova* (Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party), a Czech political party with conservative right-wing ideals.

**KSCM:** *Komunisticka Strana Cech a Moravy* (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia), the left-leaning Czech Communist political party.

**Moravia:** A region of Central Europe now generally defined as the southeastern Czech Republic.

**MRB:** Motor Rifle Brigade, Soviet and later Russian designation for the doctrinal equivalent of a Western mechanized infantry brigade.

**MRD:** Motor Rifle Division. See **MRB**.

**NZI:** *Narodni Zemedelsky Iniciativa* (National Agricultural Initiative), the Czech government's crash program of agricultural expansion in the immediate prewar years.

**ODS:** *Obcanska Demokraticka Strana* (Civic Democratic Party), the right-wing core of the prewar Czech government's opposition coalition.

**PCR:** *Policie Ceske Republiky* (Police of the Czech Republic), the Czech federal law enforcement agency.

**PK:** *Pasmu s Kontrolnim* (Zone of Control), an area of the Czech Republic that the Pribram Agreement recognizes as existing under Russian military occupation and martial law.

**PMC:** Private Military Company or Private Military Contractor, 21st-century corporate-speak for "mercenary."

**PSC:** Private Security Company. See **PMC**.

**S&B:** Sellier & Bellot, a Czech ammunition company based in Vlasim.

**SBCT:** Stryker Brigade Combat Team, the U.S. Army designation for an infantry brigade organized and trained around light/mechanized infantry doctrine and the Stryker family of AFVs.

**Silesia:** A region of Central Europe now distributed between southwestern Poland, the northwestern Slovak Republic, and the northeastern Czech Republic.

**SIS:** *Slovenska Informacna Sluzba* (Slovak Intelligence Service), the Slovak counter-intelligence agency. Alternately, Secret Intelligence Service, the British foreign intelligence agency popularly known as "MI6."

**StB:** *Statni Bezpecnost* (State Security), the Cold War-era secret police of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party.

**SVR:** *Sluzhba Vneshney Razvedki* (Foreign Intelligence Service), the Russian foreign intelligence agency. Successor to the KGB's First Chief Directorate.

**UZSI:** *Urad pro Zahranicni Styky a Informace* (Office for Foreign Relations and Information), the Czech foreign intelligence agency.

**VDV:** *Vozdushno-Desantnye Vojska* (roughly "Air Landing Troops"), Soviet and later Russian designation for airborne forces. Considered a separate arm of service in Russian military, rather than airborne units within the Russian Army.

**VZ:** *Vojenske Zpravodajstvi* (Military Intelligence), the Czech military intelligence and counter-intelligence service.

## The Standard Unit Profile

Although **Twilight: 2013** doesn't maintain an exclusive focus on military action, it is a game about the aftermath of World War III. That makes the world's surviving military units forces to be reckoned with in both the physical and political arenas. It's the rare remaining formation that's more than a battered shell of its prewar self, but such numbers are relative these days, and a company-strength remnant of a former brigade can still exert significant influence if it applies its strength properly.

Rather than constrain gamemasters with exact figures of manpower and firepower, we've chosen to take a descriptive approach to unit characteristics. Throughout this and future supplements, we'll use the following general terminology to depict units in broad strokes. Readers who desire more detail on a specific unit's order of battle or table of organization & equipment can visit our online forums, where our staff and your fellow fans can provide an embarrassment of riches. Most elements of the unit profiles presented here are self-explanatory, but a few require definition.

### Strength

This entry is a general descriptor of the manpower available to a unit as of mid-2013, broken down by three categories. "Combat" indicates personnel that most militaries would classify as front-line fighters: infantry, armor, artillery (both field and air defense), and reconnaissance troops. "Combat support" indicates any force that may be equipped for light combat but has another primary function at or near the front lines: transport, military police, signals, and combat engineer units. "Support" indicates sub-units that (at least before late 2012) weren't really supposed to engage in fighting at all: intelligence, logistics, medical, and administrative personnel.

In terms of actual warm bodies, the following hierarchy roughly conforms to the standards of many modern ground forces while strictly adhering to none:

- **Division:** 10,000 to 25,000 personnel, subdivided into brigades or regiments. May also include battalions or even companies of specialized troops (engineering, signals, military police) that aren't directly subordinate to a brigade or regiment.
- **Brigade or Regiment:** 3,500 to 10,000 personnel, subdivided into battalions.

- **Battalion:** 600 to 1,200 personnel, subdivided into companies. This is the smallest unit level at which a combat unit generally includes support sub-units (though the reverse is rarely true – few support battalions include dedicated combat companies).
- **Company:** 70 to 250 personnel, subdivided into platoons.
- **Platoon:** 20 to 60 personnel. Platoons generally subdivide into multiple *squads* or *sections*, but units operating at such small levels in 2013 generally aren't worthy of detailed attention unless they contain the PCs.

As a matter of practice, by mid-2013 it's impossible to find a functioning division-sized command structure, and damned few brigades are operating. Most units still refer to themselves by their prewar designations but have actual manpower one or two tiers down the scale.

### **Armor**

This entry refers to the unit's pool of AFVs: main battle tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers, and combat support variants thereof. Rather than give precise figures, the following general descriptors apply:

- **Heavy:** Somehow, the unit is well-supplied with armor. Half or more of its sub-units (e.g. for a battalion, half or more of its companies) are fully equipped with combat vehicles. In an encounter with elements of this unit, there's a 60% chance of one or more such vehicles being present or within immediate response range.
- **Medium:** The unit has retained or acquired a small number of AFVs. Less than half of its sub-units are so equipped, and these may not have a full complement. In an encounter with elements of this unit, there's a 25% chance of one or two combat vehicles being present or within immediate response range.
- **Light:** The unit has only a scattering of AFVs. These precious remnants are carefully husbanded for defense of key positions and take the field only for critical operations. PCs will encounter these vehicles only near base areas or in pivotal engagements.
- **None:** The unit has no AFVs worth mentioning (though it probably would like to get its hands on some).

### **Supply**

This entry depicts the unit's available reserves and ongoing sources of mission-critical supplies. For most combat units, these are food, water, ammunition, fuel, and medicine. Specific exception cases may be noted after the general descriptor:

- **Full:** The unit is well-stocked with the basics and maybe even a few luxuries. Its lines of supply are well-secured. If somehow cut off, it is capable of independent function for a period of several months, assuming well-ordered rationing.
- **Adequate:** The unit has either a good reserve or adequate supply lines but not both. If forced to operate independently, it can sustain itself for a few weeks to a few months, depending on the local situation and the GM's needs.
- **Poor:** The unit has little to no influx of supplies. It's keeping itself going by cannibalizing equipment (but hopefully not personnel), trading with local civilians, and/or finding or creating field-expedient alternate sources. If forced to go it alone, it can operate for less than a month.
- **None:** The unit is on its last legs and has no means other than conquest of renewing its available supplies. It has less than a week of essential reserves.

### **Transport**

This entry describes the unit's overall mobility in general terms: mechanized (powered vehicles), cavalry, or foot. Any special modes of transport available to the unit are also featured here. In this context, mechanized transport includes both combat-capable troop carriers and soft-skinned passenger and cargo vehicles, and cavalry includes both mounts and draft animals.

### **Key (Prewar) Facts**

**Area:** 78,866 km<sup>2</sup> (equiv. Austria, Panama, South Carolina)

**Usable Farmland:** ~33,000 km<sup>2</sup> (~2,400 km<sup>2</sup> in agricultural use)

**Bodies of Water:** ~1,600 km<sup>2</sup>

**Borders:** Germany, Poland, Austria, Slovakia

**Population:** 10.4 million

**Population Density:** 133 people/km<sup>2</sup> (equiv. China, Denmark, Florida)

**Urbanization:** 69%

### **Key (Postwar) Facts**

**Area under Government Control:** ~40,000 km<sup>2</sup>

**Borders:** Germany, Russian-Occupied Moravia, Poland, Russian-Occupied Austria

**Population:** 3.8 million (est.)

**Population Density:** 48 people/km<sup>2</sup> (equiv. prewar Mexico, Afghanistan, South Carolina)

**Urbanization:** 30% (est.)

# **Chapter One: Pravda Vitezi**

*It was the kind of early summer day you want to bottle and save for the gray and rainy times. I was riding in the back of the pickup with our local guide, a farmer whose wagons we were towing into town in exchange for some of his best homebrew – fuel for the vehicles and a different kind of fuel for the squad. His English wasn't any better than my Czech, but he had enough Polish to talk through Kozlowski.*

*We were rolling past the well-preserved remains of some ancient fortification – I'm talking "knights and catapults" ancient. On a whim, I picked up the binoculars for a closer look and caught the glint of someone glassing me in return. The observer noticed my regard and waved unconcernedly. I took in the heavy machine gun in the shadows beside him and tentatively waved back.*

*The farmer caught my interest and gabbled something, gesturing exuberantly. Koz translated: "He says it's friendlies. Local militia. Zizka Brigade, whoever that is."*

*"Whew. Good. What's with Castle Greyskull? Never mind," I added at Koz's blank stare.*

*Another gabble, then Koz frowned. "If I'm getting this right, he says it's the new castle that the Romans put up in the seventeenth century. I guess he means the Habsburgs, who were really Austrian Holy Roman, not Roman Roman..." He trailed off as I blinked at him. "Heh. Never mind."*

*"Wait, what? New castle? Koz, that's four hundred years, man."*

*"Yeah." Koz pointed to what I'd taken for a low, jagged hill in the distance. "That's the old castle."*

In the Czech Republic, history is inescapable. The nation was born from the events of the two World Wars and the subsequent Cold War. In turn, the factors that spawned those conflicts had their own roots in the Renaissance and before. This chapter presents a painfully abbreviated overview of the shaping of Czech national history and identity through the end of World War II. After 1945, we provide a bit more detail on the 20th century's subsequent developments – history that, in 2013, is still in living memory. The Twilight War, of course, receives the lion's share of attention.

If you really don't have the patience for a history lesson, we'll forgive you. The run-up to the Twilight War begins on page **xx**.

## **Background**

Throughout the early Medieval period, the regions that would eventually become the Czech Republic – Bohemia in the west and Moravia in the east – fell under the rule of various tribal groups and local kings. The emergence of the Bohemian Premyslid royal house in the late 9th century marked the ascent of a local tribe who would one day form the area's dominant ethnic group: the Czechs.

The Premyslids grew into a regional power, exerting their influence over Bohemia for nearly 500 years. In the mid-10th century, the dynasty continued to gain power even after the Holy Roman Empire absorbed it. The line died out in 1306, but alliance marriages transferred much of the Premyslid power and prestige to the rulers of Luxembourg.

The Golden Age of Czech history began in 1346 when King Charles IV ascended to the thrones of Luxembourg and Bohemia – and, a decade later, was crowned Holy Roman Emperor. Between his coronation and his death in 1378, Charles enacted a series of reforms designed to consolidate power and promote long-term stability within the Empire. His imperial capital was Prague, where he invested heavily in modernization and new

construction. Many of the city's famous landmarks were the results of his projects, including Charles University, one of the oldest universities in Central Europe. The modern-day Czech Republic still recognizes Charles IV as the Czech *otec vlasti* – father of the nation.

Half a century after its founding, Charles University spawned one of the Protestant Reformation's first precursors. Its rector, Jan Hus, spent over a decade denouncing the excesses of the Catholic priesthood and European nobility. The Roman Catholic Church executed him in 1415 but his Hussite movement took hold throughout Bohemia, triggering the 19-year Hussite Wars. Rome's crusade against the alleged heretics generated periodic German-led invasions of Bohemia; these alternated with civil wars between Hussite factions until 1436. The conflict also produced two major population movements whose effects would be felt for centuries. First, the Hussites expelled thousands of German Catholics from Bohemia, setting the stage for later German resentment. Second, Bohemian and Moravian refugee movements into Slovakia intermingled Czech and Slovak populations, strengthening the ties between the two ethnic groups.

Over the next century, rulership of Bohemia changed hands from Hussites to the Polish Jagiellon dynasty, then again to the Holy Roman Empire's Habsburg family. The Catholic Habsburgs soon came into conflict with the largely Protestant Bohemian nobility. In 1618, Prague's nobles arrested, tried, and convicted two Catholic functionaries on charges of interfering with Protestant religious practices, launching a Protestant rebellion. The Holy Roman Empire crushed the Bohemian Protestants in 1620, replacing much of the local nobility with loyal German Catholics, but the Bohemian example sparked other Protestant movements across Europe and ignited the Thirty Years' War. The generation-long conflict saw combat, famine, plague, and forced relocations reduce the populations of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia by over two-thirds.

After the war, recovery was slow. In the mid-18th century, the Habsburgs enacted a series of reforms to centralize their power and standardize the Imperial bureaucracy. German became the official language of government and, by extension, business and academia. However, even as German influences weighed on Czech culture, the Habsburgs' erosion of feudal power saw Czech merchants and tradesmen effectively supplant Bohemia's German-descended nobility. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, Bohemia and Moravia remained under Habsburg rule, through the end of the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburgs' subsequent reorganization of their remaining lands into the Austrian – later Austro-Hungarian – Empire.

In the early 19th century, European nationalist movements led to a renaissance of Czech cultural and historical studies, formerly suppressed by the Habsburgs and previous rulers. In Bohemia, Josef Dobrovsky and Josef Jungmann reintroduced the Czech language – once reduced to a regional peasant tongue – to academic prominence. Czech literature flourished, as did interest in repressed ethnic traditions. In 1836, historian Frantisek Palacky published *The History of the Czech Nation*, which became the definitive work on the subject. A decade later, Palacky became a key leader of Czech opposition to a German nationalist drive for annexation of Bohemia and Moravia. Bohemian – and, to a lesser extent, Moravian and Slovak – internal politics were marked by ongoing sparring between German and Slavic nationalists. This and other shared stresses, along with mutual Slavic descent and cultural history, led the growing Czech and Slovak nationalist movements to align in the 1890s.

## **The 20th Century: Czechoslovakia**

In 1914, the Great War erupted, dragging Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia into the conflict under the Austro-Hungarian Empire's flag. Somewhat less than enthused about serving under the banner of foreign rulers to kill fellow Slavs, thousands of Czechs and Slovaks defected to fight for the Alliance Powers against the Empire. On the political front, the two

nationalist movements united and dispatched representatives to lobby the major Alliance powers for autonomy. Following the Empire's defeat, the Allies acknowledged Czechoslovakia as a sovereign state. On October 28, 1918, Czechoslovakia proclaimed its independence in its new capital of Prague.

Czechoslovakian autonomy was as short-lived as the memories of the nations who'd formerly supported it. In March 1938, Nazi Germany annexed Austria and began to claim centuries-old historical precedent for possession of the so-called *Sudetenland* – most of Czechoslovakia's northern border regions. On September 29, a summit of German, Italian, British, and French representatives – with no Czechoslovakian involvement – met in Munich to discuss German demands. In an attempt to appease Hitler, the resulting Munich Agreement (or the "Munich Dictate" or "Western Betrayal," depending on one's perspective) acknowledged Germany's claims on Czechoslovakian land. The following day, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain made his (in)famous declaration of "peace in our time."

In the Munich Agreement's wake, Czechoslovakia crumbled. President Edvard Benes, recognizing his nation's inevitable collapse, resigned on October 5 and fled the country with key members of his government. The new Czechoslovakian administration found its power base critically weakened by the loss of the *Sudetenland* and the effects of the later Vienna Award, which forced the country to cede more territory to Hungary and Poland. Slovakia split from Bohemia and Moravia on March 14, 1939, and the new "Slovak State" acquired a puppet government answering to the Nazis. The next day, Germany invaded the remaining Czech territories, which promptly surrendered and were absorbed into the third Reich as the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. More officials fled to rejoin President Benes in England, where they operated as the Czechoslovakian government-in-exile for the next six years.

The German occupation lasted until 1945. Hungry for raw materials and production capacity, the Nazis nationalized mining, manufacturing, and other industries vital to the war effort. The occupation's initial months were relatively tame, but Operation Anthropoid – the 1942 assassination of Nazi head of state Reinhard Heydrich – brought increasingly severe treatment. Total Czechoslovakian deaths in concentration camps and political purges were between 100,000 and 130,000, including virtually all of Bohemia and Moravia's 90,000 or more Jews who remained in the Protectorate after 1939.

Resistance operations in occupied Czechoslovakia were fragmented, organized along prewar community or political lines. Nazi reprisals after Operation Anthropoid gutted most of these groups – save for the Communist-backed organizations, which had few ties to their ideological rivals in other networks. After 1942, efforts to rebuild naturally centered around these survivors. A 1944 mass Slovak uprising ultimately failed, but distracted German forces enough to ease the Red Army's initial movements into the country. In the wake of the Soviet advance, troops turned over security and administration to local partisan groups – again, most often Communists. The Prague Uprising of May 5-8 marked the effective end of the Nazi presence of Czechoslovakia.

In mid-1945, Soviet, British, and American leaders gathered at the Potsdam Conference to determine the fate of the former Third Reich. Among other provisions, the resulting Potsdam Agreement allowed Czechoslovakia to deport ethnic German residents. By the end of 1946, over 2.5 million people lost their property rights and citizenship and were forcibly relocated to East and West Germany. Another estimated 300,000 died in various reprisals.

The first postwar Czechoslovakian elections the following year reaffirmed Edvard Benes' presidency. However, the key roles that Communist resistance groups and the Red Army played in Czechoslovakian liberation allowed the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to take a controlling role in the government. Two years later, the only remaining Eastern European democracy fell: in the face of open preparations for a coup, Benes reluctantly accepted a new Communist government, then resigned rather than sign a Communist constitution.



Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Czechoslovakia moved toward Soviet-style industrialization – and political purges of public figures whose ties to the West were too strong. However, excessive government control led to economic stagnation. In 1965, the government introduced a limited free market. The loosening of the financial reins spawned a matching desire for reduced social control and the Communist Party began edging toward democracy. In early 1968, Alexander Dubcek's election as Party First Secretary marked a turning point in Czechoslovakian Communism.

In the series of events later known as the Prague Spring, Dubcek enacted extensive reforms based on the concept that socialism should mean not only economic but social freedom from class conflict. His Action Programme espoused a break from Soviet socialist principles in favor of lesser or nonexistent constraints on free speech, the press, assembly, and internal and international travel. Perhaps most dangerously in Soviet eyes, Dubcek's proposed "socialism with a human face" re-opened the possibility of multi-party government. High-level talks to reaffirm Czechoslovakian commitment to the Warsaw Pact failed to quell Soviet concerns. On August 20, 1968, the Red Army and allied Pact nations executed Operation Danube, invading Czechoslovakia and seizing control of government, transportation, and communication centers. Dubcek pleaded with Czechoslovakian citizenry to not resist, but civil disobedience spontaneously welled up across the country. Some 300,000 citizens fled Czechoslovakia in the following months. A replacement puppet government quickly moved to reverse Dubcek's reforms, save for an administrative separation between the Czech and Slovak halves of the country.

After Operation Danube, the Soviets permanently stationed troops in Czechoslovakia. The Central Group of Forces totaled five divisions plus support units – all told, roughly 90,000 men. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviet Union gradually increased Czechoslovakia's dependence on it, giving the country a reputation as one of the more harshly-controlled Communist nations.

## **The Czech Republic**

The 1989 fall of Communism in Hungary and Poland, as well as the first stirrings of German reunification, heralded the end of Soviet dominance of Czechoslovakia. On November 17, largely peaceful protests throughout the country marked the beginning of the Velvet Revolution. A nationwide general strike on November 27 demonstrated the extent of support for democracy. The following day, the Communist Party agreed to return power to the hands of the people. On December 29, the Czechoslovakian parliament elected playwright Vaclav Havel to the presidency. In June 1990, Czechoslovakia held its first free public elections since 1946.

Freed from Communist suppression, Slovak separatist movements gained strength. In the latter half of 1992, the senior political leadership of the Czech and Slovak sides of Czechoslovakia agreed to peacefully dissolve the nation. The Velvet Divorce was finalized on January 1, 1993, when Czechoslovakia formally separated into the Czech Republic and the Republic of Slovakia.

The remainder of the 1990s saw rapid liberalization as the Czech Republic sought a new national identity. The government privatized almost all state-owned industries, triggering an economic boom that made the country one of the most prosperous former Soviet client states. A large-scale military drawdown led to a search for external defense alliances. In 1999, the Czechs joined NATO.

The early 21st century saw continued economic growth, including a sudden upswing in tourism as European and American travelers rediscovered Central European history and cheap travel. The Czech government strengthened its economic, military, and political ties to its western neighbors, becoming a full EU member in 2004. Rapid industrial and

technological modernization brought the Czech standard of living close to that of many Western European nations. The first years of the new century seemed to be the dawn of a second golden age for the nation.

In 2007, the BIS became aware of a growing Russian espionage effort within Czech borders. The primary focus was on technological and economic information, but some agents appeared to be influencing Czech public opinion against NATO defense cooperation. The issue came to a head in mid-2008, when the United States and the United Kingdom began construction of an Eastern European missile defense network. The Czech-based components were a guidance radar system and an ABM battery, respectively in the Brdy region and just south of Karlovy Vary. The Russian government strenuously protested the network's creation, going so far as to advise the host nations of their presence on "the list" – referring to the Strategic Rocket Forces' ICBM targeting list. In the Czech Republic, domestic opposition coalesced around the No Bases Initiative, a movement advocating complete withdrawal from NATO and EU defense treaties. The BIS suspected, but was unable to prove, further Russian influence on the group's leaders. The Czech Republic's closest EU defense partners, Austria and Slovakia, reported similar concerns.

In the summer of 2009, the European heat wave wrought havoc on Czech crop production. The nation's status as a food exporter made it relatively well-positioned to withstand the crisis, albeit with severe economic consequences for the agricultural sector. Fearing the harsh weather might be the beginning of a pattern rather than an isolated incident, the Czech government moved to mitigate possible long-term effects.

## **2010: Trouble Behind, Trouble Ahead**

The beginning of 2010 brought confirmation of the Czech government's worst fears in the form of updated long-range climate predictions. Shaken by recent events and projections for the next decade, the government and the University of Life Sciences in Prague launched the aggressive National Agricultural Initiative. The controversial program diverted funds into expansion of the nation's agricultural industry on several levels, ranging from farm subsidies to scholarships for accelerated university programs. Although political opponents widely criticized the NZI as a panicked sop for public opinion, it captured Czech popular imagination. Most urban areas recorded a noticeable population drop from residents attempting the transition to rural life. Results were, at best, mixed – few of the nascent "farmers" were prepared for the realities of such a move and these novices often did more harm than good in their new communities. Those who didn't alienate their neighbors were forced to abandon their dreams of self-sufficiency in favor of working as cheap labor on established farms. Still, quantity had a quality all its own, and 2010 showed a net increase in crop yields despite an incrementally worse growing season.

On the military front, EU pressure on the Czechs to sign the Treaty of Cordoba fanned the flames of public dissent over international military commitments. Although Czech forces continued to plan and train alongside EU and NATO partners, several senior ACR leaders threatened to resign in protest rather than accept European – notably German – command of Czech forces. Bowing to political realities, the embattled government refused to sign the treaty, claiming it would violate the Czech Constitution. Soon after, Slovakia stood with its closest defense partner, similarly refusing to ratify the treaty.

As Ukraine's disintegration gathered speed, the influx of refugees into neighboring Austria and Slovakia became a regional security concern. Initial movement was slow, as the Czech government was hesitant to appear hypocritical, but a Slovak request under mutual assistance agreements forced the ACR to mobilize reserve units. By early summer, several companies of Czech reservists were in Slovakia, assisting with border security and refugee management.

Skillful government spin control put Czech public opinion firmly on the refugees' side – a rare stance in the Europe of 2010. In August, the Slovak and Czech governments jointly denounced other EU nations' mass deportations of Ukrainians. Slovakia, whose economy always had lagged somewhat behind that of its western neighbor, launched an aggressive civil works program, creating thousands of (admittedly low-paying) jobs for its resident Ukrainians.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine triggered a brief panic in many other former Soviet satellites. Recalling previous Russian threats, the Czech government quietly stepped up civil defense preparations and training. It also authorized expansion of nuclear power generation capacity to offset the energy crisis that would result from losing access to Russian and Ukrainian fossil fuels.

## 2011: Taking Shelter

The beginning of 2011 heralded a continuation of 2010's crises – and more to come. In February, the Slovak SIS forwarded a report to its Czech BIS and UZSI counterparts. According to Slovak economic intelligence efforts, Russia was hiding the full extent of its food shortages from both the international community and its own citizens. The impending famine would likely be on a scale greater than even the 1921 aftermath of the Russian Civil War. Complete acquisition of Ukrainian territory would be insufficient to meet Russian agricultural needs.

Faced with multiple indicators of an invasion threat, the Czech Ministry of Defence quietly dusted off its plans for force expansion via conscription (previously abandoned in 2005 at the end of the post-Cold War force drawdown). Anticipating an influx of rusty veterans and raw recruits, the ACR geared up to increase the capacity of its training cadre and facilities. Between the ongoing Russian campaign in Ukraine and the July's French nuclear strike on Belarus, these preparations gathered speed against a backdrop of increasing public unease over military affairs. When a government leak in August finally made the Czech media aware of the ACR's activities, a firestorm of public outrage (intermingled with some curmudgeonly support) erupted.

On September 21, Parliament narrowly passed a measure authorizing funding for militia training in lieu of reactivating conscription plans. Under the State Militia Act, the ACR would offer instruction in basic military protocol, marksmanship, small unit and irregular tactics, and civil defense to all qualified citizens. More controversially, the program also was open to Slovak and Ukrainian citizens living on Czech soil. Formally, the militia units raised through this program were collectively subordinate to a new command structure, the 55th Light Infantry Brigade. The Czech press immediately referred to it as the "Zizka Brigade," and an unexpectedly skillful ACR public relations campaign capitalized on this association. By the end of the year, only official documents referred to the militia by its standard designation.

### Historical Context: Jan Zizka

The Hussite Wars created the greatest figure in Czech military history: Jan Zizka. When the Catholic Church declared a crusade against Bohemia, Zizka – a knight and court functionary in Prague – rose to command the Bohemians' most effective force. His first success was repelling and subsequently breaking the 1420 siege of Prague, after which he embarked on various campaigns to suppress Catholic sympathizers and repel German invaders until his death in 1424.

Zizka's military success stemmed from his unorthodox approach to everything from training to tactics. At the beginning of the conflict, his forces were mainly untrained farmers, possessing neither equipment nor funding suitable for a conventional army. Zizka took

what his troops already had, adapting the agricultural flail into a hand-to-hand weapon. He made early firearms viable in open-field engagements against heavy cavalry by converting farm wagons into platforms for the firearms of the day. When drawn up in a defensive formation – *vozova hradba*, literally "wagon walls" – these wagons served as mobile field fortifications against lance charges. Seven centuries later, these achievements and innovations, along with their historical weight, made Zizka the best possible symbol for the Czech Republic's newly-formed militia structure.

In early December, previous government and military efforts to increase civil defense preparedness appeared prescient. The Russo-French nuclear exchange sparked a brief panic, albeit without major civil disorder. However, the western portions of the Czech Republic – including Prague – fell within the area of effect of the EMP attacks on France. Most electronics west of the Vltava River were damaged or destroyed. Loss of life was minimal, but disruption to infrastructure – already underfunded thanks to the NZI and other recent projects – was severe.

Year's end brought another grim piece of news: the fall of Kiev and Russia's subsequent absorption of Ukraine. To all but the most idealistic of Czech observers, a Russian invasion was now inevitable. The question became not "if," but "when."

## 2012: Everything Old is New Again

The Russian troop buildup in Ukraine was an obvious precursor to renewed offensives after the spring thaw. EU forces expected the primary thrust to be against Poland, but Slovakia and Romania also were possible targets. Throughout the winter of 2011-2012, EU reinforcements for Czech and Slovak ground forces were sparse to nonexistent, ostensibly due to weather conditions and resource constraints. Although the same problems did affect food distribution across the region, forcing many communities to impose rationing, government and citizens alike believed the troop shortages were a deliberate EU snub in response to Czech rejection of the Treaty of Cordoba.

Aid came from an unexpected quarter in late January. Although it had declared neutrality in the European conflict, the UK still maintained a sizable garrison in Germany. In response to a quiet request for assistance, the British government tapped the 1st Armoured Division for an extended humanitarian aid mission in Slovak and Czech territory. The division began preparing to move from its barracks.

The first direct Russian action against Slovakia occurred on February 25. Russian hackers in Ukraine launched a massive cyberwar attack on Austrian, Slovak, and Czech network backbones, primarily targeting military command and control systems. Simultaneously, Russian air assets targeted the air defenses of these countries, clearing a path for elements of the 106th Guards Airborne Division to drop on Germany. With regional air defenses reeling and uncoordinated, the VDV troops slipped through Slovak and Austrian airspace to their targets.

The following day, the Russian 201st Motor Rifle Division crossed the Ukrainian-Slovak border, opening the second front in the Euro-Russo War. Gravely outnumbered, the Slovak 2nd Mechanized Brigade bore the brunt of the invasion while the 1st Mechanized Brigade prepared fallback positions and attempted to manage the gust front of westbound evacuees. Several ACR reserve units, deployed in Slovakia to aid refugee management operations, rushed to the Slovak defenses. On February 27, the Czech Republic declared war on the Russian Federation.

The UK's 1st Armoured Division embarked from Magdeburg via barge in early March, proceeding south toward Prague as the Elbe River's winter ice began to break up. The division effectively entered the war on March 7, when the first Russian air strike sank

several barges full of the division's heavy equipment. A sustained air offensive the following week wrecked the port facility at Melnik and sank enough river traffic to effectively block the confluence of the Elbe and Vltava Rivers. The division's lead elements arrived in Prague on March 19. After reorganizing around equipment and personnel losses, companies began moving east to reinforce Czech defenses.

### **The War of the Mayflies**

In the air, the period between late February and early April of 2012 became known as the War of the Mayflies. European and Russian air forces clashed around the clock in Slovak and Czech airspace, with horrifyingly short life expectancies for pilots on both sides. Bolstered by German, Dutch, and Norwegian assets, the Czech and Slovak Air Forces put up a valiant defense, but the Czech national infrastructure suffered grave damage nonetheless. Noteworthy losses included the Sellier & Bellot ammunition plant at Vlasim, the port facilities at Melnik, and the pumping station supplying coolant to Nuclear Power Station Dukovany.

The final Slovak combat aircraft fell on March 27 and the Czech Air Force lost its last two fighters on April 7. *Luftwaffe* fighters and a NATO AWACS platform maintained operations out of Caslav Air Force Base for another month. By mid-May, Czech and Slovak airspace belonged wholly to the invaders. However, surviving ground-based defenses limited Russian air operations to rear-area transport and rare (and costly) tactical support missions.

The first Russian troops set foot on Czech soil on April 8. On the run from heavy German pursuit, survivors of the 106th Guards Airborne Division crossed the border near Kraslice. With the majority of ground forces concentrated to the east, local defense fell to police and militia units, who put up unexpectedly fierce resistance. In the fighting, the Russians overran and destroyed the American ABM battery near Karlovy Vary. An estimated 200 to 300 paratroops survived, dispersing into the countryside in squad- and platoon-sized packets.

With the loss of public works in much of the eastern Czech Republic, outbreaks of cholera and other diseases ran rampant. Although political and defense considerations prevented the ACR from sealing the Slovak border, most Polish refugees were turned away toward Germany. Retreating Polish military units and their dependents were allowed to cross the border, with the town of Opava designated as a marshaling point.

May 9 marked the loss of eastern Slovakia as Russian troops overran the Slovak 2nd Mechanized Brigade's headquarters near Lucenec. Final transmissions from the brigade confirmed Russian use of chemical weapons. Four days later, a critical miscalculation led the Slovak 1st Mechanized Brigade to begin moving east without adequate air defenses. Surviving Russian air assets seized this opportunity, obliterating much of the brigade's supply train. Without the fuel to press the intended counterattack or withdraw, the brigade's forward elements pulled into defensive positions and prepared to die fighting.

On May 18, Russian forces encircled the Slovak capital of Bratislava. A last-minute airlift evacuated key members of the Slovak government before the city fell the following day. The broken remnants of the Ground Forces of the Slovak Republic streamed westward to Austria and the Czech Republic.

### **Maskirovka**

The term *maskirovka* – literally "camouflage" – refers to the venerable Russian doctrine of military deception operations. During the assault on the Czech Republic, one of the invaders' larger-scale *maskirovkas* was the infiltration of *Spetsnaz* units in Slovak uniforms

and vehicles. In the confusion following Bratislava's fall, few of the fleeing troops were carefully screened.

The initial *Spetsnaz* mission was reconnaissance: identifying Czech and allied troop concentrations, supply depots, command centers, and other key strategic points. The opening of a second front near Ostrava was the signal for the commandos to commence offensive operations. Initial strikes focused on lines of supply and communication. The units' usual disguise as Slovak survivors had a secondary effect of undermining Czech trust in ostensible allies. Tensions were escalating until mid-June, when a *Spetsnaz* raid on Czech and British supply depots at Brno yielded a prisoner. The "Slovak renegade" died during surgery, but not before revealing his actual identity and mission.

Awareness of the problem did not immediately solve it. The Brno raid allowed the *Spetsnaz* troops to switch from Slovak to Czech and British guises. The most successful strike came on June 23, when a team masquerading as Czech reservists detonated a pair of truck bombs outside the 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade's command post near Ostrava. The explosions killed the brigade commander and most of his staff, directly contributing to the fall of the city's defenses.

The Russians weren't the only ones engaging in *maskirovka*. The ACR, equipped mainly with ex-Soviet equipment or close copies thereof, used this similarity to its advantage. Combined with an aggressive electronic warfare campaign, Czech units in Russian colors and tactical markings rampaged across the invaders' rear areas, particularly during the drive on Prague.

Today, the extent of remaining *Spetsnaz* presence in the Czech Republic is unknown (but see Chapter Four for some hints). It's certain that *some* troops are still operating, most likely under command of the CGF, but their numbers and whereabouts are a mystery. "It must have been *Spetsnaz*" is becoming a catchphrase uttered whenever someone experiences an inexplicable setback in any context.

The Russian invasion of the Czech Republic began on May 26 with the Battle of Valasske Mezirici. In pursuit of fleeing Slovak personnel, Russian troops crossed the Czech border – and stuck their collective heads into a hornet's nest of local militias. Snipers and antitank teams annihilated the initial thrust. Both sides called for reinforcements, resulting in the main Russian offensive kicking off two weeks ahead of schedule. ACR and militia forces cut off every Russian attempt to advance cross-country or on side roads but put up only token resistance to the main troop movement up European Route 442. Russian commanders began to suspect a trap – and were proven correct when their lead units reached the town of Valasske Mezirici. Czech and British regulars stalled the Russian advance for two days while Zizka Brigade skirmishers and hastily-reorganized Slovak infantry crept into position. On the morning of May 29, dozens of individual firefights erupted along E442 as the door slammed shut behind the Russians. Although the Slovak and Zizka units suffered ruinous casualties, they and the Czech and British line units inflicted greater than 75% losses on the trapped Russian forces. Debris, unexploded ordnance, and a variety of IEDs and tank traps effectively blocked E442 for the next year.

The Slovak/Czech front had previously been a sideline to the main offensive through Poland, but the premature Battle of Valasske Mezirici piqued the Russian General Staff's ire. The 5th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade was diverted from the siege of Krakow and sent down the route of the ancient Amber Road and through the Moravian Gate. On June 9, the division's lead elements came under fire from Czech artillery while still several kilometers inside the Polish border. Reconnaissance units crossed into the Czech Republic that night.

Faced with two separate threat axes, both bearing potentially overwhelming force, Czech military leaders activated one of several contingency plans: Operation *Sasek* (Jester).

Throughout the country, police and Zizka Brigade squads confiscated and destroyed road maps, tore down highway signs or replaced them with false ones, prepared bridges and other choke points for demolition, and took similar steps to confound invading forces lacking intimate knowledge of local geography. Scores of towns posted new signs, changing their names to "Dubcek," "Havel," or "Masaryk."

As Russian forces approached Ostrava, the third-largest Czech city, evacuations reached a fever pitch. Traffic control suffered a complete breakdown by June 20 and only the intervention of British military police units restored enough order to effectively position incoming reinforcements. Panic redoubled the following day when the Russians used chemical weapons to secure their advance's northern flank. A nerve gas strike on the Polish forces marshaling outside Opava was blown into the town by high winds, killing an estimated 25,000 Czech and Polish civilians. The enraged Polish troops charged the Russians in a frenzy of self-immolation, temporarily stunning the advance.

Despite the Polish sacrifice, Ostrava's defenses collapsed on June 23 with the *Spetsnaz* decapitation of 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade. Scattered units held out for another week, but the main body of the Russian advance encircled and defeated those that didn't immediately begin a fighting withdrawal toward Prague. Czech units in Russian disguises hamstrung the advance's initial stages while many of Prague's citizens evacuated to outlying farming communities, but the Russian vanguard reached Prague's eastern suburbs on July 19.

### **The Siege of Radvanice**

Cut off from reinforcements and unable to break contact after the events of June 23, the Czech 41st Mechanized Battalion, supporting British troops, and local police and militia units withdrew under fire. The 450 survivors regrouped on the grounds of the ArcelorMittal steel plant in Ostrava's southeastern Radvanice district. Over the next eight weeks, the starving and desperate fighters held off a vastly superior force, going so far as to use sewers and utility tunnels to leave their perimeter and raid Russian supply dumps. When the plant's 48 surviving defenders finally surrendered on August 12, only 18 were healthy enough to walk out on their own.

While Russian forces out of Poland struggled toward Prague, their counterparts on another front enjoyed greater success. Throughout July and August, the Russian 58th Army cut a broad swath through Austria. Refugee movements clogged the southern Czech border. Reserve and militia troops blocked most of the flood, but a scattering of routed (albeit still combat-capable) Austrian military units forestalled the use of force in most cases. Most of the refugees were pushed northwest into the Austrian-German-Czech border area, where surviving Austrian troops began to consolidate around the refugee concentrations.

The Siege of Prague began on July 20. Unable to force the city's defenses, the Russian attackers settled into positions in the rubble of Prague's eastern outskirts. Over the next three months, attempts to cross the Vltava River and encircle the city yielded little more than high body counts. By the end of October, the siege wound down to occasional desultory exchanges of projectiles and harsh language, as both sides were more occupied with preparing for winter than with killing one another.

In Slovakia, outbreaks of pneumonic plague wreaked havoc on the civilian population through late summer and early autumn. As Slovak resistance activity subsided, Russian troops moved west to reinforce the Czech and Polish offensives. August saw a renewed push across the eastern Czech border toward Brno. Czech, Slovak, and British forces in the city dug in and prepared for a long campaign.

On September 14, the fourth major Russian assault on Brno's defenses drove through the southern suburbs to the edge of the city core. Slovak artillery broke up the advance with chemical shells. Enraged by the bombardment, the commander of the 201st Motor Rifle Division ordered a response in kind. On September 15, the 201st launched three tactical nuclear warheads against Brno. Immediate losses were estimated at 1,500 troops and over 20,000 civilians. Russian armor crews sealed their vehicles and advanced through the mushroom clouds, firing indiscriminately at anything still moving. Over the next few weeks, the defenders who survived the attack and subsequent pursuit fled west to cross the Vltava River, then regrouped south of Prague before moving to reinforce the city's defenses.

### **The Nights of the Vampire**

Between October and December 2012, isolated Russian detachments across occupied Moravia suffered devastating raids. The culprits were a black-clad squad of unidentified special operations troops mounted on and supported by a black Mi-24 helicopter gunship. Past this basic profile, reports were wildly varied. On several occasions, the Vampire allegedly struck separate targets on the same night, but on a schedule physically impossible for an Mi-24's flight speed. Operations were mainly assassinations and kidnappings of key Russian personnel, interspersed with several hostage rescues. Invariably, any force claiming to have shot down the Vampire became its next target. The last reported attack came on New Year's Eve.

To add pestilence to famine and war, an aggressive influenza strain erupted throughout the Czech Republic in early October. In Prague, the disease claimed nearly 15% of the city's remaining residents and an even greater percentage of the defending troops. The death toll likely would have been much higher were it not for the city's relatively superior living conditions, made possible by the remaining output of the nuclear power plant at Temelin. Outside Prague and the Temelin area, it was much higher – as lethal as 50% in communities without adequate medical support. The government and most surviving military posts enacted quarantine procedures early in the outbreak and remained comparatively untouched. This apparent immunity led to a public perception of medical resources being diverted to a handful of officials rather than allocated to the citizenry at large. Outrage boiled over and only harsh winter weather prevented riots across the country. By the time the worst had passed in January, many outlying towns had broken off communication with the central government, declaring autonomy or throwing support to the nascent Czech Resistance movement.

