

World War and espionage Cold War story- actions of former Chief of Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade Staff

Curriculum Vitae

HLASNY KAREL, born on 22 October, 1911 in Bludov, district Sumperk, Czechoslovakia; died on November 20, 1982 in Monterey, California.

Last occupation, before communist persecution (December 13, 1947);

Chief of Staff of the 1st Armored Division in Prague with the rank of Gen Staff Lt/ Colonel- Czechoslovak Military Forces.

In memoriam, rehabilitated and pointed to the rank of Colonel (April 22, 1991).

Ex-servisman, British Military Identity Card No. D-06229 (Allied).

Member of the Returned Sailors´ Soldiers´ and Airmen´s Imperial League of Australia.

Czechoslovakia, 1st Armored Division, Prague (Smichov), 1946



California, Army Language School, Monterey, 1960s



1/ EDUCATION

a/ 1917- 1922; Primary School in Bludov

1922-1929 ; High School in Sumperk (Diploma dated June 10, 1929)

1931- 1932; University in Prague, Section for Financial Science and Accountancy
(Certificate of Examination, dated July 21, 1932)

b/ SPECIAL MILITARY Education

aa/ In Czechoslovakia before the WW II;

1929- 1930 ; School for Artillery Officers of the Reserve

1932- 1934 ; Military Academy for Artillery Officers of the Regular Army

1935- 1936 ; Postgraduate School for Artillery Officers

1938 –1939 ; Military Technical School (for motorized troops)

bb/ Abroad during the war;

1942- 1943; Polish War College in Great Britain (Peebles, Scotland)

cc/ In Czechoslovakia after war;

1945 -1946 ; War College in Prague for General Staff Officers

2/ ACTIVITY

1929 – 1931;

Compulsory Military Service with Mounted Artillery

1931 – 1932;

Accountant for Bohemian National Administration in Prague

1934-1939;

Regular Army Officer with Artillery Rgt. No 109 in Bratislava

1939;

Member of the Czechoslovak Underground Organization for the Liberation of
Czechoslovakia (Prague)

1939 – 1940;

In the early days of December 1939, he fled from Czechoslovakia and joined the Czechoslovak Army recently formed in France, where he was appointed Commanding Officer of Mounted Artillery Battery (Attestation d'identité issued on April 12, 1940).

1940- 1943;

After the Capitulation of France their forces were evacuated to England which he reached on July 7, 1940. In England he was in the Military Service with the Czechoslovak Armored Brigade with the rank of Captain. He was selected by the Czechoslovak Ministry of Defense in Exile to attend the Polish War College in Peebles (Scotland), and there finally trained as „paraschutist“. When he left the Polish War College, he was transferred by the Czechoslovak Ministry in London to the Czechoslovak Military Forces operating in Russia.

1943 – 1945;

He reached Russian territory on November 11, 1943. There he was in charge of G-3 section for Military Training and Operations of the Czechoslovak Airborne Brigade“ (with about 2,800 paraschutists). In summer of 1944 he was appointed Chief of Staff of this Brigade with the rank of Major (in Czech „Staff Captain“). Afterwards this brigade was airborned behind the enemy lines to strengthen the insurrection in Slovakia. This Brigade operated in Slovakia for over 6 months and he was wounded twice during this fighting.

1945 – 1947;

He spent a few months in the hospital, and in the meantime the war was over. In the summer of 1945 he was promoted to the rank of Lt/Colonel in Prague. When he recovered, he concluded studies at the War College in Prague, and afterwards he was appointed Chief of Staff of the 1st Armored Division in Prague with the rank of Gen Staff Lt/ Colonel. **On December 13, 1947 he was relieved of his functions by the Communist controlled Defensive Intelligence Service and a warrant** for his arrest was issued, because he accidentally said among the officers that in Russia is no democracy but only terror and that he had no intention to fight against Western Democracies.

NOTE; At the same time the commander of 1st Armored Division in Prague- General Jaroslav Broz (also from England) – was „quickly pensioned“. So before the „February-Revolution“ – this only Prague armored division- was commanded by „communist officers“.

1948;

Thanks to his friends in the Army and his war record, he escaped punishment by the Supreme Military Court but he was persecuted in various other ways. Finally, he successfully escaped from Czechoslovakia and reached US Zone of Germany in November 1948.

1949;

During his stay in the US Zone of Germany he was employed by the IRO (International Refugees Organization) and for about 5 months by the American Military Government Authorities.

1950- 1951;

He reached Australia on January 30, 1950. There he worked for about 4 months in an engineering factory as a laborer, and since then as an accountant with a manufacturing firm in Adelaide, South Australia. Since April 1951 he have been with a motor car distribution firm in Sydney.

1951 – 1952;

From december 1951 to August 1952, he worked as bookkeeper and supply- administrator for a large ranch of nearly 2 million acres, having 90,000 sheep and 30,000 cattle, in N.W. Queensland. On August 29, 1952 he left Australia by airplane and flew to Honolulu, TH, where he was addmitted as a permanent resident of the US, on August 30, 1952.

1952- 1979;

From September 8, 1952 he have served under Civil Service as an Instructor in Foreign Languages at the Army Languague School (later; Defense Languague Institute), Presidio of Monterey, California.

3/ EXPERIENCE

- a/ His basic training and experiences was with the Artillery (either motorised or mounted)
- b/ In addition to this he have had experience with and knowledge of the organization, training, commanding and combat functioning of larger airborne units. This includes the „partizan“ system of fighting, as well.
- c/ Command of various staffs (Infantry division, Airborne division and Armored division).
- d/ He could drive motor vehicles of all categories and was trained in military transport methods with regard to the construction and the maintenance of motor vehicles.
- e/ As a Regular Army Officer of the Mounted Artillery (before World War II) he was for many yers a gentleman-rider at races and an acquainted with the training and breeding of horses.

Introduction

In the summer of 1938, the Nazis had an experienced political and paramilitary organization set up to ferment pro-Nazi dissent and smash their opposition. Nazi sympathizers, Czech and German, began to enter Czechoslovakia and the Sudatenland to fight with Communists, Social Democrats, and Socialists, their traditional enemies, and to focus attention on the supposed plight of the ethnic Germans.

On 29 and 30 September 1938, the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and the French Prime Minister Edouard Daladier met at Munich with the German Fuhrer

Adolf Hitler and the Italian Duce Benito Mussolini. An agreement was reached on Nazi Germany's territorial claims against democratic Czechoslovakia, but no representative of the Czechoslovak Government was present.

Six months later, on 15 March 1939 - the fateful Ides of March – German troops marched into Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovak armed forces were ordered to offer no resistance, since any such opposition would have been futile. Previously day, **March 14, 1939; Slovakia declared independence of Czechoslovakia. and Clerical-fascist government with its leader Tiso moved into the German military machinery.**

In the weeks that followed the occupation, thousands of Czech soldiers and airmen managed to leave Czechoslovakia, most of them escaping to neighbouring Poland before sailing to France. Until war was formally declared, the French assigned them to the Foreign Legion in north Africa but, on the commencement of hostilities, the Czech airmen were drafted into the Armée de l'Air and, **in May 1940, took part in the short-lived Battle of France. The rapid fall of France then led to some 4,000 Czechoslovak soldiers and airmen leaving France** to sail to Britain – the last line of defence between democracy and fascism.

The second military unit in USSR consisted of soldiers and volunteers, who escaped the enemy-occupied Czechoslovakia north to Poland and entered a newly based unit Czech and Slovak legion. When it was clear that Poland lose war with Germany, legion's command decided to move eastward and look for protection in Romania. But legion was taken by Red Army and several times moved to different internment camps. **Later legion reorganized into the Eastern group of Czechoslovak army.**

Escape from Czechoslovakia; to France, England, Russia

After confiscating all Czech military equipment and controlling Czech industrial production, Hitler attacked Poland on September 1, 1939. Many officers of the disbanded former Czechoslovak Army left their country and formed Czechoslovak units abroad to fight their common enemy. Like many other Czech officers, Lieutenant Karel Hlasny decided to leave the country, and fight the common enemy at other fronts in Europe. He was a regular Army officer (1934- 1939) with Artillery Regiment 109 in Bratislava.

In early December 1939, he illegally fled from Czechoslovakia to Hungary on his way to France. In Budapest he needed to acquire a visa for France. The illegal refugees from the former Czechoslovakia were being apprehended there, but Karel managed to slip through.

From there he traveled by train all the way to Beirut. With some friends, he spent two weeks there through Christmas time, waiting for transportation, by ship, to Marseilles, France. From there by train to Agde where the Czechoslovak forces had assembled in a military camp. **Karel was appointed a commanding officer of the Mounted Artillery Battery.** After heavy German attacks, the French strategy had collapsed. Bad organization had led to its defeat. France capitulated and was occupied by the Germans.

The Czechoslovak forces were evacuated from France to England. They sailed (by ship Vice Roy of India) through Gibraltarr and reached Liverpool, England on July 7, 1940. **Captain Karel Hlasny served with the Czechoslovak Armored Brigade with its artillery detachment. In England, the Czech forces participated in the „Battle of Britain“ and earned a great deal of British respect for their military might.**

Karel admired the English people for their discipline, bravery and solidarity when the German Luftwaffe was subjecting them to heavy bombardment. They sustained and prevailed. Their spirit was not broken. Karel considered the three years spent in Great the best part of World War II. He had made many friendships there that would last for his lifetime. **In 1942 he was selected to attend the Polish War College (June 1942 – September 1943) in Scotland (Peebles).** Then he was transferred to the Czechoslovak military forces operating in Russia. In Britain there was a surplus of officers, while at the Russian Front they were in great demand. **The trip from England to Russia took almost three months with many inconveniences in the travel schedule.**

The transport consisted of 26 officers and a lot of luggage. The accommodations at some places were hard to find. They traveled by ship to Egypt, where they stayed a few days in Cairo. Then they continued by train in Jerusalem. Spending 10 days in the Holy Land was the most memorable stopover. They also visited some Kibbutz's, settlements of Jewish pioneers who had succeeded in turning the bare land into farms. They continued on to Damascus and then by a broken-down bus through the desert to Baghdad. The stops in the Middle East cities with open markets, and the merchants eager to sell and bargain, proved to be quite colorful. Along the way, there were many delays, as arrangements for farther transportation had to be made.

Finally, the travelers arrived in Teheran, Iran. By that time, their entry visas to the Soviet Union had expired. It took three weeks to get the needed extensions. **During that time, the Teheran Conference was taking place. Attended by Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, it shut down the city.**

NOTE;

The **Tehran Conference** was the meeting of [Joseph Stalin](#), [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) and [Winston Churchill](#) in November 1943. It was the first World War II conference among the Big Three (the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom) in which Stalin was present.