### **Restricted Access: British "Neutrality"**

Officially, prior to early 2013, Her Majesty's Government held a position of strict neutrality in the Euro-Russo War. This was unpopular with the British military due to both long-range strategic forecasts (which differed from those of civilian analysts, and probably were more accurate in the 2007-2012 timeframe) and a general sense of duty. A faction of Parliament shared these sentiments, and it was to these officials that the Czech government directed its plea for aid in late 2011. Playing on latent guilt over the Munich Agreement, these politicians won authorization for the deployment of 1st Armoured to the Czech Republic for "humanitarian relief," then turned a blind eye to the division's combat preparations.

It's also worth noting that under prewar UK and NATO strategy, one of 1st Armoured's maneuver brigades remained on British soil while the rest of the unit was based in Germany (or deployed to the Middle East). The designated NATO "round-out" force for 1st Armoured to absorb in the event of full-scale war was the Czech 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade. Thus, when the division arrived in the Czech Republic, it had an existing relationship with the ACR, which vastly increased its effectiveness during the Last Year's battles.



From a game design perspective, the presence of 1st Armoured in the Czech Republic is our excuse for players in this setting to run anglophone PCs who are still subordinate to a semi-intact chain of command. GMs who don't want this element can maintain the theatre's balance of power by replacing 1st Armoured with a German or French formation of equivalent strength, a collection of smaller EU units, consolidated survivors of the Polish or Slovak armies, or a larger Czech reserve force.

### **Restricted Access: NATO vs. EU Forces**

If any scholars of international law and military history have the leisure to do so by mid-2013, they'll spend an inordinate amount of time arguing over the legal subtleties of the Twilight War. One major sticking point is the use of NATO command structures in a war that some NATO members – notably including the United States – initially insisted was an EU concern spurred by European economic issues.

Three factors complicated the use of pure EU military assets in the early phases of the war. First was an issue of scale. The primary EU military formation was the *battlegroup*, a multinational force of 1,500 to 4,000 troops – approximately the same size as an understrength brigade and usually short on heavy equipment. The battlegroup concept was intended for rapid deployment in response to local threats, not a full-scale land war in Eurasia. NATO's standing command structure and military logistics procedures were much better suited to operations of the size required in the 2011-2012 period. Second was an issue of training and joint operations history – years for the EU structures versus decades for the NATO hierarchy. Finally, even after the Treaty of Cordoba, deployment of EU forces required a political consensus from the European Council, an unacceptably long decision cycle for members who saw the end of history looming on the horizon.

Well before the Twilight War, the EU had recognized these limitations and embarked on resource-sharing negotiations with NATO. Thus, when full-scale war began, the EU was well-positioned to "borrow" NATO support systems, command structures, and equipment. The end result of this sometimes-unwilling cooperation was a web of interlocking back-room agreements, legal fictions, and unilateral decisions that will require decades for historians to unravel. For much of the war, NATO formations bore the brunt of the fighting while re-designated as "provisional EU battlegroups" and operating with embedded EU "advisors." The proximity of NATO headquarters and one of the EU's key summit locations – both in Brussels, Belgium – made this only somewhat unwieldy rather than entirely impractical. Nonetheless, most surviving general officers now agree that the political aspects of the war severely impaired their ability to fight it.

## **2013: Crossroads**

In January, as combat around Prague desultorily resumed where it had left off the previous autumn, another Russian force made itself known. Under cover of a blizzard, the 51st Guards Airborne Regiment's survivors staged a daring assault on Nuclear Power Station Temelin. Russian forces in Austria immediately capitalized on the raid, committing much of their remaining armor and fuel to send in the 19th Motor Rifle Division. Depleted Czech forces on the southern border offered little more than token resistance. Within a week, the Russians had taken Ceske Budejovice and opened a pocket in southern Bohemia.

Inexplicably, the new invasion force failed to exploit this success, despite exhortations from its counterparts around Prague to press the advantage and assist with the capture of the Czech capital. Instead, the 58th Army opened negotiations with the Czech government,

ostensibly on behalf of the Russian Federation as a whole. On March 22-25, a formal meeting in the industrial center of Pribram, midway between Prague and Temelin, resulted in a cease-fire. The Pribram Agreement also acknowledged temporary Russian military governance of two sections of Czech territory, secured continued Czech use of the Temelin power plant's output, and allowed limited Russian access to Prague for the purposes of trade and diplomacy.

The Pribram Agreement's audacity was matched only by its capacity for inspiring dissent on all sides. Dozens of Zizka Brigade partisan leaders, by now accustomed to operating autonomously in Russian-held territory, refused to acknowledge the cease-fire and pressed their operations against Russian troops. Russian forces in Slovakia and the environs of Brno reciprocated, stating that the 58th Army's military government in Austria had no authority to conduct such a treaty. Even while withdrawing from the Siege of Prague, Russian forces argued among themselves. Some chose to align with the 58th Army in Austria rather than rejoin their parent formations in the eastern Czech Republic.

### **Restricted Access: The Pribram Agreement**

By all military logic, the Pribram negotiations shouldn't have happened. The Russians had all the advantages and no apparent reason to press for a cease-fire. Two major questions remain unanswered for most observers. First, why did the 58th Army open negotiations rather than assist the troops already besieging Prague? A unified assault, combined with cutting off power to Prague, could have ended the campaign in a matter of weeks and left the Russians fully in control of the Czech Republic. Second, why did Prague's besiegers send a representative to the negotiations, much less sign the Pribram Agreement and withdraw? Again, while their task would have been harder without 58th Army assistance, they could have finished the job in a matter of months, if not weeks.

Obviously, some source of pressure on the Russian command structure was strong enough to compel these decisions despite clear military advantages. However, no one seems to know exactly what it was – or even where it originated. The Czech UZSI and VZ are very interested in learning who intervened on their nation's behalf, as is the British SIS. This should raise some questions for characters who have contacts in these agencies...

A more thorough examination of the Pribram Agreement begins on page **XX**.

Russian internal disputes over the Agreement came to a head in late April, when several fratricide incidents erupted between troops committed to honoring the agreement and those advocating for continued offensive operations against the Czechs. Support for the latter position coalesced around the 201st Motor Rifle Division. On April 24, these units declared their subordination to a new Russian regional command: the Central Group of Forces.

### **Historical Precedent: The Central Group of Forces**

To any Czech with a modicum of military history, the Central Group of Forces' name is a clear indication of the invaders' ultimate intentions. The first formation to bear the name was the Soviet garrison in Austria from 1945 to the mid-1950s. The second time the Red Army used the designation, it applied to the occupation forces stationed in Czechoslovakia after 1968's Prague Spring and Operation Danube. Of further note, the modern CGF's 34th Motor Rifle Division, now occupying western Slovakia, traces its lineage to the previous CGF's 15th Guards Tank Division.

Even as Russian dissent gave the Czech Republic breathing room, public opinion began to turn against the Czech government. Discontent over leaders' recognition of Russian control over Czech territory fed the Czech Resistance movement that was coalescing around renegade Zizka Brigade leaders. Opposition was particularly fervent in Prague, which saw

several public demonstrations. PCR investigations pointed to a central body orchestrating the movement but tracing specific sources proved difficult.

While the Czech government launched a variety of recovery operations, late May saw further inflammation of domestic unrest. Beginning within the government, rumors spread that the winter influenza epidemic was caused by a mutated strain of a Russian biological agent. The Slovak government-in-exile fanned the flames with its own support for this theory, pointing to the previous summer's pneumonic plague outbreak in occupied Slovakia.

In June, Czech reconnaissance probes into Germany revealed a large multinational force mustering around Nuremburg. Evidence suggested that a Franco-German coalition might be considering a land grab for northwestern Bohemian farmland. Already strained to the breaking point by defensive commitments on two fronts, Czech forces began carefully realigning to meet a third potential threat axis.

## **Chapter Two: Kde Domov Muj?**

*Near Kutna Hora, we had to detour around a bombed-out bridge. The military police on duty waved us across the ford after a brief conversation with our escort and a cursory glance at the IDs a few of us still had. As we splashed through the river, I caught a look at the work crew and realized they were under guard – Russian POWs. Something about them didn't quite seem right and I caught myself staring until we pulled out of sight of them.*

*Later that day, we passed another similar chain gang – well, not really in chains, but the guards with assault rifles certainly set the mood. These guys were stripping a couple of derelict trucks. Again, I got the same weird vibe. It wasn't until we stopped for dinner that I put my finger on it.*

*Dinner.*

*The POWs weren't starving. This place had enough food that they could afford to feed their prisoners.*

In 2013, the Czech Republic is still a going concern despite grievous losses. Of the 79,000 square kilometers within its prewar borders, over 13,000 are under Russian occupation and perhaps twice that is effectively uncontrolled. The nation's population has been reduced from 10.4 million to an estimated 3.8 million, a quarter of whom live under Russian occupation governments. Prague, capital and heart of the nation, is down from 1.3 million inhabitants to 340,000, and other major population centers have suffered even greater losses or flight. The second-largest city of Brno is a shattered ruin after a Russian nuclear strike. The situation is grim... but this is not a new story for the Czechs.

## **Infrastructure**

The Czech Republic of 2000 was a post-Communist success story. Spurred by privatization of most former government monopolies, its blossoming economy attracted thousands of foreign investors. Companies opened new facilities across the country, and the Czech government poured its increased revenues back into infrastructure improvement projects. While the Twilight War shattered the country, it didn't entirely erase those hard-won gains. Most of the Czech Republic in 2013 remains salvageable and, whether they're Czech or Russian, the local authorities are hard at work to restore whatever they can.

## **Travel**

In the early 21st century, the Czech Republic had a well-developed cargo and passenger rail network and was in the process of expanding its highways to cope with the post-Soviet boom in private automobile ownership. The Twilight War brought both modes of transit to a grinding halt. Czech defenders and Russian invaders liberally dropped bridges to deny their enemies freedom of movement, resulting in a country largely impassable by any vehicle confined to roads or rails.

### **Roads**

Like many former Soviet client states, the Czech Republic of the 1990s found itself short of usable highways when held to Western standards. A massive construction effort continued into the early 21st century, resulting in a nascent highway network centered on Prague. Primary routes connected the capital to Plzen, Usti nad Labem, and Brno, with the first two routes attaching to the German autobahn system and continuing, respectively, to Dresden and Nuremberg. Additional highways were under construction at the outbreak of the war, primarily intended to link Prague to Austria and Poland through major Czech population centers.

At present, the only safe and passable major highways are the D5 (Prague to Germany through Plzen) and the D8 (Prague to the German border through Usti nad Labem). The D1 route between Prague and Brno is technically navigable but liberally strewn with the debris of war, and various sections are subject to interdiction by ACR, Russian, or local independent forces. All other major highways have been bombed or otherwise blocked. The last two unusually harsh winters and subsequent spring floods also have taken their toll.

Once off the main highways, land travel is much the same as it is elsewhere in Eastern Europe: a seemingly random mix of paved, gravel, and dirt roads, often winding through now-underpopulated farmland and small villages. Both bandits and local governments prey on unwary travelers who lack sufficient firepower to negotiate from a position of strength.

## **Rails**

Prewar Czech rail lines stretched about 9,000 kilometers, with a third of those electrified. Save for the aforementioned bridge destruction (primarily in Moravia), the network sustained relatively little damage during the Twilight War, as the invading Russian forces wanted it for their own use. The greatest shortage facing would-be railroad engineers now is one of qualified personnel, not of rolling stock.

Ceske Drahy completed inspection and refurbishment of its Prague-Plzen line in early June 2013 and now runs limited passenger and cargo service two days a week. Crews are currently evaluating and repairing the main lines running from Prague to Pardubice and to the German border near Dresden. However, until electrical output from the Temelin reactor is extended outside the environs of Prague and points south, fuel constraints will severely limit additional service.

In the east, the Russian occupation forces have ordered the reactivation of the lines running from Ostrava into Slovakia. Without electrical power or diesel fuel, though, the rails will likely remain empty. It's unclear whether the CGF intends to bring in reinforcements and supplies for a renewed offensive or to strip the occupied Moravian territory of anything of value.

## **Rivers**

Despite being a landlocked nation, the Czech Republic saw a significant amount of riverine commerce, primarily in the northwest along the Labe (more familiar to anglophones as the Elbe) and Vltava Rivers. Sections of the Morava River in the southeast were technically navigable but featured no major ports.

In 2013, the Vltava is Prague's lifeline. Daily food shipments from the northwest farmland arrive via barge, fighting the north-flowing current into the capital. This traffic receives much of the government's dwindling diesel fuel supplies, a situation which pleases no one except the towboat operators. Raids on these barges are on the rise and the ACR and its British allies are stepping up countermeasures.

The Vltava also supports travel from Prague and south-central Czech territory northward to Melnik, where the river merges with the Elbe. Melnik's port facilities sustained heavy damage during 2012 and the confluence of the rivers remains blocked with wreckage, but salvage operations are under way and the passage, if not the port, is projected to re-open in September 2013. In the meantime, Melnik remains a transshipment point for traffic moving to and from Prague. From there, it's feasible to travel northwest through Germany to Hamburg, Cuxhaven, and the North Sea. However, Germany's Balkanized nature makes this a risky proposition. Entrepreneurs hoping to open trade with one German faction or another often hire on guards for the trip, which can be a dangerous but potentially lucrative prospect for well-armed individuals who find themselves at loose ends.

## Air

A Soviet legacy of forward airbases left the Czech Republic with several dozen small airfields capable of handling regional passenger and cargo traffic. Most of these were converted to commercial use by the 21st century, though many retained a secondary role as dispersal fields for combat aviation assets. The ACR also took over some adjacent military facilities, which made those fields attractive targets in 2012.

About half the Czech Republic's prewar airfields – those that weren't military targets – remain technically usable. Prague's Ruzyne Airport and Ostrava's Leos Janacek Airport, respectively controlled by the ACR and the CGF, are fully functional – or would be if anyone was flying today. As is the case throughout the world, the limiting factor in air travel is fuel availability. The ACR has a handful of military helicopters and a few light commuter aircraft but only an emergency of the sort involving player characters would likely necessitate any risk to these precious assets.

### Travel Distances

This table provides approximate travel distances between major cities in or near the Czech Republic. Figures assume the use of main roads or established rail lines. Travelers attempting to avoid primary routes add (20 + 3d10)% to the effective distances given here.

<b>Route</b>	<b>Distance</b>
Brno-Olomouc	80 km
Brno-Prague	185 km
Ceske Bujedovice-Prague	125 km
Melnik-Prague	35 km
Olomouc-Ostrava	100 km
Ostrava-Pardubice	225 km
Pardubice-Prague	75 km
Plzen-Prague	85 km
Prague-Strakonice	100 km
Prague-Temelin	125 km
<i>To outside the Czech Republic...</i>	
Brno-Bratislava (Slovakia)	165 km
Ceske Budejovice-Linz (Austria)	120 km
Ceske Budejovice-Vienna (Austria)	210 km
Ostrava-Bratislava (Slovakia)	285 km
Ostrava-Krakow (Poland)	170 km
Prague-Berlin (Germany)	360 km
Prague-Hamburg (Germany)	1,250 km
Prague-Nurnberg (Germany)	280 km

## Economy

Although electronic commerce is a distant memory, the Czech Republic retains something vaguely resembling a functional economy, at least in government-controlled areas. The national currency is the *koruna* ("crown" – symbol Kc, international code CZK). At the onset of the Twilight War, the exchange rate with USD was roughly \$1=Kc12.5. The Czech government issued banknotes of 5,000, 2,000, 1,000, 500, 200, 100, and 50 korun face values, while coinage was available in 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1 korun denominations.

All government agencies and most private businesses in and around Prague accept Czech currency at face value – at least from buyers who sound and act Czech. Foreigners in possession of large amounts of cash are likely to be viewed with suspicion. The farther from Prague a transaction occurs, the more likely one or both parties will prefer or demand barter. Within the Russian occupation zones, of course, local currency has no value – but this hasn't stopped the Russians (and other parties) from raiding bank vaults to acquire cash for covert operations around Prague.

High-demand trade goods throughout the country include fuel, small arms ammunition, medicine, and technical information relevant to food production. Food is valuable, albeit not currently a critical need for most communities outside the far eastern reaches. This may change, though, depending on the coming harvest.

Salvage operations tend to focus on communities east of Prague, as the capital and points west remain too heavily-populated to contain many valuable items that someone hasn't already claimed. The central and eastern regions (save for Brno) still contain a great deal of potentially functional electronics, as they were outside the radius of the EMP strikes on France. Other high-value prospects for salvage include books, agricultural supplies, and manufacturing equipment that can be broken down for transport.

## Prices

For cash transactions with koruna, multiple an item's Street Price in dollars by 12.5. Alternately, it's okay to leave all figures in dollars and assume the *characters* are using the appropriate values and terms. For characters who prefer to deal in gold, GG1 equals Kc125 in government-controlled areas and around Kc250 elsewhere.

Within government-controlled areas, most common goods have their listed Street Prices. Food prices are up 20-50%, ammunition and electronic consumables are up 100%, and fuel is up 200% or more if it's even available on the open market. At the GM's discretion, other equipment or supplies not common to the area may be priced higher (as sellers overcharge for rarity) or lower (due to unfamiliarity or perceived lack of utility).

## Vehicles

Automotive production was one of the prewar Czech Republic's fastest-growing heavy industries, and private ownership of automobiles was increasing along with it. Civilian ground transport is widely available and even many light aircraft are salvageable. On the military front, the vast majority of vehicles are Warsaw Pact designs or derivatives thereof. Despite ongoing modernization programs, the ACR had not yet converted most of its fleet to newer designs, and the invading Russians obviously had their own equipment. The most common Western combat vehicles are 1st Armoured Division's British equipment. Few AFVs exist outside military control; the best salvage prospects for "slightly used" models exist near the main routes of troop movements from Ostrava and Brno to Prague.

### What's on the Road?

The most frequently-encountered brand of passenger car on prewar Czech highways was the domestic Skoda. Citroen, Ford, Peugeot, Renault, and Volkswagen products also were popular. Czech auto buyers tended to follow contemporary European preferences for

smaller vehicles, with pickup trucks almost unheard-of and small SUVs fairly rare until the late 2000s. In the commercial transport sector, Tatra, Avia, and Skoda were major players in both the domestic and international markets.

Today, the lack of gasoline and its substitutes relative to biodiesel has left most consumer vehicles parked. The most common type of motor transport is the ubiquitous Tatra medium-duty cargo truck, used in both government and private fleets.

## **Real Estate**

The prewar Czech Republic was a thoroughly-developed country. A millennium and a half of habitation produced a land with few empty places, save for the mountains on the eastern and southwestern borders. The Last Year's migrations, evacuations, and deaths led the surviving population to reconsolidate in whatever communities were most physically intact and adjacent to usable farmland. Now, perhaps one in four small villages has a population close to that which it had three years ago – but its two nearest neighbors are ghost towns and the surrounding countryside is empty. In larger cities, the same pattern is repeated as densely-populated residential blocks alternate with echoing, empty ones and vacant lots are given over to urban farming.

The harsh truth is that the Czech Republic has lost far more inhabitants than buildings. Unoccupied and intact housing is plentiful, and even warehouse or industrial space can be had with a little investigation. Possession has become nine-tenths of the law. Authorities, where they exist, look harshly upon forced takeovers, but residents who abandoned their property have little recourse if they later return to find squatters have moved in.

## **Storming the Castle**

Medieval and Renaissance rulers left the Czech Republic with over 2,000 castles (*hrad*), manor houses, and palaces – the highest density per square kilometer of any modern country. In the late 20th century, many were restored as monuments or museums, capitalizing on the burgeoning tourist industry. While centuries-old stone fortifications haven't become any less vulnerable to modern explosives, two feet of stone do pretty well against most small arms, and some communities have recommissioned their local landmarks as defense positions. Other surviving castles now serve as military strongpoints or bases for criminals, free traders, or deserters.

## **Electronics**

On a map of Europe, the effect radius of the Russian EMP attacks on France cuts a swath across the western Czech Republic, almost directly through Prague. The result is an odd disparity between the eastern and western parts of the country, exacerbated by the Temelin power plant's output capacity. Prague itself has both some working electronic devices and the electrical power necessary to run them. Areas west of the capital have some electricity but the EMP destroyed most electronic devices. In the east, the reverse is true (except in and around Brno). This has resulted in a thriving salvage trade, with entrepreneurs venturing into the country's disputed central region to gather working equipment for sale in Western Europe or Russia.

This isn't to say that functioning computers are *common* in the Czech Republic, though they do exist. Government records have been restored from backups, giving them at least an October 2011 baseline of data. In Prague and its surroundings, businesses that absolutely require software support – engineering firms and the like – tend to have at least limited computing power available. However, there's no public Internet and personal entertainment use is considered a waste of precious electricity. The government facilities in Prague have a working internal telephone system but general service is unlikely to be restored within the next year.



## What's on the Air?

The Czech government operates two CRO channels out of Prague, broadcasting each on both the FM and shortwave bands. CR1 *Radiožurnál* provides news, weather, and government information. CR3 Vltava is mixed educational and entertainment shows, and the programming director is always looking for experts on craft or survival skills to discuss their specialties. Another government-run shortwave transmitter in Pardubice broadcasts patriotic fare intended for citizens in Occupied Moravia, interspersed with cryptic transmissions that may be code or may just be intended to confuse Russian listeners.

Resigned complaints about the government monopoly are common, but at least there's no advertising. To address the former issue, a group of amateur radio hobbyists has taken over the defunct studios of Radio 1, a prewar alternative music station. Their low-powered test broadcasts on 91.9 FM cover most of Prague. The government, lacking any functioning bureaucracy for broadcast regulation, is at a collective loss as to how to deal with them.

A few numbers stations also are active on the shortwave bands, broadcasting at irregular intervals and apparently using mobile transmitters.

No television stations are on the air yet. However, the government has announced that its *Ceske Televize* will resume operations by mid-September, featuring programming similar to that provided by CR1 and CR3.

## Weapons

The massive Czechoslovakian military drawdown after the end of the Cold War left tens of thousands of surplus weapons sitting in Czech and Slovak armories. Over the next two decades, the Czech government sold or gave away much of this inventory to other nations – notably Iraq, whose reconstructed military received a healthy injection of Czech small arms in the mid-2000s. Still, when the time came to arm militia forces in 2012, enough reserve weapons were available to bring the volunteers up to the same standard of personal armament as the regular ACR.

On the civilian front, Communist-era Czechoslovakian weapons laws were as restrictive as those in the rest of the Warsaw Pact. Czech independence led to a gradual relaxation of such restrictions. By the early 21st century, private citizens could obtain licenses for most small arms, though fully automatic weapons remained largely restricted to the private security industry. At the outbreak of the Twilight War, civilian firearm ownership remained uncommon, with slightly less than 3% of the population licensed and an average of two guns per licensee.

The hazards of life in 2013 have led to a sharp uptick in weapon possession – and, thanks to the Last Year's military actions, a corresponding increase in general availability. An estimated half of Czech households have at least one small arm. The government is torn on whether this is an internal security problem (especially in light of the Czech Resistance's advocacy of an armed population) or a hedge against additional invasions. From a practical standpoint, outside Prague, enforcement of weapons laws occurs only if the authorities need an excuse to arrest someone suspected of other misbehavior. Support weapons are a different matter, as the ACR tends to confiscate them from anyone unable to prove service in an allied military.

In Russian-controlled territory, matters are a bit different. Both the Temelin garrison and the CGF view possession of weapons as implicit involvement with partisans. This isn't to say no weapons exist outside military control – just that they're better hidden. As a practical matter, troops around Temelin are willing to overlook farmers' shotguns and rifles unless they've taken sniper fire in the area recently. The CGF is much less permissive.

Currently, demand for armament outstrips supply. Military weapons are easier to obtain than civilian ones due to overall production volume, though they're not always the easiest to use (see Ammunition, following). No mass production is occurring, though the CGF is trying to put the CZ Uhersky Brod facility back into operation. Support weapons are vanishingly rare.

## **Ammunition**

Despite being a NATO member, the Czech military was armed primarily with legacy Warsaw Pact equipment. When the Twilight War began, the ACR was still consuming its stockpiles of Cold War-era ammunition, along with limited new production from the ZVI and Sellier & Bellot factories. The destruction of both these plants in 2012 caused a critical ammunition shortage for Czech forces, one which has yet to be resolved. The Russian troops occupying Czech territory are in a similar situation due to the length of their supply lines. For NATO units in the theatre, the situation is just as bad, if not worse, and many have acquired Czech or Russian arms as hedges against the inevitable exhaustion of their own stores.

In 2013, small arms ammunition is not quite worth its weight in gold, but it's close. Few military units have the supply necessary to send troops into the field with a full prewar basic load. Anyone entering the country with a large supply of military-caliber ammo can expect very generous offers from multiple parties. Oddly enough, any unclaimed quantity of ammunition in excess of a few hundred rounds is likely to be in a civilian caliber. S&B employees managed to clean out the company's main shipping center before its destruction and subsequently traded the takings across the country.

Heavy weapons ammunition is even more scarce, with the mere rumor of an undiscovered stockpile being enough for most commanders to send a reconnaissance mission. As far as guided weapons go, the few remaining ATGMS and SAMs have been consolidated in the hands of units guarding the most absolutely critical sites.

No large-scale production of new ammo is happening yet. Various rumors cite different locations near Prague for a secret ACR project to open a new factory, but this is likely nothing more than wishful thinking. It's widely believed that the Central Group of Forces is trying to put the ZVI factory back into operation, which would have much more chance of success than a cold start of production elsewhere.

## **Animals**

Historically, Bohemia was a horse breeding center, particularly during the Austro-Hungarian Empire's dominion, and several notable sport and draft breeds originated there. Equestrian sports remained popular into the 21st century. At the outbreak of the Twilight War, some 25,000 horses were registered in the Czech Republic. An estimated half to a third of these survive in 2013, mostly west of Prague. Their value is now incalculable and horse theft is a capital offense in farming communities. A few Zizka Brigade companies have experimented with traditional cavalry operations but no other military force uses horses for more than scouting and courier work. Generally, Czech horses are more valuable for farm work.

Other large domestic animals are in shorter supply, as Czech farming was almost wholly industrialized by the turn of the millennium. Cattle farms are transitioning to raising oxen as draft animals, albeit with varying degrees of initial success.

## **Food**

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Czech Republic was a net food exporter, even as the overall percentage of the population involved in agricultural production declined. The 2009 European crop crisis and gloomy climatological predictions spurred the Czech government to make massive investments in protecting and expanding the nation's overall agricultural capability. The resulting National Agricultural Initiative yielded some

spectacular failures (which the international news media eagerly seized, making largely unfair comparisons to Cambodia) and few correspondingly spectacular successes. Its publicity did have the somewhat-unintended result of making at least basic farming information available to the nation at large. This, combined with aggressive expansions of land management authorities and the infrastructure necessary for industrialized farming, made the Czech Republic one of the few European nations that didn't see mass famine between 2011 and 2013. While the average Czech citizen's caloric intake is nearly 30% lower than it was before the Last Year, few people can be said to be truly starving. The western regions of the country even have enough surplus agricultural capacity to grow crops for fuel production (see Fuel, following).

What no one discusses openly is that this is unlikely to be sustainable. While the percentage of Czechs involved in food production is up, crop yields per unit of land area are down much farther. Industrialized farming depends on chemicals (fertilizers, herbicides, veterinary medicines), spare parts for equipment, and large-scale methods of processing, storing, and transporting the final products. None of these are resources that are in great supply in 2013. Forecasters in the Ministry of Agriculture fear that the nation's farming efficiency is about to drop off a statistical cliff, with terminal consequences for the population. Without solutions, the government's prewar foresight may have only deferred, rather than prevented, this particular disaster. Awareness of this big picture isn't yet widespread, and the government is terrified of the panic that will ensue when the news breaks. Reports from the CGF's territory indicate that the first waves of farm failures already are hitting, thanks to the Russians' hands-off approach to local agriculture and failure to maintain the prewar infrastructures.

### GM Hint: Feast or Famine

Okay, let's be honest. Food shortages are an inevitable part of any large-scale breakdown of an industrialized society, but they aren't the most enjoyable part of a post-apocalyptic game. Even solving agricultural problems is not exciting roleplaying material. Players are unlikely to enjoy session after session of Vermin & Vegetables.

This is written as an element of the setting you can tune to fit your group's preferences. The Czech Republic of mid-2013 is one in which the PCs can concentrate on concerns other than starvation. The impending farm crash *can* be averted, but only with the sort of major effort that tends to pull in small, competent groups with a penchant for unconventional solutions – like, say, most PC teams. Unless your group loaded up on the Agriculture and Animal Husbandry skills, farm management is unlikely to be their thing. Instead, play to their strengths while still letting them make a difference in this crisis. Send them to sneak into enemy territory to recover an industrial chemist who can help reopen a fertilizer plant, or to survey a neighboring country for meteorological and agricultural reconnaissance. If you have a good collection of **Twilight: 2000** modules, try adapting the objective of *Satellite Down* to a location in Occupied Moravia or Slovakia.

## Fuel

The 2012 nationalization of fuel production (see sidebar) has heavily restricted the supply of fuel on the civilian market. A few small independent biofuel manufacturers remain operational, but the majority of production goes into government tank farms in and around Prague. The only legal way for an independent party to tap this reserve is to register as a provider of mission-critical transportation or services. The Czech government's definition of "mission-critical" doesn't include much outside its own agencies, save for the shipping companies that move food around the country and a few freelance medical services. Profiteering by selling fuel rations is illegal. Private possession of fuel isn't illegal in and of

itself, but anyone rolling up to Prague in a functioning motor vehicle can expect to face some pointed questions from the PCR about the provenance of his petrol.

No Czech oil refineries remain in operation. The facilities at Litvinov and Pardubice appear to be repairable but the government isn't willing to invest the time and effort until it has a ready supply of crude oil. With the country's only major oil fields located in Russian-controlled territory near the Czech-Slovak-Austrian border, this is unlikely to happen in the near future. This area is a hotbed of partisan activity, which, along with existing mutual tension, has prevented both the Central Group of Forces and the 58th Army from exploiting the wells.

Biodiesel manufacturing is in considerably better shape. The country was a prewar leader in EU biofuel research and per capita production. However, the numbers were relative even at their peak, with biodiesel only representing about 6% of the nation's total diesel fuel consumption. The Czech government controls working biodiesel plants at Dobruška and Kolin, while the CGF holds facilities at Olomouc and Kojetín. In addition, an independent militia group has taken control of the town of Polná and claims to have the local production plant online. A handful of farming communities have smaller-scale production capacity, though most of this goes back into farm machinery. Many farms, both privately-owned and nationalized, now grow rapeseed (a dual-use crop providing both animal fodder and biodiesel-worthy oil).

Despite the legendary Czech brewing industry, very little production of ethanol or methanol fuel is occurring in 2013. The main consumer of a gasoline replacement would be passenger vehicles, as most heavy transport runs on diesel fuel. Furthermore, the relative inefficiency of alcohol compared to biodiesel makes the latter a much more appealing option for both farmers and fuel producers. On the other hand, alcohol fuels have the advantage of not needing specialized chemicals for their production, and both Czechs and Russians are looking at alternate uses for now-idle breweries. On... another hand, the impending agricultural crash (see Food, immediately previous) may invalidate all such plans very soon...

### **The Specter of Nationalization**

One of the Czech government's least-popular policies was the nationalization of certain industries in 2012. These included fuel and energy production, radio and television broadcasting, most military manufacturing, any unsuccessful agricultural operation, and a lot of useful or abandoned real estate. For older Czechs, this was uncomfortably close to former communist policies. However, the fact that most of these industries remain at least semi-functional is a testament to the brutal success of the emergency measures.

As described in the main body of the text, this makes certain supplies very difficult for people outside the Czech government or military to acquire. Conversely, individuals who *are* either regular or contract employees of the government will have access to such supplies if they're mission-critical. GMs should feel free to use this as a plot device or a brake on excessive player ambitions.

## **Government and Law**

The Czech government and military "control" – in other words, can effectively project power over – about 55% of the country's prewar land area. Russian forces hold a chunk of the southern border region with Austria, as well as much of the former Czech-Slovak and Czech-Polish borders. East-central Czech territory exists outside the aegis of any civil or military government above the local level, with power devolving to local partisans, bandits,

or well-armed citizens. Still, it's in a lot better shape than many other places in the Europe of 2013.

From a constitutional perspective, the nation has a parliamentary system. The citizens elect members of both houses of Parliament (the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies), who in turn elect the President. The President serves as the ceremonial head of state, but most daily power rests in the hands of his appointed Prime Minister and other cabinet members.

A slight majority of the Czech government survived the events of 2010-2013, giving the nation some degree of continuity. As of mid-2013, 44 of the Senate's 81 seats and 132 of the 200 in the Chamber of Deputies are filled. This lack of a quorum gives an unusual amount of leverage to the Prime Minister – and to the President, whose office has assumed an unprecedented degree of actual power over the past year. While most citizens are more concerned with daily survival than constitutional propriety, a growing movement is agitating for immediate elections to fill the vacant seats. Many advocates of this course of action tend to gloss over the fact that several of the empty positions represent constituencies that are depopulated or under Russian military governance. Still, most Czechs are fervent advocates of democracy and the nation may be one of the few remaining in Central Europe whose government and citizens remain organized enough to *have* politics, much less political arguments.

Prewar Czech politics featured more than 20 political parties, though the government was (and still is) dominated by four: the center-right Civic Democratic Party (ODS), the conservative Christian and Democratic Union (KDU-CSL), the leftist Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD), and the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM). The latter often provided a swing vote, enjoying 12-15% of popular support but allied with *no* multi-party coalition. It's a surprise to some observers that the KSCM not only fears and loathes the Russian Federation but has aligned itself with the current Czech ruling coalition. Several emergency measures, including nationalization of vital industries, passed only with the KSCM's votes. The rest of the government isn't sure how to feel about this.

From a practical day-to-day perspective, it's worth noting that the regular Czech military is firmly under civilian command authority (though some militia units are a different story indeed). Most local officials, particularly within a hundred kilometers or so of Prague, also consider themselves part of a functioning national bureaucracy. Petty corruption is fairly widespread – which is not a massive change from the immediate prewar years – but overt abuse of power somehow remains rare.

## Crime and Punishment

The primary law enforcement agency in 2013 is the *Policie Ceske Republiky*, the Czech national police force, which is subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior. The PCR, staffed with 48,000 sworn officers, was the only prewar agency with full investigative and arrest authority. While many municipalities had their own police departments, these were limited to traffic enforcement and maintaining public order. The PCR subsumed all such surviving forces in September 2012.

The Czech Republic's prewar legal code was similar to that of most western nations. Of particular note: firearm laws were relatively permissive (see Weapons, p. **XX**); capital punishment was constitutionally forbidden; prostitution was legal (albeit not recognized as legitimate employment); same-sex domestic partnerships were effectively equal to marriage; and small personal quantities of most drugs were legal. Most constitutional law was governed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms, a document roughly analogous to the American Bill of Rights.

In 2013, few laws have changed, but their practical observation and enforcement is radically different. The prewar legal system is in effect throughout the government's sphere of

influence, though sentences tend to be harsh and often involve hard labor on government-run reconstruction or salvage projects. The PCR concentrates its limited resources on issues that immediately threaten public safety. In rural communities, PCR detachments serve mainly to keep peace between residents and to liaise with the ACR. Weapon laws are rarely enforced for small arms unless the weapons in question see use against Czech citizens. Property crimes see investigation only if the property in question is critical to the community as a whole. While the death penalty officially remains off the books, the prevalence of military-grade weapons leads to many suspects being shot resisting arrest. In rural areas, militias and armed citizens outnumber the authorities, and the latter often look the other way if the locals take care of their own problems.

## The Pribram Agreement

The Pribram Agreement is the single greatest source of the Czech Republic's current internal struggles – and the reason it still exists as a nation today. Anyone living in the Czech Republic of 2013 has an opinion on the Agreement, and it's likely a *strong* one. The Agreement is arguably the most controversial document in the nation's history. Although its text is a matter of public record, the circumstances that brought the signatories to the negotiating table are less clear.

### Common Knowledge

The preliminary discussions that led to the Agreement began in early 2013, around the time Russian troops captured Nuclear Power Station Temelin. The main participants in this communication were the Czech government and military, the Russian 58th Army, and what would later become the Central Group of Forces. Some reports give the Slovak government-in-exile a hand in this diplomacy as well.

In late March, Czech and Russian representatives met in the city of Pribram, midway between Prague and Temelin. The newly-elected President Marek Svoboda was the lead Czech representative and signatory for the negotiations. The Russians' primary negotiators were Colonel Vitaly Glebov and Major Feliks Yakov – commanders of the 58th Army's Task Group Temelin. The most senior representative of the Russian forces at Prague was a recently-promoted infantry captain, despite the fact that the two flag-grade officers commanding the siege were within easy travel distance of Pribram. The Slovak government-in-exile's Minister of Foreign Affairs was present as an observer but his signature does not appear on the Agreement.

Following the document's signing, the Czech Parliament met in a closed session. The Agreement was ratified on March 30. Its opponents claim procedural irregularities, including the lack of a quorum in either house.

### Historical Context: Pribram

The choice of this former mining town as the site for cease-fire negotiations may have been more than a matter of geographic convenience. At the close of World War II, the last fighting on Czechoslovakian soil reportedly took place here, pitting local citizens against German occupation forces as American and Soviet troops converged from opposite directions. During the 1950s, the city's uranium mines were staffed by political prisoners, and Pribram later became a focal point for resistance to the Soviet invasion during Operation Danube.

### The Specifics

The Pribram Agreement isn't a treaty in the strict sense of international law. Although Czech government ratified it, no Russian government has done so. Thus, it's a cease-fire

agreement between the Czech government and the Russian military – albeit one with some unusual provisions.

**Article One** of the Agreement sets forth the basic cease-fire conditions, including the acknowledged borders for the Temelin and Moravia Zones of Control (*Pasmu s Kontrolnim* – PK). Czech military personnel may not enter the PKs, nor may Russian troops exit them, without adhering to specific requirements for total force size, routes of travel, and permission from the opposite side. In practice, both sides regularly violate this article. Around Temelin, a gentlemen's agreement exists to overlook reconnaissance incursions so long as no shooting occurs. The Moravia Zone of Control is more of a problem for the Czechs: patrols from the CGF regularly cross the official line, the ACR lacks the manpower to effectively secure the central part of the country against this activity, and neither side is interested in gentlemanly conduct.

**Article Two** dictates the humanitarian obligations of Russian occupation forces to Czech citizens within territory they hold, specifically reaffirming the provisions of the Hague and Geneva Conventions with respect to civilian populations during time of war. It's one of the Agreement's more incendiary conditions for Czechs, as it allows the Russians to maintain martial law, rather than Russian or Czech civil law. This article also sets forth conditions for Czech inspection of Russian-held territory to ensure compliance. So far, Task Group Temelin has followed this provision but the CGF has not.

**Article Three** forbids Russian possession of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons on Czech soil. The CGF's compliance with this article is a matter of constant concern for the ACR.

**Article Four** guarantees Russian access to Prague for the purposes of trade and diplomacy, subject to such restrictions as the city's security forces impose on all other outside visitors. This concession includes access to a segment of the port facilities, though few parties involved in river travel are willing to deal with the Russians. The 58th Army takes advantage of this article to send parties to Prague on a regular basis, but CGF personnel are a rare sight.

**Article Five** sets forth a minimum amount of Nuclear Power Station Temelin's output that the Russian occupation force must make available to the Czech Republic. It also establishes the Czech government's reciprocal responsibilities – food and specialized equipment as necessary – to the force occupying the facility.

**Article Six** limits the Agreement's effects to a term of one year and sets forth the conditions for its renewal.

## Irregularities

The Pribram Agreement raises a number of questions. First among these is why the Russians agreed to negotiate in the first place. In early 2013, the correlation of forces around Prague was entirely in the invaders' favor. While they lacked the troop strength to pacify the entire country, it was wholly within their capacity to crush Prague and with it the ACR and the Czech government. Speculation ranges from Russian factional disputes to secret external influence (Germany and America being favorite intercessors) to the prophesied return of legendary Saint Wenceslaus.

Events within the Russian forces during and immediately after the Agreement's signing are another mystery. The troops besieging Prague sent only junior officers, individuals whose rank and experience normally would exclude them from such proceedings. They did bear accreditation entitling them to act in the name of the siege's commanders. However, the Czech intelligence services can find no trace of their existence after the Russian withdrawal from Prague. Yet more questions surround the rapid Russian descent into factional infighting during that withdrawal, as well as the equally sudden formation of the Central



Group of Forces. Some sources point to a possible mutiny within the 201st Motor Rifle Division, the CGF's lead unit in Occupied Moravia, but most of the CGF's senior officers from before that time have maintained their ranks and positions.

The CGF's current adherence to the Agreement is, at best, idiosyncratic. CGF forces violate Article One on a daily basis, but all major permanent bases are within the Agreement's defined lines. Article Two has fallen by the wayside, but the CGF's insistence that its subjects are now Russian citizens prevents at least the worst atrocities. Czech intelligence services are fairly certain the CGF retains at least chemical weapons, a violation of Article Three. Yet the CGF maintains a tiny token embassy in Prague and has not actually renewed open warfare against the Czech Republic. The common belief is that the CGF is willing to play along while it rebuilds its force strength but intends to strike as soon as it feels it has a decided advantage. Most Czechs expect 2014 to bring another offensive from the east, or sooner if the British 1st Armoured Division pulls out of the country.

### **Design Note: The Pribram Agreement**

Yes, we know what really happened to bring everyone to the table.

No, we're not going to reveal it here and now.

Yes, this is license for GMs to get into some serious conspiracy storylines.

## **The People**

Demographically, the Czech Republic is overwhelmingly Czech, descendants of the western Slavic tribes native to Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. The most common other ethnicities in the country before the Twilight War were Ukrainian, Slovak, Polish, German, and Vietnamese – though in 2013, Russians are certainly visible. The country also had a large, if amorphous, Romani population.

### **Customs and Stereotypes**

National and ethnic identity are touchy subjects for a roleplaying sourcebook. The following points aren't universally applicable to Czechs, nor are they mandatory points of characterization for players who are roleplaying Czech PCs. Rather, they're a condensation of various views (both Czechs' and outsiders') of stereotypical or archetypal Czech traits.

#### **On Image**

Some observers view Czechs as dour, a reputation that Czechs themselves tend to dismiss. Overall, they're not publicly demonstrative of strong emotion; for example, smiling as a social greeting is not a Czech cultural meme. Because of this national poker face, Czechs can appear reserved, standoffish, and formal when not dealing with their intimates. Particularly in business dealings, Czechs like to know who they're dealing with. Introductions from mutual acquaintances tend to build credibility, as does a well-established reputation that's easy to check out.

#### **On Humor**

Shortly before the Twilight War, CT's viewers voted Jára Cimrman the greatest Czech ever. Cimrman, alas, is an entirely fictional scientist, artist, detective, statesman, and sportsman, conceived in the 1960s as a caricature of the ideal Czech. His popularity persists today; plays based on his exploits are among the most common theatre productions in 2013. Until the GRU figured out the joke, he also was wanted in Occupied Moravia as a notorious partisan leader, and the Czech Resistance still invokes his name when dealing with unsuspecting foreigners.



Czech wit is dry, dark, and subtle, laced with irony and a healthy lack of respect for authority. Very little is sacred. Some of the nation's most celebrated authors and artists were satirists.

## **On Prejudices**

Despite Western influence and internal reforms, many former Communist power players adapted to the new political scene and remained in place after the Velvet Revolution. This, combined with backlash against unregulated business excesses in the early 1990s, branded independent economic development with a cultural stigma. Self-described entrepreneurs often are regarded with a slight mistrust, as if they're likely to offer their sisters or part of the Brno oceanfront for sale. This prejudice is fading in Prague, where necessity has compelled many survivors to reinvent themselves, but remains in place elsewhere.

Prague, home to nearly 20% of the total national population before the Twilight War, sometimes held itself apart from the rest of the nation. While tensions were never pronounced (except around major sporting events), low-level friction often characterized relations between Praguers and other Czechs. Today, an equivalent divide exists between Praguers who stayed in their city during the Siege of Prague and those who fled and later returned.

The greatest example of racism in the Czech Republic is the national attitude toward the Roma. Most native Czech Roma died in Nazi purges during World War II; later migrations into the country came from Romanian and Slovak territory. Modern Roma were a stigmatized minority before the Twilight War. Their popular image was one of criminality, sloth, and refusal to assimilate, and social programs to accommodate or assist them were highly controversial. Roma visibility sharply declined over the Last Year, which is largely viewed as a blessing best not examined too closely.

## **Linguistics**

The official and primary mother tongue of the Czech Republic is, unsurprisingly, Czech. A slight majority of Czechs speak a second language. For younger citizens, this is likely to be English, which has been taught since 1990; for older ones, German is a common choice. Older Czechs may also know Russian thanks to Cold War influences on the country's educational system, but it's not always socially acceptable to admit fluency. Czech is closely related to Slovak and Polish, both of which have large concentrations of native speakers near the corresponding national borders.

## **Faith**

In light of the Czechs' long history of religious turmoil, it's either surprising or expected – depending on the observer – that the Republic is one of the least-religious countries in the world. Less than 30% of Czechs professed faith in the 2000s, with most of these being Roman Catholic. In 2013, organized religion has neither gained nor lost ground. Most Czechs politely ignore the question and, if pressed, state that they have more urgent concerns in *this* world. Despite this, many Czech national holidays are based on Christian ones (largely out of tradition).

## **Holidays**

Even (or perhaps *especially*) after the end of the world, people will take any excuse to celebrate. The following are major Czech holidays:

**January 1/New Year's Day/Recovery of Independence:** In addition to being New Year's Day, January 1 is the anniversary of the Velvet Divorce.

**Easter:** Czech observances begin on the traditional Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox and continue on the following Monday.

**April 30/Witches' Night:** The Czech equivalent of the American Halloween is a modern adaptation of a previous Christian appropriation of the pagan Beltane. It typically involves bonfires and, depending on local sensibilities, either symbolic burning of witch figurines (to end winter and the power it gives the witches) or celebration centered on the witches themselves.

**May 1/May Day/Labour Day:** Still celebrated despite the old Communist regime's compulsory parades, but only die-hard socialists and communists make a point of it.

**May 8/Liberation Day:** The European anniversary of the end of World War II is, for Czechs, the day Allied forces liberated Czechoslovakia. The 2012 and 2013 celebrations strongly downplayed the Soviet role in events.

**July 5 & 6:** July 5 is the Czech feast day for Saints Cyril and Methodius, the missionaries who introduced Christianity and a unified written language to the Slavic tribes. The following day commemorates the 1415 immolation of Jan Hus, which launched the Hussite Wars.

**September 28/Saint Wenceslaus' Day:** The feast day of the Czechs' patron saint is less of a religious holiday now, given the Czech tendency toward atheism, but it's been appropriated as a celebration of Czech statehood and a day to commemorate those who've made contributions to the nation.

**November 17/Freedom and Democracy Day:** This holiday marks the anniversary of a student demonstration against Nazi occupation in 1939 – and the subsequent student celebration of it in 1989 that became a protest against Soviet occupation and sparked the Velvet Revolution.

**October 28/Czechoslovakian Independence Day:** Despite Czechoslovakia's non-existence, Czechs continue to recognize its founding as an important step toward their current autonomy.

**December 24-26/Christmas:** Czech Christmas celebrations traditionally take place on the night of December 24, with various observances continuing through St. Stephen's Day on the 26th.

## **Foodways – What's on the Dinner Table?**

Czech staple crops include potatoes, beets, wheat, cabbage, and fruit. The prewar Czech population was one of the world's greatest per capita meat consumers – a statistic fallen victim to the Last Year, though most Czechs still manage at least a small daily serving of animal protein. Pork products are in the majority, despite the short-lived Swine Rebellion (a brief panic in autumn 2012 in which uninformed citizens attempted to wipe out pig farms for fear of swine flu, mostly running afoul of better-armed pig farmers and local militias). Poultry, particularly chicken, is common too. River carp and trout, formerly holiday treats, are increasing in year-round consumption (many villages founded in the Middle Ages were built around small lakes for the purpose of local aquaculture). The small beef industry is all but gone; steak is now the pinnacle of luxury food. Wild game, sparse by mid-2013, is predominantly wild boar (or feral swine), deer, and pheasant. All food tends to be mildly spiced, though heavy on the salt.

Some typical Czech fare – where all ingredients are available, of course – includes:

- roast pork or duck with *knedliky* and sauerkraut
- fried pork fillet or roast chicken with potatoes
- beef tenderloin in cream sauce with dumplings
- sausage, always sausage, and a bewildering array of other fine swine dining

- *polevka* (soup) made from cabbage, tripe, lentils, or beans
- *kulajda* (mushroom and potato soup with hard-boiled eggs)
- *knedliky* (boiled dumplings, a universal side dish); *ovocne knedliky* (fruit dumplings) are a common dessert
- *knedlikem* (the regional variant of goulash)
- *smazeny syr* (a slice of cheese, coated in egg and bread crumbs and fried)
- *bramboraky* (heavily-spiced potato pancakes)
- *palacinky* (crepes, rolled around meat or cheese as a meal or cream cheese or fruit preserves for dessert; in the latter mode, sometimes still served with ice cream in Prague)

Czechs were among the world's heaviest drinkers and *the* greatest annual consumers of beer (*pivo*) – over 150 liters per citizen and 99% of it domestic production. Virtually every town of note had a local brewery or microbrewery. Though beer isn't what most prewar observers considered an obvious survival necessity, Czech farmers continue to grow hops. After all, in the absence of water purification plants, beer is a safer alternative to drinking water (that's the rationale, anyway). Less common beverages include wine (mostly from southern Moravia or the Elbe River basin), vodka, *slivovice* (plum brandy), and *borovicka* (the harsh local gin, 50-70% alcohol and made from juniper berries). The latter two are the most common home-brewed beverages.

## **Chapter Three: Factions and Forces**

*The party was in full swing at the roadhouse – really an appropriated Burger King, but it seemed rude to point that out. I finished my turn on the bicycle-cranked generator that was running someone's portable speakers and gladly accepted a mug of the local beer from Svoboda, who was playing tour guide tonight. Deciding to save myself for the barbecue that was coming up, I waved away a slab of deep-fried cheese.*

*The beer was surprisingly good and I was about to ask about the local brand name when the doors swung open. Everyone turned to look as a half-dozen armed men in Czech-pattern camouflage sauntered in. The troops with us bristled like a room full of cats confronted with a pack of terriers. With cliched dramatic timing, the music faded and the lights dimmed as Master Sergeant Dzmura spun to a halt on the bike.*

*Svoboda swiveled sideways in the booth and quietly unsnapped the flap on his holster. I leaned across the table to him. "Radek, what is this? Those guys look ACR too."*

*He answered without taking his eyes off the new arrivals. "No rank, no flags. See the crowned eagle patches? Not Army. Czech Resistance. Stopped obeying orders after Pribram."*

*"Resistance? Dude, I've seen occupied territory and this ain't it. What do they think they're resisting?"*

*He shrugged. "Yeah, that's sort of the question, isn't it?"*

The shooting may have abated for the moment, but the Czech Republic of 2013 is anything but peaceful. Large areas of the country remain under Russian dominion, former allies are testing the remaining borders, and a major rift is developing within both the government and the citizenry at large. The country still has the capability to pull itself up by its bootstraps and reassert itself as a regional power – but not if the energy necessary for such an effort is wasted on internal disputes or a resumption of the Twilight War. This chapter examines both the major and minor power blocs within the Czech Republic.

### **Czech Republic**

Unsurprisingly, the single largest power bloc in the postwar Czech Republic is the central Czech government and military, along with the citizens who at least nominally support their elected and appointed leaders. Although the nation has lost almost 20% of its prewar territory and over half its population, what remains is still a significant unified power in the Europe of 2013. Whether it can remain unified or powerful will be determined over the next few years – if not sooner.

As it was for a millennium before the Twilight War, Prague is the nation's political and economic heart. It also lies on a rough dividing line between two areas that suffered significantly different effects from the war. West of Prague, most communities were subject to the Russian EMP attacks in late 2011 but subsequently saw no major military action. Population centers east of Prague were out of the EMP's radius of effect, but most suffered some level of fighting during the Russian invasion. This pronounced demarcation and its effects on each region's current survival and reconstruction needs are the source of many of the nation's current internal political disputes.

#### **Agendas**

The Czech Republic's foremost priorities are to maintain its existence as a sovereign nation and to avoid losing any more citizens to the privations of the Twilight War's aftermath. Unfortunately, these goals are in conflict more than a casual observer might expect. The Army of the Czech Republic has accomplished as much consolidation and refitting as it can

with the resources still available to it. However, even with support from locally-based allied troops, is unlikely to withstand a coordinated assault by more than one major enemy. Any further military buildup must come at the expense of recovery in the industrial and agricultural sectors, both of which are essential for short-term survival and mid- to long-term economic restoration.

In addition to the external dangers of two Russian occupation forces and a potential German land grab, the Czech Republic also faces a grave internal threat in the Czech Resistance movement (see following). An irony not lost upon many government officials is the fact that the Resistance is a problem of the government's own making, having grown out of prewar preparations for the Russian invasion. Reconciliation with the Resistance is a major goal for the government, but the Resistance's lack of a centralized structure makes serious negotiations akin to arm-wrestling a snake.

The Czech government also needs to resolve a constitutional crisis if it is to retain its citizens' confidence. The Russian invasion and subsequent Siege of Prague forestalled the normal 2012 election cycle. Many current officials, including the president and prime minister, now remain in office past their legal term limits. With a significant portion of the electorate dead or behind Russian lines, simply figuring out how to reapportion parliamentary seats is a major undertaking – not to mention the logistical problems of organizing a national election.

## **Assets**

Diminished though it is, the Czech central government still at least nominally controls the lion's share of Czech land and population. In an unpopular move, albeit one generally seen as necessary, the government nationalized several industries when civilian attrition or malfeasance proved insufficient to the demands of the Last Year. These include power generation, television broadcasting, most defense-related manufacturing, and some failing food production and distribution operations, as well as a large amount of heavy transportation. These variously remain under the control of the Ministries of Industry and Trade, Transport, Agriculture, and Defense.

Thanks to an aggressive program of military reform since the end of the Cold War, the Czech military was thoroughly subordinated to civilian authority by the Twilight War's outbreak. For the most part, this held, and all but scattered elements of the surviving regular and reserve forces remain loyal to civilian authority. This is not the case with the Zizka Brigade militia units, though a few companies (mostly in the western areas of the country) are still reporting to ACR command authorities. From a practical perspective, the ACR can augment its strength with allied British and Slovak forces, though these units are not legally bound to obey Czech orders. The UZSI, BIS, and PCR also remain under government control.

Finally, the Czech Republic retains Prague and the surrounding lands. This is almost as important symbolically as it is strategically. As the heart of the nation and one of the least-touched major cities in Central Europe, Prague is rapidly regaining its historical status as a focal point for political, espionage, and economic efforts whose scope extends far beyond Czech borders.

## **Leadership**

Although disease, hunger, and war killed many individuals, a robust continuity plan enabled the Czech government to continue functioning to the present day. The current president and head of state is Marek Svorada, the former Minister of Industry and Trade, who was elected to the position after a heart attack felled the previous holder of the office. The prime minister and head of the Czech government is Gabriele Kasparkova, former Minister of Justice and one of Svorada's long-time political allies.

## External Relations

**Czech Resistance:** The lack of a unified face leads many citizens and some junior government functionaries to dismiss the Resistance. However, the upper echelons of the government and ACR take it very seriously indeed, and no few strategy meetings focus on how to bring it under control without igniting a civil war. Of particular concern are BIS reports that external powers may be provoking the Resistance into its more extreme actions.

**Central Group of Forces:** The Czechs know their history. No one believes that the new name of the Russian military command occupying Slovakia and the eastern Czech Republic is anything but a naked threat. Of all the threats to the nation's survival, most Czechs see the CGF as the most dangerous. Its use of weapons of mass destruction during the Last Year only reinforces its status and the ACR expects a resumption of hostilities within the next 12 months.

**Task Group Temelin:** Since January, the Russians at Temelin have had a knife at the nation's throat. Their hesitation to press this advantage keeps a lot of Czech generals and politicians awake at night. If not for the Pribram Agreement and a few intelligence reports suggesting that the 19th Motor Rifle Division's loyalties are strained, Task Group Temelin would look much more dangerous.

**Former United Kingdom:** Czech-UK relations were amiable throughout the early 21st century, with the Munich Dictate forgotten by all but a few old and bitter soldiers. Any remaining debts were paid when the British government sidestepped its claim of neutrality in the European conflict to effectively double Czech troop strength. Today, any British soldier or citizen in the Czech Republic is assured of at least a beer and a hot meal. The UK's disintegration provided some political headaches for Czech diplomats, but the Prague embassy does now represent the legitimate successor to the UK's government. Relations between the Republic and the Kingdom are amiable, with transportation difficulties being the main obstacle to mutual reconstruction assistance.

**Free Slovakia:** On both political and cultural levels, the Czech and Slovak populations have been intertwined for centuries. The Czech government's current official stance is that no resources *currently* are available to expel the CGF from Slovakia, but the situation is strictly temporary and will eventually be remedied. The surviving Free Slovak government-in-exile has full diplomatic recognition and relations between Czech citizens and Slovak refugees are generally good.

## Czech Resistance

It's perhaps inaccurate to label the Czech Resistance a unified faction within the Czech Republic of 2013. It's more a mindset shared by several smaller groups with different specific structures and agendas: the belief that the national government and military have sold out their citizens to the Russians and are reverting to a totalitarian outlook. The Resistance's common principle is that no Czech (or Bohemian or Moravian or Silesian) is free as long as a single square meter of land is pinned under a foreign boot or a single worker labors in a nationalized industry.

Were its efforts concentrated solely against the Russian invasion forces, the Czech Resistance would not be so much of a threat to the survival of the nation in whose name it acts (though Resistance operations constantly threaten to provoke the Russians to repudiate the Pribram Agreement). Unfortunately, several sub-factions within the Resistance are convinced that the current government has brokered deals with Russia or other parties that go beyond mere cease-fires. Operating under these assumptions, the Resistance has

turned a disturbingly large part of its propaganda and intelligence efforts against that same government.

The Resistance has three main power bases. The first is the majority of Zizka Brigade partisans: militia troops trained to oppose the Russian invasion who refused orders from their nominal ACR command authorities and continued independent operations after the March cease-fire. The second is political: an opposition coalition led by a right-wing splinter of the former Civic Democratic Party (ODS), whose members are attempting to gain control of the government from within. The third is the most widespread, amorphous, and potentially dangerous: a growing number of ordinary Czech citizens, many of whose homes or families are now behind Russian lines, who have lost faith in their elected officials and the democratic process.

### **Agendas**

The Resistance has two main goals: expulsion of Russian (and all other foreign) troops from Czech soil and the installation of a new government to ensure that recent events are not repeated. Most Resistance members desire some form of national reconstruction once these two goals are achieved, but few outside the movement's political arm are planning that far ahead in any great detail.

To attain these goals, each of the Resistance's power bases is acting according to its own capabilities. The Zizka Brigade cells and affiliated paramilitary groups (along with a handful of regular ACR units that mutinied after Pribram) are conducting ongoing operations against both the Temelin garrison and the Central Group of Forces, as well as channeling what little aid they can to their counterparts in Slovakia. The former ODS is at the forefront of demands for general elections so it can seize control of the government without violating the Czech constitution. Its members in Parliament also consistently vote in favor of military appropriations at the expense of any "non-essential" civil recovery programs. The general public hasn't yet become organized or irate enough to take any mass action. However, citizens who sympathize with the Resistance are beginning to coalesce in small neighborhood or community groups, and the most outspoken among them will aid covert Zizka Brigade operations if they can.

### **Assets**

It's impossible to formulate an accurate tally of soldiers and citizens with Resistance allegiances. From a military perspective, over half of the Zizka Brigade refused to honor the Pribram Agreement, but no one knows how many of these militiamen are still alive, let alone actively fighting. Best educated guesses put the total number of active Zizka partisans around a thousand, but cells are widely scattered across the Czech Republic and rarely gather in more than platoon strength.

Civilian sympathizers are likewise difficult to pin down. The Czech government hasn't yet taken any active measures against dissidents who publicly express support for the Resistance, but there's a lingering paranoia that *something* is in the wind. The farther from Prague a community lies, the more likely it is that at least some residents will openly express Resistance support or even claim membership. The notable exceptions to this are the elected officials in Parliament, who are too visible to be dismissed or suppressed, and the younger Prague residents who actively campaign in their favor.

This may sound like we're weaseling out of giving you hard numbers in order to let your GM decide just how strong the Resistance is in his campaign. That's probably an accurate assessment. The Resistance's ultimate power and actions have the potential to radically change this setting. That's something we'd rather see you play out than dictate ourselves.

### **Leadership**

The Czech Resistance has no unified leadership – yet. The emergence of such a degree of organization is among the current government's greatest fears. The Resistance's foremost military commander is Brigadier General Radomir Hollacek, formerly the training officer who oversaw the formation of the Zizka Brigade. Political leadership in the emerging Czech Autonomy Party centers on Leo Vostrak, an ODS parliamentarian from Ostrava. No "people's Resistance leaders" have yet emerged beyond the local level.

## External Relations

**Czech Republic:** Depending on how heavily the individual observer buys into various conspiracy theories, Resistance opinions of the Czech government and ACR range from "sadly misguided" to "actively treasonous." Most ordinary citizens without Resistance sympathies just haven't seen enough of the truth yet – not that it's their fault, given the demands of daily survival. National loyalties are still strong enough that few Resistance-affiliated groups are willing to act directly against their countrymen yet, but more and more are at least considering the option. To steal a phrase, it may be necessary to destroy the Czech Republic in order to save it.

**Russian Occupation Forces:** Most of the Resistance sees no functional difference between the Central Group of Forces and Task Group Temelin. Both are foreign invaders – worse, the spiritual successors of the Cold War-era Communist occupiers. They may go *outside* Czech soil or *under* it, but they may not remain *on* it. A few dissidents point to the passivity of the Temelin garrison as an indicator of *something*, but this is neither a popular nor safe opinion.

**Former United Kingdom:** No one in the Czech Resistance (except for a few dedicated isolationists who view the UK as an American puppet state) has a problem with the UK's previous or ongoing military contributions. The Resistance's concern is that the larger and more powerful Kingdom of England may see the Czech Republic as a source of recovery resources that it can squeeze dry and discard – perhaps even an enticing addition to a renewed British Empire. Of particular interest to the Resistance is the apparent tension in Prague between the Royal diplomatic mission and military command staff.

**Free Slovakia:** "There, but for the grace of geography, go I." The Resistance looks upon the Slovak refugee population with a mixture of pity and horror. Once the Czech Republic is free of Russian invaders, restoration of Slovakia to its people will be a moral imperative. For now, the Resistance maintains close ties to its counterparts in the occupied nation and continues to build support among the displaced Slovaks living in Czech lands.

## Symbols

The Czech Republic still uses its prewar flag: white over red, with a blue triangle at the hoist side. As a symbol of solidarity with citizens under CGF domination, the Czech Resistance has appropriated Moravia's historical symbols: a yellow-over-red flag or, more common on printed propaganda, a red-and-white-checked crowned eagle on a blue shield.

## Central Group of Forces

On February 26, 2012, Russian Federation forces occupying Ukraine crossed the border into the Slovak Republic. The conquest of Slovakia took a little under three months, after which Russian troops continued pressing westward. In mid-2013, the survivors of these units occupy the entirety of Slovakia and most of the eastern Czech Republic. Formerly subordinate to the Russian 2nd Army from the Volga-Ural Military District, the command



became independent during the Siege of Prague under a new designation: Central Group of Forces. For Russian, Czech, and Slovak observers alike, this new name remains a clear statement of the formation's intentions where the Czech and Slovak Republics are concerned.

In the Czech Republic, the CGF occupies all Czech territory east of a line running from the Polish border town of Opawica to Bila Lhota, then south to the merger of the Czech, Slovak, and Austrian borders. CGF reconnaissance patrols, salvage parties, and food and fuel raids all range another 20 to 80 kilometers westward, into the devastated no man's land containing the defunct Dukovany nuclear power plant and the ruins of Brno.

## **Agendas**

It's worth pointing out that few of the men or nations that history now portrays as "evil" actually considered themselves villains. The Central Group of Forces is a prime example of this. The Russian commanders involved in the invasion of Slovakia and the Czech Republic saw it as their mission to defend their country from EU economic warfare and secure the resources necessary for Russian citizens to not only survive but thrive. In their current position, their new mission is to bring the former Czechoslovakia back into line as a semi-autonomous satellite state, with Czech and Slovak industrial capacity serving the reconstruction of the Russian Federation.

The CGF functions as both an occupying force and a military government, maintaining martial law in the territory under its sway. It's attempting to shepherd "its" citizens into bringing their industries back up to full capacity, or as close to such as is possible in 2013. However, an understandable lack of enthusiasm among the population has slowed these efforts. So far, serious reprisals have been limited to a few isolated excesses among local commanders, but the CGF's senior leadership is rapidly running out of the patience that was never its strong suit in the first place.

## **Assets**

The CGF is primarily a military force. Its main component units are all survivors of the Russian invasions of Ukraine and Poland. In the Czech Republic, these include the 201st Motor Rifle Division, the 6th Separate Tank Brigade, and the 5th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade. The remnants of two more divisions and several smaller units are holding down Slovakia. All told, the CGF has a core of several thousand combat troops, close to a thousand more Ukrainian and Slovak conscripts, and an unknown number of support personnel.

As the military government of occupied Slovakia, the CGF can draw on virtually anything or anyone that survived the Last Year. The degree of support it's receiving from Russia is unknown. In the Czech Republic, CGF headquarters is located in the city of Olomouc, the former medieval capital of Moravia.

The CGF's component units are known to have used both chemical and nuclear weapons during the Twilight War and the 201st MRD is accused of at least one biological warfare incident. Whether or not the CGF has any such weapons remaining, the mere threat of their renewed use is a powerful deterrent.

In addition to its military power, the CGF has its ear to the reporting chains of most of the remaining Russian intelligence apparatus in the Czech Republic. Espionage operations, particularly in Prague, are high-priority items for the CGF command staff and their Russian political superiors.

Chapter Six takes a closer look at Occupied Moravia and the current status of the Central Group of Forces in the Czech Republic.

## **Leadership**

The overall commander of the Central Group of Forces is General-Colonel Boris Berezovsky. Since being promoted to command of the CGF, Berezovsky has taken to styling himself as "Governor-General of the Czecho-Slovakian *Guberniya*," conveniently ignoring the fact that the Russian Empire's original title had nothing to do with military rank. In the wake of Berezovsky's eccentricity, daily operational control often devolves to General-Lieutenant Semyon Nevskaja, commander of the 201st MRD.

## External Relations

**Czech Republic and Resistance:** The remaining Czech government and military are the foremost obstacle to completion of the Central Group of Forces' mission. Unfortunately, the current balance of forces prevents the CGF from simply rolling westward and crushing all resistance, as it intended to do in 2012. Russia needs Czech agricultural and industrial capacity intact and simply depopulating the country and leveling Prague won't provide those resources... no matter how gratifying such action might be. Ongoing "Czech Resistance" actions against the CGF only prove that the Czech government has shifted its tactics to insurgency, harassment, and sabotage while it rebuilds its conventional forces.

**Task Group Temelin:** On any given day, the CGF is on the verge of declaring the Temelin garrison a collection of traitors and requesting permission to commence offensive operations against it. CGF commanders believe that had the 58th Army pressed northward to Prague rather than negotiating with the Czech government, the entire Czech Republic would now be back under Russian control. As it is, the "Pribram Betrayal" has questionable legal standing. Relations between the CGF and 58th Army headquarters are frosty at best, and CGF forces have standing orders to provide no assistance to Task Group Temelin.

**Former United Kingdom:** The Central Group of Forces has no immediate interest in a so-called "kingdom" a thousand kilometers away. However, the continued presence of a major British military force allied with the Czechs is enough to give planners pause. The CGF's strategy for dealing with 1st Armoured is simply to wait, as intelligence from Prague implies the unit will soon be recalled to England.

**Free Slovakia:** As the military government of the Czecho-Slovakian *Guberniya*, the CGF does not recognize any other Slovak government. Partisans within the former Slovakia are in a state of rebellion and will be brought to heel. Slovak troops sheltering within the Czech Republic are merely on a stay of execution.

## Task Group Temelin

The Russian 58th Army, formerly based in the Caucasus Military District, was the primary force responsible for the invasions of Romania, Hungary, and Austria in 2012. By the end of the year, constant action had ground it down to less than half its prewar strength, and the surviving units had settled into Austrian communities to wait out the winter. Thus, the news in January 2013 that a rag-tag band of paratroopers had captured a working nuclear reactor was something of a shock. The closest unit that was even nominally combat-ready was the 19th Motor Rifle Division. Together with as much engineering support as the 58th Army could scrape together on short notice, the 19th MRD was re-designated Task Group Temelin and sent charging northward to secure the site before the Czechs could react.

If the capture of Temelin was unexpected, what followed stunned 58th Army commanders. Having taken the reactor, the Russian officers on-site subsequently brought the Czech government to the negotiating table and concluded a cease-fire agreement, leaving Russia in possession of almost a quarter of Czech territory. True, most of that concession went to the Central Group of Forces, but the 58th Army was admittedly tied down in Austria and in no position to further exploit any gaps in the southern Czech border. The 19th MRD and its

supporting units were left in place to hold the power plant and surrounding land while the Russian generals looked forward to a return to the marvels of electricity.

As the months have worn on, though, Task Group Temelin's initial success has been all but erased by a series of disappointments. Partisan activity throughout the Zone of Control established by the cease-fire has derailed several efforts to restore power transmission to Austria. Likewise, projects to restore rail transportation out of the region and bring several industries back online have met with failure after failure. Only the unit's ongoing, if unexpected, success on the diplomatic front has kept it in the good graces of its superiors. Having established an uneasy peace, Task Group Temelin now provides the sole Russian line of diplomatic communication to not only the Czech Republic but, through surviving embassies in Prague, several other nations.

### **Agendas**

The Temelin garrison's foremost priority now is survival. The troops here have spent more than half of the past two years in combat operations and the relative peace and quiet of the Temelin Zone of Control is the next best thing to paradise. Unfortunately, constant harassment from the Czech Resistance and pressure from 58th Army HQ are wearing on the troops. No few of the Russians at Temelin have written off their chances of ever going home and are starting to quietly discuss other options for restarting their lives.

### **Assets**

As previously noted, Task Group Temelin is a military force. Its primary component is the roughly four surviving battalions of the 19th Motor Rifle Division. It also contains the company-strength remnant of the 51st Guards Airborne Regiment that initially captured the Temelin nuclear facility for Russia. However, the unit's greatest asset and reason for existence is Nuclear Power Station Temelin. Chapter Five takes a closer look at the Temelin Zone of Control and the current status of Task Group Temelin.

### **Leadership**

The nominal commander of Task Group Temelin is Colonel Vitaly Glebov, who inherited command of the 19th MRD after the unpleasant demises of two of his superiors. However, Major Feliks Yakov, commander of the 51st Airborne, has what some would consider an undue amount of influence over both the troops and the local civilian population.

### **External Relations**

**Czech Republic:** Dealing with the Czech government is an intricate gamble for the officers of Task Group Temelin. The Czechs theoretically could wipe out the 19th MRD, though they'd pay dearly and likely would lose the reactor complex. Neither party wants such an outcome. For the Russians, the trick is to appear strong enough to be a peer but not strong enough to be a threat – and, if it's even possible to strike such a balance, to further develop that relationship into something even more beneficial.

**Czech Resistance:** If the Resistance would simply go away and leave the Temelin garrison alone for a few months, matters would be much simpler. Unfortunately, the persistent efforts of a relatively small group of disaffected Czechs may push the 58th Army into ordering action that would wreck Task Group Temelin's carefully-constructed rapport with the Czech government.

**Central Group of Forces:** The Pribram Agreement ended the Siege of Prague, likely preventing the deaths of thousands more Russian troops. If the men leading the Central Group of Forces can't see that, they're idiots – which does seem to fit with their blind insistence on prosecuting a war that's already over in the name of a country that's face-down in its own grave.

**Former United Kingdom:** Task Group Temelin never faced British forces in battle during the Twilight War, so the former UK is largely an unknown. The Russians haven't yet spoken with His Majesty's embassy, and military contact has been limited to a handful of casual (albeit slightly tense) tavern encounters with off-duty troops in Prague.

**Free Slovakia:** Likewise a cipher due to lack of contact, the Slovak government and military in exile just aren't a major issue for Task Group Temelin. A few Slovak refugees reside within the Temelin Zone of Control but they're effectively just part of the overall population as far as the Russians are concerned.

## Kingdom of England

Although the combined total of British soldiers and citizens in the Czech Republic is only a few thousand, representatives of the former UK wield a disproportionate amount of influence over events here. This is directly attributable to the actions and continued presence of 1st Armoured Division. Even after severe attrition during the Last Year, the division comprises almost half the total combat power available to the ACR, and its ongoing presence is a significant deterrent to renewed Russian attacks.

Early in the Siege of Prague, a Russian artillery strike killed the British ambassador and much of his staff during a tour of 1st Armoured's forward positions. With no senior representative of the UK's government available, the commander of 1st Armoured took over management of British-Czech relations. This lasted until late April, when a small, well-armed convoy bearing His Majesty Alexander IV's new ambassador made its way down the Vltava River. The new diplomatic mission immediately took over and began pressing flesh and negotiating with the Czech government.

At present, an uneasy tension hangs over the roughly 1,400 British expatriates left in the Czech Republic, most of whom have concentrated in and around Prague. Few are comfortable with the UK's breakup and the subsequent royal restoration, but the ambassador and his subordinates have adroitly taken over local representation of British interests. So far, the ambassador has stayed out of 1st Armoured's operations save for the initial packet of orders that arrived with her. The precise content of these is known only to the division's command staff. However, the unit's overall priorities have shifted from improving Prague's defenses and patrolling the surrounding area to a general stand-down and refit.

### Agendas

Officially, His Majesty's Government seeks to reopen trade relations with the Czech Republic as soon as transport conditions makes this feasible again. Mutual assistance negotiations are ongoing. A technical aid mission from the Kingdom is scheduled to arrive in late August, with Czech grain exports tentatively starting up in mid-autumn if crop yields are sufficient. Rumor also has it that a joint operation to secure the Elbe River through Germany is in the works, though it's unclear where the troops for such action could be found. Finally, the Kingdom has a strong interest in monitoring Russian activity throughout Europe, and the Czech Republic provides an excellent jumping-off point for intelligence operations.

Outside the British embassy, matters are less sanguine. 1st Armoured's troopers have few reservations about the work they did in the course of the Last Year. As news from home has filtered out, though, fewer and fewer feel as if the nation they enlisted to serve still exists. The British Army's oath of service is to the crown, not the country, and King Alexander IV *is* Queen Elizabeth II's rightful heir. Still, his dissolution of Parliament and the formation of the Civil Protection organization are worrisome, and the UK's subsequent

breakup is downright unpalatable. Opinion among the troops is equally split between making the most of a long-term stay in the Czech Republic or going home and trying to salvage what's left of the UK. Neither option is particularly appealing – and commanders are playing their intentions very close to the proverbial vest.

## Assets

The largest and most visible British asset in the Czech Republic is the remaining troop strength of 1st Armoured Division. Although it suffered heavy casualties over the Last Year, it's still a force to be reckoned with, especially by the standards of mid-2013. As valuable as the combat troops are, the support personnel – particularly the REME, sapper, and medical contingents – did not see extensive combat and may be in better shape than the Czechs' own equivalent assets.

His Majesty's ambassadorial legation included not only diplomats but an infrastructure survey group from Civil Protection. This group's primary mission is to determine what technical assistance the Kingdom can best lend the Czech Republic to restore critical services and industries. Several field teams, each consisting of a handful of engineering specialists and a PMC bodyguard squad, are traveling throughout the country. These teams' initial reports formulated the plan for the technical assistance mission currently en route.

The ambassador's staff also has made it a priority to locate all British civilians in the Czech Republic. Most of these were students or businesspeople who were marooned during the Last Year. Those with useful technical skills have been pressed into service on the CP survey teams; the rest are being gathered in Prague for eventual repatriation.

## Leadership

His Majesty's Ambassador to the Czech Republic is Ellen Trescott, OBE, a veteran Foreign Office diplomat. Command of 1st Armoured Division lies with Brigadier Jeremy Usher, MBE.

## External Relations

**Czech Republic:** As stated above, both the British ambassadorial and military contingents enjoy amiable relationships with their Czech counterparts. The distance involved is the primary reason the two nations aren't already cooperating more closely on several proposed joint initiatives.

**Czech Resistance:** The British diplomatic mission doesn't officially recognize the Resistance as representative of the Czech government or people. However, a recent attack on a CP survey team has brought the movement into focus as more than an object of curiosity. From a military standpoint, the Resistance isn't much of a factor, though it's garnering a certain amount of sympathy among British troops who are starting to question the legitimacy of their own new government.

**Central Group of Forces:** The diplomatic mission wants to ascertain whether the CGF actually represents Russian interests or is an autonomous military fiefdom. However, after the nuclear strike on 7th Armoured Brigade at Brno, no British military personnel are interested in exchanging anything but fire with the CGF.

**Task Group Temelin:** This Russian contingent's general posture makes it even more intriguing to the British diplomats, as the difference between it and the CGF is suggestive of a schism in the Russian government or military command structure. 1st Armoured has never faced units of the 58th Army in combat and therefore has no personal grudge, but the Temelin garrison is still the enemy until proven otherwise.

**Free Slovakia:** The embassy has opened relations with the Slovak government-in-exile, but the unlikelihood of Russian departure in the near future means the Slovaks have very little to offer the Kingdom. On the military side, British and Slovak forces rarely operate

side-by-side, and many troopers carry a grudge against the Slovaks for provoking the nuclear attack on Brno.

## Free Slovakia

At no point did the Last Year go well for the Slovak Republic. The invading Russian forces made profligate use of chemical and tactical nuclear weapons to crush all opposition, rolling across the width of the country in two and a half months. Combined with famine and disease, the war itself reduced the Slovak population by at least half – and by some estimates, much more. Most of the survivors remain within the territory now claimed by the Central Group of Forces, but an estimated 450,000 – almost 10% of the country's prewar population – fled into Austrian, Polish, and Czech territory. While casualties among these refugees were grievous, particularly during the harsh winter of 2012-2013, displaced Slovaks now comprise a noticeable fraction of the Czech Republic's total population.

Several key members of the Slovak government, including both the president and prime minister, escaped Bratislava before it fell to the Russian advance. Rather than relocate to Prague, these leaders established their government-in-exile in Brno. In addition to providing the symbolism of being much closer to Slovak land, this allowed them a direct hand in coordinating the surviving elements of the Slovak armed forces with their Czech hosts. Ultimately, though, this decision proved to be fatal. The nuclear strike on Brno obliterated the leaders of what had become known as "Free Slovakia."

A few representatives of Free Slovakia were in Prague at the time of the attack. Once the scope of Brno's destruction became clear, these bureaucrats became Free Slovakia's *de facto* leaders. Unfortunately, they don't have much left to lead.

The Free Slovakia movement is a loose network of Slovak citizens living within the territory claimed by the Czech Republic. The reformed Slovak government-in-exile provides coordination for communication and advocacy within the Czech political apparatus. Without actual physical resources, though, it can accomplish little else and is a "government" in name only. For the actual character of Free Slovakia, the exiled population at large is a better indicator. A few simply are trying to restart their lives, but the majority of Free Slovak citizens are actively engaged in efforts to strike back at the Russians. A large number of volunteers have joined Czech reconstruction projects, reasoning that the Czechs are their closest and most likely allies in any future military campaign. Others are active in the Czech Resistance. Still others have congregated in Prague, where – somewhat to the embarrassment of their "elected leaders" – they besiege every embassy with pleas for aid.

### Agendas

Free Slovakia's sole focus is the return of the Slovak Republic to autonomy and prosperity. Individual members or sub-groups may have personal interests, but these are almost always sublimated to the overall goal of Slovak sovereignty.

### Assets

Free Slovaks comprise perhaps four to five percent of the Czech Republic's total population in 2013 – albeit a highly visible four to five percent. The civilian population represents a broad cross-section of prewar Slovakia, with a large percentage of skilled industrial laborers.