The fate of Czechoslovak citizens in the Soviet Union improved after the latter was invaded by Nazi Germany. On July 18, 1941, the Soviet Union signed an agreement with the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile for the raising of Czechoslovak troops on Russian soil. **General Heliodor Pika was dispatched to Moscow as head of a military mission, and he negotiated the release of those interned.**

On December 8, 1941, the Soviets designated the town of Buzuluk as the training camp for what was then known as the 1st Czechoslovak Independent Battalion. Buzuluk is a town in Orenburg region, located on the Samara, 246 km north-west of Orenburg and approximately 180 kilometers from Kuibeshev. It stands in the barren steppes east of the Volga River and just west of the Urals.

Czechoslovak recruits coming to Buzuluk were dressed in civil or prisoner clothes. Only first group that arrived from Oranky was dressed in work uniform of Red army. Fortunately the Buzuluk's barracks primarily served as base of W. Anders's Polish army, which left there 3000 British battledresses after their departure. Those British uniforms were finally used (after negotiations with Soviets) by Czechoslovaks.

General Sergei Ingr, overall commander of the Czechoslovak Army for the London government, eventually visited Buzuluk on an inspection tour. Svoboda then accompanied him to Moscow to engage in further negotiations. What transpired in Moscow, and how did it effect Svoboda's subsequent bearing? It seems that on one hand the military mission under Pika demanded his removal, considering him as being less than loyal to the London government. On the other hand, Czechoslovak Communists in Moscow, led by **Klement Gottwald, insisted that Svoboda be formally installed as commander.** In London, President Benes perceived that the Soviets wanted Svoboda in command, and he did not want to alienate them to the point where Czechoslovak troops in Russia no longer answered to the London government. Benes consequently opted for a compromise solution. He designated General Jaroslav Kratochvil, who had commanded the 1st Infantry Regiment during the French campaign, as overall commander of the 1st Independent Battalion in Russia. **Svoboda would serve under Kratochvil as a subordinate.** For Svoboda, it marked the beginning of a long-term estrangement from the Western-oriented Czechoslovak military establishment.

Relations with the USSR were the centrepiece of Beneš's foreign policy. In general, he mistrusted the western powers after Munich and wanted to ensure Czechoslovakia's security through an alliance with the Soviet Union and to this end he signed a Czech-Soviet Treaty of Alliance on 18 July 1941. Beneš understood that the only way he could return to Czechoslovakia lay in co-operation with Stalin. He reckoned that his return would ensure the preservation of democracy, but in the end he miscalculated, just as he had at the time of the Munich crisis.

Czechoslovak military activity abroad consisted of air and land forces formed in the UK and the Soviet Union. **In the UK, a Czechoslovak armoured brigade exceeding 5,000 men was formed which served in the Normandy campaign. Four Czech squadrons flew with the RAF: Nos. 310, 312, and 313 were equipped with fighters, while No. 311 was a bomber squadron.**

Once free to go, **an airplane took 26 Czechoslovak Officers from Teheran to Moscow**, but not directly, attending to many stops and delays. They reached the Russian territory on November 11, 1943. **There, firstly, Captain of artillery Karel Hlasny participated in the 1st Czechoslovak independent field Battalion in Buzuluk as commander of infantry trained supplemental company- to the end of 1943.**

History about the „Slovak formation“ of the 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade (Yefremov, Russia)

On March 14, 1939 Slovakia, declared independence of Czechoslovakia. Clerical-fascist government with its leader Tiso moved into the German military machinery. Slovakia as the only German ally attacked Poland in September 1939. Slovak army also participated in the framework of eastern axis campaign against the USSR (**in particular "Fast (mobile) division" further "1st infantry division" and "Provisory division" further "2nd infantry division"**).

From 1943 it was more obvious, that German initiative languishes. Military failures on eastern front, increasing German disbelief and superiority towards their allies including Slovaks, hidden belief in pre-war Czechoslovakia and tradition of First-Republic Czechoslovak army among a number of Slovak officers, and naturally fear from military defeat of Slovakia and implicit in it consequences - those factors were determinant, that Slovak soldiers gradually deserted from their units.

Four days after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Slovakia sent its own units forward against the Russian lines in the form of the Slovakian Expeditionary Army Group. The Slovak Army Group was commanded by the Slovak Minister of Defense, Ferdinand Catlos. As the Campaign in the East drew on, the Slovak forces began to fall behind the massive German sweep across the Soviet Union. **This was mainly because of a general lack of mobile forces able to transport the 45,000 strong Slovak Army Group along side the German advance.**

As a result of the inability of the Slovak Army Group to keep up with the German advance, it was decided to create a mobile unit that would be capable of doing so. This was done by forming all the motorized units of the former Slovak Army Group into a single formation termed the Slovak Mobile Command, otherwise known as Brigade Pilfousek, commanded by the former commander of the 2nd Slovak Division, Rudolf Pilfousek. Brigade Pilfousek advanced through Lvov and towards Vinnitsa. Around July 8th, 1941, the Brigade had advanced beyond the tactical control of the Slovak command, so control of the unit was handed over to the German 17.Armeekorps. It was at this time that the remaining forces of the former Slovak Army Group (no longer an independent formation), were used behind the German lines in conjunction with the 103rd Rear Area Command of Army Group South in security duties and helping to eliminate pockets of Soviet resistance.

By July 22nd, the Brigade, now under German control, had advanced to Vinnitsa and had pushed on towards Lipovets. The Brigade experienced heavy fighting against the Soviets during this time. Next, the Brigade moved north through Berdichev, Zhitomir, and on towards the region of Kiev. In the beginning of August, 1941, the Slovak Army Group was pulled out of the lines when it was decided to form two new units that would be better suited to the actions they would be taking part in. **The best units of the former Slovak Army Group were now organized into two new divisions, the 1st Slovak (Mobile) Infantry Division and the 2nd Slovak (Security) Infantry Division. The 1st Slovak (Mobile) Infantry Division was also known as the Slovak Fast Division.**

The Slovak Fast Division was originally commanded by Gustav Malar, one of the original commanders from the Slovak advance into Poland back in 1939. By the middle of September, 1941, the 1st Slovak (Mobile) Division was back in the front lines, this time near Kiev. After the fighting near Kiev ended with its final capture, the Slovak Mobile Division was transferred to the reserves of Army Group South. Here the unit moved along the Dnieper River, through Gorodishche, Kremenchug, and Magdalinowka, where heavy fighting took

place. **As of October 2nd, the Mobile Division was a part of the 1.Panzer-Armee fighting on the eastern side of Dnieper River** near the region of Golubowka and Pereshchino.

The Mobile Division was then moved on to the areas of Maripol and Taganrog, after which it spend the Winter of 1941-42 along positions on the Mius River. Later, the Mobile Division took **part in the German advance into the Caucasus Region where it played a vital role in the assault and capture of the vital Soviet city of Rostov**. Late in the Summer of 1942, the Divisional commander became Jozef Turanec. He led the Mobile Division across the Kuban River all the way to the region of Taupze. In late 1942, the 31st Artillery Regiment from the 2nd (Security) Infantry Division was transfered to the 1st Mobile Division. Command of the Mobile Division changed again in January, 1943, when Lt.Gen Jurech took over command.

After the horrible loss at Stalingrad in the Winter of 1942/1943, the entire position of the Germans in the Caucasus region was altered, as now any futher advance south would only insure the complete loss of all forces south of the Mius River if and when the Soviets reached Rostov in the North, thus trapping them. As direct result of the losses in the north, the forces in the Caucasus region were quickly pulled back north to escape possible entrapment. The 1st Slovak (Mobile) Infantry Division, as a part of the German forces fighting in the Caucasus region, was pulled back. **The Mobile Division was nearly encircled and trapped near Saratowskaya, but managed to escape**. The remaining portions of the Mobile Division were then airlifted out of the Kuban, but in so doing were forced to leave behind all their heavy equipment and weapons.

The Mobile Division was then used to help cover the retreat of over the Sivash and Perkop land bridges. From here, the Divisions history becomes unsure for the next few weeks. What is known though is that it later ended up being commanded once again by a new commanding officer, Elmir Lendvay. It looks as if the Division was pulled from the lines for a short while, until it was again thrown into action, this time near the area of Melitopol. Soon after, the Division was caught by a massive Soviet surprise attack that had managed to break through the German lines. **The Mobile Division was routed and over 2000 men were taken by the Soviets**. The Mobile Division, routed and destroyed, was then pulled from the lines.

So after the destruction of the German 6th Army at Stalingrad, Slovak desertions dramatically increased. The most significant desertion occurred in the Melitopol-Kakhava sector on October 30, 1943. Here 2,140 Slovak soldiers and 41 officers and noncommissioned officers crossed over to Soviet lines.

Training and movement of the 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade (from January 1944 (Russia- Yefremov) to October 28, 1944 (Slovakia- Banska Bystrica);

On January 9, 1944 started an organization of 2nd Czechoslovak paradesant brigade in Yefremov (Russia), **largely made up of these Slovak deserters**. This Brigade, attached to the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps but later dispatched to aid the Slovak National Uprising of 1944.

Commander; Lt/ Colonel; and later (from September 1944) Colonel Vladimir Prikryl
To June 1944;

Chief of Brigade Staff; Staff Captain/ Gen Staff Vilem Sacher (to June 10, 1944)

Chief of Brigade Operating Section; Captain Karel Hlasny (to June 15, 1944)

From June 1944;

Chief of Brigade Staff; Staff Captain Hlasny Karel (from June 15, 1944)

Russia

Training took place with the 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade in Yefremov (from January 9, 1944). Yefremov is a town in Tula Region, located 149 kilometres south of Tula, and 300 km southwards from Moscow.

From February 1, to April 15, 1944 brigade parachutists passed out 13559 trained parachute descents.

On April 22, 1944; Concluding military exercise of *2nd Czechoslovak paradesant brigade*.

From May 1, 1944; 2nd Czechoslovak paradesant brigade (component part of nascent *1st Czechoslovak army corps*) left Yefremov and moved by 5 rail trans to Proskurov going through Kiev and Zhitomir.

Other trainink place in Proskurov (from May 17, 1944)

Proskurov is located on the Southern Bug River and about 340km from the Ukrainian capital, Kiev. This town was renamed *Khmelnyskyi* in 1954.