What's left of the Slovak military reassembled near Prague in late 2012 and is now deployed in Pardubice and points east. Although it reports to the Free Slovak government, it's part of the ACR for operational and logistical purposes. This force – listed on paper as the 9th (Slovak) Mechanized Brigade – is effectively an understrength battalion of light infantry.

### Leadership



President Stanislav Matalik and Prime Minister Ivan Troppova, both former mid-level functionaries with no executive experience, head Free Slovakia's government-in-exile. The equally green Colonel (formerly Captain) Ladislav Csaka has command of 9th Mech.

## External Relations

**Czech Republic:** A single nation until the early 1990s, the Czech and Slovak Republics were one another's closest allies throughout the early 21st century. The fall of Slovakia has made the relationship considerably more one-sided. As a population existing almost entirely within the Czech Republic, Free Slovakia invests significant effort in being more benefit than drain on its hosts.

**Czech Resistance:** Although the Free Slovak government officially aligns with its Czech hosts, the movement's actual sympathies and desires are much closer to those of the Czech Resistance. Both groups want the Russians out of their homes and are willing to use whatever means are necessary to accomplish that goal. An estimated half of the surviving Slovak military has joined Resistance groups rather than re-muster under ACR command.

**Central Group of Forces:** The fields and forests of Slovakia shall be restored with the blood of the invaders.

**Task Group Temelin:** Free Slovakia sees little reason to differentiate between two batches of Russians, but the 58th Army isn't the formation occupying Slovak land today. It would be an oversimplification to say the Slovaks view the Temelin garrison as a strictly Czech problem, but it's not an immediate priority for them.

**Former United Kingdom:** The Kingdom of England has little to offer Free Slovakia at present, but it never hurts to be polite.

## Minor Factions

The Czechs and Russians are the primary power blocs in the Czech Republic of 2013, with Slovakia-in-Exile and the Kingdom of England not far behind in terms of overall strength. However, these are far from the only entities with an interest in local events. The following minor factions have only local influence, if even that, but are still worthy of attention.

## Austria

Czech relations with Austria, warm for much of the early 21st century, became strained over the run-up to the Twilight War. Two main issues contributed to this. The first was the the Austrian ban on Ukrainian refugees in the summer of 2010, which the Czech and Slovak Republics opposed both popularly and politically. The second was the proposed expansion of Nuclear Power Station Temelin; Austrian law has forbidden the use of nuclear energy sources since 1978 and majority opinion generally aligned with this stance. Austria's refusal to allow allowing foreign military assistance within its borders also seemed the height of folly to Czech observers, who were well aware of their southern neighbor's military capabilities compared to the impending Russian threat. By the time Austrian refugees began attempting to cross the Czech border two years later, the Czech government was more than willing to say "we told you so." From the ACR's perspective, it was far better to make Austrian citizens a problem for the Russians than for their own personnel, and allowing thousands of unvetted civilians into what was still an untouched rear area posed a severe security problem. To the credit of both militaries, few shooting incidents occurred, but strict Czech border controls crushed the last vestiges of cooperation between the two nations.

The Austrian government effectively ceased to exist in late 2012. Austria is now under the military government of the Russian 58th Army, with which the Czech government maintains tenuous contact through Task Group Temelin. Scattered bands of Austrian civilians and soldiers are carrying on a resistance against the Russian occupation. Several competing command structures for this movement exist. Most sources believe that one is based out of the Bohemian Forest, somewhere in the shared Austrian-Czech-German border region. This area contains the largest concentration of Austrian refugees on Czech soil, numbering somewhere in the thousands. Those who aren't attempting to move farther west into Germany are believed to be attempting to establish homesteads, but a general lack of skills and infrastructure is likely to make this a grisly failure. The Czech Resistance movement is believed to maintain some tenuous contact with these settlers, but the other major players have bigger concerns.

## Germany

Prewar Czech-German relations were cordial but distant. The election of several former East German officials to high offices caused many Czechs to look askance at German politics. However, politicians on both sides of the border were committed to putting the past behind their nations.

Although Germany was one of the first nations to enact measures against mass Ukrainian immigration, a significant minority of German citizens protested this policy. While not strong enough to have it overturned, this pressure did persuade the German government to become the single largest provider of humanitarian aid to the Czech and Slovak refugee management efforts. The *Bundesanstalt Technisches Hilfswerk* call-up was the greatest international deployment in the national relief service's history.

Germany was heavily committed to the Polish front in 2012 but did recognize the invasion of Slovakia as a potential threat. Troop deployments came too late to bolster Slovak defenses, but a limited number of German forces were dispatched to supplement the ACR's strength. Czech politicians held up the movement of frontline combat troops into the country, so the initial German contributions were air defense and engineers. *Luftwaffe* fighter squadrons staged from Czech airbases and two SAM battalions supplemented Prague's defenses. Some German ground units participated in the fighting around Ostrava later that year, and a few of these were caught up in the subsequent Czech retreat to and defense of Prague. With the exception of one artillery battery (composed mainly of reservists from the Czech-German border region) and its support element, all of these units have since withdrawn to Germany.

When examining Czech-German relations today, the foremost question is "which Germany?" The German annexation of Denmark makes both the Czech government and citizenry suspicious, but the action occurred far enough away to be less of an immediate matter than the Russians are. Of greater concern is the current Franco-German troop buildup near Nuremberg, which appears to have no logical target other than the lightly-defended western Czech agricultural areas. Czech military intelligence has noted several incidents, believed to be unrelated, involving apparent *Bundeswehr* deserters raiding communities near the German-Polish border.

From an economic perspective, German stability also is a major issue for the Czechs. The main river transport route of the Elbe passes through Germany to the port of Hamburg, as do almost all westward land routes. Germany's current patchwork internal security is a major obstacle to travel between the Czech Republic and Western Europe. However, without more economic, political, or military influence, there's little hope of stabilizing the nation.



## Poland

After their respective conversions from communism to capitalism and democracy, the Czech Republic and Poland became staunch allies. Together with Hungary, they founded the Visegrad Group, one of the first regional alliances to emerge in post-Soviet Eastern Europe. This alliance's efforts to bring its members up to economic parity with Western European nations were arguably instrumental to later EU and NATO membership initiatives. Both sides of the Czech-Polish border region were home to mixed ethnic groups, and Polish was the third most common tongue in the Czech Republic.

During the Twilight War, only the impending Russian threat in Slovakia kept the ACR from contributing to Poland's defense. As the front lines moved steadily westward, the Czech Republic received thousands of displaced Polish citizens, temporarily settling most of them around Ostrava. This became a natural fallback point for shattered Polish military units looking to regroup and reorganize on friendly territory.

The Polish troops fought gallantly against the initial Russian incursions through the Moravian Gate, buying precious time for Czech and British forces to slog through the flood of westbound evacuees. Unfortunately, Russian reconnaissance assets were well aware of the Czech troop movements. On June 21, 2012, the Russians launched mass chemical weapon strikes to interdict Czech mobility. Several Polish refugee camps were caught in the barrage, including the main tent city and Polish field headquarters at Opava. Thousands of Polish and Czech civilians died. Retaliation was immediate and brutal. The surviving battalion of Polish forces threw itself headlong into the Russian flank, heedless of its own casualties. When the dust settled, the Russian 5th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade had ceased to exist. The Russians were stunned, allowing the Czech 4th Mechanized Brigade time to deploy and prepare hasty defenses around Ostrava.

Today, Poland is the closest thing the Czech Republic has to a neighboring ally. The surviving Polish government in the south of the country maintains regular communication with its Czech counterpart, and each nation has re-opened its embassy in the other's capital. The nations share similar concerns, as both are partially occupied by Russian forces and are uncertain about the intentions of their EU "allies." Current resource constraints prevent either country from providing material assistance to the other, but information is being freely exchanged. Of late, a few joint intelligence operations have been launched to probe the Central Group of Forces and its counterparts on Polish soil. The Czech government tries to ignore the fact that Poland is concerned about *Czech* stability too.

## Ukraine

Ukraine's determinedly independent status outside both NATO and the EU enforced a certain degree of isolation from European affairs. This also gave it a degree of autonomy that many Czechs envied. The Russian invasion in 2010 was an obvious sign of things to come for the Czech Republic, even as governments farther from the action dithered and stalled. The Czech and Slovak Republics were among the few nations to open their borders to Ukrainian refugees. The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated that nearly a million Ukrainians applied for entry in 2010 alone. Of these, some 160,000 were officially granted visas. Many were immediately remanded to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, entities which were more than happy to have tens of thousands of skilled workers willing to take employment in government infrastructure programs at subsistence wages. The overall success of the National Agricultural Initiative was largely due to the influx of experienced farmers among the refugee population.

More controversial than the mass refugee resettlement was the government decision – over the ACR's objections – to include the displaced Ukrainian population in the Zizka Brigade

training program. Initial enlistment rates were low, but the fall of Kiev in December 2011 triggered widespread interest. By the time the war entered the Czech Republic the following spring, an estimated 15% of total Zizka Brigade personnel were Ukrainians eager to exact a measure of revenge on the Russians.

Today, much of the surviving Ukrainian refugee population in the Czech Republic is concentrated in rural areas. Any still-functioning NZI farm is likely to have at least one or two Ukrainian families, and several small towns have become Ukrainian-dominated enclaves. Most Ukrainians on Czech soil lean toward sympathizing with the Czech Resistance, though few have wholly withdrawn support for the government that was willing to take them in. On the Czech side, a large minority of citizens retain a mild prejudice brought on by the financial cost of the refugee influx. This rarely goes farther than the occasional ethnic slur, but the tension is present in some areas, particularly Prague. The Ukrainians have no formal political representation in the Czech government, but some former government officials have become adept at lobbying the Ministry of Agriculture on behalf of "their" people.

## **United States of America**

Czech-American relations before the Twilight War were generally good, save for the groundswell of opposition to construction of ABM facilities on Czech soil. The American intelligence assessment of this movement mirrored the Czech conclusions that Russian provocateurs were fanning the flames, though the basic desire to stay out of a renewed Cold War was admittedly homegrown.

American neutrality in the European conflict kept the United States from deploying troops to defend the Czech and Slovak Republics. Heavy pressure from a Prague-born former Secretary of State did convince the American administration to send Special Forces assistance for the ACR's Zizka Brigade training program, as well as to deploy a limited number of ground forces to ensure security for the ABM facilities. Both of these groups were drawn into the Twilight War in early 2012.

With the death of most of the American diplomatic mission during the Siege of Prague and the CivGov/MilGov split, the Czech Republic has no official relations with what's left of the United States. The only noteworthy American presence is the surviving complement of the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, formerly assigned to defense of the ABM facilities. The unit has moved into quarters in Prague and is attempting to arrange transport to Germany or Poland in the hopes of linking up with other American forces and eventually going home. The 56th SBCT also salvaged the visa records of the U.S. embassy and is trying to gather as many American citizens as possible before it departs (about 3,300 were in the country at the beginning of the Last Year).

The status and location of 4th Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group are unknown. The unit's official orders were to provide training support for the Zizka Brigade program, but it's commonly believed to have had a second mission of gathering firsthand intelligence on Russian operations in Slovakia.

## **Criminal Syndicates**

Prior to the fall of the Iron Curtain, Czechoslovakia, like most other Soviet satellite states, had surprisingly little organized crime. The 1990s saw a sharp increase in criminal activity, thanks to open borders, fluctuating governments, social upheaval, and police forces with relatively little experience in combatting powerful criminal syndicates.

In the immediate prewar period, the largest amount of organized criminal activity in the Czech Republic was a handful of groups with Russian and Ukrainian roots. An estimated

three-quarters of all criminal organizations were foreign. The nation's location and border permeability made it an ideal transshipment point for cargo ranging from drugs (particularly heroin) and weapons to sex slaves. Of greater concern to both the BIS and the PCR, Russian syndicates were making major investments in legitimate front businesses with an apparent strategy of gaining influence over manufacturing and raw materials industries. These same groups also were actively engaged in bribery, blackmail, and other means of gaining leverage over government officials at all levels. Investigations into possible connections between these organizations and Russian intelligence services were cut short by the outbreak of the Twilight War.

Currently, local organized crime activity takes three major forms. The first is small, violent groups that have taken advantage of the chaos to set themselves up as rulers over isolated communities. This is largely confined to the no man's land in the central Czech Republic, between government- and CGF-controlled territories. Most of these "pocket warlords" are members of syndicates based in Albania or the former Yugoslavia who were trapped in the Czech Republic by the war. A few, however, have been identified as Czech, Ukrainian, and Russian. Unconfirmed reports indicate that some of these groups are kidnapping residents from nearby communities to sell to the CGF as slave labor. The ACR and PCR are eager to exterminate these groups, but resource constraints have prevented any significant operations thus far. Resistance cells have engaged some with varying degrees of success.

The second major form of illegal activity is widespread smuggling popularly known as the "gray road." The Czech Republic's central location between the EU and Russian-held territory makes it, once again, an ideal transit point for movements of goods and people. Dozens of smuggling groups – some independent, some beholden to larger syndicates – cross the Czech borders on a nightly basis. Food and medical supplies are the most common goods, but a gray market trade in such unlikely items as functional electronics is growing in Western Europe. "Snakehead" repatriation specialists also are thriving, enriched by the desperation of expatriates who want to return home at any cost.

Finally, many of the large prewar syndicates are still around, albeit just as attenuated as every other prewar institution. Current activities lean toward protection rackets (some of which border on quasi-legitimate private security operations) and self-enrichment through control over vital goods and services. Surviving ethnic gangs, particularly Chinese, Vietnamese, and Hungarian, remain in place as neighborhood "fixers" and "enforcers." Prague and Ostrava are the only Czech population centers large enough to support more than a single criminal organization. Reports from CGF territory indicate that the Russians are ruthlessly suppressing all non-Russian criminals, leaving their own domestic syndicates relatively untouched. In Prague, the reverse is true, as the BIS is gravely concerned about Russian criminal organizations channeling information to the GRU and SVR.

## Humanitarian Organizations

The mass influx of Ukrainian refugees to the Czech and Slovak Republic drew the attention of scores of humanitarian agencies, from the International Red Cross to nationally-sponsored organizations like the German *Bundesanstalt Technisches Hilfswerk* and grassroots community volunteer groups. Throughout 2010-2011, thousands of relief workers were active in the Czech Republic, providing logistical and medical support and legal advocacy for displaced Ukrainians. The EMP attacks in late 2011, followed by the harsh 2011-2012 winter and the second phase of Russian offensives in early spring, left many of these personnel stranded. Some packed up and attempted to relocate to their respective homes for aid missions there, with varying degrees of success. Others hunkered down in the communities that were already hosting them, trading skilled or unskilled labor for a share of whatever resources were available.

By mid-2013, few such groups are operating within their prewar mission parameters – even the best-equipped required on supply chains and administrative structures that no longer exist. Those that chose to remain in the Czech Republic have aligned themselves with their host population centers, making their specialized knowledge a valuable community asset or trade resource. Such communities tend to be better-off than their neighbors, but only within the relief group's area of expertise – be it health and sanitation, light construction, emergency medicine, or another focus. In turn, the relief groups have a small amount of influence over local affairs, though not a controlling one. No coordinating structure exists on the national level, though the Ministry of the Interior is including these groups in its ongoing survey of recovery assets within the country. The Czech government is not interfering with any such group's attempt to return home, but repatriation assistance is unlikely to be forthcoming.

## **Chapter Four: City of a Hundred Spires**

*We got to Prague after dark. No, check that: we got to Prague after the sun set. The city was anything but dark, glittering like... analogies failed me. It was lit. It was a city. A real, living city.*

*Lieutenant Moravec got us temporary quarters in Kbely but we were too keyed up to sleep. We got showers – hot water! – and found out from the CQ that it was Saturday and the trams were still running. Our borrowed uniforms – clean laundry! – got us onto those – mass transit! – for free and we headed downtown.*

*We got off with most of the crowd at the south end of something called Wenceslas Square and just stood there by a big equestrian statue, taking it all in. We could see soot and bullet holes and rubble but we also could see fresh paint and plaster and, for God's sake, neon beer signs. And we were in the midst of hundreds of people who weren't trying to kill us or even, for the most part, armed. From the smattering of Czech I'd picked up from Svoboda, it sounded like they were talking about work, family, politics... things that used to be normal in our world. I looked around for a bench, feeling a sudden need to sit down.*

*Suddenly, Llewellyn whirled and took off through the crowd, clearing a path with sharp elbows and her own broken and scatological Czech. The rest of us hustled to keep up with her and almost plowed her under when she skidded to a halt in front of a bar. A couple of regimental crests were newly painted on the windows and over the door hung a big white and green flag bearing a red dragon. We could hear the thump and howl of a Glaswegian punk band I couldn't quite name, but the album was recent – not quite two years old, probably one of the last new releases ever. Inebriated voices floated out to us, singing along to lyrics about someone else's girlfriend.*

*Lew took a deep breath and I saw what may have been the least-expected marvel of the evening: the woman actually teared up. "Aw, hell," she said, wiping at her eyes. "Boys, I think I'm home."*

*Ruiz leaned on my shoulder and muttered so Lew couldn't hear, "Not quite, but this might be better than home is right now."*

For over a millennium, Prague has been the heart of the Czech lands. The former capital of Czechoslovakia, Bohemia, and the Holy Roman Empire, it is now the capital and largest city of the Czech Republic. Although scarred by the Twilight War, the city has once again emerged from famine, plague, and siege as a major center of power in central Europe. As governments across Europe dig themselves out of the rubble and look around, the still-intact Czech capital has become a regional center for international relations, as close to neutral ground as can be found in the summer of 2013. Prague is the focal point of events throughout the Czech Republic and beyond, and a near-obligatory destination for diplomats, entrepreneurs, hustlers, and wanderers anywhere in Central Europe.

## **History**

Human settlement in the area of Prague began in prehistoric times. During the Roman era, the region's primary occupants were Celtic, then later Slavic, tribes. In the 9th century, one of these tribes – the Czechs – rose to dominance with the semi-mythic ascent of the Premyslid dynasty. Later dynastic scions built the two focal points of later settlements: Vysehrad Castle, on the eastern bank of the Vltava River, and a fortification that would become Prague Castle on a hill overlooking the western bank.

In the 10th through 14th centuries, Prague grew into a major commerce center, thanks to its location astride Central Bohemia's largest river. It gained further prominence when native son Charles IV ascended to the Holy Roman throne in the mid-14th century and

moved the imperial capital to his hometown. Charles launched a series of ambitious construction projects that define Prague to the modern era.

Following Charles' reign, Prague's glory gradually declined, bottoming out after the city lost two-thirds of its population over the course of the Thirty Years' War. Several major military campaigns resulted in Bohemian defeats and consequent loss of power for the local nobility. Regrowth had just begun when, in 1689, a massive fire leveled large swaths of the city. Far from being a death knell, however, this heralded a massive reconstruction effort. The emerging merchant class poured money into prestige projects and nearby mines and ironworks made the city a magnet for new industry. By the mid-1800s, the city boasted over 100,000 residents.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw Prague's emergence as the focal point of the growing Czech nationalist movement. The renaissance of Czech literature and culture also was centered here. Even as industrial development continued, the Prague academic community blossomed too. These factors elevated the city to serve as the capital of the new nation of Czechoslovakia in the years after World War I. Subsequent Nazi and Soviet invasions and occupations inflicted relatively little combat damage to the city, though Communist-sponsored construction programs arguably did their own brand of harm.

After the Velvet Divorce, Prague remained the capital of the nascent Czech Republic. The nation moved quickly to normalize relations with the West. Prague capitalized on these new ties and, by the turn of the century, was a major destination for European tourism and economic development. At the beginning of the Twilight War, its population was 1.3 million. Today, perhaps a quarter that many people live in and around Prague's smudged and war-torn glory.

### **Design Note: What We're Doing Here**

We'll be open about our intent: Prague's history and current condition are meant to make it a semi-stable base of operations for PC teams in Central Europe, as well as a complete setting in its own right for groups who prefer a game focused on intrigue or espionage. Though the city suffered from the Twilight War and is a long walk from recovery, it retains enough prewar comforts and conveniences to be somewhat familiar – yet all the more alien for the differences.

### **The Siege of Prague**

Though the Russian invaders besieged several Czech cities and other sites over the course of the Twilight War, the Siege of Prague stands out for both its intensity and its duration. It's also the only such incident that Czechs regularly reference by name. Citizens may talk about "the fighting at Radvanice," "the Pardubice raids," or "what happened to Brno," but unless they personally experienced another event, "the Siege" always refers to the Siege of Prague. The capitalization is implicit.

In the interest of presenting a game setting rather than a military history text, we've chosen to gloss over the exact sequence of events in the Siege. The outline is in Chapter One: the Russians reached the city limits on July 20, 2012 and remained until April 2013. During that time, they trashed much of the city's eastern suburbs and intermittently shelled the western portions, but never successfully forced and held a crossing of the Vltava River. This chapter is full of snapshots of the Siege and its aftermath, but individual GMs are free to establish whatever specific events they need to fill in their own campaigns' backstories – or to run games set *during* the Siege.

## **First Impressions**

Getting to Prague is not difficult, at least in the broad strokes. The city's current status is common knowledge throughout Central Europe, albeit often embellished by local rumor. Anyone possessing a passing familiarity with European geography knows where it is. The trip, of course, may be as arduous as the GM wants to make it, depending on whether he wants the journey to be as important as the destination.

From a distance, Prague's presence is inescapable. During daylight hours, smog from residences and industry blankets the area (electrical service is not universal, despite rumors to the contrary). At night, the skyglow of the city's lights is visible as far as 60 kilometers away. Traffic on the region's main arteries is constant: inbound food shipments, outbound finished goods, outlying communities' delegations seeking higher officials to petition or harangue, military patrols, diplomatic missions, wandering entertainers, refugees, vagabonds, free traders... in 2013, all roads lead to Prague.

Once travelers pass the outer security perimeter, the full extent of Prague's size – both former and current – becomes apparent. The loss of a million residents in a two-year period has left vast swaths of the city empty or populated only by transients and squatters. Combat and Russian occupation churned parts of the eastern districts into little more than rubble and the inevitable detritus of war. Still, at 340,000 people plus satellite communities, this may be the largest population center anyone's seen in the region since the Last Year began. Prague has *crowds*.

Those crowds aren't just wandering around clogging the streets. They're busy. If the Czech Republic is going to drag itself up out of the wreckage and rebuild rather than just surviving at its current level, Prague will be where it happens first. Everyone in the city knows this – and everyone seems to be working toward it. The average adult resident works in excess of 60 hours a week (prewar, the work week was around 40 hours, with some initiatives pushing to reduce it to 32 as a salve for burgeoning unemployment).

Prague's population and industry are sustainable only because of Nuclear Power Station Temelin's output. Prague, unlike most of Europe, has electricity. This bears emphasis because of its novelty. For survivors who've spent the past months in the frozen mud of the front lines or the dark silence of abandoned villages, streetlights and indoor plumbing can bring unexpected culture shock.

The decade before the war brought Prague surprising prominence as a center for international tourism. The city's response was unabashed commercialism. While tourists are extinct in 2013, enough of Prague's hospitality industry survives to accommodate visitors and new residents. Local guide businesses are a recent outgrowth of this, spawned by tour guides and travel agencies determined to apply their prewar expertise. It's rare for an outsider to spend more than a few hours in Prague without being recognized as such and approached with an offer of service. Overt criminal activity is rare, as the trade relies on travelers and is surprisingly self-policing regarding direct threats to them. However, any guide is likely to be carefully observing his clients and reporting to *someone*.

## Architecture

A city is more than the sum of its buildings, but the structures and streets are an inescapable part of Prague's image. A millennium of construction left the city a living textbook of architectural history. The suburbs and outer districts show heavy Soviet influence from post-WWII rebuilding and expansion. Many of these areas feature blocky edifices made of prefabricated concrete segments; nearly a third of prewar Czechs still lived in *panelak* (short for *panelovy dum*, literally "panel house") tenements. Downtown Prague, on the other hand, is a unique blend of massive Gothic churches, stately but elegant Baroque edifices, organic Art Nouveau curves, austere Czech Cubist rigidity, and modern glass and steel high-rises. Verdigris-covered copper domes and elegant stone towers and steeples

dominate a skyline of orange-tiled roofs, giving Prague one of its traditional nicknames: the City of a Hundred Spires.

20th-century urban planning made the outlying districts passable to vehicles, but downtown areas are built to earlier standards of accessibility. Much of the city core is still (or again, after post-Communist restorations) cobblestoned. Many an older neighborhood is a maze of twisty little passageways, none alike, and foot traffic is the order of the day. Newer construction often integrates pieces of previous structures that stood on the same site, as decoration if not support.

The Vltava River divides Prague in half as it wends its way through the city. 2002 floods – the worst in two centuries – caused significant property damage, though most was repaired before the beginning of the Twilight War. The spring thaw in 2013 brought a much less severe encore and some waterfront neighborhoods still show the signs of high water. Of the fourteen prewar bridges that provided passage across the Vltava, five remain intact and capable of handling vehicle traffic. Another two are closed to vehicles and considered "use at own risk" for pedestrians. The Charles Bridge (p. **xx**) remains pedestrian-only as well.

## Living in Prague

Prague is one of the largest population centers in Central Europe. More survivors put down roots here every day, drawn by the lure of security, opportunities to start over, and semi-functioning public utilities.

### Lodging

With so many of the city's former residents gone, it's not hard to find a place to sleep in Prague. Squatting in an abandoned building is a *de facto* declaration of ownership in ungoverned parts of the world, but possession actually can be the proverbial nine-tenths of the law here. Many Praguers died or evacuated over the Last Year and their homes and businesses were vacant or occupied by squatters. Records were incomplete at best and chaos ensued as the Siege ended and people began flooding back into the city. By April, the PCR was beset with thousands of cases involving property disputes, many of which turned violent.

The collection of legislation called the Occupation Act was the city's attempt to resolve most of these issues and encourage resettlement of abandoned buildings. Under most circumstances, anyone who occupies an abandoned structure for a period of six months, whether for residential or business purposes, can apply for title to that structure. A prior owner who attempts to reclaim the property during that time may actually *lose* his title if he cannot prove prior intent to return to Prague and if the current occupant has made substantial repairs or improvements. In addition, if the city already declared has a property abandoned or condemned, a new occupant can apply for title immediately, with approval contingent on six months of continuous occupation.

While the Act has mitigated the worst of the post-Siege real estate grabs, it has spawned its own set of law enforcement problems. Various criminal syndicates, seeing massive opportunities for long-term profit, are now "sponsoring" squatters, providing protection and other considerations in return for titles. Predictably, corruption is rampant among property inspectors.

Visitors who don't want to establish permanent residency – or worry about the dubious security of a squat – have other options. A few large hotels are operational but charge extortionate rates for their services (which, admittedly, may include armed security, guides, narcotics, and hot and cold running companionship). A more cost-effective option is to take lodging in a family-owned establishment. The available space can be as small as the bedroom of a recently-deceased relative or as much as an entire abandoned house that the



neighbors have claimed under the Occupation Act and refurbished for guests. A handful of travelers' hostels still operate in the Old Town and New Town districts, but most of these are fronts for gangs and safety is dependent on the tenant's skill with a knife.

## **Utilities**

Prague receives the lion's share of output from Nuclear Power Station Temelin – about 200 megawatts, or 20% of its average prewar use. Even with a roughly equal reduction in the city's population, though, this doesn't guarantee universal availability of electricity. Transmission facilities suffered severe damage from 2011's EMP attacks and subsequent military action, particularly east of the Vltava. Even where the network is restored, power is rationed. Allocation prioritizes military and government facilities first, heavy industry and reconstruction efforts second, light industry and other businesses third, and residential service last. Most dwellings with service are restricted to less than a kilowatt of available power: enough for lights, cooking, and fans, but not enough for HVAC systems or major electronics.

Electricity also allows indoor plumbing, which many Praguers consider a greater luxury than the raw power itself. Prague's primary fresh water source is Karany, a town about 20 kilometers northeast of the city. The purification plant here extracts water from the local aquifer, purifies it, and pipes it to the city. Service was interrupted during the Siege (a major cause of disease during the winter of 2012-2013), but the Russians mercifully did no permanent damage and operations resumed at the end of April. Prewar, this facility only supplied about 30% of the city's water needs, and it is running at peak capacity today. Water rationing measures are in place during the summer months and may become permanent if Prague's population continues to expand. On the plus side, the city actually has excess capacity for wastewater remediation, as most of the local sewage treatment plants remain functional.

The EMP wrought havoc on Prague's phone system and completely destroyed the regional cellular network. Sporadic efforts since then have mostly restored landline service to the city core and most inhabited neighborhoods west of the Vltava. The system is anything but reliable, however, as the hardware is a nightmarish patchwork of salvage, some dating back to the 1950s. Public pay phones are available, but only the older models that hadn't yet been converted over to exclusive use of prepaid phone cards. No cellular service exists; EMP damage was too complete for restoration to be practical in the near term.

## **Getting Around**

Outside the antiquated, vehicle-unfriendly streets of the city core, Prague has a fairly well-developed road network, albeit now without traffic signals. Fuel shortages keep traffic light and what exists is almost entirely military, government, or freight. Combat engineers cleared most of the debris from the Siege, so roads tend to be open outside restricted areas. The biggest obstacle is the Vltava: security checkpoints at the few vehicle-rated bridges can generate substantial backups.

Fortunately for those who can't get or afford fuel but need to walk farther than a few blocks, Prague has limited public transportation in the form of its prewar electric tram system. Of the 140 kilometers of track, about 60 are active, mostly west of the Vltava. Regular service runs from 0500 to 2200 daily and the city's transit authority extends hours for major events. Passes cost Kc150 for a day or Kc700 for a week. Trams legally have right-of-way but military drivers haven't yet caught on to this; spectacular collisions occur on a monthly basis.

## **Getting Out of Town**

Prague's main functioning rail station is in Smichov, a neighborhood just south of Mala Strana on the west bank of the Vltava. The only regularly-scheduled train accessible to the

public is the one to Plzen. Formerly offering a daily round trip, the train now departs Prague on Mondays and Thursdays and returns on Tuesdays and Fridays. Several intermediate stops require a total of eight hours for a journey that once took less than two. A one-way ticket is Kc600. Freight shipments are Kc2,500/ton for passage on a flatcar or Kc4,000/ton for an enclosed boxcar. Security screening of both passengers and cargo is low-tech but thorough.

For river travel, the only one of Prague's four former port facilities now functional is the Smichov port, located about four kilometers north of the city center on the west side of *Cisarsky Ostrov* (Imperial Island). Most traffic here is food shipments coming down the Vltava from the northwest corner of the country. To defray operating expenses, some barge operators will take on passengers or cargo heading upriver. Barter is preferred, as hard cash loses value north of the capital. The trip costs around Kc3,000 or GG50 per passenger, Kc25,000 or GG400 per ton of cargo. Most captains won't take on armed passengers unless the ACR vouches for them – in which case they may receive free passage if they agree to defend the vessel during the voyage.

## **Security and Public Safety**

It's difficult to overstate Prague's economic, cultural, and political importance to not only the Czech Republic but the surrounding region. Consequently, the ACR and PCR take the local security environment *quite* seriously.

Security in the area around Prague is the ACR's responsibility. All major highways into Prague feature permanent checkpoints between five and ten kilometers outside the city. River traffic on the Vltava is likewise controlled by checkpoints on both the riverbanks and moored barges. All such sites are manned in at least squad strength and have anti-vehicular weapons. Secondary roads in the area are regularly patrolled or, where feasible, blocked with obstacles that would require several days of work to clear without heavy equipment. Such blockages are clearly marked with detour signs.

General patrol work and law enforcement inside Prague fall to the PCR. Due to scarcity of fuel, uniformed foot patrols are the primary police presence. A typical patrol consists of two or three officers (more for high-traffic areas) with sidearms, normal duty gear, and at least one submachine gun and radio. Officers tend to be polite but detached, with their level of reserve increasing upon seeing weapons or hearing foreign accents. While not soldiers, most patrolmen in the city are veterans of the Siege of Prague, and the PCR's use of force policies have relaxed significantly since the prewar years. Social workers with sidearms are very much in the minority these days.

The PCR is the lead security force inside the ACR's perimeter but the military supplements the police presence in high-security areas, at government and military offices, and during large events. ACR troops do not have police powers but are not above beating down a suspect and holding him at gunpoint until the PCR arrives. A typical ACR patrol is a seven-man rifle squad, though such patrols often split up into two elements to cover more ground. A checkpoint has, at minimum, a sniper rifle and a grenade launcher, as well as a manpack radio. If an event is beyond a local force's ability to handle, infantry companies from Ruzyne Airport or the 7th Mechanized Brigade garrison can be anywhere in the city in 15 minutes or less.

Fire and medical response are the responsibility of the Prague Fire Rescue Service. Unfortunately, the agency suffered grievous personnel and equipment losses during the Siege of Prague and is critically understaffed. The first responders to emergencies are likely to be local volunteers, many of whom received on-the-job civil defense training during the siege but lack the proficiency of the remaining professionals. As a practical matter, the absence of a complete telephone system also hampers response times, even though the Service's vehicles have priority for the government's fuel supply. The department also has

become risk-averse after being a target of *Spetsnaz* action; most stations will not respond to combat scenes until the PCR broadcasts an all-clear.

### Heavy Iron

The ACR and PCR hold a limited monopoly on force in Prague. Armored vehicles and heavy weapons are prohibited within the outer security perimeter. Upon halting for inspection at a perimeter checkpoint, travelers with such assets will be politely but firmly asked to pull off the road and wait for an escort. This escort will consist of an additional force whose strength is slightly greater than that of the party in question. The party will then be escorted to the nearer of two secure vehicle parks, north and south of Prague along the Vltava's west bank, where they must leave all combat vehicles, support weapons, and explosives and incendiaries. Characters who want to unload prohibited cargo but continue into the city with soft-skinned vehicles will be issued a heavy padlock and shown to one of a series of cargo containers. Despite likely player paranoia, these *are* secure facilities and the PCs' equipment will be untouched when they retrieve it.

In acknowledgement of the PCR's inability to be everywhere at once (and perhaps deference to the sensibilities of nominally allied troops who've been on combat status for several years), personal small arms are allowed within Prague. Anything up to a rifle is permissible, though the local police tend to look askance at obvious sniper weapons. Shoulder weapons – anything larger than Bulk 1 – must remain unloaded with red marking tape strung through the chamber and bore. In combat, clearing this obstruction before loading takes 2d6H ticks.

ACR personnel (as well as those of 1st Armoured) are immune to most of these restrictions, so long as they're acting within the normal scope of their duties. However, even ACR vehicles are required to stop while a checkpoint verifies the crew's identity and movement orders. The American 56th SBCT is permitted to bring its combat vehicles inside city limits but all mounted weapons must remain unloaded. No other foreign forces have such privileges.

## The Lay of the Land

A complete visitor's guide to Prague would be larger than this entire book (and if you want one, your local bookstore probably has a few in its travel section – we strongly recommend this for GMs who want more local color or historical context). This section highlights the districts and specific locations that are most important to the Prague of 2013 – and to PCs visiting or living in it.

During the Siege, the Vltava River formed a natural barrier to the Russian advance. Russian troops forced a few ephemeral beachheads on the western bank of the river, but none lasted longer than a day. Ammunition shortages and the defenders' aggressive counterbattery fire limited the damage Russian artillery could inflict on the western half of the city. Thus, the Vltava divides the modern Prague in more than a pure geographic sense. Districts west of the river are largely intact, if a bit shopworn, while those east of the river endured seven months of house-to-house fighting. The eastern districts are home to more squatters and refugees, as well as the majority of ACR and British maneuver forces in the area. Damage to bridges and checkpoints on the surviving ones limit mobility between the city's two halves, which doesn't help the social and economic rifts developing between eastern and western residents.

### West of the Vltava

#### Hradcany

As its name implies, the Castle District centers on Prague Castle. The highest point in Prague, this neighborhood is densely-packed with both historic sites and government offices. Prague Castle itself remains the ceremonial and practical seat of the Czech government. Those federal agencies not already headquartered in the district before the war have, for the most part, relocated here to minimize communication lag. Several of the larger diplomatic missions, including the British and American contingents, also maintain their embassies here. This collection of inviting targets means the district is the most heavily-patrolled in the city.

Hradcany's high ground made it an attractive site for air defenses during the early months of the Twilight War. Only a few Russian air strikes drove home here, though their bombs inflicted serious damage on parts of the castle complex. Surprisingly, the later Siege brought little additional wear and tear, despite artillery exchanges that hammered other districts flat. Some citizens romanticize this as a gentlemen's agreement to preserve national history, though it's more likely that the Russians wanted to preserve government facilities and records for their own use. For its part, the ACR moved most combat assets out of the district to minimize its target profile, though the Sisters of Mercy of St. Charles Hospital was appropriated for military use. PCR and ACR security forces also engaged in several firefights with *Spetsnaz* infiltration teams, including one truck bomb attack that leveled the Tax Administration's temporary headquarters.

### Points of Interest

Entire books have been written on the history and architecture of **Prague Castle**, which has been the seat of Czech government for centuries. 9th-century churches were the initial permanent structures on the site, with the first palaces going up in the 1100s. The succeeding centuries saw continuous expansion and reconstruction at the behest of whatever royal or imperial line currently held power in Prague. By the 21st century, the castle complex was one of the world's largest, spanning over half a square kilometer. The list of individual historic buildings within its grounds includes the Basilica of St. George, the Old Royal Palace (site of the Second Defenestration of Prague), St. Vitus Cathedral, and several other palaces. More importantly for most visitors in 2013, the castle also is the seat of the Czech government, housing the offices of the president, prime minister, and cabinet. The business of government takes place to the accompaniment of round-the-clock construction as workers convert former tourist attractions to offices and repair damage from Russian bombs. The Czech Senate meets in **Wallenstein Palace**, a sprawling Baroque complex a few blocks to the east.

The imposing Baroque structure of **Cernin Palace** looms a few blocks west of Prague Castle. It was commissioned in the late 17th century by Count Humprecht Cernin, then the Bohemian representative to the Holy Roman Empire. The palace now houses the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and thus is the focal point for Czech international relations. Regular attempts to penetrate the building plague the BIS personnel assigned to maintain physical and electronic security.

Half a kilometer north and downhill of Prague Castle is the headquarters of the Czech **Ministry of Defence**, including the offices of the VZ. The complex remains under repair after the March 2012 crash of a Russian MiG-29. Air raid precautions mitigated casualties, but facility damage was extensive. A not-altogether-friendly rivalry exists between officers who work here but walk up the hill to meet with civil officials and those who have taken "temporary" desk space closer to the center of government but outside the military's assigned space.

### GM Hint: Hradcany

The Castle District makes good scenery for...

- ... tense high-level negotiations or casual encounters with diplomats of almost any nation.
- ... top secret briefings from the highest levels of the government or ACR.
- ... desperate firefights against hit teams striking at the Czech Republic's nerve center.

## Mala Strana

The "Lesser Quarter" (literally "Little Side") is a maze of twisty little cobblestone streets. Historically, it was home to Prague's German population, later replaced by the city's greatest concentration of churches and nobles' residences. In the immediate prewar years, its central location saw it grow to one of Prague's denser collections of tourist traps. Today, it's a bustling residential neighborhood full of government functionaries and the businesses that cater to them. Much of Prague's legal traffic in luxury goods occurs here and the district boasts several of the city's finest restaurants for both good food and discreet rendezvous. Visitors are advised to avoid starting trouble – the residents demand a strong security presence and most of the businesspeople are related to someone who works "up the hill" in Hradcany. As part of this security, Mala Strana is closed to any motor vehicle without a government pass.

With the exception of Petrin Hill (see below), Mala Strana suffered few direct attacks during the war. The worst damage came in a January 2013 fire that began near the west end of Charles Bridge and engulfed several square blocks before being extinguished. The ruins were razed and the area now provides overflow space for the Charles Bridge market. The rest of the district remains as it was before the war, save for a bit more grime: two- to four-story houses and shops with red tile roofs, packed tightly together around narrow, winding, hilly streets.

### Points of Interest

The **Charles Bridge**, the most famous of Prague's score of bridges over the Vltava, connects Mala Strana and Old Town. From its completion in the 15th century until the mid-1800s, it was the city's *only* bridge over the river, making it a regional trade artery. A modern restoration effort concluded in early 2011 and Russian air strikes inflicted only cosmetic damage, save for a single crater near the Old Town end. Today, its central location makes its 516-meter-long, 10-meter-wide span the ideal spot for a bustling, chaotic, round-the-clock open-air market. The steep permit fee (Kc300/day or Kc1,800/week per meter of frontage) does little to discourage merchants, whose stalls line the upriver side of the deck and overflow onto the cleared ground at either terminus. Between the nearly 200 vendors, almost anything legal and man-portable is available. Only pedestrians and handcarts are allowed on the bridge; bicycles were banned after irate shoppers flung several aggressive cyclists into the Vltava. The PCR patrols in force to discourage theft and contraband.