To the end of August 1944; paradesant brigade movement to Przemysl, located in South- eastern Poland (second ,after Krakow, oldest town in south Poland).

Poland

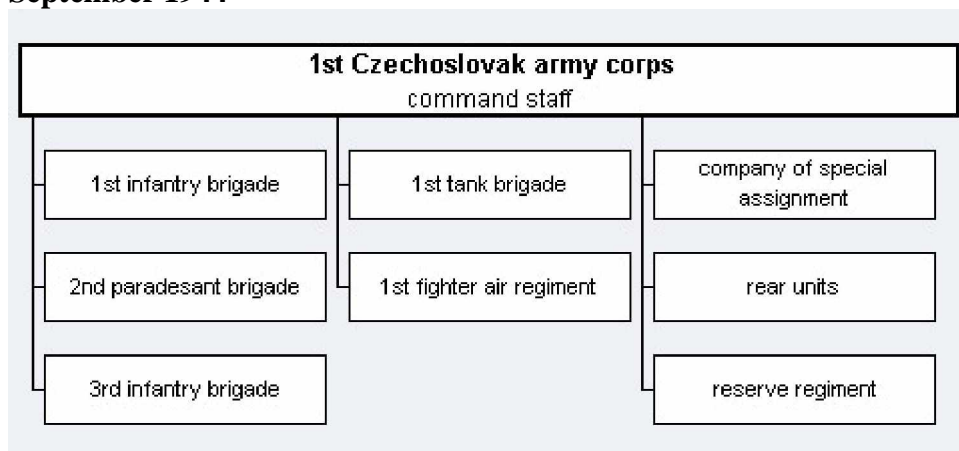
From September 6, 1944, brigade leaved Przemysl, and **moved (walking!) to Poland- Krosno area**, there participated in Karpathia- Dukla operation.

From September 22, 1944; After hard combats in Karpathia-Dukla operation 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade was gathered in Kroskienk near Krosno (Poland) to prepare for transport to Slovakia.

2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade; Carpatho-Dukla operation

Ist Czechoslovak Army Corps was created on the April 10, 1944 in Soviet Union (Chernivtsi) and moved to Krosno area soon after. The Corps initial commander was Brigade General Jan Kratochvíl who was soon replaced by Brigade General Ludvík Svoboda (September 11, 1944) who was also performing the role of Minister of Defence in the government in exile. Before this operation, the Ist Czechoslovak Army Corps consisted of two infantry brigades, one paradesant brigade, one tank brigade, and smaller air and other support units. National composition; Czechs (53%), Slovaks (19%), Rusyns (22%), Jews (3,5%), others (2,5%)

Structure of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps; September 1944



1st Czechoslovak Army Corps; From September,8 – To October 28, 1944

Commander; Brigade General Jan Kratochvíl
 Brigade General Ludvík Svoboda
Chief of Staff; Staff Captain Bohumir Lomsky

1st Czechoslovak Infantry Brigade;

Commander; Brigade General Ludvík Svoboda
 Staff Captain Lubos Novak
 Staff Captain Otmar Zahora
 Brigade General Jaroslav Vedral
 Brigade General Bohumil Bocek

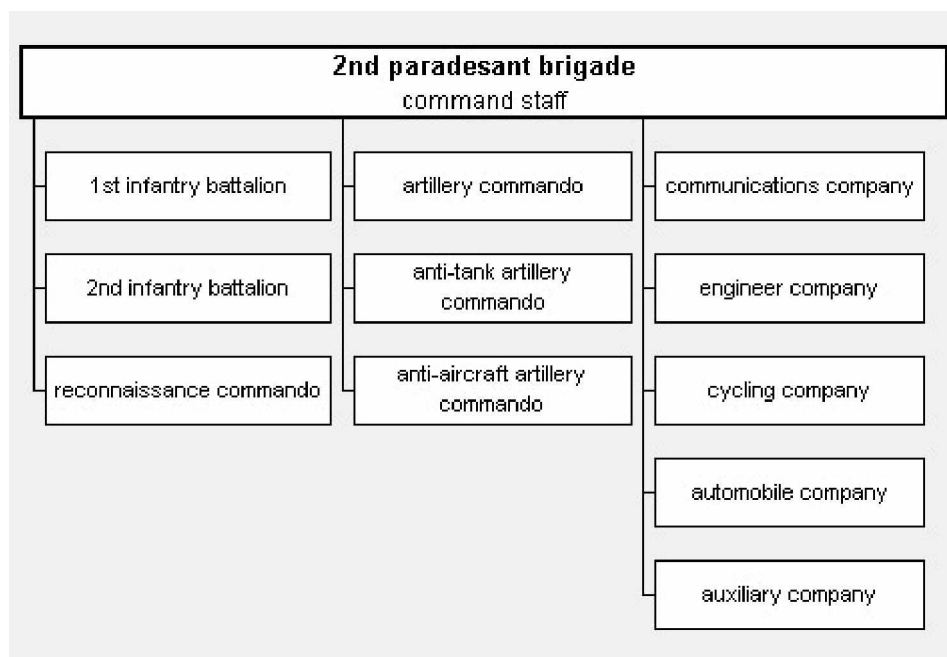
Chief of Staff; Staff Captain Lubos Novak
Staff Captain Jaroslav Dockal

2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade;
Commander; Colonel Vladimir Prikryl
Chief of Staff; Staff Captain Karel Hlasny

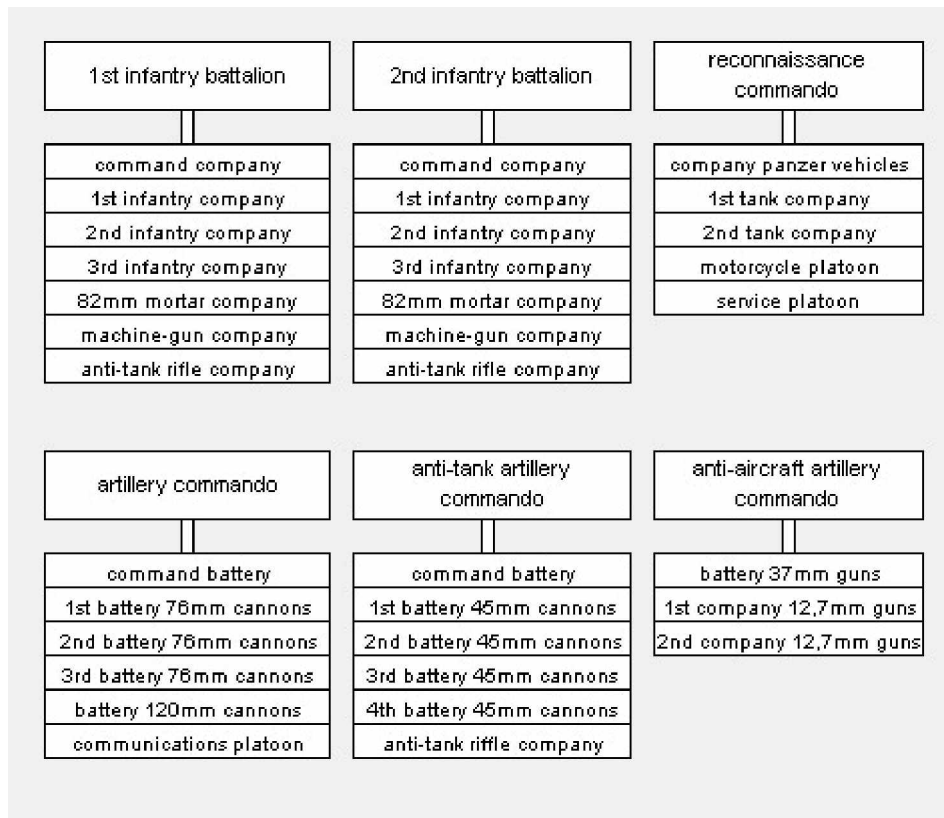
3rd Czechoslovak Infantry Brigade;
Commander; Lt/Colonel Karel Strelka
Lt/Colonel Frantisek Fanta
Brigade General Karel Klapalek
Chief of Staff; Major Miroslav Kukla

1st Czechoslovak Tank Brigade;
Commander; Staff Captain Vladimir Janko
Chief of Staff; Captain Ladislav Perl

Structure of the 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade



subaltern units



The direct liberation of Czechoslovakia started on September 8, 1944 by Carpathian (Dukla) Operation. The battles at Dukla Pass belong to the hardest military operations of the Czechoslovak units which took part in World War II. This military operation is known in history as the Carpatho-Dukla operation. **It began on September 8, 1944; the liberation armies crossed the border of Czechoslovakia, on October 6, 1944.** The Soviet army contributed to help the Slovak National Uprising and domestic Czechoslovak antifascist resistance. **The 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps in the USSR participated during these battles, which lasted almost 3 months.**

Slovakia was considered to be in the Soviet sphere of military operations. **The Soviets were tacitly expected by the Western Allies to provide the bulk of support to the uprising.** Since the Soviets did not wish to forfeit the political influence they expected to obtain in postwar Czechoslovakia, they agreed. Although the Soviets did not wish to admit it, they were really not in a position to give the uprising the needed measure of support. **At the time of the planning of the uprising, the front was 200-250 kilometers away from insurgent territory. Ahead of the Soviets were the Carpathians.** Autumns here were characterized by heavy rains and fog--conditions which made the landing of aircraft a perilous undertaking. The Soviets nonetheless assigned the 4th Guard of the Gomel'sk Air Squadron and the 5th Guard of Orel Squadron to form an "air bridge" between Soviet-held territory in

Poland and Slovakia. **A key feature in strengthening the uprising would be the Soviets transporting the 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade to insurgent territory.**

Marshal Ivan Koniev was ordered by the Soviet High Command to launch a breakthrough to insurgent territory. Dukla Pass was the designated route: it afforded access to partisans in the Presov Region, and the opportunity to descend to the plains of Hungary. It was also hoped that the movement would cut off the 1st Panzer Army from Army Group North Ukraine. The task of assaulting the mountain pass was **given to General Kiril Moskalenko's 38th Army and the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps. The 1st Guard Cavalry Corps, 25th Tank Corps, and secondary units would then effect a deeper penetration to insurgent territory.**

General Ludvik Svoboda, commander of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps, was optimistic of an early breakthrough at Dukla Pass. The battlefield which lay ahead of the Soviet and Czechoslovak forces was, however, an extremely formidable one. **Dukla Pass is 15 to 20 kilometers wide and 15 to 20 kilometers long. In addition to heavily defending it with armor, infantry and artillery, the Germans had planted thousands of land mines. The initial engagement was extremely bloody.** Later, Svoboda would admit that faulty reconnaissance played a role in the high casualties.