Before the war, the 320-meter prominence of **Petrin Hill** was a large greenspace in the heart of the city, mostly devoted to monuments and parks. The highest point in Prague was an ideal site for air defense batteries and observation posts, though, and Russian air and artillery strikes scattered its trees like matchsticks. Residents carried away the wood for fires or building materials, leaving a desolate husk strewn with craters and stumps. The 60-meter steel tower at the hill's peak is now twisted wreckage, as is the funicular railway that ran from Mala Strana to the summit. The view of Prague, though, remains unsurpassed.

Petrin Hill's most prominent surviving feature is the **Hladova Zed** ("Hunger Wall"), a 14th-century fortification standing 4 to 6 meters tall and 2 meters thick. The wall has become the local memorial for victims of the Last Year. Much of the white stone along its 1,200-meter length is covered with photographs and other mementoes. The section around the defunct Štefánik Observatory is dedicated to casualties of allied militaries, while the end of

the wall at the Mala Strana side of the hill is a collection point for information on Czech survivors in Russian-occupied territory.

### **GM Hint: Mala Strana**

The Lesser Quarter makes good scenery for...

- ... covert meetings with high-level contacts in the private rooms of small restaurants.
- ... nighttime foot chases over dimly-lit cobblestones and through Petrin Hill's eerie shadows.
- ... shopping in the Charles Bridge market, where everyone in Prague rubs shoulders and buyers can connect with a vendor for *anything*.

## **Motol**

The Motol district lies about 3 kilometers west-southwest of Hradcany. Its primary importance comes from the Motol University Hospital, the Czech Republic's largest at 1,400 beds. A number of foreign-born personnel still work here, making it the preferred place for non-Czech-speakers to obtain treatment. It's also setting up an accelerated bare-bones training program targeted at medical providers in outlying communities.

The adjacent Stodulky neighborhood contains the defunct Vietnamese embassy. Most survivors of the Sapa Massacre (p. **XX**) relocated here during the Siege of Prague. Most have since moved back to Libus, but a few hundred squatters remain and occasionally snipe at anyone who tries to move in. This is a point of concern for the BIS, whose headquarters is located out of line of sight but only a few hundred meters away.

## **Prokop Valley**

Formerly a park and nature preserve, Prokop Valley is now one of the city's largest agricultural areas. It lies between the Stodulky and Barrandov neighborhoods on Prague's southwest side. About half the local population is Ukrainian, mostly recent immigrants who fled their country's collapse and sought asylum here.

## **Ruzyne**

This outlying district, about 10 kilometers west of the city core, is home to Prague Ruzyne Airport, the Czech Republic's largest airport. The Czech Air Force has relocated its headquarters here following the loss of its Kbely facilities (p. **XX**). Tight security makes it impossible for outside observers to determine precisely what air assets the ACR retains. Two Mi-17s make occasional flights on high-priority courier missions and local residents claim to have heard jet engines being tested. The field theoretically can accept other traffic, though no flights have landed since it reopened in April.

The adjacent suburb of Hostivice is an inspection point and distribution center for food shipments entering the city from the west. Occasional food riots during the Siege resulted in several hundred civilian deaths over the course of the winter. Hostivice's population now almost reaches prewar levels, and many of the new residents are overt Czech Resistance supporters. The VZ and BIS consider this a major security concern but have yet to receive authorization for closer investigation.

# **East of the Vltava**

## **Stare Mesto (Old Town)**

Archaeological records indicate the first permanent settlement in the area was here. From this 10th-century marketplace, the Old Town expanded to become the region's commerce center. Throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance, it was home to tradesmen of all stripes, as well as Prague's sizeable (for the time) Jewish population. The district was the heart of the city and many of Prague's most important public gatherings happened here.

In the 2000s, Old Town became Prague's tourist center, as well as the district most used by foreign filmmakers. Neither quality was a major tactical consideration during the Siege, but Old Town's proximity to the government centers across the river made it a prime target for Russian advances. On the district's southeast edge, the burnt-out hulk of the Municipal House concert hall marks the closest point to which enemy armor penetrated Old Town, though infantry forces pressed to the Vltava on several occasions. Extensive skirmishing left few streets unmarked.

Today, Old Town is regaining its prominence as the city's trade center. The former tourist shops are gone, replaced by businesses offering more useful goods and services. An emerging phenomenon is the block collective, a cooperative venture in which a handful of households jointly occupy a few adjacent buildings, repair one at a time, and open a new business in each structure as it becomes habitable.

### Points of Interest

At the center of Old Town lies *Staroměstské Namesti* – **Old Town Square**. This 9,000-square-meter expanse of paving stones began as the 12th-century town marketplace and once again serves that role, providing a venue for scores of merchants who can't or won't pay the city's price for a space on Charles Bridge. At night, the square is the primary social center of the district, albeit much quieter than Wenceslas Square. In the square's southwest corner stands Old Town Hall, Prague's original government center. Once the centerpiece for the square's tourist panorama, it's now the city government's main employment office. Signboards along the surrounding sidewalks provide space for private job postings.

Tucked against the Vltava are the former administrative offices and liberal arts campus of **Charles University**, which held classes more-or-less continuously in Old Town from 1347 to 2012. The collapse of funding during the Last Year led most of the staff to seek other opportunities, and the same artillery barrage that damaged Josefov was the final nail in the university's coffin. A handful of professors doggedly attempt to teach classes here, but for the most part, the buildings are little more than a place for former students to nurse a beer and bemoan the state of the world. A few different "student organizations" – little more than drinking circles – are ineffectually campaigning for the Czech government to restore funding. Squatters around the university grounds form a vocal but lazy base of support for the Czech Resistance.

Along the district's northeast corner lies **Chase Island**. The island formerly supported both a rail and a road bridge across the Vltava, but Russian bombs cut both connections at the west bank. They missed the vital locks, however, and Chase Island is now an ACR inspection point for all river traffic moving south of the city. Work also is underway to refurbish the island's defunct hydroelectric power station, which once produced 5.6 megawatts of electricity.

### GM Hint: Stare Mesto

Old Town makes good scenery for...

- ... finding goods, services, or jobs away from the highly-visible Charles Bridge market.
- ... moving into an abandoned storefront and setting up a legitimate (or cover) enterprise.

- ... taking care of everyday business – or contrasting extraordinary events against an everyday background.

## Nove Mesto (New Town)

Realizing that "New Town" was founded in 1348 can put the length of Prague's history in perspective. Charles IV established the district to expand and link the previously-separated communities on the Vltava's east bank. A 19th-century revitalization campaign swept away many of the district's old buildings, and new construction continued here for the next hundred years. By the beginning of the 21st century, New Town was Prague's commercial and social heart.

Like its northern neighbor Old Town, New Town saw extensive fighting during the Siege. Most of its occupants fled west, leaving the district to the soldiers, and construction of field fortifications did almost as much damage as actual combat. Nearer the Vltava, some blocks are almost untouched, with adjacent swaths of destruction charting the routes of various Russian offensives. Of the four districts forming Prague's core, only New Town sustained Russian occupation for nearly the entire duration of the Siege.

Whether despite the heavy damage or in defiance of it, Praguers have returned to Nove Mesto in droves since the Siege ended. Signs of the war are everywhere: Havlicek Park is a boneyard for wrecked AFVs, the American 56th SBCT has moved into the miraculously-undamaged Radio Free Europe building, and urban legends spread of deranged *Spetsnaz* holdouts living in the Vinohrady railway tunnel's network of maintenance passages. But New Town's residents are rebuilding faster than anywhere else in Prague. Though Old Town has temporarily supplanted it as the city's business center, New Town offers something that survivors of the Last Year may have thought a vanished treasure: leisure.

### Points of Interest

Once a humble horse market, **Wenceslas Square** is now one of the Czech Republic's most iconic locations. This vast expanse – 750 meters long and 60 wide – runs northwest and downhill from the Czech National Museum to the edge of Old Town. Over its six centuries, the square has served Prague as the primary site for immense public gatherings – upwards of 250,000 during the last nights of Czechoslovakian Communist rule. In the early 21st century, the square became a center for nightlife, lined with hotels, restaurants, bars, and nightclubs. Although 2013's revels are much lower-key, this may now be Central Europe's last remaining club district, even if the drinks are brewed in bathtubs and the DJs rely on bicycle-cranked generators to run their turntables. On a more sober note, Catholic Czechs have taken to leaving offerings and prayers at the foot of the monument to Saint Wenceslas, the Czech patron saint. On most nights, the saint and his horse are bathed in flickering candlelight.

The founding of **Vysehrad Castle** is steeped in Czech legend. Apocryphally, the founders of the Premyslid dynasty first settled on this hill overlooking the Vltava in the 10th century, making it Prague's first permanent habitation. A palace followed in the late 11th century, with subsequent major renovations occurring in Charles IV's reign and again in the 19th century. The resulting complex was home to the Basilica of St. Peter and St. Paul, a state cemetery, and several museums – and was utterly indefensible against modern weapons. Despite this last factor, two companies of ACR reservists held the hill throughout the Siege, receiving supplies via rowboat across the icy river and mercilessly directing artillery against Russian forces throughout city's south side. Today, the castle is becoming the ACR's ceremonial symbol for all the Twilight War's battles, and being selected for the honor guard over the state cemetery shows that a soldier's fellows hold him in high regard.



Two blocks east of the Jiraskuv Bridge (one of the few still open to vehicle traffic) stands **Saints Cyril and Methodius Cathedral**, a Greek Orthodox church. In 1942, the church was the site of a vicious gun battle between Waffen SS troops and the Czech Resistance fighters responsible for Reinhard Heydrich's assassination. The Czechs saved their last bullets for themselves to escape capture. The political arm of the modern Czech Resistance has appropriated the church as a symbol. When they're not giving speeches on its steps, the movement's leaders can be found in one of the neighborhood's cafes.

### **GM Hint: Nove Mesto**

New Town makes good scenery for...

- ... staging public spectacles or mass demonstrations in Wenceslas Square.
- ... making covert contact with high officials of either the ACR or the Czech Resistance at symbolic locations.
- ... enjoying as close to a prewar social scene as anyone's likely to find in 2013.

## **Kbely**

This residential neighborhood centers on Prague's first airport, Kbely Field, which formerly handled both civil aviation and the ACR's air transport assets. The Russian advance forced the Czechs to abandon Kbely in mid-2012. During the Siege, the GRU stripped the airport of anything with possible intelligence value but left its infrastructure mostly intact.

After the Russian withdrawal, the ACR retook possession of the base. It's now the 7th Mechanized Brigade's headquarters. The surrounding homes, abandoned by their original owners and subsequently claimed by Russians, provide quarters for 7th Mech's personnel. Businesses are trickling back into the area to support these new residents.

## **Kobylisy**

Sitting above an oxbow in the Vltava, this quiet residential neighborhood's primary prewar claim to fame was as the site of Reinhard Heydrich's assassination and the subsequent Nazi reprisals against the local citizenry. It also housed UZSI headquarters, a fact which went largely unremarked by the residents.

Over the winter of 2012-2013, Kobylisy saw some of the Siege of Prague's heaviest fighting. Russian forces drove straight through the district and, after an intensely bloody but ultimately failed assault across the Bridge of Barricaders, dug in and held on until early February. Today, Kobylisy is a jagged, charred ruin, strewn with the detritus of battle. Ongoing development at the port facility is slowly revitalizing it drawing mostly outsiders; but few Praguers are anxious to live here. The adjacent Bohnice neighborhood, also severely damaged in the fighting, now is home to 1st Armoured's main base. The British division's headquarters is on the former grounds of the Prague Psychiatric Hospital, a decision which amuses Czechs and Tommies alike.

## **Libus (Little Hanoi)**

Throughout the Cold War, thousands of Vietnamese immigrated to Czechoslovakia for jobs. Many of their children stayed on after the fall of Communism. The neighborhood of Libus, about 8 kilometers southeast of the city center, became home to Prague's largest Vietnamese community. Its focal point was the Sapa Market, a former meat packing plant converted to a 35-hectare marketplace.

Most of Libus' Vietnamese residents refused to evacuate during the Siege of Prague. In December 2012, a Russian push into the neighborhood met with a surprisingly vigorous defense from a citizens' militia previously unknown to both the attackers and the ACR.

After suffering heavy casualties from sniper fire, the Russians rolled in their armor and leveled the market and the adjacent tenements. Unfortunately, several hundred noncombatants also remained in the buildings, resulting in what Prague's remaining Vietnamese now call the Sapa Massacre.

The survivors of the incident relocated across the Vltava during the Siege but are now returning *en masse*. The neighborhood holds just under a thousand suspicious and insular Vietnamese, many of whom are living in shacks until they can rebuild their homes. The surviving neighborhood militia and gangs have consolidated and occasionally clash with Czech and Russian organized crime syndicates. Non-Asians are watched carefully here unless they're visiting the small Buddhist shrine that stands near Sapa's rubble.

## City of a Hundred Spies

No few national capitals died during the Twilight War, taking their governments with them, but politicians sprang anew like ineradicable fungus. Even before the war ground to a halt in most parts of Europe, old and new governments alike began reaching out to re-establish international relations. Thanks to its combination of location and relatively intact infrastructure, Prague is emerging from the thinning smoke as one of Europe's greatest centers for diplomacy. Scarcely a week goes by without another ambassadorial mission arriving in the city to re-open an embassy.

With international politics, of course, comes a universal need for information. For every diplomat in the city, there's a spy who wants his secrets or his influence. What's more, many espionage agencies are still fighting the Twilight War. Some nights, only the scale of the conflict serves to distinguish this year's covert war from last year's military offensives.

### Restricted Access: Spy Games

Really, this entire part of the book belongs in one big Restricted Access sidebar. The following agency profiles are presented so GMs (and, to a lesser extent, players) have a comprehensive overview of the Prague espionage environment. No *character* should have all, or even most, of this information. GMs should feel free to enact whatever changes are necessary to prevent unscrupulous players from memorizing this section and metagaming the campaign into a shallow grave.

#### Where are the troops?

To minimize chapter bloat, the unit profiles for Prague's primary defenders – 7th Mechanized Brigade and the Castle Guard – are in the ACR appendix that begins on page **XX**.

## Czech Agencies

Czech law enforcement and intelligence services have the unenviable – arguably, impossible – task of keeping track of all Prague's players and maintaining a semblance of order among them.

### Bezpečnostní Informační Služba

The BIS is the Czech Republic's domestic intelligence agency – and thereby the nation's lead counter-intelligence organization. Its missions are counter-terrorism, information security, counter-espionage, and protection of the Czech Constitution. Unlike many Western domestic intelligence agencies, the BIS lacks law enforcement powers. Thus, it liaises closely with the PCR when arrests or criminal investigations become necessary, and though

its agents may go armed, they operate under the same legal constraints as ordinary citizens. At least, that's the law and theory...

In 2013, the BIS is treading dangerously close to the example of the StB, its Communist-era predecessor. Political pressure, the Twilight War's losses, current foreign and domestic threats, and the nagging question of just how much influence Russia really has over the nation have combined to create an institutional culture of paranoia and desperation. Since the Siege of Prague began and GRU and *Spetsnaz* infiltration became threats to national survival, Prague's BIS agents have been increasingly willing to act on the flimsiest of evidence, preferring to err on the side of protecting the Czech Republic rather than obeying the Constitution. For most, the driving factors are duty and urgency rather than self-interest, and a general sense of shame is inadvertently producing a mass silence that has the same effect as deliberate cover-ups. It may not be too late for the agency to turn itself around, but few outsiders are aware of the problem's extent.

**Assets:** BIS headquarters in Prague is where almost all of the agency's 250 surviving administrative and support employees work. As such, it's the coordination center for all Czech counter-espionage work, save for a few investigations being run solely by the VZ Directorate. The agency actually has far more field agents in Prague than most outsiders would suspect: nearly 300. A number of these are former PCR or municipal police officers from Moravia who escaped the Russian occupation there and transferred to the BIS, and they're some of the agency's most overzealous investigators. Limited funding means cash and material resources are in short supply and most available high technology is on loan from military or PCR inventory. On the HUMINT side, the agency has an immense network of informants among Praguers who still consider themselves Czech patriots, and it's increasingly tied into the PCR's case files.

**Objectives:** Though it's a dangerous phrase to use in the current Czech political climate, the BIS' focus is state security. Foremost of the priorities under this aegis is counter-espionage, but a close second is rooting out all remaining Russian influence and threats in Prague – both newly-developed and those remaining from prewar political movements. Of particular concern are the former backers of the No Bases Initiative, as well as a number of politicians in the Czech Social Democratic Party. The BIS believes that, through Russian business interests, the SVR was blackmailing or bribing several prominent members of Parliament in the immediate prewar years.

**Operations:** With Prague the center of regional diplomatic efforts, at least half the BIS' local assets are tasked with identifying and monitoring foreign spies in the city. The agency maintains files on all diplomatic missions here and, as manpower allows, conducts surveillance on known or suspected agents to try to map their local networks. Another large contingent is struggling to deal with the evolving threat of the Czech Resistance movement, and it's these agents who are most likely to exceed their legal authority. Most of the agency's former counterterrorism office now focuses on countering GRU direct action in the city, liaising closely with the VZ Directorate.

### GM Hint: Secret Police

We've deliberately avoided defining just how far the BIS has gone in the name of state security and how widespread the excesses are. This is an issue you should fine-tune to the needs of your own plot. If you want to restrict the problems to a few overworked agents who've gone off the deep end, that's fine. If you want an institution that's reverting to Communist-era secret policing, by all means, serve up the tasty jackbooted thuggery. Of the four agencies profiled here, the BIS potentially has the greatest shadowy leverage over both the Czech government and citizenry, as well as the widest-reaching ability to make foreigners' lives hell. The extent to which you want it to go bad – or just slip its leash in the name of national survival – will determine how it affects your player characters.

## Urad pro Zahranicni Styky a Informace

The UZSI is the Czech foreign intelligence service. However, it's not legally restricted from operating within Czech borders – and in 2013, Prague is a target-rich environment for these spies. The UZSI is the smallest of the Czech intelligence services, but its reports play a key role in shaping national policy.

**Assets:** The UZSI headquarters complex was located east of the Vltava and had to be evacuated early in the Siege. The agency's survivors relocated closer to Hradcany and now occupy the upper floors of the nationalized Hotel Pyramida, two kilometers west of Prague Castle. This makeshift headquarters is severely lacking in technical resources and the agency is justifiably paranoid about its security. Still, it's a place for the 150-odd technicians, linguists, and other support staff to work. About 50 UZSI field officers, half of whom operate under cover identities, reside in Prague. This number is slowly increasing as officers formerly assigned to other stations find their way home with reports on the status of the Czech Republic's neighbors.

**Objectives:** To conduct diplomacy, the Czech government needs information on what its negotiating partners have, want, and fear. The UZSI's main tasking is to feed this insatiable hunger for information. The agency also participates in Czech efforts to re-open contact with the surviving governments of former allies – and to establish relations with emergent polities like the Sicilian State and the Free Cities of Krakow and Lyon. Assessment of military threats is largely the VZ's problem, though some analysts believe the CGF and 58th Army need to be treated as hostile micronations rather than pure military commands.

**Operations:** Most UZSI efforts in Prague focus on cultivating sources within other nations' embassies, either directly or through local hired help. This is by no means restricted to neutrals and enemies – indeed, the agency's most intense focus is on the ostensible allies of Free Slovakia and the Kingdom of England. UZSI headquarters also is working to re-establish contact with missing field officers and is actively searching for reliable recruits or hirelings who are willing to make dangerous journeys for little pay. Finally, a very, very quiet operation is attempting to make contact with the SVR in order to re-establish diplomatic channels with Russia proper.

### Alphabet Soup

The differences between the Czech agencies can be a bit confusing to audiences who are accustomed to Western divisions of responsibility in the intelligence field. Here's the short form.

BIS: Domestic intelligence. UZSI: Foreign intelligence. VZ: Military intelligence both foreign and domestic. PCR: Cops.

The BIS and PCR operate exclusively within Czech borders; the UZSI only operates outside the Czech Republic. The VZ has no geographic constraints.

Of the four agencies detailed here, only the PCR has police powers. Legally, the BIS and UZSI cannot arrest or detain anyone, while the VZ may do so only in support of military operations.

The VZ, as part of the ACR, is subordinate to the Ministry of Defence. The PCR and UZSI are subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior. The BIS is directly answerable to Parliament.

VZ personnel hold military rank within the ACR and are answerable to military judicial codes. All BIS and UZSI employees are technically civil servants and fall under federal law, but field agents hold military equivalent rank (they can't fall within a military chain of command, though). The PCR has its own rank structure and officers are subject to federal law.

The BIS and VZ have direct counter-espionage missions; the PCR officially doesn't but, in practice, often encounters criminal matters that overlap with BIS interests. The UZSI has no counter-espionage tasking.

Due to decades of Communist repression and abuse of authority, all these agencies have enduring image problems with the Czech citizenry. The Czech Republic's formative years brought strict government oversight even as the agencies were established. In 2013, the PCR has the best reputation among the general public. The BIS is most regarded with suspicion and fear, though this is more a persistent cultural meme than the result of public awareness of the agency's current problems.

## Vojenske Zpravodajstvi

VZ is the ACR's unified command structure for its intelligence and counter-intelligence forces. Unlike the civilian services, VZ operates both within and outside Czech borders. Its sphere of influence is officially limited to defense matters – though in 2013, virtually anything of espionage interest is somehow related to defense. Some officers within VZ worry that this mission creep is diluting their directorate's capabilities and harming relations with the BIS and UZSI.

**Assets:** VZ is headquartered in Prague, with facilities in the Ministry of Defence offices in the Hradcany district. Its entire surviving complement of analysts, cryptographic technicians, and office staff works here, as do the liaison officers who maintain relations with the military attaches at the various embassies. All told, about 150 intelligence support personnel are based in Prague. Another 20 to 30 HUMINT officers operate in the city, mostly trying to keep track of their opposite numbers in the GRU and other threat agencies.

VZ also commands the ACR's signals intelligence assets. Two companies of SIGINT personnel are stationed in or around Prague, one attached each of the ACR's maneuver brigades. These are normally at the disposal of the brigade commanders but VZ headquarters can retask them if necessary. An intercept platoon from one of these companies operates out of Ruzyně Airport to monitor embassies' transmissions.

Finally, the special operations troops of 601.SKSS (see p. **XX**) are under VZ command. The unit is not normally a factor in Prague, as its operations keep it in or near Occupied Moravia. Some VZ officers – particularly those assigned to the ongoing *Spetsnaz* hunt – consider this a major deficiency and are searching for ways to acquire a limited special operations capability within the capital.

**Objectives:** VZ's primary missions are threat assessment, protection of classified information, and military counter-intelligence. As might be expected, its largest headache in all these areas is the CGF, with the 58th Army a close second. Other potential military threats are the recent Franco-German force buildup, the Kingdom of England's intentions for 1st Armoured's disposition, and the Czech Resistance.

**Operations:** VZ's highest-profile actions in Prague have been interdictions of CGF *Spetsnaz* strikes. However, these ops are rare and usually involve an agent pointing regular ACR troops at an imminent threat and standing back. Most of the agency's routine is much less exciting: auditing security at military facilities, conducting background checks for security clearances, and investigating theft and other crimes against ACR installations and personnel. Recently, recognizing the need for new intelligence assets, the command has begun diverting funds to establish a handful of "free trader" groups that hopefully will be able to move outside Czech-controlled territory.

## Policie Ceske Republiky

As the national law enforcement agency, the PCR isn't directly responsible for counter-intelligence work. However, as most intelligence operations involve illegal activity at some point, no few PCR officers in Prague have stumbled upon the actions or aftermath of spy or saboteur activity. The PCR also liaises extensively with the BIS, as noted previously, and its homicide and burglary investigators are developing a good sense for cases that might fall under the BIS' portfolio.

**Assets:** Of the prewar PCR's 48,000 sworn officers, a bit more than 10% are still alive and serving, with 1,500 assigned to Prague. Even with assistance from the ACR for patrol, traffic control, and other routine tasks, this is a crushingly unfavorable ratio of officers to residents. Investigative and technical staffs are particularly overworked – the former are drowning in casework and the government has siphoned off many of the latter for its own rebuilding projects. On the plus side, the remaining patrol officers are as well-equipped as any light infantry formation of comparable manpower, and civilians glad for any steady work have freed up most of the sworn officers who formerly held desk assignments.

**Objectives:** The PCR's mission is law enforcement. As a practical matter, manpower restrictions have forced the agency to triage its workload. Current investigative priorities are capital crimes, truly spectacular property crimes, and black market sales of rationed or restricted items – as well as the inevitable politically-motivated cases. Anything else falls by the wayside unless it captures an individual detective's sympathy. The patrol units have the unenviable task of keeping order in a wounded city whose population is regrowing faster than its infrastructure can be rebuilt.

**Operations:** The basic techniques and skills of police work haven't changed in 2013, though the general lack of computer support and fuel have forced some changes in procedure. The other major shift in PCR operations is staffing: for self-protection, detectives and patrol officers alike typically work in two- to four-person teams rather than solo, with one or two civilian assistants providing administrative and research support behind the scenes.

### **Restricted Access: KSCM Collections Group**

Very few individuals outside the KSCM are aware of the Collections Group, much less that its innocuous name belies its actual purpose. Simply put, this is the dirty tricks squad for the Czech Republic's remaining politically-active communists.

**Assets:** The Group's nine operatives are skilled in breaking and entering, safecracking, surveillance, and political analysis. Three are aging former StB operatives; the rest are younger recruits trained by the veterans. The Group's greatest strength is its well-protected cache of electronic surveillance equipment, which may be the best in the country.

**Objectives:** The Group's mission is to covertly gain political leverage for the KSCM – or at least the senior leaders to whom it reports. Of late, its focus has expanded from pure domestic intelligence-gathering to careful probes of Russian and British intentions. The KSCM mistrusts both nations and is interested in finding a political bombshell to drop on Parliament at an appropriate moment. It's worth noting that while the KSCM historically has been an opposition party, it wants to guide the Czech Republic, not bring it down. The local Communists aren't traitors – just unscrupulous.

**Operations:** Typical assignments involve shadowing political opponents, recording important conversations, stealing critical documents, and occasional blackmail (with real or falsified evidence). Group personnel also handle information security for the KSCM's own offices. The Group has no real capacity for direct action and is the most likely conduit through which the Communists would hire deniable muscle if needed.



# Russian Agencies

Between the military occupation of Czech soil and Prague's newfound importance to international diplomacy, it's no surprise that the largest foreign intelligence presence in the Czech Republic is Russian. In addition to official agencies, Russian organized crime is a major presence in the region, and its ties to the SVR make it more than just a law enforcement concern. The situation is further complicated by the growing schism between the Central Group of Forces and the 58th Army, both of which claim to be operating under orders from higher authority in Russia.

## Glavnoye Razvedyvatel'noye Upravleniye

The Russian military intelligence agency was heavily active in the prewar Czech Republic. As a former Soviet client military undergoing NATO integration, the ACR was a subject of intense Russian interest. Czech arms procurement and upgrade programs also underwent scrutiny, as did the nation's political and strategic alignment with the West. In the immediate prewar years, the BIS believed GRU provocateurs to be behind the rapid growth of the No Bases Initiative. Some current indicators point to similar false flag operations exacerbating the Czech Resistance's opposition to the federal government.

Even after the Last Year, the GRU remains Russia's largest espionage organization, though it now lacks unified direction. Some operatives retain communication with central authorities but most are *de facto* subordinates of local or regional ground force commanders. This fragmentation also exposes cracks in its formerly apolitical image, particularly in the Czech AO. Both the Central Group of Forces and the 58th Army have GRU units under their respective command, often with similar assignments. In not only Prague but the rest of the Czech Republic, parallel operations cross paths with increasing frequency. The BIS and VZ are looking for ways to exploit this division.

**Assets:** In Prague, three major GRU cells are active, each with a handful of agents and a large number of informants and catspaws. One reports primarily to the 58th Army and the other two to the CGF, though none of the three is feeding information exclusively to one party. In addition, the 58th Army has inserted a signals intelligence team under the cover of an electronics salvage and repair business, and the CGF keeps at least a platoon of *Spetsnaz* operators in the area.

The Temelin Zone of Control is host to a GRU analysis and counter-insurgency detachment that openly maintains offices in Temelin and Ceske Bujedovice. A *Spetsnaz* reconnaissance platoon is based in Tyn nad Vltavou.

In response to Czech Resistance and Free Slovak activity, the Central Group of Forces has saturated Moravia with intelligence assets. The main body of the 3rd Guards *Spetsnaz* Brigade is active throughout the region, usually in small, mobile units. Covert operatives circulate through the region in whatever guises they can assume. Olomouc hosts the area's main GRU offices, including an intelligence analysis center and the CGF's main SIGINT unit.

**Objectives:** The 58th Army is primarily concerned with maintaining stability within the territory it occupies, and its GRU elements are tasked with gathering operational intelligence to further this goal. However, assessments of both Czech intentions and those of the Central Group of Forces are increasing in priority, as is a solution to the questionable loyalty of Task Group Temelin. Foreign intelligence from other nations with diplomatic missions in Prague is a low priority.

The CGF is likewise focused on counter-insurgency. However, the view among its general staff is that much of the Czech Resistance will collapse if the Czech Republic itself is taken out of play. Therefore, a slight majority of CGF attention is devoted to monitoring and, if possible, further destabilizing the Czech military and government.

**Operations:** Prague's GRU cells divide their attention between the ACR's recovery operations, Czech domestic politics, civil reconstruction and industry, and international diplomacy among the city's embassies. Most of their work takes place through old-fashioned seduction and recruitment. They scrupulously refrain from what the agency terms "active measures," though they have occasionally engaged the *Sverdlovskaya Brata* (see following) to divert attention from critical operations. The 58th Army's SIGINT unit in the city also keeps a low profile – and runs a profitable business to boot. The CGF's *Spetsnaz* force is a different story, as the unit intermittently indulges in sabotage and assassination. This visibility further polarizes the intelligence cells.

In the Temelin PK, the local GRU office provides analytical services for the rest of Task Group Temelin. It's an ostensible advantage that the garrison only grudgingly accepts, as the GRU team's secondary mission of reporting on the troops' loyalty is an open secret. The local *Spetstaz* platoon's primary mission is reconnaissance in Czech territory; its secondary tasking is extraction of the Prague SIGINT team should its cover be blown. While the 58th Army's GRU elements would like to take a more active role in the PK in both counter-insurgency and milking the reactor's staff for information, manpower constraints make these agendas difficult to pursue.

In Moravia, the GRU spends most of its energy hunting down Czech Resistance and Free Slovak forces. In addition to reconnaissance and direct action by 3rd *Spetsnaz*, undercover agents are seemingly everywhere. The GRU here isn't above "recruiting" informants with threats to their families, inciting outrage to lure partisan groups out of hiding, or even committing atrocities in the name of the Czech Resistance. Aside from hunting Resistance groups – and the 601.SKSS, for whom the 3rd Guards has a special hatred – the GRU's remaining SIGINT and HUMINT resources are divided between Poland and the disputed oil fields on the Czech-Slovak-Austrian border.

### **Restricted Access: The Other GRU?**

Most GRU forces in the Czech Republic are subordinate to either the 58th Army or the CGF. However, both the 58th Army's GRU contingent and the Czech VZ believe a *third* GRU faction is operating in Prague. SIGINT suggests this faction is in contact with someone in Russia. This implies that the surviving General Staff has taken a direct interest in the Czech Republic. What particularly worries 58th Army commanders is that, if this is the case, the General Staff has chosen not to notify the 58th of its intentions and operations...

### **Sluzhba Vneshney Razvedki**

Until the Twilight War, the SVR maintained a strong presence in Prague. The Foreign Intelligence Service's primary interests were Western technology and Czech relations with NATO and the EU. Russian businesspeople and expatriates were the agency's main assets. By some estimates, over a third of the Russian companies operating in the Czech Republic were reporting to, if not outright fronts for, the SVR.

The Last Year was not kind to the SVR's Prague contingent. The May 2012 expulsion of the Russian diplomatic mission forced the agency's "legal" *rezidents* to depart, turning over their networks to their counterparts who lacked diplomatic covers. The BIS was waiting for such a maneuver and promptly scooped up all but a few of the remaining agents. Several more fell prey to various mishaps during the Siege. Today, understrength and lacking reliable communication with their superiors in parts east, the SVR's remaining personnel are keeping a very low profile.

**Assets:** Less than ten SVR agents operate in Prague. Most were previously assigned to technological espionage missions and are now involved in whatever parts of the city's recovery operations they can access. All but three are on solo assignments. The remaining



trio, who have covers as Finnish telecommunication consultants, have played a critical role in bringing Prague's phone system back online. The cell has taken only limited advantage of this situation to avoid breaking cover. Two other agents independently have limited influence over factions within the *Sverdlovskaya Bratva* (see following) but are restricting their activities to monitoring the local black market as a means of tracking Czech government actions that affect the shaky economy.

**Objectives:** Although all of the local SVR agents had specific assignments before the Last Year, their agenda boils down to two simple objectives: stay alive and report back to whatever's left of Russia. Most are continuing to gather intelligence in their respective fields of expertise just so they can have something to report. Since the end of the Siege, though, two agents have attempted to make contact with the 58th Army and subsequently been killed in apparently random criminal acts. The survivors are looking over their shoulders and trying to determine if the deaths are coincidence or enemy action. General opinion is leaning toward the latter, but no one yet has a definite suspect.

**Operations:** Aside from day-to-day survival, maintaining cover, and gathering what technical or economic data they can, most of the local SVR personnel just aren't up to a whole lot. They're about as far out in the proverbial cold as anyone can be these days. Some have considered trying to contact and influence the Czech Resistance, but as they're under foreign cover identities, they doubt they'd be able to make any real inroads with the movement.

## **Sverdlovskaya Bratva**

The largest Russian criminal syndicate in Prague is the *Sverdlovskaya Bratva* (literally "Sverdlovsk Brotherhood"). Prior to the Twilight War, the organization had barely a toehold in the Czech underworld. The Last Year's disruptions served as an excellent smokescreen for a quick, brutal purge of rival families. By mid-2012, the Greenbellies (so known for their appropriation of the colors of Karlovy Vary's hockey team) were a dominant power in Czech organized crime. During the Siege of Prague, an estimated two-thirds of black market transactions passed through the syndicate's hands.

**Assets:** The PCR's best estimates place the Bratva's strength at 120 to 150 full-time operators, with as many as 400 low-level flunkies and legbreakers throughout the western Czech Republic. Membership is roughly one-third Czech, one-third Russian, and the rest mixed regional ethnicities, though the Russians still dominate the organization's upper echelons. Several high-level enforcers are former KGB or GRU. The Greenbellies have access to military equipment up to light anti-armor weaponry but, outside their GRU veterans, are generally lacking in technical or tactical expertise. Finally, the gangsters are filthy rich in almost any currency one cares to name – except respectability.

**Objectives:** The Greenbellies' primary mission is the same as that of any organized crime syndicate: gain as much wealth and power as possible outside the constraints of law. The PCR and BIS suspect that at least some elements of the organization retain Russian nationalist leanings and are working with the GRU and/or SVR.

**Operations:** It's difficult for the PCR to tell where the Bratva ends and legitimate businesses begin. Much of the organization's current work is directed at cornering the markets in resources that will be critical over the next few years: food, agricultural tools and supplies, small industrial machinery. On the thoroughly illegal side, the Greenbellies are involved in smuggling, gambling, loan sharking, high-value theft, protection rackets, intimidation and murder for hire, prostitution, and what little remains of the local narcotics trade. The syndicate may have assisted GRU and Spetsnaz personnel in entering Prague during the siege and likely still provides muscle for Russian direct action in the city.

## Other Players

In addition to the Czech theatre's major powers, many nearby nations (and a few not so nearby) have intelligence assets in Prague. The following is an incomplete list of these less-prominent agencies and their activities in the city.

### **Agencja Wywiadu (Poland)**

As the Czech Republic's closest ally against the CGF, Poland maintains strong military and intelligence ties in Prague. An AW liaison office operates out of the Polish embassy, sharing data with the agency's Czech counterparts. The UZSI and AW have conducted a handful of joint operations in Occupied Moravia, mostly to extract personnel critical to the two nations' respective reconstruction efforts, and relations are characterized by mutual professional respect.

That respect would instantly evaporate if the Czechs became aware of the AW's *other* mission in Prague. The Poles are concerned that if the Czech Republic collapses, they'll be the CGF's next target. To forestall this, they're developing sources inside the Czech Resistance with an eye toward identifying key leaders. If the movement becomes strong enough to threaten the Czech government's stability, the AW is prepared to eliminate those leaders – preferably with evidence implicating the Russians.

### **Bundesnachrichtendienst (Germany)**

Czech authorities only recently became aware of a German espionage presence in Prague. In late May, the VZ caught two Ministry of Defence clerical staffers copying information on the ACR's western troop dispositions. Under interrogation, both suspects revealed that they were being compelled with threats against relatives living in Saxony. A subsequent raid failed to capture their handler but uncovered enough additional evidence to clearly point to the BND. Based on this, the VZ is reassessing several other recent penetrations previously believed to be Russian work. Germany's ultimate goals are unknown but, especially in light of recent troop movements, many Czech analysts suspect preparation for raids or outright territorial seizure in northwest Bohemia.

### **Central Intelligence Agency (United States)**

CIA has exactly one surviving representative in the city, an economic intelligence specialist who originally operated under diplomatic cover as part of the State Department's prewar financial development mission. She's currently working with the 56th SBCT to locate American citizens in the region and get them to Prague before the unit pulls out. Her primary information sources are informants among the free traders who operate in Austria and Occupied Moravia. When she needs to apply force, she relies on the 56th's scout platoon or Black Swan International, a local American and Australian PSC. By now, her cover is a polite fiction, but the Czech intelligence services are looking the other way as long as she doesn't interfere with their own operations.

### **Secret Intelligence Service (Kingdom of England)**

As far as 1st Armoured has been able to determine, all British intelligence officers in Prague died during the Siege. The division's own military intelligence staff is certain that the recently-arrived British diplomatic mission included a contingent of "MI6" personnel, but the SIS has yet to make contact with its military counterparts. Officially, the Czech VZ knows nothing of this situation. Unofficially, both the division's G2 section and its VZ liaisons are very concerned that what SIS activity they have identified in Prague seems to be focused on 1st Armoured itself.

### **Slovenska Informacna Sluzba (Free Slovakia)**

What remains of the "other" SIS is now headquartered in Prague with the rest of the Slovak government-in-exile. Today, the agency is struggling to rebuild. The staff who evacuated Bratislava before it fell were administrators, not operators, and a majority of those died in the nuclear attack on Brno. Ironically, most of the agency's survivors are those who volunteered to remain in Slovak territory and report on Russian activity when it became clear that the Slovak Republic was about to fall. Thanks to aggressive GRU counter-intelligence efforts, though, the SIS's ostensible headquarters is out of contact with all but a bare handful of these agents. The agency's top priority is re-establishing communication with them and gaining a better picture of the current situation in Slovakia.

Thus far, the SIS has assiduously ignored the UZSI's tentative suggestions that the agency should follow the Slovak military into assimilation with its Czech counterpart. Unbeknownst to Czech authorities, the SIS is quietly recruiting Czech Resistance members and other deniable assets for operations in Slovakia and Occupied Moravia. Slovak personnel serving in the ACR have channeled a significant amount of equipment to this operation. However, the Slovaks are reconsidering the wisdom of this plan, as Resistance elements appear to be siphoning off weapons for potential use against the Czech government.