At dawn on September 8, a two-hour artillery barrage precluded the advance of Moskalenko's 38th Army towards Dukla Pass. The movement was initially successful, although Czechoslovak troops, slogging along waterlogged roads, were not able to come up from the rear in time. By nightfall German resistance began to stiffen. After two days of fighting, Soviet riflemen penetrated Krosno and the second line of German defenses. But Dukla had yet to be cracked. Koniev selected a gap of less than 2,000 yards on Moskalenko's flank east of Dukla, and dispatched the 1st Guard Cavalry to make a breakthrough to the German rear. The 1st Guards launched their attack on the night of September 12, but were quickly closed off by German troops in their rear. Again, the Red Army was in no position to reach insurgent territory.

The initial Soviet line of battle led through the village of Iwla to Tylawa. The 101st Infantry Corps was entrusted with the attack. The plan was to reach Tylawa by the second day, and on the third day to reach Svidnik in Slovakia. When the main artillery barrage hit Mszana, the terrified villagers fled into the surrounding woods. And the drama did not end there. The plan of crushing German resistance in a few days could not be accomplished.

On September, 9; the units of the 1st and 3rd infantry brigades fell under open fire between the villages of Machnówka and Wrocanka. Corps lost 611 soldiers that day. Cause of tragedy was false Soviet information about clean up area from the enemy forces, even Czechoslovak command should self verify area before marching units. Because of combat failure and high Czechoslovak losses in first days of Carpatho-Dukla's operation Soviet command established general Svoboda as new corps commander (September,10).

	September,9	Sept.,22	Losses (Sept. 9- 22)	October 6,1944
1st infantry brigade	5307	3613	1694(31.9%)	3052
2nd paradesant brigade	2810	2100	710(25.3%)	2112
3rd infantry brigade	3482	2605	877(25.2%)	2453
1st tank brigade	631	698		630

Two Czechoslovak brigades--the 1st and the 3rd--suffered very high losses, without taking any German's area. Theoretically, Presov could be reached in six days; in fact, it remained beyond the Czechoslovaks' grasp for four months.

The 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade, meanwhile, were active in combat in southern Poland. On September, 12; 2nd Czechoslovak paradesant brigade joined combats in Carpathian Mountains. Aside from absence of heavy weapons brigade successfully, fought next seven days- to September, 19. **Paradesants after hard fighting occupied town Besko** (September, 19), and other areas... so **aided the 1st Ukrainian Front 38th army in transferring the main attack from the center to the left wing opposite enemy forces concentrated at Dukla Pass.** Next day, on September 20, **the town of Dukla was taken, and on the 24th September, the 14th Tank Brigade under Colonel A. E. Skidanov entered Mszana.**

The battle for the neighboring village of Smerczne began. Here steel reinforced bunkers protected the German position. On September 26, the decision was reached on the Soviet side to break through the Arpad Line. In Mszana and neighboring villages, three infantry divisions were concentrated, backed by three tank corps of the 38th Army. There were 900 artillery tubes concentrated at 160 per kilometer, backed by air support. This concentration attracted a counterbarrage by German artillery on Mszana. When the campaign ended with the Soviets and their Czechoslovak allies forcing their way through Dukla Pass, the villagers returning to

Mszana could not recognize anything. All was gone. The same applied to the villages of Hyrowa, Tylawa, Olchowiec, Ropianka, Wilsznia and Smerczne. **All these villages had simply ceased to exist.**

At the end of the September, through fog and heavy rain, the 1st Army Corps resumed its advance. **On October 6, 1944; German units evacuated area of Dukla's Pass. Czechoslovak troops crossed state border of Czechoslovakia and started to liberate own territory.** The entrance into Slovakia had come at a staggering cost. **General Vedral, commander of the 1st Brigade, was killed by a mine less than one kilometer after crossing the border.** An estimated 6,500 men of the 1st Army Corps had been killed, almost half of its original strength. Overall, the **Soviets and Czechoslovaks sustained an approximate 80,000 casualties**, with almost 20,000 killed in action. **German casualties are estimated roughly at 20,000.**

October 6 was thereafter designated as Czechoslovak Army Day. After the breakup of Czechoslovakia in 1993, it was still remembered in Slovakia as Liberation Day. Yet the battle for control of this key region in Eastern Slovakia did not end with the capture of the pass. Between Dukla Pass and the town of Svidnik lies an area which has come to be known as "the Valley of Death."

After hard fighting in the Carpathian foothills, the **paradesant brigade was grouped in Kroscienko until September 22, 1944.** The Soviets had planned to move the brigade by air across the mountains on September 18-21. **Since the brigade only finished fighting on the 19th, commander Colonel Vladimir Prikryl asked for three days' time for rest and regroupment before resuming operations.**

Owing to inclement weather on the other side of the mountains, the delay was further extended. The first of the brigade was launched seven days later than originally planned. **The weather was not conducive to the operation at this time either, but the Czechoslovak paratroopers were chafing for action and Prikryl could countenance delay no longer.** The transport was flown by Soviet Captain N. S. Larianov. It was unable to land at Tri Duby, and after a thir try Larianov brought the plane down on the uneven airstrip of Rohazne. Credit must be given to Slovak Lieutenants T. Zachar and J. Bystricy, who lit flares at the last possible moment, enabling the transport to land without catastrophe.

2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade; Slovak National Uprising (SNU)

The Slovak National Uprising was an inseparable part of European antifascist movement. Inspiring for today's effort to integrate Europe was the people of 32 nations and nationalities involvement in the Uprising.

At the end of 1943, the goal of the Slovak anti-fascist resistance concentrated around the illegal Slovak National Council (SNC). Even the Slovak Army, defiant to the collaboration with Nazi Germany, favored the revolt. In the spring of 1944, the SNC received cooperation from many anti-fascist officers of the Slovak Army and established contact with the Czechoslovak government in exile in London. Through out the spring, groups of Russian partisans were active in Central Slovakia. They had established contact with local people inciting them to get involved in the revolt. The eager, impatient partisans conducted disruptive and subversive actions, sometimes premature for the beginning of an uprising.

The military successes of the allied forces in years 1943-44 caused the essential breaking point in the course of the war. That influenced the formation of the Slovak National Council in December 1943. It meant the unification of the anti-fascist forces in Slovakia. Slovak Republic was considered a German satellite and Slovak army was developed as a power instrument of the totalitarian regime. Since 1944, antifascist emotions among its soldiers and officers increased. The military headquarters were created in the attempt to unify antifascist forces within the Slovak Army in April 1944. Its task was to elaborate the plan of the SNU and to coordinate the military actions of the insurgent's army within the actions of the Russian Army.

The critics of the regime, the activities of the Slovak National Council and military headquarters and partisan movement brought suitable conditions for an armed uprising. After the arrival of the paratroop units from Ukraine and the Soviet partisan groups coming from Poland in summer 1944, the partisan movement grew stronger. **The Slovak Government and German Secret Service obtained the information about these activities and President Tiso agreed to the arrival of German occupation troops.**

The Soviet Union prepared to support the forthcoming uprising by exporting its partisan movement. After its liberation, the city of Kiev was designated as "the Ukrainian Partisan Headquarters." In April 1944 the Ukrainian Communist Party announced its decision to aid the Czechoslovak cause by **setting up a special training program for partisans who would be dispatched to Slovakia. The organization was entrusted to the Ukrainian Partisan**

staff, which was assisted by Rudolf Slansky, special representative of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. About a hundred Czechs attended the first training course, as well as a number of Polish partisans. The initial plan called for ten partisan groups (with ten to twenty men in each group) to be airdropped into eastern Slovakia. The Soviet command meanwhile began bolstering the **regular Czechoslovak military units already fighting on the Eastern Front. The 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade was likewise trained for specialized warfare behind German lines.** On the night of July 26, 1944, the first partisan detachment was parachuted into Slovakia in the Ruzomberok area, further to the west than originally anticipated. This unit was commanded by a Red Army captain named Piotr Velitchko, and it immediately began setting up base areas for additional partisan detachments.

The regular Slovak Army would also play a key role in the uprising. Owing to tense relations with Hungary, the Tiso regime was forced to retain the services of military officers who had not shed their old Czechoslovak sympathies. In the central Slovak mining city of Banska Bystrica, a pro-Czech military group became active, **establishing radio contact with the government-in-exile in London. This group was led by Lieutenant Colonel Jan Golian.** Svoboda's fellow legionnaire veteran, Ferdinand Catlos, was aware of this group's clandestine activities. In view of the widespread Slovak desertions on the Eastern Front, the minister of defense anticipated changing sides. Golian was able to carry on with Catlos' silent approval. One officer among the Military Center in Banska Bystrica, **Mikulas Ferjencik, later** **recounted:**

The uprising was to be proclaimed after an agreement for aid from the Soviet Union had been reached and at a time when the Soviet armies would reach the area of Krakow. To avoid provoking the Germans from taking repressive measures in Slovakia due to the ever-increasing activity of partisan groups, it was necessary to request the Soviets to reduce or cease such activities. Should the Germans begin to occupy Slovakia or disarm the Slovak army, it was agreed that the uprising should begin without consideration of help and progress made by the Soviet army.

Here the partisans provided a key obstacle to the entire future of the uprising. The Soviet-led partisans under Velitchko soon discerned that there were no German troops in central Slovakia. They intimidated the local mountain folk with their ceaseless requisitions, and then began terrorizing ethnic Germans of Slovak citizenship in the mining towns. They soon began blowing up vital bridges and tunnels. The Military Center uneasily asked them to refrain from any premature action which might jeopardize the timetable of the uprising. For that matter, so

did Slovak Communist leader Gustav Husak. But the partisans only took their orders from Kiev.

A secret session of the Slovak National Council was held in Rocianska Valley on June 27. Here it was resolved to send a delegation to the Soviet Union; the pro-Czech military conspirators would provide the airplane. Ferjencik was designated to represent the Military Center. As he was preparing to board the plane, Golian handed him a note addressed to General Heliodor Pika from Slovak Minister of Defense Catlos. Catlos' offer to the Soviets (and, since the letter was addressed to General Pika, presumably the Czechs) was a simple one. At the moment when Soviet forces reached Krakow, in southern Poland, the Slovak military would take over the Slovak government. The Carpathian mountain passes (particularly Dukla) would be opened to the Soviet military for a rapid descent onto the plains of Hungary. Slovakia would then declare war on both Germany and Hungary. Presumably, a war against Hungary would be popular among the Slovak people, since it afforded the opportunity to regain Kosice. No mention was made of reunion with the Czechs.

From the very beginning of the uprising, the insurgents were kept on the defensive. Most tragic of all was the fate of General August Malar, commander of the East Slovak Army Corps. Malar was likewise of Czechoslovak legionnaire background, having served on the Italian Front during the First World War. The East Slovak Army Corps was designated for the key role of opening Dukla Pass to the advancing Soviet forces. But now Malar likewise lost his nerve. He urged his troops not to engage in any premature action. His subordinate, Lieutenant Colonel Stefan Talsky, flew off to Soviet lines with the entire air wing of the East Slovak Army Corps, consisting of 22 aircraft. Reporting to Marshal Ivan Koniev's headquarters, Talsky stoutly maintained that, if the Soviet military thrust in a southwesterly direction, the East Slovak Army Corps would effect a linkup at Krosno, in southern Poland. What Talsky did not know was that the East Slovak Army Corps had already ceased to exist. German armored columns of Army Group Heinrici, advancing southward from Poland through Dukla Pass, disarmed the Slovak units on August 31. Most of the Slovak soldiers were hustled off to internment in Germany. Only small bands were able to break out of encirclement to join the insurgents in the central highlands..

Partisan activity continued to intensify, culminating in the massacre of members of a German military mission passing through the country. Berlin had by now decided that the Tiso government was no longer in control of Slovakia. It resolved to militarily occupy the country and disarm Slovak Army units. Catlos, in the final hours preceding the uprising, lost

his nerve. Just before being placed under house arrest, he delivered a radio broadcast to the nation, urging the populace to accept the occupation. His subordinates in Banská Bystrica followed a different course of action. **On August 29, Lieutenant Colonel Golian issued the coded order: "Commence transfer."**

On August 29, 1944 German troops with the consent of the Slovak government started to occupy Slovakia. It was a signal to start an armed uprising of all anti-fascist forces in Slovakia. In the evening of August 29, 1944 General J. Golian issued an order to put the army at full alert. In the morning hours of August 30, 1944 the insurgent troops entered Banská Bystrica, which was the political and economical center of the uprising. So Slovak National Uprising (SNU) began August 29, 1944. Local army headquarter in Banská Bystrica received an order to call up the 1938 and 1939 reserves and support units located in strategic triangle Banská Bystrica - Brezno - Zvolen. **During first days of uprising there were 18.000 soldiers and officers fighting against German invaders.** Free insurgent territory was formed and reached Levoča, Spišská Nová Ves, Dobšiná in the east, Žilina and Bánovce nad Bebravou in the west (part of Zlaté Moravce County) and in the north and south it was identical with state border. **Uprising affected more than 30 counties, which was about 20.000 km² large territory with population approximately 1.700.000 inhabitants.** Lieutenant Colonel of the general staff Ján Golian was promoted to the rank of colonel.

The decisive armed force in the uprising was the 1st Czechoslovak army in Slovakia, which was the name which the insurgent troops of the Slovak Army fought in the SNU. Until October 7, 1944 the commander of the army was General J. Golian and after that it became General R. Viest.

The first stage of the defense of the compact insurgent territory lasted from the beginning of the uprising until September 10, 1944. In this stage - in spite of extensive losses – the insurgents achieved the stabilization of the front.

The second stage of the defense of the insurgent territory lasted from September 10, until October 18, 1944. In this course, the insurgent army was **reinforced by the Czechoslovak fighter regiment and 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade**, which both came from USSR. Despite providing this support, the insurgents lost some important territories.

The third stage lasted from October 18, 1944 to the end of October and was represented by the **general German offensive undertook from Hungary after the unsuccessful attempt** of Hungary to leave the war.

Historical calendar of the antifascist resistance shows; the 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade provides the main support about defense of territory in Banská Bystrica region; in October 1944
(http://www.snp.sk/index_eng.php?id=historia4)

August 30, 1944

Czechoslovak broadcasting of British radio station broadcasted speech of Czechoslovak ministry of defence General S. Ingr, in which he announced, that **military and partisan units became a part of Czechoslovak army**. Czechoslovak government confirmed that insurgents units fighting in Slovakia are part of Czechoslovak army.

September 4, 1944

Delegation of the Slovak National Council led by Karol Šmidke returned from the Soviet Union to Banská Bystrica in night on September 4-5. In Moscow they discussed **support to insurrection and transportation of 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade** and 1st Czechoslovak air force squadron to territory of insurgents
(http://www.snp.sk/index_eng.php?id=historia3)

September 5, 1944

Mobilisation announced by the Slovak National Council for men under 35 years. **Number of Slovak soldier increased to 47.000 after this mobilisation.**

September 6, 1944

Russian mission landed in Banská Bystrica in night on September 5-6. The mission was send by 1st Ukraine Headquarter of Marshal I.S. Konev **commanded by Major I.I. Studenskij-Skripka.**

September 22, 1944

After hard combats and heavy human and material losses in Karpathia-Dukla operation **2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade was gathered in Kroscienk near Krosno (Poland)** to prepare for transport to Slovakia.

September 25, 1944

Beginning of 2nd Paradesant Brigade in Soviet Union transport from Kroscienk to insurgent territory. Colonel Vladimir Prikryl arrived to Slovakia and took over the command of 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade in Slovakia

September 26, 1944

The Slovak National Council announced second mobilisation for five age groups. **Number of insurgents increased to 60.000 soldiers after this second mobilisation. 1st**

Czechoslovak army in Slovakia consisted of 44 battalions, 6 artillery units and 32 artillery batteries.

September 28, 1944

Group of political representatives from Moscow landed in Tri Duby air base: Jan Šverna, Rudolf Slánský and Marek Čulen. **Group of Soviet officers commanded by Colonel A.N. Asmolv came together with them.**

October 6, 1944;

37 transport airplanes ferried first members (ap. 3 infantry companies) of 2nd Paradesant Brigade from USSR to Slovakia, where were immediately moved into combats.

October 7, 1944

Division General Rudolf Viest arrived to Slovakia and took over the command of the 1st Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia. Chief of Staff of 2nd Czechoslovak paradesant brigade Staff Captain Karel Hlasny arrived in Slovakia with general Viest by the same plain.

Government representative for liberated territory minister František Nemeč arrived to Slovakia to take over political power. Slovak National Council unanimously refused this intention of Czechoslovak government in London. Slovak National Council sent its delegation to London (Ladislav Novomeský, Ján Ursíny and Lieutenant Colonel Mirko Vesel) to discuss this question with president Dr. Edvard Beneš.

General Viest, unlike other Slovak military officers, was unwilling to reconcile himself with the Tiso regime. He escaped to the West via Hungary to the end of 1939. He occupied the significant cabinet position of deputy minister of defense in the London government. Benes dispatched him to Moscow to serve as part of Pika's military mission. As a member of this group, Viest did not get along well with Svoboda. Yet he seemed to be the one commander who could keep peace among the competing factions in the Slovak uprising. Golian was promoted to the rank of general by the London government, but he lacked the confidence of many subordinates. The partisans overall refused to cooperate with the regular Slovak military, and the Slovak National Council progressively sided with the former in this dispute. Viest was consequently designated to supersede Golian as overall commander. He arrived at the insurgent-held airfield of Tri Duby on October 7. His first order was that the 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade recapture Jalna, a strategic village in the Hron River valley that guarded the approaches to insurgent territory in the central highlands.

The brigade was reinforced by the 3rd Tactical Group and the partisan brigade named after the late Captain Jan Nalepka.

October 10, 1944

2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade attacked along a line from Trnava Hora to Jalna, supported by partisans attacking from Kloceny-Pitelna to prevent German units in Ziar nad Hronom from helping the defenders. Jalna was retaken on October 12. **It was the last victory of the Slovak insurgents during the uprising.**

October 15, 1944

Transportation of the 2nd Czechoslovak Padesant Brigade to partisan territory was finished. Parts of this unit were sent to insurgent defence lines immediately as they arrived and usually to most difficult combats. **Together with insurgent soldiers and partisans they were fighting in areas Železná Breznica-Trnavá Hora-Jalná, Hronská Dúbrava, near Močiar and in other areas.**

October 17, 1944

Parts of the 2nd Paradesant Brigade were replaced by units of 3rd tactical group during night on October 17-18 and were transported to Badín, Vlkanová and Sielnica in order to organise and strengthen these units.

October 18, 1944

Main attack of German troops in order to defeat insurgent territory started by heavy bombing of Banská Bystrica, Liptovská Osada and Brezno.

October 19-24, 1944

2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade was put again to front areas in Krupina-Zvolen, near Detva and Dobrá Niva, Brezno, Podbrezová and Čierny Balog.

October 22, 1944

Meeting of political authorities in Banská Bystrica. They discussed preparation for organised retreat to mountains and continuation in partisan fighting. Chairmanship of the Slovak National Council discussed war situation in presence of Generals R. Viest and J. Golian. They sanctioned plan for military defence of central uprising area in triangle Zvolen-Banská Bystrica-Brezno and assigned three new centres of combat against German occupants: Veľký and Malý Šturec area, Slovenské Rudohorie (Poľana-Vepor), Čertovica area and eastern part of Low Tatras region.

October 25, 1944

Chief of Partisan headquarter gave an order to start partisan fighting to partisan units. They were retreated from front lines and areas for diverse missions were selected for them.

Evacuation of Banská Bystrica started. Chairmanship of the Slovak National Council moved its headquarter to Donovaly. **2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade built defence lines near Banská Bystrica in Badín, Vlkanová and Šalková.**
October 26, 1944

Headquarter of the 1st Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia moved to Donovaly, where political authorities of uprising had already moved. General Rudolf Viest gave an order to leave Banská Bystrica till morning of October 27, 1944. **Staff of 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade moved from Banská Bystrica to mountains. Part of the unit defended insurgent units retreating toward Staré Hory.**

Military unit Schill continued in attack and **penetrated to defence lines of 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade near Badín and Vlkanová.** First units of 18 SS division Horst Wessel penetrated through Očová, Zolná, Čerín to Horná Mičiná and threatened Banská Bystrica from south-east. Right wing of 18th SS division moving alongside Hron River joined left wing moving through Očová and Bečov near Poniky.