## **Chapter Five: Power Struggle**

*The briefer was pure spook, a gray man in a gray suit who spoke in the precise, accent-free English they teach in schools without names. We watched in awe as he rolled the mouse pointer across the projection, clicked, zoomed, dragged, settled on an area down southwest by the German border. "We believe the targets are moving through this area. Our own forces will attempt to intercept them before they reach the treaty line –" another click and a section of highway lit red, "– but if they enter Russian-controlled territory, pursuit will be your responsibility." Unspoken: because we weren't ACR and thus, if they caught us on their turf, the Russians would treat us only as enemies, not as a cease-fire violation.*

*Captain Voight tore himself away from the Ghost of PowerPoint Past and raised a finger. "So what's the package these Albanians have?"*

*More clicks; a scanned vacation photo of a forty-something couple posing against the backdrop of a rippling azure bay. "Doctors Jiri and Erika Zelenka, Czech citizens, last known to have relocated to their daughter's home in Regensburg after Brno became a front line." He hesitated, evaluating our need to know. "Respectively, professors in electrical engineering and radiology, formerly of Masaryk University."*

*Kozlowski cleared his throat. "And an occupation force hired someone to find and deliver two doctorates like that... why?"*

*The briefer spoke precisely, as if to a somewhat slow child. "Presumably, this is part of their ongoing search for support staff for the reactor."*

*No one spoke for a long moment. The captain, sensing we all were deferring to him, broke the silence. "Re-ac-tor. The Russians have a... re-ac-tor." He drawled it out, three distinct syllables. "As in... nuc-le-ar? As in... working?"*

*It was the spook's turn for a long pause. Then, in an incredulous whisper: "No one told you?" He gestured around the room, taking in his computer, the projector, the fans. "Where do you think the power comes from?"*

*Well, we'd wondered... but I wasn't sure I was any happier knowing.*

The lands centered on the former South Bohemian administrative region comprise the smaller of two areas now at least nominally under Russian control. Untouched by major combat, most of the region's physical infrastructure remains relatively intact. This alone would make it valuable, but it also contains one of the world's few still-functional nuclear power plants. A combination of skill and luck allowed Russian forces to seize the facility in January 2013, and a hasty follow-on invasion from occupied Austria consolidated and expanded their hold on the plant and surrounding territory. Subsequent cease-fire negotiations led to the Pribram Agreement, which formalized Russian possession of the territory for at least the short term. However, many local citizens and no few Czech and allied troops are overtly or covertly opposed to allowing *any* invaders to remain on Czech soil. Russian forces within the treaty-delineated Temelin Zone of Control suffer from constant harassment. Commanders on both sides are hard-pressed to keep incidents from boiling over into renewed open warfare.

### **Landscape**

The Temelin Zone of Control (Temelin PK) is a roughly rectangular section of southern Bohemia with the town of Temelin at its northeast corner. The eastern edge of the Zone begins at the village of Dolni Dvoriste on the Austrian border and follows the Malse and Vltava Rivers through Ceske Budejovice to Tyn nad Vltavou, a small town about five kilometers north of Temelin. From there, the border cuts west to Strakonice, then follows

European Route 4 south to the German border. All told, the PK encompasses roughly 2,800 square kilometers. It's worth noting that most Czech citizens remaining within the Zone are mildly irate about the entire region going by the name of a flyspeck town. Ceske Budejovice and Strakonice are much more important municipalities. However, when the Pribram talks began, the disposition of the reactor and its power output were critical items on both sides of the table.

Before the Twilight War, the South Bohemian region was one of the Czech Republic's more rustic areas. Industrialization was light, save for Ceske Budejovice and a few small factory towns. Most of the local economy was based on agriculture and tourism. Many communities occupy the sites of medieval walled towns (though the walls rarely are intact enough to serve as defensive works against modern weaponry). It's a rare town that lacks at least one or two buildings dating to medieval or renaissance times.

The PK's overall topography is rugged. Rolling hills dominate the northern regions. The terrain becomes gradually more hilly and forested in the south, rising into the low mountain range of the Sumava (otherwise known as the Bohemian Forest) along the Austrian border. The highest peaks of the Sumava rise more than a thousand meters above the surrounding land. During the Cold War, Soviet-sponsored relocations of citizens away from the Warsaw Pact's border regions had the inadvertent effect of nature preservation. Since the Velvet Revolution, Czech government policies maintained large parts of the Sumava as a national park, keeping it relatively pristine and uninhabited.

The region's climate is relatively cool and wet, moreso after the climatological events of the past few years. Runoff from the mountains feeds thousands of ponds, creeks, lakes, and peat bogs across the Zone. A portion of the PK's prewar agricultural capacity centered on aquaculture, with a majority of the Czech Republic's fish production coming from this area.

## Daily Life

The Temelin Zone of Control exists under the military governance of Russian Task Group Temelin, administered primarily by the 19th Motor Rifle Division. The 19th MRD is subordinate to the 58th Army, headquartered in Vienna, but the 200-kilometer separation makes it effectively autonomous on all but the strategic level.

As a practical matter, the Russians' "control" stretches only as far as their rifles and mortars can reach. Though most Czech residents of the Zone continue their daily routines under Russian authority, they do so because they and their families still have to eat. Few are willing collaborators. The 19th MRD's commanders, recognizing this, try to keep the occupation's hand as light as possible, save for a few locations where large troop concentrations are a military necessity. However, constant provocations from both solo partisans and the semi-organized Czech Resistance are steadily ratcheting up the troops' tension level. The entire PK could erupt in violence if a single Russian squad leader loses control of a situation.

## Survival Considerations

The Temelin Zone of Control's location in the southwestern Czech Republic spared it most of the direct effects of the Twilight War prior to 2013. Austrian refugee movements in 2012 resulted in some civil disorder along the southern border, but no major combat occurred until the January invasion. Even this operation saw no pitched battles. As a result, most of the area's physical infrastructure is sound. Buildings and bridges are standing and paved roads are passable. Save for the lack of people and traffic, some towns look exactly as they did before the outbreak of the Twilight War.

Closer examination tells a different story. Although physical structures remain untouched, the PK was on the outer edge of the EMP attacks centered on France. Throughout the

region, electronics went dark in an instant. As was the case throughout the world, smaller (and less affluent) communities weathered this event better than larger towns and cities did, due to a higher concentration of older technology and equally venerable tradesmen still familiar with its use and upkeep. The largest initial impact was the loss of electrical power from the Temelin reactor and other plants. Despite their proximity to the Temelin facility, smaller population centers had a relatively low priority for restoration of service, even before the Russian invasion. Larger towns – not coincidentally, those now host to the major Russian troop concentrations – have at least some service now, but most smaller communities remain in the dark unless they happen to lie close to a main transmission line.

The lack of electricity (both generation and distribution systems) means a lack of other public utilities as well. Ceske Budejovice, Tyn nad Vltavou, and Temelin itself have water pressure and functional purification plants, but the rest of the Zone of Control does without. This, combined with a prewar shortage of trained medical personnel, led to several major public health emergencies. The largest were a major typhoid outbreak in Strakonice in 2011 and the following year's nationwide influenza crisis, but cholera and other diseases depopulated smaller towns throughout the area. Doctors remain in short supply in the PK and regional medical coordination is nonexistent.

The unusually harsh winter of 2012-2013 also exacted a heavy toll on the local population. Without electricity or natural gas for heating, citizens were forced to turn to the region's abundant woodlands for fuel. Poorly-tended fires resulted in several conflagrations involving entire small communities. The worst started in the village of Lenora and spread to consume a hundred square kilometers of the Sumava National Park, killing nearly a thousand Austrian refugees encamped there.

The final problem facing the Zone is its food supply. Although much of the area's northern reaches were dotted with farms (both long-established and those expanded in the National Agricultural Initiative), the general loss of both workers and mechanized agricultural capability has threatened the local population's ability to feed both itself and the Russian occupation force. Two other demands may soon exacerbate the problem: a proposed conversion of Ceske Budejovice's breweries to ethanol fuel production and rumors that the 58th Army in Austria has ordered the 19th MRD to begin exporting food southward.

## **Trade**

Although it's an autonomous Russian enclave on paper, the Temelin Zone of Control is far from self-sufficient. Food production, as mentioned previously, is barely enough to keep the region's residents fed. Civilian fuel reserves are currently nonexistent, save for those which individual farms may have managed to cache before Russian foraging parties arrived. Outside the major population centers, which are steadily expending salvaged prewar reserves, consumer comfort and luxury goods are effectively nonexistent. The Zone's most common export commodities are salvaged machinery from both the PK itself and Russian-occupied Austria. With prewar environmental concerns a distant memory, though, logging has seen a resurgence and may become a growth industry if someone can solve the problem of getting lumber from the Sumava to the Vltava River for transport north.

The Pribram Agreement provides for controlled trade between the PK and Czech territory under central government control. Strakonice is the official point of entry to the Zone for civilian traffic. Most traders working through the town are foreigners, as few Czechs are willing to openly risk the stigma of trading through the Russians. Of course, the PK's border is highly permeable to smuggling.

### **Tribute**

One major regular convoy does pass through a different point of entry to the Zone. This is the monthly food shipment from the Czech government to the Temelin garrison, mandated

by the Pribram Agreement in exchange for electricity continuing to flow out Temelin. The 250 tons of cargo makes a two-day rail journey from Prague to Ceske Budejovice. It crosses the PK boundary at Hluboka nad Vltavou, where Czech and Russian crews and guards hand off the train and its cargo.

## **Travel**

Ground travel into the PK is easy across all but its eastern border. Neither Russian nor Czech forces have the manpower for more than scattered patrols. While major arteries have checkpoints (or are just blocked for the sake of expediency), the area is threaded with backroads.

Within the PK, all motor transport must display a permit from the military government, but foot and animal traffic is generally permitted outside sensitive areas. However, Russian patrols are likely to stop and question anyone who looks out of place (and displaying military-grade weapons certainly qualifies). Roads are mainly in good repair. It's worth noting that spring floods over the last two years have damaged bridges throughout the area, and only those which are critical to military traffic or local trade have been restored.

The major waterway into the PK is the Vltava River. Although it's not contiguously navigable from Prague to points south, long sections of the river are open to small boats. Regulated river traffic into the PK leaves the Vltava at Zvikov Castle, entering the Otava River tributary for the trip to Strakonice. Few navigable waterways exist inside the PK proper, save for the Vltava along the eastern border.

Rail traffic in the PK is restricted to the main route between Ceske Budejovice and Strakonice, along with the branch line that diverges from this route at Cicenice to serve Tyn nad Vltavou. The occupation force supervises all operations, though the actual rail crews are mostly former CD personnel. At present, the only rail traffic into or out of the Zone is the monthly food shipment from Prague (see sidebar), but 58th Army HQ is pressing for a restoration of service from Ceske Budejovice to Austria.

## **Internal Politics**

When Czech and Russian representatives signed the Pribram Agreement on March 25, both sides recognized Task Group Temelin as the Temelin Zone of Control's government. Thus, all local civilian authorities in the Zone are technically subordinate to Colonel Vitaly Glebov, the occupation forces' overall commander.

The Zone's largest population centers and strategic locations – Ceske Budejovice, Strakonice, Temelin itself, and Tyn nad Vltavou – are under direct military governance. Their elected and appointed officials have been politely but firmly removed. Russian officers serve as these towns' senior administrators, directing resource allocation and other formerly civil matters to further the occupation force's agendas. In Ceske Budejovice and Tyn nad Vltavou, the local authorities work with citizens' advisory councils as a token gesture toward allowing the residents some say in administrative matters.

Outside critical areas, most towns retain at least nominal self-determination, though civil authorities still report to (and are audited by) the senior military officers in their respective areas. This arrangement sees varying degrees of success, depending on how much the Russians interfere with local affairs and how strong partisan activity is in the area.

Law enforcement in the Zone is a touchy matter, both in daily operations and in determining whose laws to enforce. Outside the critical Temelin area, most municipal police forces are allowed to continue serving in their prewar roles and jurisdictions, subject to certain limitations. These include a ban on motor vehicles and weapons heavier than sidearms, the presence of a Russian "liaison officer" at briefings and major operations, and integration of

any radio network into Russian military communications. Furthermore, any action against Russian personnel may occur only under direct supervision of a Russian officer.

The overall Russian posture toward the Czech citizenry is intended to be as benevolent as possible, given the circumstances. As is human nature, though, some officers – particularly those stationed on the far side of the Zone from higher authority – are running their administrative areas as personal fiefdoms, with troops under their command engaging in varying degrees of predation on the locals.

### **GM Hint: Russian Agendas**

The Russian occupation force in the Temelin Zone of Control – and, more specifically, its command team – is one of the biggest wildcards in the Czech Republic. No one in the Czech Republic knows exactly what the Russians are up to. They could be:

- ... playing "good cop" to the Central Group of Forces' "bad cop" in an attempt to distract Czech attention from an impending invasion from Austria.
- ... carving out their own pocket empire in the wake of Russia's descent into neo-feudalism.
- ... preparing for a mass defection to the Czech Republic because it looks like the best option in the area for long-term stability and survival.

This uncertainty is something around which individual GMs could build an entire campaign. Therefore, we're not going to definitively say which of these possibilities – if any – is correct. We'd much rather you decide for yourself and give your PCs a chance to influence events toward whichever outcome you and your players will find the most entertaining.

## **Military Operations**

The major ongoing conflict in the Zone is Czech partisan activity and Russian counter-insurgency. Two Zizka Brigade companies are still active (see Czech Republic and Resistance, p. **XX**), along with several dozen smaller Resistance cells and independent groups of widely-varying competence. The operational tempo is highest in the southern and western areas of the Zone, where Russian forces are spread relatively thin. Northern and eastern areas, with their stronger troop concentrations and fixed defenses, have higher security and fewer places to hide, and insurgents who operate too openly tend to have short careers. Some groups based in the southern regions also raid into occupied Austria, sometimes with the assistance of Austrian refugee communities in the Sumava mountain range.

Although such action is forbidden by the Pribram Agreement, Task Group Temelin regularly sends reconnaissance patrols into the rest of the Czech Republic. The paratroopers of the 51st Guards Airborne Regiment conduct most of these probes, but the past two months have seen a growing commitment of regular 19th MRD troops to recon operations. The Russians seem to be under orders to avoid contact unless fired upon, though a handful of firefights with local militia units have occurred. For the Czech part, corresponding VZ penetrations of the Zone take place just as regularly, usually staging from the 15th Engineer Brigade's former headquarters at Bechyne, just northeast of Tyn nad Vltavou. Save for a few Czech extractions of key political or technical personnel, both sides seem to be avoiding direct action against one another – and the ACR rarely interferes in Russian counter-insurgency operations.

## **Intelligence Operations**

In addition to military reconnaissance, the Zone is a major jumping-off point for Russian intelligence operations in the Czech Republic. Both GRU and SVR agents move through the



area to gather information on local conditions and build cover stories before entering Czech territory. The 58th Army also keeps a *Spetsnaz* platoon in Tyn nad Vltavou.

The Czech BIS and UZSI jointly run several loose intelligence networks in the Zone. These agencies' main focus is gathering intelligence on the 58th Army's overall strategy for Austria and the Czech Republic. The VZ has no major assets in the Zone, but any travelers coming out of the area can expect polite but firm requests for interviews with VZ officers seeking news on Task Group Temelin's troop strength and dispositions.

## Nuclear Power Station Temelin

Planning for Nuclear Power Station Temelin began in the late 1970s, during the era of Soviet influence over then-Czechoslovakia. Initial site plans called for a total of four reactors, but the Velvet Revolution and subsequent withdrawal of Soviet assistance and funding caused the cancellation of two. In the 1990s, the Czech national energy company, CEZ, partnered with Westinghouse to bring the facility up to Western safety standards. The first reactor went online in 2000 (to the accompaniment of both Czech and Austrian protests) and the second was activated in 2002. By the following year, the Temelin facility was the Czech Republic's single largest energy source, capable of producing 2,000 megawatts of electricity for an annual output around 12,000 terawatt-hours – about 20% of the country's total electricity consumption.

In the mid-2000s, the Czech Republic was a net energy exporter, but concerns over increasing consumption led the government to re-examine the original plans for the Temelin facility. A politically-charged process started and halted several times before feasibility studies got under way in 2008. However, interference from nuclear power opponents slowed progress until the Russian invasion of Ukraine in September 2010. The potential loss of access to Ukrainian and Russian fossil fuels gave CEZ the necessary leverage to lobby for increased funding and reduced government oversight.

Under the accelerated program, construction began in November 2011, with an aggressive completion date of 2015 – shaving an aggressive five years off the original schedule, three of them from the construction phase. However, the project was barely past the groundbreaking stage when the Russian EMP attack on France occurred.

Temelin was on the fringes of the EMP effect, which saved the facility from permanent damage or worse – the disruption *only* threw both reactors into emergency shutdown. A frantic around-the-clock effort brought the #2 reactor back online on December 17, a little more than two weeks after the EMP. However, with only one reactor functioning, power generation capacity was halved. Winter weather, other ongoing hardships, and EMP damage to the country's distribution systems combined to make full restoration of service effectively impossible. CEZ concentrated on bringing Prague's critical facilities back to full operating status, then expanding outward along electrified rail lines and other major transportation routes.

At Temelin, repair work continued through the winter of 2011-2012 on the less-viable #1 reactor. The March 2012 loss of Temelin's sister facility at Dukovany heightened this effort's urgency. The following month, CEZ declared Dukovany a write-off and began transferring all but a care-taking crew to Temelin. Conditions within the Czech Republic were less than favorable for a mass transfer of personnel and equipment, and several convoys simply disappeared.

The plant continued operating through the winter of 2012-2013, keeping the lights and heat on throughout the Siege of Prague. CEZ line crews made a tempting target for *Spetsnaz* patrols roaming behind Czech lines, and several teams disappeared before Zizka Brigade cells began providing armed escorts. This proved effective until early 2013, when the Russian 51st Guards Airborne Regiment came to town.

The survivors of the 51st had entered Czech territory the previous April, fleeing from several times their number of angry Germans. After more-or-less accidentally overrunning the American ABM launch facility at Karlovy Vary, the "regiment" – now effectively operating at less than battalion strength – dispersed into the southwestern Czech countryside. Initial pursuit efforts gradually faded away as the paratroopers avoided contact and the main Russian invasion drew off most of the ACR's attention. By the end of the summer, the 51st had become adept at living off a combination of trading and raiding, avoiding any actions overt enough to draw a swarm of Czech partisans.

By late 2012, the 51st's sporadic radio contact with its nominal higher command, the 58th Army, was not encouraging. Russian supplies and manpower were running low everywhere. Pressing through northern Austria to open another Czech front and retrieve a handful of paratroops (whose initial German mission was an expendable long shot anyway) was not in the cards. The regiment's commander ordered his scouts to find him a target big enough to motivate a rescue mission.

The first reports on Temelin were too good to be believable. A functioning nuclear power plant? Lights? Heat? Running water? Guarded by only an understrength battalion of light infantry? However, careful reconnaissance throughout December revealed the truth of the rumors. Although the Czech government considered it a critical facility, troop shortages and Temelin's distance from the front lines had reduced its defenders to a scratch company of regular Ground Forces personnel – mostly survivors of other destroyed units – and two companies of reservists. For the 51st, the decision was obvious.

New Year's Day saw the scattered platoons of paratroopers draw together outside Strakonice, then cautiously move southeast toward the reactor complex. A severe winter storm provided the plan's final element, dumping almost a half-meter of snow on the region by nightfall on January 9. Under cover of snow and darkness, the paratroops crept into the facility, then struck. With simultaneous seizures of the engineers' quarters, the control complex, and the defenders' command bunker, Nuclear Power Station Temelin was in Russian hands by dawn.

The next week was a frenzied scramble on both sides. The Temelin garrison was unable to send a warning before RPGs blew their radio mast to splinters, leaving Czech commanders unaware of the change of management for almost a full day. For their part, the Russian forces in Austria were unable to credit the 51st's initial reports. The Russians managed to overcome their disbelief and inertia first, sending the 19th Motor Rifle Division northwest from Linz to secure the area. The scattered Czech forces along the Austrian border fell back in the face of vastly superior numbers (and a significant amount of the 58th Army's surviving armor), retreating across the Vltava River.

The VDV paratroopers had managed to secure the cooperation of the local citizens and CEZ staff – not to mention maintaining control over several hundred prisoners of war – through the simple expedient of behaving respectfully. The 19th MRD's commander felt himself to be under no such constraints, ordering the 51st out of the facility they'd captured. His next action was to begin interrogating the plant's senior engineers for the procedures necessary to cut electricity to Prague and begin relaying it into the Austrian power grid.

On the morning of January 18, he was found hacked to death (and pieces) in his quarters.

His chief of staff assumed command of the division, sent out patrols to hunt down the local Zizka Brigade cells, and continued the interrogations. On the morning of January 20, a sack containing the chief of staff's severed head appeared atop the flagpole outside the division command post.

The senior battalion commander reluctantly assumed overall command, stopped the interrogations, and decided it would be best to avoid cutting off Prague's power and

triggering a humanitarian crisis. The 58th Army's commanders confirmed his promotion shortly thereafter.

## Temelin

**Prewar Population:** 800

**Current Population:** 1,000 town, 700 surrounding area

**Allegiance:** Czech Republic, but occupied by Russian forces

**Defenders:** 19th MRD (1 battalion distributed among several firebases in the immediate area)

**What it Has:** a working nuclear reactor

**What it Needs:** very little

Under normal circumstances, Temelin is the kind of town that the Twilight War would have left relatively untouched. Located about 100 kilometers south of Prague and 50 kilometers northwest of the Austrian border, the 600-year-old community had a tiny prewar population. It was far enough west to be safe from the Russian invasion through Slovakia and likewise sufficiently distant from Austria to attract no military attention from that direction. Unfortunately for Temelin and the surrounding region, one of the greatest prizes of the Twilight War's closing days is located two kilometers southeast of the town: the still-functioning Nuclear Power Station Temelin.

Before the war, Temelin was a classic example of a quaint, impoverished South Bohemian farming village. The locals largely ignored the reactor, save for a few who performed custodial or other service staff duties. Its proximity to the reactor yielded tax revenues that made it the focal point of the area's school district and enhanced a few other local government services. Few tourists passed through, and most of those were bound for the reactor's visitor center in the restored renaissance-era manor of Vysoky Hradek.

Temelin is one of the very few communities in the Czech Republic that saw a net population *increase* over the Last Year. Most of the nuclear facility's workers are now quartered here, as is the Russian garrison. A temporary tent town occupies the fields south of the town and construction on a more permanent dormitory facility is ongoing.

## Other Points of Interest

### Ceske Budejovice

**Prewar Population:** 100,000

**Current Population:** 17,000 city, 20,000 surrounding area

**Allegiance:** Czech Republic, but occupied by Russian forces

**Defenders:** 19th MRD (2 companies plus headquarters assets)

**What it Has:** heavy industry; brewing capacity

**What it Needs:** agricultural production, particularly raw materials for ethanol

Before the war, Ceske Budejovice was better known as "Budweis" – yes, as in the beer. The community's most prominent industry was brewing, and it was home to the Budweiser Budvar brand. The city's size and location astride the confluence of the Vltava and Malse Rivers made it a commercial and a district capital.

As the largest population center in the Temelin Zone of Control, Ceske Budejovice was the logical choice for Task Group Temelin to establish its headquarters. Its proximity to Temelin

provides electrical power, though the city's steam heating plant is critically low on fuel oil. Parts of Ceske Budejovice maintain an almost-prewar level of public utilities, unseen anywhere else outside Prague and Temelin itself.

To minimize unrest, Task Group Temelin has attempted to interfere as little as possible with the community's daily operations, though Russian troops now provide law enforcement and a military liaison officer sits on the city council. The division HQ has taken over the Ctyri Dvory development complex, which was formerly home to Soviet troops during the Cold War. Work is underway to adapt the city rail yard's maintenance shop to AFV repair, and the employment of local personnel there is an ongoing security versus manpower concern for the Russians. A much higher-profile debate is the disposition of the city's breweries. All involved parties recognize the urgent need for motor vehicle fuel, but limited food supplies make restarting alcohol production – whether for fuel or human consumption – a risky proposition, to say nothing of touchy civic pride around the brewery.

## **Strakonice**

**Prewar Population:** 24,000

**Current Population:** 3,500 town (plus up to 300 transients), 4,000 surrounding area

**Allegiance:** Czech Republic, but occupied by Russian forces

**Defenders:** 19th Motor Rifle Division (1 company)

**What it Has:** light and medium industry

**What it Needs:** food; medical assistance

In its heyday, Strakonice was a manufacturing center for handguns under the Ceska Zbrojovka imprint. Following Communist nationalization of the factory, production later shifted to sport motorcycles, which retained a following throughout Europe into the 1970s. Market shifts eventually led the town's primary employer to become a general machine and automotive parts producer. Apropos of nothing, Strakonice was also an international center for folk bagpipe music – a point of interest for some members of the British 1st Armoured Division.

The Twilight War exacted a heavy toll on Strakonice. The farmland surrounding it was a popular destination for urbanites looking for a new start during the Pastoral Revolution. The predictable calamities caused by an influx of inexperienced "farmers" caused a slight drop in overall food production in the area. A subsequent typhoid outbreak over the winter of 2011-2012 was the last straw for many residents. Those who stayed on had nowhere else to go or were too determined to give up, and they viewed the arrival of the 19th Motor Rifle Division with little more than a collective shrug.

Strakonice forms the northwest corner of the Temelin Zone of Control; as such, it's a base for 19th MRD patrols throughout the area. It's also the official point of entry into the Zone for civilian traffic coming from the Czech Republic. However, it's perhaps the least-popular duty station in the Zone. It was far enough west to be affected by the EMP attack on France and public utilities were never restored. Perhaps because of this, it's had ongoing problems with not only typhoid but a host of other diseases, resulting in a gradual depopulation of the town and surrounding area. In addition, the local industrial base is deteriorating without the necessary electrical power to bootstrap itself back to operation. The Russian occupation force views Strakonice as a hardship posting, and the troops responsible for local security and border control are here as punishment for poor performance or discipline problems. They tend to take out their ire on travelers passing through the town, which serves to further limit large-scale trade. It's unknown whether this is the Russian commanders' intentional strategy.

## Tyn nad Vltavou

**Prewar Population:** 8,500

**Current Population:** 1,200 town, 3,000 surrounding area

**Allegiance:** Czech Republic, but occupied by Russian forces

**Defenders:** 19th MRD (1 battalion)

**What it Has:** defunct tourist opportunities; fish

**What it Needs:** food; fuel; something to occupy the attention of several hundred bored Russian soldiers

Before the Twilight War, the town of Tyn nad Vltavou existed primarily as a tourism center and a support structure for the nearby Nuclear Power Station Temelin. Many CEZ employees who didn't fancy the trip from Strakonice lived here, five kilometers northeast of the plant. The town's location on the banks of the Vltava River, albeit south of the continuously navigable segment serving Prague, made it a popular rafting and canoeing destination. The events of 2010-2012 all but eliminated the local tourist trade, but the town was able to spin up a small aquaculture industry to remain mostly self-supporting.

Unfortunately for Tyn nad Vltavou, the river also made a good defensive line for the 19th Motor Rifle Division when it occupied the area in January 2013. Temporary fortifications grew into permanent bunkers as the soldiers moved in, and the Pribram Agreement formalized the occupation in March. Today, the town is the primary forward base and defensive node for the Russian forces holding the Temelin Zone of Control. The remaining residents find themselves host to the single largest concentration of invaders in the Zone.

The 19th MRD's field fortifications extend about twenty kilometers in either direction along the Vltava River's southern bank. Observation posts are spaced every few hundred meters, while well-camouflaged bunkers with machine guns and ATGMs cover likely crossing points. The majority of the local garrison is housed in Tyn nad Vltavou itself, with companies rotating to the field on a biweekly schedule. Many waterfront buildings have been converted into fighting positions for infantry or armor. Without now-nonexistent air support, forcing a crossing of the Vltava would be suicide for what's left of the ACR.

The remaining local residents are universally appalled at the usurpation and destruction visited on their town, but the threat of overwhelming force – or just a loosening of discipline over the troops – keeps civil disobedience to a minimum. A Zizka Brigade cell from the 182nd Infantry Company used to function here, but after one too many failed sabotage attempts, the locals reported them for fear of reprisals. Visitors will find Tyn nad Vltavou a suspicious and sullen town where both residents nor Russians will likely turn them away – or turn on them – unless they have something of value to trade.

## Major Forces

Despite its limited size on a map, the strategic importance of the Temelin Zone of Control makes it a critical area for military attention. The following units are the primary – but certainly not the only – combat forces operating in the area.

## Task Group Temelin

### 51st Guards Airborne Regiment

**Loyalty:** Nominally Russian Federation, but effectively personal troops of the unit commander

**Subordination:** 106th Guards Airborne Division (effectively nonexistent by 2013), then 58th Army

**Prewar Manpower:** 1,700

**Strength:** One combat company

**Armor:** Light (original airmobile IFVs)

**Supply:** Full, which is a point of contention between the "regiment" and the 19th MRD

**Transport:** Fully mechanized

**Other Equipment:** NBC defense and reconnaissance gear

**Commander:** Major Feliks Yakov

**Headquarters:** Nuclear Power Station Temelin

**Primary AO:** immediate environs of Temelin and main supply route from Austria

The 106th Guards Airborne Division was based in Pskov before the outbreak of the Twilight War. Following the fall of Ukraine, the unit moved to Ternopil and began preparing for operations behind NATO lines. On the night of February 25th, 2012, the division's 104th and 51st Guards Airborne Regiments embarked for an assault into southern Germany. Over the next several weeks, the regiments conducted hit-and-run raids throughout its target area, severely impairing NATO logistics operations and drawing a disproportionate amount of pursuit onto themselves.

Once the area was sufficiently saturated with German soldiers that the VDV troops no longer could perform their primary mission, the scattered units of the 51st Regiment attempted to link up on the move while heading for the sparsely-populated Bohemian Forest. However, an unexpected German flanking maneuver forced the paratroopers to divert eastward into the Czech Republic. While attempting to outmaneuver persistent *fallschirmjager* pursuit, the Russians blundered into the American 56th SBCT's positions around the Karlovy Vary ABM launch site. Rather than change course, the Russian commander elected to cut his way *through* the Americans and out the other side, utterly wrecking the facility in the process. In the ensuing confusion, the few hundred survivors dispersed in squad- and platoon-sized detachments.

Over the rest of 2012, the survivors of the 51st subsisted through a combination of raids, foraging, and cautious trade with war-weary Czech and Austrian civilians. Constant sparring with Zizka Brigade partisans gradually attritted the Russians to less than two companies' total strength. Unable to reach friendly lines in Austria or persuade the 58th Army to send a rescue mission, the 51st's commander gambled his 180 men on an all-or-nothing raid that, if successful, would ensure relief.

Over the night of January 9-10, 2013, the entire force crept through a blizzard whiteout to within less than 20 meters of Nuclear Power Station Temelin's outer defenses. An hour before dawn, a salvo of RPGs smashed into the guard vehicles and bunkers. Within twenty minutes, Russian soldiers were in the power plant's control room, dictating terms of surrender to astonished plant engineers. The unit then held the plant through four days of tentative Czech counterattacks until a relief force arrived from Austria.

## **Operations**

Until recently, the 147 survivors of the 51st Regiment were stationed in Temelin, serving as the quick-reaction force for the defenses of the reactor and the nearby town. In June, however, the unit acknowledged that static defense was not its strength and relinquished control of Temelin to the 19th MRD. The "regiment" now is based in Ceske Budejovice, with

platoons rotating through Tyn nad Vltavou on a regular basis. The unit's daily operations are difficult to trace.

Although not as well-armed as a tank company, the paratroopers are the most capable infantry combatants in the Zone. The unit knows the local geography intimately, allowing them to show up at the least opportune time for an aggressor. Additionally, the 51st's fanatical loyalty to Major Yakov makes them the most likely candidates for any politically sensitive mission. Any confidential messages coming out of the Zone will be carried by a detachment from the 51st. Every soldier in the unit has been to Prague for at least a week and most can speak at least pidgin Czech by now.

### **Restricted Access: Airborne!**

The 51st Guards Airborne Regiment's best-kept secret (aside from its commander's real agenda) is the fact that it retains airborne capability. Among the regiment's complement when it assaulted Temelin were the survivors of two Russian aircrews whose transports were shot down during the drop on Germany. In addition, the capture of Ceske Budejovice yielded a Czech Air Force An-26 and a Slovak Air Force C-27J. Careful maintenance and scrounging of fuel has kept both aircraft operational and yielded enough jet fuel for full tanks and a small reserve. Between the two aircraft, the regiment has airdrop capacity for half its total complement (32 paratroops in the An-26, 46 in the C-27J).

Obviously, the existence of this capability is a closely-guarded secret. Outside the 51st, only Colonel Glebov, his command staff, and the *extremely* well-compensated ground crews are aware of the airplanes' existence. It's debatable whether Major Yakov has even informed 58th Army HQ. PCs outside the regiment will *not* know about them.

## **19th Motor Rifle Division**

**Loyalty:** Russian Federation (but gradually eroding)

**Subordination:** 58th Army

**Prewar Manpower:** 12,000

**Strength:** Three combat battalions; three combat support companies; two support companies

**Armor:** Heavy; the 19th MRD has the majority of the 58th Army's tanks

**Supply:** Adequate, but with poor fuel reserves

**Transport:** Combat forces are mostly mechanized with a scattering of cavalry; support and combat support (except the engineers) are limited to foot

**Other Equipment:** Significant concentration of combat engineering equipment

**Commander:** Colonel Vitaly Glebov

**Headquarters:** Ceske Budejovice

**Primary AO:** Temelin Zone of Control

Headquartered in North Ossetia-Alania, the 19th MRD was part of the Russians' prewar bulwark against troubles in Georgia – or, from a different point of view, part of the invasion force poised to reclaim the former Soviet republic. It was among the second wave of Russian forces to enter Ukraine in late 2011. After participating in mopping-up actions, the division moved to Odessa, where it began planning and training for the next phase of the war.

The division's next tasking was the invasion of Romania. In February 2012, the 693rd Motor Rifle Regiment embarked on amphibious assault vessels – over the protests of the naval infantry officers responsible for the successful seizure of Odessa. The rest of the division moved southwest toward the Romanian border. Russian intelligence expected no more than token resistance from the overmatched Romanian Navy, but commanders failed to provide adequate air cover for the amphibious force. A Romanian Air Force anti-shipping strike wrought havoc on the tightly-packed landing ships. The attack gutted the Black Sea Fleet's sealift capability and killed over half the 693rd. The remainder of the division continued its original mission, sweeping down the coast to envelop the port city of Constanta.

Following the collapse of organized resistance in Romania, the division moved west through Hungary, leapfrogging the first units on the ground and pressing into Austria. By late summer, six months of continuous combat operations had reduced the division to half its prewar strength and 58th Army commanders pulled it off the front lines for rest and refitting. The 19th settled into firebases around Linz for the winter of 2012-2013.

A restful winter was not in the cards for the 19th MRD. Before dawn on January 11th, the 58th Army's command staff realized that reports from Temelin were not a hoax: survivors of the VDV drop on Germany really had captured a working nuclear reactor. A hasty reorganization put the majority of the 58th Army's armor and fuel in the hands of the 19th. Urgent orders designated the division as Task Group Temelin and sent it roaring north toward the Czech border in one of the last major armored offensives of the war. The mission was simple: secure Temelin and hold it at all costs.

Czech defenses on the Austrian border were wholly unprepared for a reckless assault of this magnitude. The Russians advanced to the Vltava River, where they reined in enough to allow the Czechs to retreat rather than feeling compelled to fight a last-ditch defense. The division immediately began digging in around Temelin and Tyn nad Vltavou. Patrol operations and anti-partisan sweeps over the next two months consolidated the division's hold on the area, allowing 58th Army commanders to go to the table at Pribram with a strong negotiating position.

## **Operations**

Now dangerously short on fuel, the 19th MRD is a defensive rather than maneuver force. Its single largest concentration of combat power is in the Temelin-Tyn nad Vltavou area, with most of its functional armor spread out around the reactor complex. The division's support assets are located with its headquarters, with the exception of a combat engineer company at Tyn nad Vltavou. Frequent squad-sized patrols, usually on foot or horseback to conserve fuel, roam the main roads and railways within the Zone. Most, save for those led by exceptionally motivated junior officers, won't go out of their way to investigate suspicious events or get into fights. In the event that a patrol *does* find itself exchanging fire with someone, mechanized response forces are based in one a handful of towns around the Zone and will come down on any aggressor with both boots.

The division does strive to maintain a high overall level of readiness and training. Every man in the 19th MRD knows just how fortunate he is to be garrisoned in a place whose modern utilities still work, at least in part. No one is willing to jeopardize that assignment by making the division look bad enough to be replaced. By the same token, few members of the division actually want to go back to full-scale combat operations – they're perfectly comfortable where they are. Should circumstances or orders force the unit into combat, though, it does have the single largest surviving collection of tanks in the Czech AO.

## **Czech Republic and Resistance**



## **182nd Infantry Company**

**Loyalty:** Czech Resistance (varies by sub-unit, but generally fanatical)

**Subordination:** Czech 55th Light Infantry Brigade (nominal)

**Prewar Manpower:** 175

**Strength:** Variable but at least four combat platoons if assembled in a single place

**Armor:** None

**Supply:** Poor

**Transport:** Foot

**Other Equipment:** None of note

**Commander:** First Lieutenant Jaroslav Navara

**Headquarters:** Strakonice (formerly Ceske Budejovice)

**Primary AO:** Temelin Zone of Control

The 182nd and 183rd Infantry Companies were the Zizka Brigade units raised by the Ceske Budejovice Regional Military Command. At the outbreak of hostilities, they were placed under the command of the 181st Infantry Company, an active reserve unit based in the same city, and used to supplement security on the Austrian border.

Throughout 2012, the companies' activities were limited to humanitarian aid and traffic control. Most personnel chafed under these restrictions, having volunteered with the expectation of gloriously resisting the Russian invasion, and approximately a third of the units' total strength deserted to join Zizka Brigade cells operating in the eastern part of the country.

The remaining volunteers were as surprised as the rest of the Czech military when Russians seized the Temelin reactor and a massive (by the standards of early 2013) armored force roared across the Austrian border. The 182nd was in Strakonice at the time, attempting to provide medical aid for a typhoid outbreak there. Upon receiving word of the invasion, it moved east to attempt to organize resistance against the Russian advance. Unfortunately, it arrived outside Tyn nad Vltavou two days after the Russians. The company's commander led his men directly into the Russian defensive positions, where they were decimated. The survivors fell back to the southwest, breaking contact and disappearing into the countryside.

Over the next few months, the company's survivors used their extensive local contacts to rebuild their strength. The unit tried to stay out of direct combat, focusing on gathering intelligence in anticipation of a Czech counter-offensive to retake the reactor. News of the Pribram Agreement was like a knife in the back – most of the company had grown up in the towns and farms now ceded to the Russian occupation forces. Determined to carry on the war even if their own government had abandoned them, the men and women of the 182nd spread out and began passing on their skills to the scores of citizens determined to stand with them.

### **Operations**

The 182nd is the backbone of the Czech Resistance in the Temelin PK. If every fighter trained by the company assembled in the same place, the 182nd might well be able to muster more manpower than it had before it first entered combat. However, only a quarter of the company's prewar membership is still alive and active – the rest of its personnel are motivated but ill-equipped and half-trained civilians.

To avoid detection and subsequent erasure, the "company" is now split into cells residing in farming communities throughout the PK. Most cells contain three to ten partisans, including at least one member of the original company. Cell activities vary widely but most maintain a constant low-level harassment of local Russian patrols and garrisons. The cells operating around Strakonice are particularly aggressive and have gone so far as to abduct, torture, and dismember both Russian soldiers and Czech citizens they've labeled as collaborators. Of late, the 182nd has stopped communicating with its sister company, though it maintains contact with the Czech Resistance movement in Prague and elsewhere.

## **183rd Infantry Company**

**Loyalty:** Czech Republic (varies by sub-unit, but generally strong)

**Subordination:** 55th Light Infantry Brigade

**Prewar Manpower:** 160

**Strength:** Three combat platoons if assembled in a single place

**Armor:** None

**Supply:** Adequate

**Transport:** Foot

**Other Equipment:** None of note

**Commander:** Master Warrant Officer Konstantin Chyba

**Headquarters:** None (formerly Ceske Budejovice)

**Primary AO:** Temelin Zone of Control

The 183rd company was the second Zizka Brigade company raised by the Ceske Budejovice Regional Military Command. Like the 182nd, it was subordinated to the local active reserve company and stayed out of the fighting on the Polish and Slovak borders. When the Russians took Temelin, the 183rd was patrolling the Austrian border in the Sumava region. The news of the 182nd's brief and messy fight at Tyn nad Vltavou convinced the 183rd to go to ground, conducting reconnaissance but *not* directly engaging the Russians. Several members of the company were residents of Ceske Budejovice and Tyn nad Vltavou and returned to their civilian lives, going undercover to gather firsthand information on Russian activities. Furtive and sporadic contact with BIS and VZ personnel put much of this data in the hands of the Czech government before the negotiations at Pribram in March.

## **Operations**

Since the Pribram Agreement was signed, the company has kept a low profile, ceasing even the occasional sniping and IED harassment in which it had previously engaged. Like the 182nd, the 183rd has split up into cells, mostly concentrated in the eastern portion of the Zone. However, unlike their more aggressive counterparts, the partisans of the 183rd are abiding by the terms of the Pribram Agreement. Those who can do so with a straight face are building or maintaining cover identities that have daily contact with the Russians in some capacity, from laborers and housekeepers to mechanics and tailors. To the 183rd, the information they can gather is far more valuable than killing a handful of conscripts who just want to go home anyway.

## **102nd Reconnaissance Battalion**

**Loyalty:** Czech Republic

**Subordination:** ACR General Staff

**Prewar Manpower:** 620

**Strength:** Two combat companies; three support platoons

**Armor:** Medium

**Supply:** Full

**Transport:** Fully mechanized

**Other Equipment:** Two Sojka III reconnaissance UAVs; ELINT equipment

**Commander:** Major Milena Jagr

**Headquarters:** Bechyne

**Primary AO:** Temelin PK and surrounding area

The 102nd ("102.PzPr," for *Pruzkmny Prapor*) was part of the Soviet legacy of influence on Czech doctrine. This unit was a reconnaissance, raiding, and counter-terror asset directly subordinate to divisional staff – in the ACR's case, the General Staff, as the 21st-century Czech military effectively was a short division. The battalion was equally capable of airborne or mechanized operations and possessed limited electronic warfare assets and a UAV company.

102.PzPr was active throughout the Twilight War, usually operating in small detachments along the front lines. It was one of the few ACR units to deploy outside Czech territory: two platoons infiltrated Slovakia in June 2012 to monitor Russian activity along the Carpathians and in Bratislava. The battalion's only pitched battle came in mid-September, when its heavy reconnaissance company led a vicious delaying action around Jihlava to screen the forces retreating from Brno. Over the autumn and winter of 2012, most of the battalion operated behind Russian lines, disrupting support of the Siege of Prague and generally causing havoc when not hiding. Attrition was high but the General Staff recognized the need to keep the battalion in the field and continually fed it a trickle of replacements. Consequently, the 102nd's casualty rate over the Twilight War was the highest of any battalion in the ACR at nearly 140% (though the raw number is misleading – most of the casualties were among those same replacements and over half the unit's prewar members are still alive).

At present, the battalion is based at Bechyne, the former headquarters of the 15th Engineer Brigade. This facility, less than 15 kilometers northeast of Tyn nad Vltavou, is the ACR's main outpost for keeping an eye on Task Group Temelin. Smaller detachments are stationed in Pardubice (for operations into the Czech Republic's disputed central regions) and Plzen (recently assigned to monitor the German border). Reports through the Slovak Resistance indicate that some of the deep reconnaissance team in Slovakia is still alive and the battalion's commanders are lobbying the General Staff to mount a rescue mission. Despite its gruesome losses over the Last Year, the 102nd's overall readiness and *esprit de corps* are the highest in the ACR, thanks largely to its senior leaders and proven combat record. The unit maintains a spirited rivalry with 601.SKSS and 43nd Airborne – and an equal, though sharper, one with the 51st Guards Airborne.

### **Restricted Access: The Power Behind the Power**

As of mid-2013, Nuclear Power Station Temelin's #2 reactor continues to operate at about half its rated capacity, generating roughly 500 megawatts of electrical power. Under the terms of the Pribram Agreement, a minimum of 200 megawatts is transmitted to Prague and its regional distribution network. Prague's typical prewar load was just under 1,000 megawatts, but reductions in both population and overall usage now ensure service for most critical facilities and some availability to ordinary residents. In the Temelin Zone of Control, Russian and Austrian engineers are focused on repairing and extending the grid southward into the Russian-occupied portions of Austria.

In the long term, the situation isn't sustainable. This is a matter of concern to both Russian and Czech authorities, both of whom are well aware of the plant's finite resources. The last fuel delivery from Westinghouse occurred in October 2011, at which point the plant had roughly 24 months of fuel available. Reduced consumption since that time has allowed CEZ to stretch its fuel supply, but at the current rate of output, the operational reactor will exhaust its fuel sometime in 2016. Increasing power generation – necessary to bootstrap other industries back online – will only accelerate this trend. Cannibalizing the four reactors at Dukovany would provide a significant source of fuel, but that site now lies within territory patrolled by the Central Group of Forces, presenting a significant military challenge in addition to the technical hazards of extracting and transporting reactor fuel. There's also the small matter of arranging a cooperative Czech-Russian mission, which would be necessary so long as Temelin remains in Russian hands. With the current state of the world, no other sources of fuel are likely to be forthcoming.

The Russians have an additional problem, one which the Czech government suspects but the BIS has not yet been able to confirm. At normal capacity, the power station had a staff of about 1,000 engineers, technicians, and laborers. Between the Last Year's various catastrophes, it's down to less than half this number, even with the refugees from the Dukovany facility. The shortage of experienced engineers is particularly critical, and only heroic efforts have kept the plant operational without damage thus far. Sooner or later, something's going to go horribly wrong unless Task Group Temelin can find another source of well-trained warm bodies. The 58th Army has advised its *Spetsnaz* troops and GRU agents that finding and recovering people with the appropriate skill set is a high priority, but nuclear engineers don't tend to wear signs on their foreheads advertising their training. When (not "if") the BIS becomes aware of this tasking, it's likely to touch off a covert race for these essential specialists.

## **Chapter Six: Moravia in Ruins**

*I snuggled deeper into the mud, tried to think warm thoughts, and went back to my scope. The scene in the village below us hadn't improved. At least this time the patrol was confining itself to a mere shakedown for supplies and dry rooms for the night – no extracurricular entertainment. By this point, I wasn't sure who was worse: the Russians or the local Czech Resistance cell.*

*The ground squelched as Captain Voight crawled up beside me. "How's it looking, Sergeant?"*

*"SSDD, sir." I offered the rifle and its optics but he demurred. "Boss, I know it's not the mission and we can't do anything to bring down heat on ourselves before we do the job, but is there any way we can do something about these guys on the way out? You know, when a little more noise won't matter?"*

*He gave it a hard think before regretfully shaking his head. "You got the same brief I did. Kill or disappear a squad out here and the reprisals will be a nightmare. Can't do it. In like the rain, out like the wind."*

*I sighed. "I know, sir. Just..."*

*"Yup." He paused. "Lousy roads, though, especially with the weather like this. And we haven't seen them pull maintenance on their truck." His teeth flashed. "Get in there tonight after the sentry drinks himself to sleep. Set up an accident."*

*"That's a shame, Captain. It's a nice truck."*

*"Don't get greedy, Sergeant."*

*"Sir."*

The eastern third of the Czech Republic bore the brunt of the Twilight War's fighting. This area, historically rich in mineral resources and the heavy industry they supported, was a primary Russian target during the 2012 campaign. Only a strategic directive to capture as much manufacturing capacity as possible in a salvageable state spared Moravia from outright devastation – and in some parts of the region, it's hard to see even this limited mercy.

Today, Moravia is the westernmost outpost of the Central Group of Forces, the quasi-autonomous Russian military command that occupies Slovakia, northeast Austria, and northern Hungary. Czech citizens in Moravia live under a harsher military government than the Soviets ever imposed during the Cold War, perhaps rivaling the Nazi regime of the 1940s. Russian excesses – and the systematic plundering of the area's wealth and technology – sustain an active resistance movement, and it appears that only a temporary shortage of resources keeps the CGF from sweeping westward in a tide of renewed aggression.

Unlike the Temelin Zone of Control, whose borders roughly conform to geographic or prewar administrative divisions, the Moravia Zone of Control is delimited by arbitrary lines. The Zone's western boundary begins at the Polish border town of Opawica and proceeds southwest to the village of Bila Lhota, where it turns almost due south to the convergence of the Austrian, Slovak, and Czech borders. All told, the Moravia Zone of Control encompasses nearly 10,000 square kilometers of Czech land. Central Group of Forces patrols and raids regularly move up to 80 kilometers west of this line. In mid-2013, the Moravia Zone of Control is purely a legal construct, existing only in official documents. To the Russian occupation government, it's the Moravian province of the Czecho-Slovakian *Guberniya* (Governorate or Protectorate). To Czechs, it's simply Occupied Moravia.

## What about Silesia?

Technically, the region of the Czech Republic under the Central Group of Forces' dominion also includes Czech Silesia. This region historically encompassed what's now southwestern Poland, along with swaths of the German-Polish and Czech-Polish borders. We mean no offense to any Silesian readers. Our choice of "Moravia" as a generalization for the Russian-occupied portions of the eastern Czech Republic is primarily for ease of writing. "Moravia and Silesia" would get awkward after a few pages.

## Landscape

Northern Moravia is coal and iron country. The Polish border is bounded by the Jeseniky Mountains in the occupation zone's northwest corner and the Western Carpathian Mountains along the Polish-Slovak and Czech-Slovak borders. Between these ranges, low hills and farmland speckled with lakes form the Moravian Gate, part of the ancient Amber Road that allowed trade (and conquest) between southern Europe to the Baltic Sea. The central portion of Moravia is hilly and forested, save for a relatively level plain around the city of Olomouc, near the center of the occupation zone. In the south, where the foothills of the Carpathians rise toward Slovakia, forest again takes over, with fertile farmland becoming predominant toward the Austrian border regions.

As major sources of war material for Germany, the Moravian manufacturing centers suffered heavy Allied bombing during World War II. During the Cold War, they suffered again from Soviet influence on industrial and architectural development. The shattered cities of Brno in the southwest and Ostrava in the northeast, respectively the former second- and third-largest communities in the country, feature blocky, functional construction whose looming skeletal remains tend to overshadow the region's smaller towns. Outside the environs of these cities, many Moravian farming and crafting communities retain their classical identities, looking much as they did in centuries past save for the intrusion of modern vehicles and utilities.

Moravia bore the brunt of the Russian invasion and the wreckage of war is commonplace across the countryside. Most major travel arteries are liberally strewn with burnt-out hulks of vehicles. Graves on both mass and individual scales sprout from fields and groves. Damage both incidental and deliberate is everywhere. The only parts of the region untouched by the war are those with neither transportation routes nor resources to interest an army, and even these isolated pockets are beginning to attract the attention of small roaming bands of troops and rogues alike.

## Daily Life

Moravia's status depends on the observer. To the Central Group of Forces, it's a recently-conquered territory whose still-restive population needs to be brought to heel and assimilated into the new Russia. To the Czech government, it's a temporary territorial concession. To most residents, their legal or political status matters less than the fact that they've been subject to a year of warfare and foreign occupation.

Here, the Twilight War is ongoing. The CGF's commanders consider 2013 to be a pause rather than end, a year for consolidating territorial gains and rebuilding strength before resuming the conquest of former Warsaw Pact members for the new Russia (or perhaps for themselves). Czech and Polish troops regularly probe the occupation zone's borders. Inside those same borders, the Czech Resistance keeps a vicious insurgency smoldering, striving to make Moravia too painful and expensive for the Russians to hold, even as it subtly propagandizes the local population away from the elected Czech government.

Within the region's surviving major cities, the occupation is an inescapable fact. Most functioning industry and public utilities are bent to the CGF's plans. Squads of bored conscripts enforce curfews and randomly pursue their own "investigations" or those of the GRU. Outside the cities, smaller communities play unwilling host to local garrisons.

Still, the Russians in Occupied Moravia have something less than nine battalions of combat-capable troops to hold 10,000 square kilometers *and* maintain fixed defenses on two threat axes. They can't be everywhere at once. Outside the major troop concentrations of Ostrava, Olomouc, and Vyskov, it is possible for citizens in well-behaved communities to go weeks without seeing more of the occupiers than a passing patrol or convoy.

## **Survival Considerations**

Unlike the rest of the Czech Republic, where available real estate outstrips surviving population, Occupied Moravia has little available shelter to offer. While the Last Year's death toll was greater here than in points west, the region's buildings have suffered significant damage from the war and occupation. Most dwellings with structural integrity are already someone's home, and many of those whose stability was questionable were torn down for firewood during the previous winter. Abandoned buildings still suitable for long-term habitation tend to be in areas isolated from any population center, such as towns completely depopulated by famine, plague, and survivor migrations.

The only power plant operating in Moravia is at Detmarovice, northeast of Ostrava. Coal mining in the Carpathians currently provides enough fuel for one of the facility's four turbines. Most of the resulting 200 megawatts is going into the Carpathian mines and key manufacturing facility in Ostrava. The CGF's stated intent is to increase mine output, thereby providing enough fuel to run the Detmarovice plant at full capacity. This, in turn, should be enough to power more of heavy industry as well as parts of the local rail lines. The lack of electricity in the rest of the region presents the same problems as it does elsewhere: loss of public utilities, industry, and telecommunication, driving a general regression to the technology base of a century beforehand.

Southern Moravia, albeit small in terms of land area, was some of the Czech Republic's most fertile land. The Austrian border in particular was noted wine country. This region saw the least fighting of any part of CGF-held territory. Consequently, the surviving population, supplemented with refugees from the northern cities, is capable of producing enough food for Occupied Moravia as a whole. This may soon change, however, as the Russian military's need for fuel forced many farms to convert from food crops to biodiesel materials at the spring planting.

## **Trade**

Occupied Moravia has no large-scale trade with other polities. What little commerce flows across its borders is the result of individual entrepreneurial efforts. The Russian occupiers seem interested primarily in integrating it with Slovakia, which means restoring heavy industry and food production as well as transportation across the Carpathians. In keeping with its growing tendency toward military neo-feudalism, the CGF is pressuring communities to focus their production on assets directly important to it, with all the inefficiencies and potential catastrophes that command economies have yielded in the past.

Moravia's main importance to the CGF stems from its long history of heavy industry. As previously noted, the occupation government has reopened coal mines around Ostrava in an effort to bootstrap the city's manufacturing capacity back to working order. The city's steelworks are beyond recovery but the Russians are examining mineral survey records to see if exporting iron ore to Slovakia's surviving forges is feasible.

The Czech Republic was not known for extensive petroleum reserves. 99% of those known to exist were found in a small field near the Czech-Austrian-Slovak border. With an

estimated 40-60 billion barrels of oil untapped, this represents a national treasure in 2013. However, the CGF lacks both equipment and manpower to exploit this field and the 58th Army has an equally strong interest in the portions that lie under Austrian soil. Moreover, all the region's refinery facilities remain in Czech hands – for the time being.

Since the spring thaw and the cessation of most open warfare, Moravia's location has once again made it a prime thoroughfare for transit across Central Europe. The lack of viable arteries for large-scale transportation tends to limit such travel to small groups or merchants with high-value goods, but the Carpathian passes are seeing an increasing flow of traffic. Many of the aforementioned merchants represent Balkan or Russian organized crime syndicates, which makes the CGF as a whole (though not necessarily individual commanders) less likely to interfere with them. The occupation government is currently debating its long-term policy for handling – and possibly taxing – traffic without compromising security.

With the exception of the Brno area, Occupied Moravia wasn't subject to EMP during the Twilight War. The result is a thriving business in salvaged computers and electronic equipment. While the CGF is sifting the wreckage for anything of immediate military value, free traders from the Balkans have bought salvage rights to less-critical equipment. Even with the Russians taking several cuts along the way, a few wagonloads of microprocessors and hard drives can yield a small fortune in Prague and points east.

## **Travel**

Occupied Moravia's roads are in bad shape. The deterioration wrought by two winters pales in the face of war damage. Overly-enthusiastic Zizka Brigade detachments with an abundance of munitions wrecked much of the northeast's transportation network to blunt the Russian offensive out of Poland. The ACR's own rear guard was more precise, but just as destructive, during the subsequent withdrawal from Ostrava. CGF forces have repaired most of the main transportation arteries necessary for maintaining lines of communication and supply, but side roads are likely to feature craters, missing bridges, barricades, mines and IEDs, and a variety of other hazards.

If anything, the region's rail network is in worse shape – rail lines make for easier sabotage than paved roads do. The CGF has dragooned enough CD work crews and unskilled laborers to reopen the main line between Ostrava and Olomouc, as well as the rails that run through the Carpathians from Ostrava to the Slovak border town of Cadca. Without electrical power, though, limited diesel fuel reserves prevent regular travel.

Few opportunities for water travel exist within the region. The Morava River, from which Moravia takes its name, flows from Olomouc to the Danube just west of Bratislava, but it's navigable only by small boats. Sections of the old Bata Canal, as well as smaller rivers, may allow brief journeys but are more important as fisheries. Major cargo movement by river is impossible.

Anyone traveling openly within Occupied Moravia faces more than just the incidental hazards of the route. CGF troops will challenge any other travelers they encounter. The CGF has yet to institute a standard for travel documentation, but some officers will request a subject's papers to see how he reacts. For their part, Czech Resistance cells tend to assume that anyone traveling openly does so with the Russians' permission – and is therefore a fair target.

## **Internal Politics**

Following the "realignment" (no one ever says "breakdown") of central authority in Russia, several Russian field forces have reorganized their dominions along semi-feudal lines, establishing military-ruled fiefdoms that nominally report to Moscow but effectively must be self-governing and self-sustaining. The Central Group of Forces holds one of the largest



such *guberniyas*, claiming to be the legitimate government of all of the former Czechoslovakia.

Within Occupied Moravia, all Czech elected officials have been deposed, replaced with Russian military officers whose superiors effectively delegate fiefdoms to them. While the CGF realizes the futility of completely abolishing all levels of Czech government – for one thing, the Russians have a dearth of trained civil servants to install in the place of the existing ones – the military government exercises rigid high-level control. CGF intelligence officers (and ordinary soldiers with some degree of bureaucratic experience) are engaged in ongoing audits of Czech government records for several purposes. Tax and land records are receiving scrutiny to identify farmland and industrial centers that were the most productive before the war. Police and, where available, military records are being used to profile potential troublemakers who may be leading insurgent activity.

The CGF exercises a strictly military chain of command over its officers, but this is subject to the same internal politics that plague every military. The three main field forces devoted to the Moravian occupation – the 201st Motor Rifle Division, the 5th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade, and the 6th Separate Tank Brigade – all report to General-Colonel Berezovsky in Slovakia. Thus, although the 201st MRD is the dominant unit in the Czech theatre and has the highest-ranking commander, its officers have no technical authority over the two independent brigades. General-Lieutenant Nevskaja of the 201st is campaigning to change this, but even the semi-delusional Berezovsky recognizes the potential threat of concentrating so much power in one ambitious subordinate's hands.

On a more practical local level, many small communities in Occupied Moravia are garrisoned by no more than a platoon of Russians, or even a single detachment that "rides circuit" through multiple villages. Such communities often come to accommodations with their "protectors," agreeing to maintain appearances for the troops' superiors in exchange for a degree of actual freedom. Other towns find themselves saddled with less-amenable military rulers and suffer varying degrees of indignity or outright reigns of terror. Reactions to such incidents vary widely – officers of the 201st MRD, in particular, aren't shy about reprisals, but the Czech Resistance continues to encourage civil disobedience and more extreme forms of retaliation.

For the Resistance's part, the dozens of cells spread across Occupied Moravia are unified in purpose but widely divided in doctrine and politics. More moderate groups – usually led by ex-ACR personnel – seek at least coordination and information-sharing with the ACR and the Czech government, seeing the Pribram Agreement's temporary necessity even if they disagree with its immediate impact on their homes. On the other hand, a growing number of extremists consider the country's current elected leadership their next target after the Russians are driven out. These latter groups are a major concern for the BIS, though it presently can do little but attempt to catalog and evaluate them.

### **GM Hint: Uncompromising Evil – Or Not**

At this point, it's worth pointing out that the Central Group of Forces is far from a monolithic, authoritarian, neo-feudal military government (though Czech propaganda certainly may paint it that way). As with any immense hierarchy, a lot of the people in it are just caught up in their daily tasks, but the ones who go to extremes are those who form outsiders' image of the whole organization.

At the CGF's top level, many officers (notably in the 201st MRD) are veterans of Afghanistan in the 1980s. Their attitude toward the Czech citizenry and the Resistance stems from previous experiences in occupation and counterinsurgency. While some are power-addicted bastards, just as many are "only" products of a hard, uncompromising school. A few also

served in the Cold War-era Czechoslovakian occupation force and hold attitudes shaped by those decades-ago experiences as junior officers.

Field- and company-grade officers, lacking their seniors' experiences, are more of a mixed bag. Those who rule their domains with iron fists are likely to do so out of personal gratification or a desire to emulate (or ingratiate themselves with) their superiors. Others may see themselves as stewards rather than military dictators and genuinely try to help "their" citizens. These younger officers also grew up in a post-Communist Russia and are more likely to understand the failings of the command economy that their seniors are trying to impose. This doesn't mean they can change policy, though, only the manner in which they execute it.

The point here is that the Russians of the CGF may be the enemy for Czech and allied PCs, but they aren't automatically orcs. On the flip side, Russian PCs in Occupied Moravia will find themselves caught in a morass of moral ambiguity, and those who carefully observe the chain of command will find a vicious political struggle over the best long-term strategy for handling the conquered territories.

## **Military Operations**

Although neither side has the endurance for sustained combat operations, the Twilight War still simmers in Occupied Moravia. The Czech Resistance continues to mount an aggressive insurgency, against which the Russians are vigorously campaigning. The Czechs aren't alone in their fight, as they regularly share intelligence and coordinate operations with their Austrian and Slovak counterparts, despite the CGF's best efforts to seal the borders.

West of the Pribram Agreement line, Russian raids and patrols spar with the ACR every week. Few engagements are decisive – or large enough for either side to take official note – but blood continues to flow. The ACR's main base for operations against the CGF is Pardubice, and Russian commanders would dearly love to mount a decisive raid against it. So far, distance and fuel limitations have prevented such action.

The CGF also works with its allies around Kaliningrad to harass EU units in Poland. The 5th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade sends regular reconnaissance-in-force missions north. Defense of the Moravian Gate is a primary responsibility for the 5th and a good portion of its strength is oriented along the former Czech-Polish border to prevent adventurism from EU troops or the Free City of Krakow. More rarely, CGF specialist units out of Slovakia or points east use Ostrava as a jumping-off point for their own forays onto Polish soil.

## **Weapons in Moravia**

Officially, the CGF has a monopoly on force in Occupied Moravia. Anyone openly bearing arms is assumed to be part of the insurgency. Anyone caught with a concealed weapon is likely to be executed on the spot. The Russians confiscate any firearms and ammunition they find.

Free traders and others who are "just passing through" are not exempt from these regulations, though enforcement is highly variable and subject to the whim of the local commander. As a matter of practicality, such travelers are allowed to retain their small arms if they can prove their neutral status via bribery or a letter of introduction from a senior CGF officer. Heavy weapons are likely to be confiscated even if a group can prove its bona fides.

Outside the major garrison cities of Ostrava, Olomouc, and Vyskov, some local garrisons relax the policy. While military-grade armament remains proof of insurgent involvement, officers from rural backgrounds tend to recognize that a few hunting weapons are necessary

for crop and livestock protection and self-defense. Handguns occupy a gray area due to their ease of concealment.

## Intelligence Operations

The Russian SVR has little to no presence in Occupied Moravia but the GRU has an extensive intelligence apparatus headquartered in Prerov. Most of the agency's focus is on counterinsurgency, using both its own assets and a slowly-growing network of Czech collaborators. The remaining *Spetsnaz* troops in the theatre fall under GRU command; they've taken over the former headquarters of their Czech counterparts in nearby Prostějov.

The GRU's lack of emphasis on counterintelligence may prove a devastating weakness. In addition to ACR military reconnaissance operations, the BIS has a robust web of informants in the remnants of the Czech civil service. The agency is sharing its take with the UZSI, but both agencies are concerned about leaks within the Czech government. Also, since the beginning of summer, the BIS' resources have been stretched by the need to ascertain the loyalties and capabilities of the major Czech Resistance groups in Occupied Moravia – a task that's actually harder than keeping tabs on the Russians.

As if Czech operations weren't enough, the Polish AW has penetrated the 5th MRB's operations around Ostrava, thanks in part to the Polish expatriate and Czech-Polish ethnic communities in the area. The AW is strictly avoiding contact with the Czech Resistance – it has its own plans for the 5th. The AW and the BIS occasionally coordinate operations but don't operate together as a matter of course.

### GM Hint: Spy Games

While the Russian, Czech, and Polish intelligence services are the biggest players in Occupied Moravia, they aren't the only ones. The Central Group of Forces concerns everyone in the area – including its fellow Russians in Austria, Poland, and other nearby territories. Virtually any surviving military or national government in Central Europe probably has at least one or two case officers in Moravia or Slovakia to keep an eye on the Russians' activities. Occupied Moravia isn't an espionage hotbed of Prague's caliber but it's certainly a spy-rich environment. This provides a wealth of national loyalties and background for PCs and NPCs alike.

## Points of Interest

### Ostrava

**Prewar Population:** 300,000

**Current Population:** 52,000 city, 40,000 surrounding area

**Allegiance:** Czech Republic but under Russian occupation

**Defenders:** 5th MRB (1 battalion plus support elements), 201st MRD (1-3 companies on R&R rotation at any time)

**What it Has:** Coal and other mineral resources, the skeleton of heavy industry, as much free trade as the CGF allows, living conditions not much worse than Prague's

**What it Needs:** Fuel, industrial and civil engineers, labor

Formerly a heavily-polluted industrial center, the Ostrava of the early 21st century was making significant investments in self-transformation. Coal mining in the Czech Republic's third-largest city had ceased in the mid-1990s, heralding the gradual closure of several

other large industrial concerns. By the late 2000s, Ostrava was well under way to reinventing itself as a center for business, high technology, and nightlife.

The Czech Republic's third-largest city was the first to fall to the Russian invasion. Mid-2013 marks a full year of occupation. Most of the city's remaining residents have had time to learn to live under – if not accept – the 5th MRB's governance. The Detmarovice power plant provides a trickle of electricity to the city. While residential areas remain dark, the authorities have restored power to much of the downtown area, including the club district. The presence of modern utilities makes Ostrava a relatively not-unpleasant place to live, even under occupation, though the city is also a popular R&R destination for Russian troops. It's also becoming a prime stopping point for free traders following the old Amber Road, enough so that the 5th MRD has had to establish a well-patrolled open market near the city center.

The occupation government's primary agenda for Ostrava is to restore as much of its industry as possible to operational status. The modern ArcelorMittal steelworks are unrecoverable after the Siege of Radvanice (see p. **XX**), but the historic preservation attentions lavished on the much older Vitkovice mill make it theoretically usable. The local coal mines have been reopened, a move which raised mixed feelings among the locals. Ostrava was trying to distance itself from heavy industry – but in 2013, such operations may keep the city alive. Local living conditions and a growing need for both skilled and unskilled labor are attracting workers from throughout Occupied Moravia.

## **Brno**

**rewar Population:** 400,000

**Current Population:** 15,000 (estimated)

**Allegiance:** N/A

**Defenders:** 6th Tank Brigade (2 companies)

**What it Has:** the irradiated remnants of heavy industry and military defensive works

**What it Needs:** a miracle

Before the Twilight War, Brno was the Czech Republic's second-largest city. Sitting astride the convergence of centuries-old trade routes, the community was the industrial and cultural heart of Moravia. Although Brno was often eclipsed by Prague, its development was a regional, if not national, priority, and post-Communist restoration was proceeding slowly but steadily.

During the Russian invasion, Brno became the lynchpin of Czech defenses arrayed against incursions from Slovakia and Austria. The Czech 7th Mechanized Brigade and British 7th Armoured Brigade, as well as various support units and most of the surviving Slovak military, were headquartered there. Evacuations of the city's residents continued until the first major Russian assault on August 29.

On September 15, 2012, three Russian tactical nuclear warheads gutted Brno. Two detonated within the city's historic core, targeting a Slovak artillery battery and the Czech University of Defence and the adjoining regional military command center. The third detonated several hundred meters over Brno-Turany Airport and the British HQ there. The subsequent general attack leveled the parts of Brno that weren't already toppled and/or on fire. While the Russian troops didn't directly target fleeing citizens, artillery barrages failed to discriminate between crowds of civilians and the routed defending soldiers interspersed with them. Afterward, the 201st MRD settled into the city's surviving buildings (mainly west of the city center). Throughout the Last Year, Brno served as a Russian rear area and transportation center until the 201st moved its headquarters to Olomouc.

Today, less than a quarter of Brno's prewar buildings still stand. A few thousand hardy citizens have returned to see what they can recover, but most have found nothing more than disappointment. About half of these have reluctantly taken employment with the Russian occupation force, receiving food, medical care, and a modicum of security in exchange for raw labor. The garrison is nominally responsible for inventorying Brno's remaining industrial equipment and packaging that which is salvageable for transport to Bratislava, Olomouc, or Ostrava. Most of the involved troops are thoroughly disgusted and opine that the 201st MRD could have made a better contribution to the war effort by expending the warheads on itself.

### **Restricted Access: The Brno Craters**

Two of the three warheads that struck Brno were 10-kiloton ground bursts, but the weapons were neither high-yield nor particularly dirty. Both craters are located in what was the city's historic center. They're immediately obvious, two blasted holes about 90 meters across and 20 meters deep, each surrounded by a half-kilometer radius of complete destruction and twice that of severe damage. Radiation exposure for characters in or directly adjacent to the craters is 1d10 rads per day, tapering off to 1d6 rads per day elsewhere in former historic Brno. Outside the immediate area, no appreciable radiation exposure occurs.

## **Vyskov**

**Prewar Population:** 25,000

**Current Population:** 5,000 town, 8,500 surrounding area

**Allegiance:** Czech Republic but occupied by Russian forces

**Defenders:** 6th Separate Tank Brigade (5 companies)

**What it Has:** food; undamaged military facilities; assorted military stores (though no ammunition)

**What it Needs:** fuel; draft animals

Midway between Olomouc and Brno (about 40 kilometers from each), Vyskov is located near the midpoint of the occupation zone's official border. This regional administrative center is an archetypal small Moravian town, with a few medieval historic sites, a local brewery, and a scattering of light industry. A swath of heavily-wooded hills lies to the northwest, with farmland sprawling across the rest of the surrounding territory. On a strategic level, the community's importance was derived from the 160 square kilometers of the Brezina Military Training Area, one of the ACR's primary training facilities. The VOP-026 Sternberk corporation owned an adjacent complex for advanced military equipment development and testing.

Vyskov saw minimal fighting during the Twilight War. The invaders were focused on the area's larger cities, and the community had no local Zizka Brigade company (most residents interested in military service already were ACR reservists). When the 201st MRD invested the town after Brno's destruction, the remaining training cadre stripped the VOP-026 Sternberk complex and evacuated to Prague.

Vyskov now is home to the 6th Separate Tank Brigade, which uses it as a staging area for salvage operations in Brno's ruins. It's also the collection point for food shipments from the surrounding farming villages to Olomouc and Ostrava. The brigade's main problem is a lack of transport capacity for both food and material. The Russians govern Vyskov with a light hand, which keeps the area's level of Resistance sympathy at a low simmer. Aside from a couple of platoons on police duty, most of the local garrison stays on the Brezinka compound northwest of town.

# Major Forces

As the site of the Twilight War's heaviest fighting and the most likely battlefield for a renewed conflict, Occupied Moravia is an area of interest for every military force in the Czech theatre. Russian occupation forces can't be everywhere at once, which makes the region a prime target for objective raids by Czech and allied military units and partisans alike. In addition, the Czech Resistance is focusing the majority of its operations on the Russian presence here, keeping the Russians busy with ongoing counter-insurgency action. The following units are the largest or most notorious combat forces operating in the Moravian region.

## Central Group of Forces

The total combat power of the Central Group of Forces is, on paper, terrifying to Czech military analysts. As a practical matter, fatigue from three years of war has worn down even those units that retain a majority of their troops and equipment. Still, the CGF is a force to be reckoned with. The following units are the primary ones stationed within Occupied Moravia – but past this, Slovakia plays unwilling host to at least two more Russian divisions.

### 201st Motor Rifle Division

**Loyalty:** Russian Federation

**Subordination:** Central Group of Forces

**Prewar Manpower:** 8,000-11,000

**Strength:** Three combat battalions, three combat support companies, two support battalions (plus roughly equivalent strength in western Slovakia)

**Armor:** Light

**Supply:** Adequate

**Transport:** Approximately half of combat troops are mechanized; everyone else is on foot

**Other Equipment:** Disproportionately large amount of combat and civil engineering assets

**Commander:** General-Lieutenant Semyon Nevskaja

**Headquarters:** Olomouc

**Primary AO:** Central Occupied Moravia

Based in the Volga-Ural Military District before the Twilight War, the 201st MRD was notoriously understrength due to persistent recruiting shortfalls. In autumn 2011, the division received orders to move to Ukraine and absorb the remnants of other Russian formations battered during the invasion. By the beginning of 2012, the 201st was as close to its notional strength as it had been since its withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989.

On February 26, the 201st became the spearhead of the Russian invasion of Slovakia. The division advanced steadily across the country over the next three months. On May 19, the division's 191st Motor Rifle Regiment captured the Slovak capitol building in Bratislava. A week later, elements of the division's 783rd Reconnaissance Battalion unintentionally kicked off the invasion of the Czech Republic, beginning the Battle of Valasske Mezirici.

Throughout the summer of 2012, the ACR and Czech partisans stymied the division's attempts to advance westward. Frustrated with their lack of progress (especially in the face of the 5th MRB's success at Ostrava), division commanders hurled waves of men and



equipment through the Carpathian passes, finally establishing enough of a foothold to control traffic across the Czech-Slovak border. The division assembled an assault force on the western side of the mountains and moved to invest Brno, the defenders' primary stronghold. A two-week siege culminated in Slovak deployment of chemical weapons against the 191st Regiment and the division's subsequent nuclear response.

Though elements of the 201st pursued the fleeing Czech and British units to the Vltava River, the division as a whole was unable to consolidate its hold on the territory through which it passed. Zizka Brigade partisans, irregular citizen's militias, and fragmentary Slovak and ACR units made the Czech countryside bristle with rifles. The 201st's commanders embarked on a vicious counterinsurgency campaign, but every reprisal against local residents only fanned the flames of Czech resistance. For most of the division's ordinary soldiers, the Pribram Agreement was a blessed relief from a war turned dirty – though most were careful not to express such an opinion where their officers could hear.

Today, the 201st is the primary unit of the Central Group of Forces' Czech occupation. Reinforcements from Slovakia, including several hundred Slovak conscripts, are trickling in to bring it back up to strength. The division uses its manpower – the single largest concentration of force in the Czech Republic – as a blunt implement to bring the Czech population to heel. Most surviving communities in the division's area of operations are garrisoned with at least a couple of squads to ensure compliance with agricultural or manufacturing requisitions.

### **WMDs and the 201st**

During the Twilight War, the 201st MRD used chemical weapons on several targets in Slovakia. It also launched the nukes that hit Brno. While it's not the only Russian unit in the Czech theatre to have such a history (for instance, the 5th MRB's use of nerve agents on Polish civilians), it's the most likely formation to still have such assets in inventory and be willing to use them again. Whether the 201st has any such weapons available to it by mid-2013 is a matter for individual GMs to decide.

## **5th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade**

**Loyalty:** Russian Federation

**Subordination:** Central Group of Forces

**Prewar Manpower:** 8,500

**Strength:** Two reinforced combat battalions, one combat support battalion, three support companies

**Armor:** Light, though enough vehicles have been salvaged around Ostrava to bring the unit up to Medium if repair facilities become available

**Supply:** Adequate, save for critically low fuel reserves

**Transport:** Mechanized transport for two companies, otherwise foot for infantry and draft animals for combat support units; could be fully mechanized if fuel allowed

**Other Equipment:** Large complement of trucks from the captured Tatra factory in Koprivnice

**Commander:** General-Major Bogdan Yakovlev

**Headquarters:** Ostrava

**Primary AO:** Northern sections of Occupied Moravia

A relatively new formation, the 5th Separate MRB was one of two brigades spun out of the former 2nd Guards Tamanskaya MRD in early 2009. Attached to the Moscow Military District, the brigade was a showpiece unit for Russian military modernization, fielding some of the latest equipment to roll off the Nizhny Tagil production lines.

Oddly for such a prestigious unit, the invasion of Ukraine saw the 5th held in a reserve role. The unit spent late 2010 and most of the following year idle, only being released for duty in the Ukrainian occupation in September 2011. During the winter of 2011-2012, the brigade was assigned to counter-insurgency operations around Ternopil, providing much-needed field experience for its men and officers. In February 2012, the 5th moved northwest to Lviv to prepare for the next phase of the campaign.

In late February, the brigade crossed the Polish border as part of the northern Russian offensive into the former Central European Soviet satellites. Its initial movement took it west along the northern flank of the Eastern Carpathians, splitting Poland and Slovakia. Spring of 2012 saw the brigade engaged in continuous action against EU Battlegroup 107, a Dutch-German-Finnish formation which had retreated into the Carpathians to strike Russian flanks in both Poland and Slovakia. A coordinated campaign by the 5th and its counterparts on the Slovak front smashed BG-107 in late April. After a brief pause for rest and refit, the brigade moved northeast toward Krakow under orders to relieve other Russian units besieging the city.

The 5th never reached Krakow. On June 5, Moscow ordered the brigade to bypass the city and proceed southwest, where it would open a new front into the Czech Republic. The brigade crossed the Czech border four days later under sporadic fire from Czech and Polish artillery. Over the next two weeks, Russian reinforcements and Czech and British defenders converged on the city of Ostrava in equal numbers.

On June 21, a concentration of reforming Polish troops around nearby Opava reached critical mass. To secure the brigade's right flank, the unit's commander ordered a chemical strike on the Polish assembly area. Unfortunately, high winds pushed most of the artillery rockets off-course, sending them plunging into the town and the Polish refugee encampments outside it. The enraged Poles, many of whom had had dependents in the camps, charged the Russians in a brutal, uncoordinated assault. The counterstrike rocked the 5th MRB back on its heels and inflicted grievous casualties before the Poles were wiped out. Only well-timed covert action from *Spetsnaz* forces operating behind Czech lines prevented the city's defenders from exploiting the confusion and pushing the Russians back across the Polish border.

Ostrava fell in late June. Mauled by Polish, Czech, and British resistance, the brigade detached its worst-hit units to consolidate while maintaining control of the city, then began staging intact or reformed company-sized detachments on the road to Prague. Czech partisan action took a heavy toll, particularly on isolated support units, until the brigade dedicated a battalion to counter-insurgency efforts and began counter-ambushes of the harriers.

The majority of the brigade's combat force reached Prague by late August and settled into field fortifications on the city's northeastern perimeter. Assaults throughout the autumn of 2012 made deep penetrations into the Czech defensive perimeter, including one that pressed to the eastern bank of the Vltava at the *Most Barikadniku*, but the Russians were unable to hold much of the ground they took. The following spring's cease-fire agreement came as a relief to many of the 5th MRB's troops, though the brigade's command staff was vehemently opposed to it. The brigade was the last Russian unit to withdraw from Prague on April 15, and joined the 201st MRD in repudiating the Pribram Agreement three days later.



Currently, the 5th MRD is headquartered in Ostrava, albeit with over half its strength forward-deployed near the treaty line or keeping an eye on the Polish border. Most of its efforts in and around Ostrava are focused on restoring local industrial capacity and reopening transit routes from Poland and points east.

## **6th Separate Tank Brigade**

**Loyalty:** Russian Federation

**Subordination:** Central Group of Forces

**Prewar Manpower:** 3,900

**Strength:** One combat battalion, two combat support companies, two support companies

**Armor:** Medium, though salvaged British equipment from Brno is slowly expanding this capability

**Supply:** Poor

**Transport:** Mechanized for all combat and combat support personnel, albeit with only a few days' fuel; otherwise foot

**Other Equipment:** Exceptionally strong air defense assets

**Commander:** Colonel Martyn Borzakovsky

**Headquarters:** Vyskov

**Primary AO:** Brno and southern Moravia

Another product of Russian military restructuring in the immediate prewar years, the 6th Separate Tank Brigade was formed from the armored component of the former 3rd Motor Rifle Division. Designed as a shock formation, it served that role in the invasion of Ukraine, contemptuously brushing aside all resistance. Having suffered only a few score casualties, the brigade was eager to repeat its success in the 2012 Polish offensive, only to be mauled by EU air strikes in the campaign's early phases. After losing half its tanks in the first week of battle, the brigade was pulled off the front lines to consolidate around Rzeszow. The surviving officers pushed their troops hard; by late May, the brigade was back up to strength with integrated survivors of harder-hit formations.