October 27, 1944

Last meeting of Chairmanship of the Slovak National Council and Communist Party with army representatives and partisan headquarter commanders. They decided that insurgent army will continue in partisan fighting. German air force bombed retreating partisan and insurgent units in Staré Hory. First units of German combat forces entered Banská Bystrica in the morning and were followed by units of 18th SS division Horst Wessel. Commander of the 1st Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia **General Rudolf Viest gave during night on October 27-28 special operative order to start partisan fighting.**

It is written there: “Organised resistance of the army is after disintegration of some units no more possible and that is reason why units of the 1st Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia would according to the situation **start partisan war against Germans in night on October 29, 1944.**” Following locations were selected for particular units:

1st	group:	Veľká	Fatra	mountains
2nd	group:	south	part of	Low Tatras
3rd	group:	north	part of	Low Tatras
4th	group:	north	part of	Poľana
5th	group:	south	part of	Low Tatras

6th group: north part of Low Tatras and Liptov area

Army units were supposed to form separate units by order of particular commanders, **2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade should form partisan groups on south and north parts of Prašivá mountain.** Partisan groups should be formed out of 100-200 soldiers and only from volunteers and people willing to “gave everything for freedom of the country”. Free Slovak Radio broadcasting ended in Donovaly in the morning. **Staff of 2nd Paradesant Brigade moved to Staré Hory and units to Moštenická and Hiadel'ská valley.**

October 28, 1944

Partisans headquarter commanded by Colonel A.N. Asmolov moved from Donovaly to mountains accompanied by partisan units, part of paratroop unit and insurgent forces.

October 29, 1944

Authority of Partisan headquarter was expanded to the whole territory of Slovakia. Main partisan headquarter in Czechoslovakia was formed commanded by Colonel A.N. Asmolov. **At the meeting of political and military representatives** of uprising at camp of 1st Czechoslovak partisan brigade of J.V. Stalin **under Prašivá was decided to establish Main partisan headquarter as one an only organising and executive authority of partisan movement in Czechoslovakia.** After meeting of partisan headquarter and Colonel V. Příkryl it was decided to submit **2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade to partisan headquarter commanded by A.N. Asmolov.**

October 30, 1944

Military parade was organised in Banská Bystrica by General Herman Hoffle and representatives of people regime of Dr. Jozef Tiso, who celebrated mass. **Dr. J. Tiso awarded SS soldiers and publicly expressed thanks to Hitler. To this day Germans arrested more than 10.000 insurgents** took about 80 canons, 600 heavy vehicles, 1 panzer train, 300 horses and state treasury with 2.8 milliards SK cash.

From the begining of uprising until the liberation of Czechoslovakia the fascists tortured to death and **murdered 5,304 persons, which were found in 211 mass graves. 93 villages were burned out.** In spite of the repression of the uprising after the retreat of the insurgents to the mountains, new partisan groups started to form themselves. Partisans were attacking Germans from the rear and they were undertaking sabotage actions on road and railway

connections. On November 3, 1944 the insurgent commanders, **General Golian and Viest were captured and interrogated in Banská Bystrica and Bratislava. They were taken to Berlin.** Their fate is unknown.

The retreat in to the mountains brought a period of cruel terror and bloody reprisals against the participants in the uprising and their families and also against an innocent civil population. After the failure of the uprising, the Germans took control of Slovakia. Many people were executed or sent to German concentration camps. People were buried in mass graves. First, they were assembled to dig long, deep trenches, then ordered to stand on the edge facing the trench only to be shot from behind. Their bodies fell into trenches and were covered with the ground they had dug out. Many of these mass graves were found only after the liberation of the country from the horror it had endured.

Story of our Life; Love, Action and Drama Around the World

Also family of Eva Marhold actively participated in the uprising. More later (on August 22, 1959) former Chief of Staff of 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade Staff Captain **Karel Hlasny married this girl in California.** Eva wrote in publication „**Story of our Life; Love, Action and Drama Around the World**“ (2003; 95 pages) some details about SNU, and especially about Colonel **Karel Hlasny.**

There Eva writes (see some „chapters“ from her publication);

On the Run

Lom-Krpacovo

The Day of Destiny

The Patient

Karel

In Prague

The Year 1948

Gone Again

Australia

Queensland

Coming to America

Attempts to Get Out of Czechoslovakia

Trapped

Other Ways to Get Out

Nacvalač versus Hlasny

Finally Together

Starting a New Life

Nacvalač Trapped

Conclusion, epilog or forward; by Karel's son, Peter Hlasny

On the Run

After the failure of the uprising, the Germans took control of Slovakia. The Gestapo (German State Police) moved in to oppress all rebellious elements and mercilessly persecuted the civilian population who have their support to the uprising. Many people were executed or sent to German concentration camps. Entire villages were burned to the ground after their inhabitants were killed. People were buried in mass graves. First, they were assembled to dig long, deep trenches, then ordered to stand on the edge facing the trench only to be shot from behind. Their bodies fell into the trenches and were covered with the ground they had dug out. Many of these mass graves were found only after the liberation of the country from the horror it had endured.

Our family actively participated in the uprising. My father, in cooperation with the Slovak Army, built emergency landing strips because of the shortage of reliable airfields in the insurgent territory. Bad weather and long-lasting rains often made them unusable. My father could have been held accountable for the help he offered to the uprising. His business partner chose to remain at home after the occupation began. He was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to the Mauthausen concentration camp. For us, we had no choice but to run away from home and go into hiding.

At the end of September 1944 when the front was approaching, and a German take-over seemed inevitable, we got ready to move. My mother packed several pieces of luggage and backpacks with warm clothes, shoes, laundry and personal items. She took her jewelry and enough cash to survive in emergencies in uncertain circumstances. All of the rest we left at home, not knowing if we would ever come back. Father was somewhere in the field so my mother was in charge. She was quite an energetic woman, able to adjust to any situation. A driver from father's company drove us to the town of Stiavnica, where we had good friends, who later might have found themselves in the same situation we were in at the time.

Stiavnica was a beautiful small town nestled in mountains with silver mines in operation. Our good friend Peter Polak was a mining engineer there. We thought that the place might be safe. Several days after our arrival there, we had heard Kremnica (our home) already had fallen to the German and the front was now moving towards Stiavnica.

Peter Polak arranged the next move farther to the east. He took a large dump truck with a driver from the mining company. His family, our family and about ten more people with a lot of baggage were loaded on the truck, and we took off. We then proceeded east to the village of Dubova where Peter's friend was an engineer in an oil refinery. We stayed there for about a week living with some friendly people.

My father arrived from Banska Bystrica with bad news. The uprising could not hold any longer and in few days everything would be lost. From here we made our final move to the mountains. There on the foothills of the Low Tatry were antimonium mines called Lom, and our friend Marsalek was in charge. Peter, father and my brother Ivan took off to meet Marsalek and ask if he could provide us with his place of shelter. The shelter was about ten miles away, a good walking trip. The next day only Ivan came back with good news, we might proceed there and he would lead us on our way. We said goodbye to the people in Dubova, left some luggage behind, repacked our backpacks and started the last episode of our escape. This was, so far, the worst part.

As we walked through the valley, some military trucks gave us a ride to the next village. From there we had to turn on a side road and walk all the way up to the mountains. We still passed through two small villages where we rested for a while and bought some refreshments. Being already tired, the backpacks were awfully heavy. It was completely dark when we finally got to the place, tired to death. Father was waiting for us in a warm room with a wood-burning stove and five straw-filled mattresses laid on the floor. The only luxury there was a bathroom with hot water. Still, we were happy that we had found a shelter and could get some rest for the night. Following day; Germans occupied the valley below.

Lom-Krpacovo

Lom- Krpacovo was a place we could never forget. We would be caught there in the most dramatic situation of our lives.

Lom was the name of the antimony mines enterprise, and Krpacovo was the name of the hill where the business was located. We would be caught there in the most dramatic situation of our lives. It was quite a remote place on the foothills of Low Tatry. In a densely wooded area

was a large clearing with cluster of wooden buildings scattered around, all belonging to a private German company. There was an administration building with some offices and quarters for Vaclav Marsalek, the engineer in charge. He lived there with his lovely wife Helena, and his two-year-old son. He offered us a vacant, in bedrooms we had straw filled mattresses, light and easily movable. Wood-burning stoves were in every room, so the place was quite warm for the cold winter in the mountains.

During the operation of the mines, housing for the workers was provided in wooden barracks furnished with bunk beds and showers with hot water, laundry and storage. In one of the barracks was a dining hall and a large kitchen. A cook on the premises prepared hot meals for the workers. Most of the miners and workers had their families living in the valley, and would go home for the weekends. During the uprising, repression, and the German occupation afterwards, all work there had stopped, and the miners went home. The buildings were unoccupied but were kept in reasonably good shape.

The other buildings housed stables with horses, barns with straw and hay, barns with vehicles, warehouses with supplies, feed storage and additional housing for other employees. There was also an infirmary where first aid was provided. All together it was a small, self-contained community. The actual mines with shafts and a quarry were located on a higher elevation in the mountains. Several wooden structures were also located there. That place was even more remote.

Some of the permanent employes remained at Krpacovo just to take care of what needed to be done, mainly the maintenance. The Czech engineer Marsalek in charge of the operation was a well organized, no-nonsense man who kept everything and everybody under his control. There were two technical clerks, Joe Ziak and Laco Dobrovic, who were friendly and willing to help anybody in need. The cook, Anna, was a single, hardworking woman in her thirties. She took care of two cows on the premises that supplied the residents with fresh milk and butter.

The winter came sooner than we had expected. Early in November a cold wave with snowstorms had changed the place into a winter wonderland. First, it was a beautiful sight, the tall fir trees sprinkled with snow and blanket of white covering everything else. More and more snow made the roads impassable and wild animals and creatures were coming closer to the residences. The many soldiers, partisans and people hiding in the mountains without a shelter were now being subjected to conditions endangering their survival.

One day, down from the mountains came a group of a dozen Russian partisans. They took up residence in the infirmary and refused to comply with any of the rules. These partisans were

bold and reckless. Their goal was to disturb the Germans in the valley with subversive actions. On a daily basis, armed with automatic rifles, they paid unwelcome visits to the villages in the valley demanding provisions from those living there. Before coming back, they would stop at a local pub and get drunk. Then walking back through the woods, they would shoot into the air, just for their own pleasure. For them, it was a war with no regard for the civilian population that they were putting into danger.

The Germans were very much aware of their presence. Yet, somehow, the partisans were clever enough not to get caught. After staying at Krpacovo for about a week, the partisans departed, leaving the infirmary in a shambles. The medical supplies disappeared along with them. Still, all the residents were relieved when they were gone. For a while it was quiet and back to normal.

Then, in the afternoon of November 15, **we saw a large military unit coming down from the mountains. They walked in a long file, more than a hundred men**, unshaven and bundled-up in long military coats. They were a part of the 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade, sent from the Eastern Front to Slovakia. They participated in battles against the Germans up to the fall of Banska Bystrica, the center of the uprising. Their goal was now to make their way to the Russian Army, which already had penetrated the eastern part of Slovakia, and join them in liberating the country from the occupation.

On their troublesome way, exposed to rains and snow blizzards for days, the soldiers had been stumbling through deep snow in the Low Tatry Mountains. Without shelter and provisions, hungry and exhausted, some of them sick and troubled with frostbite; they finally came down to Krpacovo. Their commander, Colonel Prikryl, had asked Marsalek to provide them with a temporary shelter. Marsalek, being a former career officer in the Army before WW II, understood their needs and was willing to help. He offered them housing in the vacant buildings, offices, barns and where ever they could find a place. **The staff officers, commander Colonel Vladimir Prikryl, chief of staff brigade Staff Captain Karel Hlasny** and two majors were invited to stay in Marsalek's private quarters. The soldiers dispersed over the entire place. Finally, they had a chance to settle down in warm rooms, take showers, change clothes, rest, and get hot meals after many days of starving and eating snow.

With their arrival, Krpacovo now resembled a military camp with the civilians representing a miniscule minority. **Together with the Paradesant Brigade an Anglo-American military mission descended from the mountains to Krpacovo.** These men were sent from an American military base in Bari, Italy. They landed at the Tri Duby airfield along with supplies and weapons in support of the uprising. They had remained in Slovakia to the

end, and had to retreat to the mountains with the rest of the insurgents. Altogether, their count was 20 men. **The American mission was under command of US Navy Captain James A. Green, the British were under the command of Colonel Trelfall and Major Sehmer. American Navy Lt. Jerry Mican,** who spoke Czech, was the liaison officer in communications with the Czechoslovak brigade.

For safety reasons, this mission had settled in the structures around the mines at the higher elevation. Only Lt. Jerry Mican stayed in Krpacovo, maintaining contact with his mission. As we later learned, on December 26, 1944, fourteen members of the American and British mission were captured by the Germans in the valley on the other side of the mountains. With no regard to international laws for the treatment of POW's (prisoners of war) they were transported to the Mauthausen concentration camp, and were executed there in January 1945 just a few months before the end of the war. Our dear Jerry was one of them.

The Day of Destiny

The most horrendous day was yet to come. The Germans in the valley by some betrayal had learned that a large insurgent military unit had settled at Krpacovo. They decided to conduct a massive raid there.

In the early morning hours, on November 30, 1944, one company of SS men armed with heavy machine-guns and other weapons of destruction arrived at Krpacovo. Our soldiers were not prepared for the attack. In an unorganized jumble, they ran into the woods to find cover from the gunfire. Some of the soldiers, who were sick and could not get out fast enough from the barracks, were shot on the spot. We watched the horror from our windows. Soon we saw some of the Germans coming up the stairs to get us. The door was locked so they pounded on it and kicked at it.

Generally, all of us were frightened. In desperation, my mother decided to open the door for the Germans, otherwise they would have broken it in anyway. In a few German words, mother told them we were just civilians. After my mother opened the door, three SS men charged in and ordered us to get out. When we stepped down, they lined us against a wall and three SS men with loaded rifles stood in front of us preventing us from moving. They just waited for an order to shoot us. **We stood there in the snow for about two hours, waiting for the worst.** My mother was always quite brave. She led us in prayer saying aloud one Czech prayer after another. The Germans did not understand the words but from the tone of our voices got the idea of what we were saying.

We were saved almost by a miracle. Had they asked us to show our ID cards, our address on them was more than a hundred miles away. Also, the apartment, where we were staying, did not look like a permanent residence at all. We were refugees hiding from the Germans. The SS men ransacked the apartment looking for weapons. We did not have any. They then took the beautiful down-filled sleeping bag that Jerry had left behind.

Standing out in the open we were exposed to terror all around us. The SS men were everywhere, running through the buildings and facilities. They first searched the barracks for weapons and other military materials. After ransacking the barracks, they set them on fire. Everything went up in flames and nobody could make a move to prevent it or extinguish the flames.

In the meantime, the SS commanders entered Mr. Marsalek's quarters. The staff of the brigade had escaped but left some military materials behind. The Germans confiscated everything they found and started to negotiate with Marsalek. **He had been working for a private German company and was fluent in German. He cleverly played a host to the SS commanders. His bar was always well supplied with „Slivovica“ and other hard liquors.**

Not sparing any alcohol on the Germans, he got them more or less drunk. Then he vouched for us as employees of the mining company. In the same way he stood up to protect his other employees and saved their quarters from destruction. Finally, the German SS men who had been watching us outside got an order to let us go back in the apartment.

The SS men were careful not to advance into the dense woods where our soldiers had taken cover. The Germans assembled in combat position on the plain at the edge of the woods and commenced a concentrated fire. Some of our soldiers began shooting back at them from the woods. This would go on for some time until the SS commander gave an order for his troops' departure. For their safety, he wanted to be back in the valley while there still was daylight. Having finished their devastation, they pulled back around 4 p.m.

When the Germans had gone, several soldiers brought to Mr. Marsalek, Staff Captain Karel Hlasny who had been seriously wounded in the crossfire and was bleeding profusely. Mr. Marsalek could not keep him in his quarters anymore but made other arrangements for him. With the help of the two young employees, Joe Ziak and Laco Dobrovic, they moved a single bed into the basement room which otherwise had been used as a laundry. They laid him there on a long table, washed him, and a medical doctor from the brigade tended to his wounds, cleansed them and sprinkled some sulfonamids directly on the flesh. Karel was wounded with German explosive rounds, called dum-dums. These rounds did

not shoot through, but exploded on impact, leaving a large funnel shaped wound with the flesh ripped around the edge.

Karel had been shot twice, once in the left forearm, and again in the lower part of his abdomen, also on the left side. He had lost a lot of blood, was weak and very much in pain. They laid him in a clean bed, and Mrs. Marsalek brought in some pillows to raise the upper part of his body. Karel could not stand up, nor even sit up. After he had received the minimal medical care as the circumstances, he tried to rest.

Mr. Marsalek came to our apartment with a bottle of slivovica to celebrate our surviving the massacre. We were really grateful to him for how he has saved our lives. Then he turned to me, and asked me to follow him to the laundry room, there was a wounded man there who could need my help.

That was how I first met Karel. He was surprised, maybe even glad to see me. His face lit up with a little smile, but soon after he was overcome with pain. Long afterwards, he still recalled how I looked that day. I was eighteen years old, with long blond hair, wearing a green sweater, gray skirt and gray boots that were made of a heavy woolen material. He remembered that in very detail, long after I had forgotten it. It was the beginning of our long relationship. We would still have to overcome many obstacles before we finally could be together. I have always believed the meeting was our destiny.

The Patient

The day after the disaster, everything looked bleak. All of the soldiers had retreated to the higher elevation, knowing they could not come back. Only one patient remained. Under the existing circumstances he was supposed to be treated as a civilian.

In the morning, his aide, dressed in a uniform and armed with a rifle, showed up and offered to be on guard in front of his door. Engineer Marsalek was infuriated. He sent him back to where he came from, and made a strict rule- no visitors to see patient, except for the caregivers.

Among the caregivers, the young men, Joe and Laco, were very helpful. They used to stay with the patient overnight. I came there in the morning. The patient was introduced to me by his real name- Karel Hlasny. He looked a little bit more relaxed than the night before. We chatted for a while. **He told me that he was from a small town, Bludov in Moravia, where his parents, siblings and other members of his family still lived.** He had not seen them nor heard from them for five years, since leaving the country and going to war. He hoped the

war might be over pretty soon. When he would recover from his injuries it might be quite a happy reunion with his family. Even though I would have loved to hear more about him. I did not ask more questions as he started to look tired again. I just put a fresh dressing on his wounds. They looked awful, and we were so short of medications and supplies. There was not much I could have done for him. I just tried to cheer him up, reading to him some short stories to keep his mind away from his misery.

Late in the afternoon, Dr.Rehak from the brigade came to see the patient. He was quite concerned about his condition, especially the high fever. He gave him some sulphapyridine, orally, and sprinkled some more on his wounds. Even the doctor was experiencing a lack of needed medication. He ordered a liquid diet with plenty of water to drink. So the caregivers handed him glasses of water, alternating them with his urinal. The patient was not able to get out of the bed by himself.

The next day his condition had deteriorated. He was restless, depressed and very much in pain. His wounds had become infected. The doctor noticed the patient had developed pneumonia, running such a fever that at times he seemed unconscious. The doctor insisted the patient had to be transported to a hospital- otherwise he would not survive. This was going to be quite a difficult task. First, he had to change his identity. The Germans had confiscated some military reports and documents during the raid. The name Karel Hlasny appeared in them frequently.

The next morning, Joe drove down to the valley to acquire for the patient a false identification card. He had discussed it with him the night before, and they agreed on an assumed name of Andrej Bognar. Joe knew some people in the valley who could help him. They produced a false document with the picture of the patient pasted on it. Later, on the same day, Joe drove to the hospital in Podbrezova to discuss the admission of the patient with a young Czech doctor in residence there. This was a very complicated matter. The hospital had been taken over by German doctors who used facility to treat their own wounded soldiers. Only one small wing of the hospital was left for the treatment of the local population, and Dr.Krystek was in charge of it. He told Joe the admission office was under German control, so he should bring the patient to his private quarters, and the best time would be after dark.

All that was good news, but the undertaking would not be easy. Joe was a very brave young man, however, and decided he would pull it through.

The next day on December 5, 1944, Joe and Laco started to prepare the patient for the trip. They dressed him in civilian clothes given to him by the charity of the good people at Lom. They wrapped him in blankets and put a knitted cap on his head, covering the upper part of

his face. A big scarf covered the lower part of his face so that only his eyes and nose were seen. They put him on a horse drawn sleigh, and covered him with blankets. There was a lot of snow everywhere with freezing temperatures. I came to say goodbye, and wished him good luck. Karel told me that if he would survive that ordeal, I would get a royal reward from him!

At dusk, Joe took off with the patient. It was about 15 miles (24 kilometres) to Podbrezova, passing through three villages in the valley. Of course, the Germans occupied the villages. There, marshal law was enforced under which people should not be out after dark. Our travelers were stopped by a German patrol. Joe, in his broken German, told them he was taking a very sick person to the hospital in a hurry. They arrived at Podbrezova in the late evening hours and Joe unloaded the patient at the private quarters of Dr. Krystek.