Movement orders came in early June, sending the brigade through southern Poland to the Moravian Gate and the Czech Republic. The 6th crossed the Czech border in mid-month, following up the 5th Separate MRB's breakthrough. On June 22, the brigade engaged in one of the theatre's largest tank battles, exchanging fire with the Challenger 2s of the British 20th Armoured Brigade in the hills south of Ostrava. As British and Czech forces disengaged and fell back, the 6th attempted pursuit, only to be hamstrung by Zizka Brigade ambushes and raids. Nevertheless, on July 19, the brigade was the first Russian unit to reach Prague.

Throughout the latter half of 2012, the 6th prowled the eastern bank of the Vltava, hunting for any possible crossing to exploit. The Russians repeatedly crossed swords with Czech and British armor, though few engagements were conclusive. Dwindling fuel reserves forced the unit to pull in its horns by late autumn, settling dispiritedly into fixed positions to wait out the winter.

After the Pribram Agreement, the Central Group of Forces demanded the 6th integrate into its command structure. The brigade did so with no particular protest, though equally without notable enthusiasm. Despite the unit's dense concentration of combat power, the CGF subsequently assigned it to supervise and guard the engineers and salvage teams stripping the ruins of Brno and the factories of southeast Moravia. Many Russian officers in

Moravia consider the 6th the most "politically unreliable" of any CGF formation and believe its fuel reserves are being kept artificially low to keep it from going rogue. The unit's adoption of Western armor units' customs – *Bundeswehr*-style gun tube kill rings and American cavalry Stetsons – doesn't help this impression. Nor does the theft of a life-size fiberglass Tyrannosaurus Rex, formerly part of the DinoPark Vyskov tourist trap and now guarding the front gate of the brigade's main base.

Despite its current situation, the 6th boasts the highest morale of any Russian unit in Moravia. Many surviving officers are veterans not only of the Twilight War but of the 3rd MRD's actions in Chechnya during the late 1990s, giving the unit a disproportionately high amount of seasoned leadership. The tankers and their supporting mechanized infantry have proven vicious, albeit honorable, opponents for the Czech Resistance. However, after Ostrava and Prague, the brigade considers the British 1st Armoured Division its real nemesis and is spoiling for a rematch, particularly against the Queen's Royal Hussars of the division's 20th Brigade.

## Czech Republic and Resistance

### 214th Engineer Company

**Loyalty:** Czech Resistance but not inimical to Czech government interests

**Subordination:** Czech 55th Light Infantry Brigade (nominal)

**Prewar Manpower:** 160

**Strength:** Three combat support platoons

**Armor:** None

**Supply:** Adequate

**Transport:** Foot, but could liberate Russian vehicles if necessary

**Other Equipment:** Access to most Russian assets in Ostrava

**Commander:** Captain Jiri Falta

**Headquarters:** Ostrava

**Primary AO:** Ostrava and immediate environs

One of only two engineer companies in the Zizka Brigade, the 214th was raised entirely from workers at Ostrava's ArcelorMittal steel mill. The company served with distinction in the defense of Ostrava but was caught up in the general withdrawal from the city – not, however, before torching its headquarters and most hardcopy records of its members' enlistment. The company's troops subsequently resumed their civilian identities and made their way back to Ostrava in small groups, merging with the overall osmotic flow of refugee movements over the latter half of 2012.

Upon reassembling in Ostrava, the 214th decided to go into hiding rather than risk the enthusiastic GRU response to overly-active Zizka Brigade cells. The unit rarely takes direct action against the occupation force, preferring to rely on several Resistance cells it spawned and trained over the winter of 2012-2013. None of these cells is aware of the true nature of their organizers and the 214th is prepared to dispassionately sever its ties to any cell that becomes a danger to it.

A majority of the company's troops, being trained steelworkers, are now employed in the Russian effort to reactivate Ostrava's heavy industry. This positions them for all manner of sabotage or intelligence-gathering and the company's leadership is carefully considering its next move. However, a more immediate concern is the Russians' recent salvage of a large

number of ACR computers, and the company fears GRU data-mining may reveal its existence.

## **601st Special Forces Group**

**Loyalty:** Czech Republic

**Subordination:** VZ Directorate

**Prewar Manpower:** 975

**Strength:** Three understrength combat companies

**Armor:** None

**Supply:** Poor

**Transport:** Foot

**Other Equipment:** None of note

**Commander:** Major Petr Stenci

**Headquarters:** Jihlava

**Primary AO:** Occupied Moravia and Slovakia

The 601st Special Forces Group (601.SKSS – *Skupina Specialnich*) traces its ancestry to the 22nd Airborne Regiment, a Cold War-era Czechoslovakian parachute reconnaissance formation. Post-Soviet reorganization saw several changes within the unit, ending with the adoption of a Western special operations model in 2003. During this time, detachments from the unit served in NATO peacekeeping missions in the Balkans, and later in Iraq and Afghanistan (incidentally, one company of 601.SKSS was involved in counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan before the ACR lost contact with it in mid-2012; its current status is unknown).

Throughout the winter of 2011-2012, the 601st was instrumental in training Zizka Brigade volunteers at its headquarters in Prostějov. The Russian invasion of Slovakia brought orders for the unit to turn over its training mission to regular ACR instructors. By mid-March, most of the 601st was in Slovakia, gathering intelligence on Russian strength and tactics and conducting the occasional sabotage raid. Slovakia's collapse in May left a majority of the 601st's strength far behind enemy lines, but most of the unit exfiltrated in good order and regrouped at Prostějov.

While preparing to redeploy in support of Czech defenses, the 601st received an urgent retasking. The degree to which Russian *spetsnaz* had penetrated Czech rear areas had become apparent to the ACR's general staff. As the primary Czech counter-insurgency force, the 601st was charged with hunting down its Russian counterparts.

The Last Year saw the 601st on near-continuous field operations. Company- and platoon-sized detachments operated independently behind Russian lines and in the no man's land of the central Czech Republic. Attrition gradually whittled down the unit, which was forced to live off the land or lightly-guarded Russian supply convoys. Initially, the 601st avoided the unpredictable amateurs of the Zizka Brigade, but by early 2013 the unit had acknowledged the competence of at least some of the more successful surviving partisan bands. With the loss of Prostějov, the 601st re-established its headquarters in Jihlava, just outside the CGF's normal patrol area. It continues to sneak, peek, and occasionally apply precision violence within CGF territory.

Of all the ACR's regular units, the 601st is the most vocally opposed to the Pribram Agreement. It has been in near-constant contact with CGF forces for over a year and has ample experience of what Russian occupation means for Czech citizens. Although the 601st

is still responding to its chain of command, elements within the VZ question whether its ultimate loyalties are swinging toward the Czech Resistance. However, the unit's ongoing intelligence and operational contributions make it too valuable to simply pull in from the field.

## Free Slovakia

### B Company, 12th Mechanized Battalion

**Loyalty:** Slovakia

**Subordination:** 1st Mechanized Brigade (nominal)

**Prewar Manpower:** 1,100

**Strength:** Three combat platoons, two support platoons

**Armor:** Light

**Supply:** Poor

**Transport:** Foot

**Other Equipment:** None of note

**Commander:** First Lieutenant Nadezda Corej

**Headquarters:** Somewhere near Zlin

**Primary AO:** Carpathian mountains along the Czech-Slovak border

When the shattered remnants of the Slovak 1st Mechanized Brigade evacuated to Brno in mid-2012, 12th Mechanized Battalion became the focus of consolidation activities by virtue of having the most remaining officers. The unit reorganized around its core of survivors, absorbed other units' remnants as they trickled in, and dug in around Brno.

During the collapse of Brno's defenses, 12th Mech's B Company found itself cut off from the general westward rout. Along with the battalion's intelligence and signals staff, the company shot its way out of the Russian encirclement and fled into the surrounding countryside. Luck and a few Zizka Brigade scouts allowed the company to avoid contact and disperse into communities along the border, where the troops' accents would go unremarked by most Russian observers.

B Company spent the winter of 2012-2013 in hiding, assisting its host communities with what medical and technical support it could provide. In early February, the unit reassembled near Uhersky Brod and began reconnaissance operations in the Carpathians. It's currently liaising between the Czech and Slovak Resistances and occasionally raiding Russian supply convoys. The company has radio communication with Free Slovak leadership in Prague but rarely uses this capability for fear of detection.

## **Appendix: Steel Fist, Velvet Glove**

Chapters Five and Six detail the Russian units present in each occupied zone, as well as some of the Czech and allied forces operating in those areas. This appendix presents the other side of the equation: the forces of the Army of the Czech Republic and the British 1st Armoured Division. In addition to unit profiles, we've included a few resources for building player characters from either force.

### **The ACR**

The Army of the Czech Republic that fought the Twilight War was a unique product of East and West. Over the decades of the Cold War, Czech military doctrine fell under rigid Soviet influence. After the Velvet Revolution, the new Czech government set to dismantling and rebuilding all of its state security apparatuses – from the ACR to the UZSI. For the military, this meant massive manpower reductions, a transition from conscription to all-volunteer staffing, a seismic shift in strategy and threat assessment, and sweeping changes in both procedures and equipment to support a bid for NATO membership.

By the turn of the millennium, the ACR was down to a third of its Velvet Divorce-era strength and a junior partner in NATO. Initial standardization had focused on communication and data systems. Throughout the 2000s, modernization efforts targeted the combat forces, gradually replacing Cold War equipment with modern Western designs. Czech forces cross-trained extensively with other militaries, hosted NATO joint exercises, and contributed to UN peacekeeping missions and Iraqi and Afghan reconstruction.

At the Twilight War's outbreak, the ACR had some 27,000 active-duty troops, not counting reservists, militia, or civilian support staff. In 2013, it's operating at between a third and half of its prewar strength – exact casualty and staffing figures are closely guarded. However, raw numbers are deceiving. Quite a few former reservists are now full-time soldiers and many former support or aviation arm personnel are retraining to fill the empty ranks of ground combat units.

### **Key Units**

#### **4th Rapid Deployment Brigade**

**Loyalty:** Czech Republic

**Subordination:** ACR General Staff

**Prewar Manpower:** 2,300

**Strength:** Two combat battalions, one combat support company, two support companies

**Armor:** Light, though remaining assets are among the ACR's newest and most advanced

**Supply:** Full

**Transport:** Mechanized for all combat and combat support personnel; most support sub-units have draft animals

**Other Equipment:** Limited access to ACR helicopter assets based in Prague

**Commander:** Lieutenant Colonel Drahomir Luxa

**Headquarters:** Pardubice

**Primary AO:** Eastern Bohemia to the Moravia Zone of Control boundary

The prewar 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade was the lighter of the ACR's two maneuver brigades. The brigade was one of two formations the ACR classified as deployable on short notice and consequently received significant funding for equipment upgrades. In the event of full-scale NATO mobilization, it was designated as the round-out brigade for the British Army's German-based 1st Armoured Division (taking the place of the British 4th Mechanized Brigade, which was based in the UK). The unit's home base was Zatec, northwest of Prague.

In early 2012, most ACR assets began redeploying in preparation for the expected Russian invasion of Slovakia from Ukraine. 4th RDB shifted from its quarters to the vicinity of Prague, where it was to serve as the Czech central reserve. The unit also took charge of liaison duties with incoming British troops, handling integration of a force the size of the ACR itself into the Czech command structure.

At the beginning of June, reports from Poland indicated that a large force had detached itself from the Russian main body around Krakow and was moving toward the Polish-Czech border. 4th RDB, along with the British 20th Armoured Brigade and various combat support units, shifted northeast by road and rail to deploy around Ostrava. Elements of the attached 132nd Artillery Battalion began engaging the Russian vanguard on the morning of June 9, and brigade reconnaissance teams were in contact with their Russian counterparts before nightfall. The next two weeks saw intermittent sniping and skirmishing as the Czech and British defenders attempted to bleed the Russians dry, harrying the heavier force while the PCR supervised the evacuation of Ostrava.

By June 22, the Russian advance appeared had bogged down after a mass charge by Polish forces in response to a nerve gas strike on their dependents. Czech and British commanders took the opportunity to consolidate depleted forces and resupply. The following day, however, a *Spetsnaz* truck bomb attack on the brigade's headquarters killed most of the Czech command staff. The commander of 20th Armoured stepped in to take charge of Czech forces and prevent the front's total collapse, but Ostrava was lost. With it went the 41st Mechanized Battalion, which was forced to dig in and endure what would become the Siege of Radvanice. The remainder of the brigade withdrew from the city and began a fighting retreat to Prague, working with local Zizka Brigade companies to make the Russians pay in blood for every meter of ground.

Upon arrival in the capital, 4th RDB took over command of the local defenses (over the objections of some members of Parliament who attempted to score political points with Ostrava's fall). The brigade was engaged in grueling urban fighting for the entire Siege of Prague. By the Siege's end in March 2013, most of its infantry companies were down to less than a platoon's worth of soldiers each and the brigade commander had been a freshly-promoted captain a year before.

Though the 4th was badly mauled, its survivors' morale was high – if tinged with hysteria. ACR commanders reorganized the formation and reinforced it with reservists and Czech Air Force personnel to bring it back up to a semblance of its former strength. In late April, the unit moved east to Pardubice to re-establish a major ACR presence there.

Today, most of the brigade is deployed in or around Pardubice. It's focused on training and integrating its replacement personnel and conducting patrols into eastern Bohemia and western Moravia. One company is based at Ruzyně Airport in Prague; it's tasked with securing key members of the government and the ACR's general staff in the event of an emergency.

### **Component Units**

The subordinate battalions that comprised 4th RDB prior to 2012 were:

- 41st Mechanized Battalion (mechanized infantry; wheeled)

- 42nd Mechanized Battalion (mechanized infantry; wheeled)
- 43rd Airborne Battalion (airborne)
- 44th Light Motorized Battalion (light infantry)

## **7th Mechanized Brigade**

**Loyalty:** Czech Republic

**Subordination:** ACR General Staff

**Prewar Manpower:** 2,000

**Strength:** Five combat companies, four combat support companies, one support company

**Armor:** Medium and increasing through salvage and repair operations

**Supply:** Full

**Transport:** Mechanized for all combat personnel; combat support and support elements are mostly on foot

**Other Equipment:** Heavy combat engineering assets

**Commander:** Major Krystof Nedved

**Headquarters:** Kbely, Prague

**Primary AO:** Prague and western Bohemia

The 7th Mechanized was the ACR's heavy brigade, headquartered in Hranice, midway between Ostrava and Olomouc in north-central Moravia. It did not share the 4th RDB's mission of NATO interoperability, being instead tasked as the lead defense force for Czech territory, and most of its equipment was of Cold War vintage.

The 7th's movement orders came on February 27, 2012, within hours of the Czech Republic's declaration of war on the Russian Federation. ACR commanders had expected such a development for months and the brigade's advance parties were headed to Slovakia by the end of the day.

The brigade's original tasking was to deploy in support of the Slovak military, hopefully stalling the Russian advance before it reached Czech soil. However, Russian commanders, familiar with Czech and Slovak mutual defense agreements, had anticipated these orders and moved to bottle up the ACR. On March 6, Russian air strikes cut four of the six rail lines running across the Czech-Slovak border. A week later, as the first Czech troops rolled into Slovakia, apparent *Spetsnaz* sabotage triggered a massive derailment, all but wiping out the 74th Light Infantry's lead company. Ongoing sniping and further sabotage rendered the last rail route unusable and frustrated all attempts to repair the damaged rails. With late winter weather and uncontrolled refugee evacuations rendering the roads impassable to a brigade-size troop movement, the 7th resentfully began digging in on the west side of the Carpathians.

By mid-May, the brigade was spoiling for a fight as transmissions from Slovak units whipped the Czech troops to a fever pitch. The roads over the Carpathians were clear but Slovakia's collapse was inevitable. The orders from Prague were to continue digging in, provide a secure rear area for retreating Slovak forces to consolidate, and plug the Carpathian passes with Russian bodies. 601.SKSS and 102.PzPr reconnaissance teams had identified the Russians' likely lines of advance and the brigade was shifting to block them.

The Russian invasion of the Czech Republic began on May 26, surprising all involved parties. Survivors of the Slovak 1st Mechanized Brigade's combat engineer company crossed the Czech border at the Slovak village of Bumbalka, closely pursued by the Russian 783rd

Reconnaissance Battalion. The ACR reserve company covering the area set up a hasty ambush and annihilated the Russians, but not before a call for help went out. By nightfall, the Czech 71st Mechanized Battalion was engaged along a broad front.

The Battle of Valasske Mezirici unfolded over the next three days, with the 7th Mech and elements of the British 7th Armoured Brigade facing off against the 191st Motor Rifle Regiment. After the Russians' defeat, Czech and allied forces pulled back from the border, leaving minefields, booby traps, and Zizka Brigade stay-behind teams to obstruct the Russian advance.

Throughout the summer months, 7th Mech skirmished with Russian forces attempting a breakout from Slovakia. Ostrava's fall forced the brigade to shift its alignment in anticipation of a Russian flanking maneuver from the north. This allowed the 201st MRD to push through weakened Czech defenses in early August. The 7th withdrew to the Brno area, settling into defensive works that Czech and British engineers had spent the past months preparing.

Through August and September, Brno held out, without electricity but otherwise suffering less than Prague. This state of affairs ended sharply on September 15 with the Russian nuclear attack. Both the Czech and British command centers were destroyed. Large portions of 7th Mech's survivors routed. The troopers of British 7th Armoured screened the Czech withdrawal until the extent of the disaster became clear, then fell back in disarray themselves. Both formations spent the next weeks on the run and harried by both Russian regular forces and *Spetsnaz*. Few units were able to catch a breath until they reached the 15th Engineer Brigade's headquarters at Bechnye. Survivors assembled there, then crossed the Vltava and moved north to Prague.

By October, the brigade had reorganized in Prague, relieving the pressure on 4th RDB and British 20th Armoured. Absorption of Bohemia's last reserve companies and the 151st Engineer Battalion brought the unit back up to a semblance of fighting strength.

Throughout the rest of the Siege, 7th Mech's heavy armor was instrumental in turning Russian thrusts toward Prague's heart. The unit suffered heavy attrition, though, and morale was universally low over what most troops came to feel was their abandonment of Brno.

Today, 7th Mech remains the ACR's heaviest force, but its combat readiness is questionable. The brigade suffers a constant trickle of desertions; some personnel throw in their lot with the Czech Resistance and others simply slip away to start new lives. Unit integrity largely rests on a core of embittered veterans who've sworn to avenge Brno and are holding the brigade together by force of will and occasional midnight terror tactics in the barracks. These troops are easily recognizable by the Brno coat of arms – a shield with four horizontal stripes, alternating white over red – on their vehicles and personal gear. The ACR General Staff recognizes that it has a potentially serious problem with the brigade but has yet to determine how to address it. With the recent appearance of another threat on the German border, the issue has taken on renewed urgency.

### **Component Units**

The subordinate battalions that comprised 7th Mechanized prior to 2012 were:

- 71st Mechanized Battalion (mechanized infantry; tracked)
- 72nd Mechanized Battalion (mechanized infantry; tracked)
- 73rd Tank Battalion (armor)
- 74th Light Motorized Battalion (light infantry)

### **9th (Slovak) Mechanized Brigade**



**Loyalty:** Free Slovakia

**Subordination:** 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade

**Strength:** 3 combat companies, 1 combat support company, 3 support companies

**Armor:** Light

**Supply:** Adequate

**Transport:** Combat and combat support units have soft-skinned trucks; support personnel are limited to foot

**Other Equipment:** None of note

**Commander:** Colonel Ladislav Csaka

**Headquarters:** Pardubice

**Primary AO:** North-central Czech Republic

The 9th Mechanized Brigade is a newly-formed unit. On paper and in practice, it's an ACR force, but its political affiliation is with Free Slovakia. The brigade is composed of the survivors of the Slovak Army's prewar 1st and 2nd Mechanized Brigades who reassembled around Prague after Brno's destruction, along with a scattering of later Slovak and Ukrainian recruits. The "brigade" designation is a courtesy only; in actuality, the unit is little more than a light infantry battalion with good medical and maintenance support. It contributes a couple of platoons at a time to patrols east of Pardubice, but most of its efforts are directed toward training. The brigade's staff is strongly interested in reacquiring heavy equipment, particularly IFVs and artillery.

## Castle Guard

**Loyalty:** Czech Republic

**Subordination:** ACR General Staff

**Prewar Manpower:** 620

**Strength:** Four combat companies, two support platoons

**Armor:** None

**Supply:** Full

**Transport:** Fully mechanized

**Other Equipment:** Ceremonial regalia and band instruments

**Commander:** Major Vojtech Svoboda

**Headquarters:** Prague-Ruzyne Airport

**Primary AO:** Prague

The Castle Guard is the ACR's ceremonial and VIP protection unit, providing security for Prague Castle and the surrounding government complex. Though it's funded and staffed by the ACR, the unit's chain of command runs directly to the Office of the President. In addition to two guard battalions, the prewar Castle Guard included its own orchestra, a motorcycle platoon for motorcades, a military working dog platoon, and transport and armorer components. Candidates for the Guard were required to have at least sergeant's rank and had to meet rigorous standards of education, physical fitness, and appearance.

The unit remained in Prague throughout the Twilight War. During the Siege, the guard battalions alternated rotations on the front lines. Under this arrangement, operational

command was ceded to the 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade's HQ. The unit also acquired AFVs from reserve stocks to provide extra security for VIP convoys; it retains this equipment and is now effectively fitted out as light infantry.

Today, the Guard retains its ceremonial duties, though its close-order drill is a trifle rusty and its brass is out of tune. Its primary mission is protection of the heads of the government and the ACR, including evacuation of Prague Castle and Ministry of Defence headquarters in the event of a nuclear or chemical threat. The unit also rotates platoons through patrol duty in Prague and liaises with the PCR to maintain situational awareness. Recently, selection for the Guards has gained an overt political component, with the VZ screening current personnel and candidates alike for Czech Resistance sympathies.

### Heraldry

On ACR uniforms, the Czech flag is worn on the left sleeve under an arched tab bearing "Czech Republic" in English. Unit insignia goes on the right shoulder; most battalions and squadrons have distinct coats of arms in addition to those used at the brigade or airbase level.

ACR vehicles bear a roundel similar to the flag: white from 11 o'clock to 3 o'clock, red from 3 o'clock to 7 o'clock, and blue from 7 o'clock to 11 o'clock. This is reversed on the right side of vehicles to keep the blue segment forward. Some units use low-visibility versions of this insignia in combat, though this is not universal practice. Some aviation squadrons also display the Bohemian heraldic symbol of a rampant two-tailed lion.

Throughout the Twilight War, units temporarily adopted the heraldry of the cities they were defending. The best-known such example is 7th Mechanized Brigade's use of Brno's symbol, but other units now display colors such as the white horses of Ostrava and Pardubice, Olomouc's Moravian eagle, Caslav's castle and trumpeters, or Jihlava's lion and hedgehog.

## ACR Character Resources

The following rules modifications adapt the standard character creation system for generating ACR personnel.

### ACR Life Paths

The ACR's unified command structure included the Ground Forces (army), Air Force, and shared support and training components. The landlocked country had no naval forces. Accordingly, entry and careers in the ACR are modified as follows:

- **Signing Up:** Entry has an Education minimum of 5, not 6. The Czech military has no equivalent to undergraduate officer training (**Twilight: 2013** core rulebook, p. 98 sidebar).
- **Basic Training:** All Czech military characters receive the same training package: Climbing 2, Driving 1, Fieldcraft 2, Hand-to-Hand 1, Hand Weapons 1, Longarm 2, Medicine 1, Support Weapons 1, +1 to the lowest of Fitness, Muscle, Education, or Resolve (only if the attribute's current value is 5 or less), +1 CUF, and +1 OODA.

### Restricted Phases

Characters with a Czech military background may *not* select the following military life path phases:

- **Military Education:** Direct Commission. In addition, characters in Military Indoctrination and OCS may not select the Naval or Special Operations training options.
- **Infantry Arm:** Naval Infantry.

- **Naval Arm:** All.
- **Special Operations Arm:** CSAR.

## Rank

ACR characters use the following rank titles. ACR combat uniforms bear a subdued rank insignia tape over the right breast; on all other uniforms, rank is worn on both epaulets.

<b>Value</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Insignia</b>
<i>Commissioned Military Rank</i>		
7	General	1 to 4 gold stars edged in gold braid
6	Colonel	3 gold stars over a gold bar
5	Lieutenant Colonel	2 gold stars over a gold bar
4	Major	1 gold star over a gold bar
3	Captain	4 gold 3-pointed stars
2	First Lieutenant	3 gold 3-pointed stars
1	Lieutenant *	2 gold 3-pointed stars
<i>Enlisted Military Rank</i>		
8	First Sergeant	4 silver 3-pointed stars
7	Master Sergeant	3 silver 3-pointed stars
6	Sergeant First Class	2 silver 3-pointed stars
5	Staff Sergeant	1 silver 3-pointed star
4	Sergeant	3 silver pips
3	Corporal	2 silver pips
2	Private First Class	1 silver pip
1	Private	none
* The ACR has an additional commissioned rank subordinate to the rank of Lieutenant: Second Lieutenant (with a single 3-pointed gold star). An officer trainee who immediately joins the reserves rather than entering active duty receives this rank. For game purposes, it's considered a story element; a newly-commissioned reserve officer still has Commissioned Military Rank 1.		

## Gender Issues

The ACR had no policy limits on the jobs open to female personnel. However, for various reasons, few women rose to senior enlisted ranks (Master Sergeant and above) or field-grade commissioned ranks (Major and above). Additionally, physical fitness standards enforced a *de facto* barrier to women entering certain career fields (infantry, field artillery, armor, special operations, etc.). For game purposes, Czech characters ignore all gender restrictions on military life path phases, but the GM should feel free to require some creative and plausible rationalizations for female characters on anomalous career paths.

## New Life Path Phases

The following new phases model the Zizka Brigade's formation in 2011-2012. Both are considered paramilitary phases.

## **Zizka Brigade Training**

The 55th Light Infantry Brigade was a loosely- and urgently-organized product of the Twilight War's early stages. To boost troop strength, the ACR and a few NATO allies gave civilian volunteers an abbreviated course in irregular small unit operations to prepare them for the impending Russian invasion. Some cells died poorly; some acquitted themselves heroically; some simply disappeared.

**Prerequisites:** Czech, Slovak, or Ukrainian citizenship; Attributes: all physical attributes 4+; no criminal record beyond misdemeanors; no previous law enforcement, espionage, or military training package and not currently employed in any such field.

**Length:** 1 year.

**Benefits:** Gain 6 points of professional skills from the following list, no more than 2 total in any one skill:

- Construction/Demolition
- Driving/Heavy
- Fieldcraft
- Longarm
- Medicine
- Support Weapons
- Tactics

Additionally, gain Enlisted Military Rank 1 and make an immediate Resolve-based promotion check.

**Attributes:** Awareness, Resolve, CUF, OODA.

**Special Rules:** Zizka Brigade training began at the end of 2011. The character's next phase *must* be a Last Year phase, but all prerequisites for the Irregular Warfare and Twilight Warfare phases are waived.

## **Zizka Brigade Cadre**

Zizka Brigade leadership and training personnel were drawn from volunteers with prior applicable experience... *any* applicable experience.

**Prerequisites:** Czech citizenship; Attributes: all physical attributes 4+; no criminal record beyond misdemeanors; at least one previous law enforcement, espionage, or military training package but not currently employed in any such field.

**Length:** 1 year.

**Benefits:** Gain 6 points of professional skills from the following list, no more than 2 total in any one skill:

- Command
- Instruction
- Intimidation
- Language (English, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian)
- Streetcraft
- Tactics
- all skills in all previously-received training packages

Additionally, gain Enlisted Military Rank 3 and make an immediate Resolve-based promotion check. If the character previously held a higher Enlisted Military Rank or any Commissioned Military Rank, he instead reverts to that Rank – but does not receive the immediate promotion check.

**Attributes:** Awareness, Personality, Resolve, CUF, OODA.

**Special Rules:** Zizka Brigade training began at the end of 2011. The character's next phase *must* be a Last Year phase, but all prerequisites for the Irregular Warfare and Twilight Warfare phases are waived.

## Education

In the pre-Twilight War Czech Republic, education was mandatory through age 15 (EDU 4). Another three to four years of primary school were available but not required, though entry into a university was difficult without this additional schooling. Attendance at national universities was free or subsidized through age 26. Admittedly, this is background information with no real bearing on game mechanics, but we figured someone would ask.

## Native Languages

The Czech Republic's official and most prevalent mother tongue is Czech. Czech is closely related to Slovak and Polish, both of which were common second languages (or primary languages for immigrants and resident aliens). During the Soviet occupation, a fair number of Czechs learned at least some Russian, though this is less common in citizens born after the 1970s. Students educated since 1990 are likely to have taken English or, less frequently, German classes. This is solely background information to assist players in skill selection, but GMs should bear in mind that characters speaking one of these languages are likely to find at least a halfway-competent Czech interpreter in any large population center.

## Standard Equipment

Here's a list of the ACR's standard infantry weapons of the Twilight War era. ~~We'll detail most of the unique hardware in the upcoming **Shooter's Guide: Weapons Czech** supplement, but this should suffice to get groups up and running for now.~~

- **Service pistol:** Most troops had the vz.82 (treat as a Makarov PM with a 12-round magazine). Some units, mainly those deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, were issued Glock 17s. Starting in 2009, vz.82s began to be phased out in favor of new CZ SP-01 Phantoms (treat as a Glock 17 with a 19-round magazine), but the vz.82 remained in widespread use through the war.

- **Assault rifle:** Most formations went to war with the Sa. vz.58 (treat as an AK-47), often fitted with a vertical foregrip and powered reflex sight. Special operations units and the 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade received the first production runs of the CZ S805 (treat as a generic 5.56x45mm carbine), similarly accessorized. The Castle Guard retained the vz. 52/57 (treat as an SKS) for ceremonial duties but now issues the CZ S805 for less formal occasions.

- **Submachine gun:** Mostly vz.61 Skorpion, issued to Castle Guard troops and selected by some officers or vehicle crews in lieu of the vz.82. Military police and special operations units used the H&K MP-5 (treat as a generic 9mm SMG) for CQB. In the early 2010s, limited procurement of the CZ Skorpion Evo III (treat as a generic 9mm SMG) went to 601.SKSS and 102.PzPr.

- **Shotgun:** Shotgun use was limited to special operators military police, who used the Winchester 1300 (treat as a generic 12 gauge pump-action) or the Benelli M3 Super 90

(treat as a generic 12 gauge semi-automatic) on the rare occasions that a scattergun was required.

- **Sniper rifle:** Special units often were able to select their own precision rifles, but the standard weapons were the Dragunov SVD and the CZ 700 M1 (treat as a generic 7.62x51mm bolt-action sniper rifle).

- **Support weapons:** The standard GPMG for both vehicular and infantry use was the UK. vz.59 (treat as a PKM). Light infantry and special operations units (mostly those issued the CZ S805) had access to the FN Minimi. Virtually every infantry squad had an RPG-7 and a few RPG-75s (treat as an M72 LAW). The standard infantry mortar was the LRM vz.99 (treat as a generic 60mm mortar).

## 1st Armoured Division, British Army

In the immediate prewar years, 1st Armoured Division was the main component of the British Forces Germany command (formerly home to the Cold War-era Royal Air Force Germany and British Army of the Rhine). Two of its three maneuver brigades, 7th and 20th Armoured, were stationed in Germany (respectively, at Hohn and Paderborn), with 4th Mechanized rotated home to Catterick Garrison in 2008. Almost all of the division's German-based components deployed to the Czech Republic in early 2012, effectively doubling the ground combat power involved in the nation's defense. Without 1st Armoured's participation in the Twilight War, it's unlikely that the Czech Republic would still exist as a sovereign state. Nor, arguably, would 1st Armoured be as relatively intact as it is – its commitment to the Czech defenses prevented the MoD from employing it in early 2013's ill-fated Operation Marauder.

Today, 1st Armoured may be the Kingdom of England's single largest field force outside British soil. Both maneuver brigades retain significant combat power, though ammunition and other supplies are critically low. Overall *esprit d'corps* is high. However, the rank and file Tommies have grown increasingly fractious as news from home has filtered through the division. The United Kingdom's breakup and subsequent isolationism and near-fascism do not sit well with men and women who spent the Last Year fighting just such a threat. Discipline has, thus far, prevented anything more overt than muttered discontent – which a good portion of the division's officers are willing to overlook because they share the sentiment.

1st Armoured's commander, Brigadier Jeremy Usher, maintains his headquarters where it was during the Siege of Prague: on the grounds of the former Prague Psychiatric Center. Most of the divisional support units are based here, along with a security detachment from 20th Armoured. The rest of the division's maneuver forces are based separately.

### Restricted Access: 1st Armoured's Future

Brigadier Usher and his command staff are well aware of their men's mindset – and, despite their best efforts, the new British ambassador to Prague also knows something of the situation. The division officers are concerned that His Majesty's Government may consider 1st Armoured "politically unreliable" and that their next orders from home will either disband the division or effectively abandon it in Central Europe. To hedge their bets, the divisional staff has quietly begun drawing up contingency plans to address these possibilities.

The division's recent reduction in patrol and training activity is part of this effort. While the official excuse is a fuel shortage, actual fuel availability remains the same, but a greater portion of the division's allocation is being stockpiled. Additionally, a detachment of 20th Armoured's REME element is covertly trying to restart the biofuel plant at Domazlice.

Under the current state of affairs, 1st Armoured is unlikely to mutiny. However, if a rival British government with more legitimacy than King Alexander IV's were to emerge, this might be enough to trigger a mass transfer of loyalty.

## Key Units

### 7th Armoured Brigade

**Loyalty:** Kingdom of England

**Subordination:** 1st Armoured Division

**Prewar Manpower:** 5,000

**Strength:** Two combat battalions; three combat support companies; three support companies

**Armor:** Light, though two companies are retraining on loaned Czech reserve equipment

**Supply:** Adequate, save for ammunition and fuel

**Transport:** About two-thirds mechanized for combat forces; otherwise foot

**Other Equipment:** Most of the division's engineering assets

**Commander:** Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Archer

**Headquarters:** Melnik

**Primary AO:** Vltava and Elbe Rivers and northwestern Bohemia

The "Desert Rats" entered the Twilight War with significant combat experience: Operation Telic in 2003 and subsequent return tours of Iraq in 2005 and 2008, as well as smaller Afghan assignments. In May 2012, 2nd Battalion of the Royal Anglian Regiment became the first British soldiers to exchange fire with Russian troops since the end of the Russian Revolution.

7th Armoured was partnered with the Czech 7th Mechanized Brigade through the Twilight War, fighting mainly in southern Moravia. The 201st MRD's nuclear attack on Brno inflicted more casualties than the previous four months' fighting. Despite these losses, 7th Armoured held together while 7th Mech routed, an event for which many British troopers have never quite forgiven their Czech counterparts. The brigade also knows exactly who prompted the Russians to go nuclear and holds a venomous opinion of the remaining Slovak military.

During the Siege of Prague, the division held 7th Armoured in reserve, giving the badly-mauled brigade a much-needed opportunity to rest and refit (at least, as much as possible in a city under siege). After the Pribram Agreement, the brigade relocated downriver to Melnik, where it's currently based.

The brigade's current assignment is security along the Elbe and Vltava river corridors and throughout northwest Bohemia. While this is a less stressful job than staring down Task Force Temelin or the CGF, it's no less critical, as this region holds a good portion of the food production on which Prague depends. 7th Armoured also heads the ongoing salvage operations at Melnik's port facility and along the rivers, including recovery of British equipment and supplies sunk during the War of the Mayflies. The unit takes a perverse pride in having endured a nuclear battlefield; vehicles that survived Brno are adorned with the traditional jerboa silhouette on a mushroom cloud.

### Component Units

The subordinate battalion-sized maneuver units that comprised 7th Armoured prior to 2012 include:

- Scots Dragoon Guards (armor)
- 4th Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland (mechanized infantry; tracked)
- 2nd Battalion, Royal Anglian Regiment (light infantry)
- 3rd Battalion, Mercian Regiment (mechanized infantry; tracked)
- 9th/12th Lancers (reconnaissance)

## **20th Armoured Brigade**

**Loyalty:** Kingdom of England

**Subordination:** 1st Armoured Division

**Prewar Manpower:** 5,100

**Strength:** Three combat battalions; four combat support companies; three support companies

**Armor:** Medium

**Supply:** Adequate, save for ammunition

**Transport:** Most combat forces are mechanized; limited drayage for support elements

**Other Equipment:** 2 Lynx Mk 7 utility helicopters

**Commander:** Colonel Daniel Owensford

**Headquarters:** Plzen

**Primary AO:** Southwestern Bohemia

Like its sister brigade, the "Iron Fist" served in Operation Telic and subsequently enjoyed the dubious pleasure of deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. The brigade was teamed with Czech 4th RDB through the Twilight War and fought in the defense of Ostrava and subsequent withdrawal to Prague.

Despite being on the front lines of the Siege of Prague, 20th Armoured suffered lighter overall casualties than 7th Armoured, both from combat and the winter's disease outbreaks. After the Siege lifted, the brigade moved southwest to Plzen and assisted in reopening the rail route between there and Prague.

Currently, 20th Armoured's primary mission is to counter the threat of Task Group Temelin. It maintains close communication with 102.PzPr at Bechnye and conducts its own reconnaissance patrols as well. Elements of the unit based at Domazlice are involved in providing limited humanitarian aid to Austrian refugees in the Sumava region (against the Czech government's preferences).

### **Component Units**

The subordinate battalion-sized maneuver units that comprised 20th Armoured prior to 2012 include:

- Queen's Royal Hussars (armor)
- 1st Battalion, Princess of Wales' Royal Infantry (mechanized infantry; tracked)
- 5th Battalion, The Rifles (mechanized infantry; tracked)
- 1st Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment (light infantry)



- 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards (reconnaissance)

## British Army Character Resources

We don't have room for a full treatment of the British military, but here are a couple of key items.

### Rank

British Army characters use the following rank titles:

<b>Value</b>	<b>Title</b>
<i>Commissioned Military Rank</i>	
7	General (Brigadier for the most junior)
6	Colonel
5	Lieutenant Colonel
4	Major
3	Captain
2	Lieutenant
1	Second Lieutenant
<i>Enlisted Military Rank</i>	
8	Warrant Officer Class 1 *
7	Warrant Officer Class 2
6	Staff Sergeant (in infantry, Colour Sergeant)
5	Sergeant
3	Corporal (in artillery, Bombardier)
3	Lance-Corporal (in artillery, Lance-Bombardier)
2	Private Class 1-3 **
1	Private Class 4 **
* A successful promotion check at Enlisted Rank 8 confers the title Regimental Sergeant Major but no additional Rank value.	
** At Enlisted Rank 2, start at "Class 3" and move up one "Class" at each <i>failed</i> promotion check. The rank of Private has unique titles for each branch of service. An incomplete list: Airtrooper (aviation), Craftsman (maintenance), Fusilier or Rifleman (infantry, depending on regiment), Gunner (artillery), Sapper (combat engineers), Signaller (communications), Trooper (cavalry and armor)	

### Standard Equipment

Here's a list of the standard infantry weapons 1st Armoured brought to the Twilight War. Note that this isn't an exhaustive inventory of everything in British Army use.

- **Service pistol:** Officially, the SiG P226 (treat as a generic 9mm service pistol) was being phased in by the late 2000s, but many older personnel preferred the venerable Browning Hi-Power (see the free **Twilight: 2013 Rules Addendum** electronic document or treat as another generic 9mm service pistol).

- **Assault rifle:** L85A2 (see the **Twilight: 2013 Rules Addendum** or treat as a generic 5.56x45mm bullpup).
- **Shotgun:** Urban operations in Iraq prompted many infantry sections to carry a Benelli M4 Super 90 (designated L128A1; treat as a generic 12 gauge semi-automatic).
- **Sniper rifle:** AI AWM in .338 Lapua (designated L115A3 in British service) and the L129A1 (treat as a generic M16 DMR in 7.62x51mm).
- **Support weapons:** The standard SAW was the FN Minimi; the L86A2 (treat as an L85A2 with range O/S and weight 6.6 kg) remained in limited use, largely as a designated marksman weapon. The standard GPMG was the FN MAG. Grenadiers mounted the AG36 (designated L17) on their rifles. Mortar sections used the L16A2 (treat as a generic 81mm mortar) and antitank teams used the Javelin ATGM (presented in a future supplement).