The doctor realized the patient needed immediate treatment. They laid him on a kitchen table in his apartment. The doctor operated on him with the assistance of his wife without any anesthetics. He gave him some „Slivovica“ alcohol to drink. The patient was so weak he passed out very shortly. Dr. Krystek kept the patient in his apartment for several days before he could find a safe place for him in the hospital. At least the pneumonia and high fever had ceased. Treating the deep infected wounds would require more time.

Dr. Krystek kept the patient at his own risk in the hospital occupied by Germans for three months, until the liberation of Podbrezova by the Russian Army. It was not an easy task for the doctor. He kept moving the patient around from room to room. At one time, when the patient was able to walk, he put him in a room with small children. Because he was there under name Andrej Bognar, the children called him „Uncle Andrew“. He entertained them by reading stories from children's books. When some parents started asking about „Uncle Andrew“ the doctor moved him into a quarantine room, and put a „Typhoid sign“ on the door.

It was then that the Gestapo came to the hospital and told Dr. Krystek they knew he was hiding an insurgent soldier. They conducted their inspection walking from room to room. **When the patient called „Andrew“ heard the thumping of their boots in the hallway, he hid behind the door of the room. The Gestapo saw the Typhoid sign. They did not even open the door; instead they just walked away.**

The doctor and the patient were quite relieved. The consequence of that encounter could have been fatal for both of them. A few days later, the Gestapo came back, and asked Dr. Krystek to surrender the patient. The doctor told them the patient had died the previous night, and they could get him from the morgue.

In February, the front moved to the area. It had become a battle zone and the Germans became frustrated. By the end of February, just before the liberation, the Germans evacuated their patients from the hospital and retreated. Now Karel, the patient was able to come out of hiding, being free to use his own name again. As the Russian came he ran out to welcome them. He had fought with them on the Eastern Front, spoke Russian quite well, and knew many Russian songs. They celebrated the liberation, toasting each other with „Vodka“.

Doctor Krystek was aware Karel's wounds did not heal properly. On his forearm the palm size scar was pushed deep into the muscle. The radial artery and nerves were ingrown in the scar causing impaired circulation and numbness of his left hand. From the wound in the lower abdomen, where his pelvic bone had been shattered, fragments of the bone were still coming out with pus. Yet, the hospital in Podbrezova was not equipped for the necessary delicate surgeries. They did not even have x-ray equipment there.

After the liberation of the area, Dr.Krystek immediately arranged for transfer of Karel to a major modern military hospital in Vysne Hagy that was staffed with very good surgeons (Major Dr.Skvaril...). There he could receive special care and undergo corrective surgeries. The brave Dr.Krystek had saved his life. After the end of the war he would be decorated with a medal for valor (Czechoslovak War Cross from 1939). Also by the same medal was decorated Joe Ziak.

Karel

On May 9, 1945, Czechoslovakia celebrated the end of the war, the Day of Victory, with great pride, much hoopla and a military parade in Prague. At the same time Major Karel Hlasny, who had shed his blood for the liberation of the country, was still in a military hospital in Vysne Hagy. He was recuperating from the complicated corrective surgeries he underwent there on March 28, 1945 on his wounds from the war. **From his hospital bed he had written to his parents in Bludov (North Moravia) – the first letter after six years of no contact with them.** See the following letter from May, 29, 1945;

My dearest parents,

After a very long time I am sending you most sincere greetings and kisses. You also must have endured many problems, maybe, even more than we had. I am glad, you had overcome those terrible times and behaved bravely. In our tiny republic all of us would be better off.

Currently, I am in a military hospital in Vasne Hagy in High Tatras. Our airborne brigade, where I had served as chief of the staff, landed in Poland (Dukla Pass) and Slovakia (Slovak

National Uprising) in September and October last year. Overcome by the superior power of the enemy, our forces had to retreat to the mountains to continue in a partisan war. In one action I was badly wounded twice.

Now, I am well again, have my head, arms and legs, starting to walk again. I hope to be discharged from the hospital within a month. Then I would get a furlough to coming home. I would tell you wherever I had been. In those six years, I had covered a lot of territory.

From Prague I escaped illegally to France- via Budapest, Belgrade, Solun, Istanbul and Beirut and farther by ship across the Mediterranean Sea to Marseilles. After the fall of France we had to depart to England, where I spent three years.

In the summer of 1943, I was sent to Russia. There we had formed 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade. We had fought on the Polish side of Dukla Pass before landing in Slovakia.

On the way to Russia we had traveled through Egypt and Palestine where we had spent ten days in Jerusalem. We visited the Tomb of Christ and many other sacred sites. In Bethlehem the cave where Christ was born, the river Jordan, where John the Baptist had baptized, Jericho and other places. Then we continued through Damascus, Baghdad to Teheran.

About all that I will tell you when I will come home. In the meantime, stay well.

With my cordial greetings to all of you, your faithful son,

Karel

In Prague

Together with my brother, Ivan, we went to Prague in September 1945. Ivan was accepted to study civil engineering and I enrolled at the Charles University. Engrossed in the life of a college student I met new people and made new friends. Those times were beautiful and exciting. Karel also lived in Prague at that time. He had come back from the war as a hero, and was being treated that way. He received back pay for the time spent on the front and in hospitals in one very large payment. He did not know what to do with all that money. At least he bought a nice BMW car. After his graduation from the General Staff College (summer 1946), he was promoted to General Staff Lt./Colonel and assumed a position of Chief of Staff of the 1st Armored Division (to the end of 1946) in Prague. Karel now enjoyed many privileges like being driven to his job by a chauffeur in a military sedan from the division. He also had many friends in the military circles, officers he had known from England and from Eastern Front.

On my birthday in October 1945, Karel sent a huge bouquet of roses with a small card to the dormitory where I lived. The next day I phoned Karel to express my thanks, and mentioned it was just too much, and a smaller present would have been appreciated. Karel considered it ungrateful or even downright stupid from me. I did not hear from him for months. For the holidays, he sent only a simple Christmas card, addressed to our family. Meanwhile, Karel and I kept in touch and saw each other occasionally.

After two years in Prague, Karel's leisure life was about to come to an abrupt end. By the end of 1947, the political situation had become very tense. The communists had started preparations for a take-over of the government under the command of the Soviet union. Some of the Czech communist leaders, who during WWII stayed in Russia, had already been indoctrinated there. The Soviet Union wanted to expand its domination of the Eastern European countries it had liberated in WWII. Czechoslovakia had to pay the price for her liberation by losing her democracy. Political purges started first in the armed forces. Suddenly, any officers who had stayed in England during the war were considered unreliable. They were subjected to persecutions and unsubstantiated accusations.

The First Division, where Karel served as Chief of Staff, was giving a farewell party to their retiring commander, General Broz, on December 8, 1947. The participants were not aware that they no longer could speak freely in public. During all the toasting and drinking, the communist controlled Defense Intelligence Service (in Czech „StB“) made sure it had their informers there. Karel was approached by one of the men, who provokingly asked him about his opinion on the Soviet Union where he had spent some time during the war. Karel said frankly that in the USSR there was political oppression and terror and that he preferred to live in a democracy. This remark would cost him his job and have warrant issued for his arrest for defaming the Soviet Union..

On December 13, 1947 he had to clear his desk and was put on indefinite leave until a military court would decide on the matter. For more than two months he was very uncertain about his future. Due to the intervention of his influential military friends, the arrest warrant was withdrawn. Instead he was put on a three-month probation away from Prague.

The Year 1948

The year 1948 was written in the history of Czechoslovakia as one of its darkest years. It was almost unthinkable how so much could happen in just one year. The struggles, tragedies and suffering of people would be beyond imagination. The few good times after the war, were

being followed by crushing events. As in other difficult times we would survive but our lives would be changed in many ways.

Karel's problems had already started by the end of the previous year. He lost job by being put on indefinite leave with an uncertain outlook. In September of the previous year I had moved from the dormitory and rented a room from an elderly lady who was very fond of me. That place was quieter and by coincidence was not far from Karel's apartment, although he was gone most of the time. Fortunately, I had passed all the exams before the big turmoil began.

The communists had become well prepared for the overthrow of the government. They were organized and had hidden warehouses full of weapons. In factories, they recruited militia, armed them, and were ready to be use them to oppress any opposition. The communists held all the key positions in the goverment and had secret police under their control. They were becoming more and more aggressive.

On February 20, 1948 the democratic members of the Czechoslovak government submitted their resignations to the President Benes in protest to the communist infiltration of the Ministry of Interior and the police. The crisis grew when the communist Prime Minister Gottwald refused to cooperate with them, formed a new government and put pressure on the President to approve his demands. On February 25, 1948, the ailing President Benes reluctantly accepted the resignations of the ministers and approved a new communist government to prevent the bloodshed of a civil war. Overnight the democratic system had changed to a totalitarian one following the Soviet pattern. Terror, purgues, and persecutions had begun.

In May, President Benes refused to sign a new communist constitution. He resigned and four months later died broken hearted.

NOTE;

In World War I I a substantial part of Czechoslovakia was liberated by the Red Army and the First Czechoslovak Army Corrps under the leadership of General Svoboda. Svoboda was appointed Minister of Defense while being welcomed as a hero of the Eastern Front. The Soviet Union enjoyed a great popularity among the population and in the elections of 1946 the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CCP) won 38% of the vote nationwide.

In March 1946, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had 1,159,164 members, including 151,330 in Slovakia. Immediately after the Communist coup of February 1948, membership soared to a peak of 2,418,193. This made the Czechoslovak Party the

largest in the world in proportion to population. The majority of the new members were, if possible, even more opportunistic than the earlier band-wagon jumpers.

On February 22, 1948 after the abdication of cabinet ministers from three democratic parties in protest against Communist practices the Communist dominated Trade Union Congress voted unanimously to replace the 12 government posts with Communists. As armed workers and the People's Militias took to the streets, Svoboda refused to quell the insurrection with military force, saying "the army will not march against the people". **Two days later (and one day after a general strike in which 2,5 million citizens participated either out of fear or creed) the then Czechoslovak president Edvard Beneš accepted a solution** asserted by Gottwald and filled the vacant government posts with Communist candidates, thus creating a 25-seat government with 13 Communist ministers. The takeover was completely bloodless. Svoboda, whose label had been that of an "apolitical" minister since the first days of his term, then joined the Communist Party whose de facto Trojan horse he had been all the time and was elected a deputy to the National Assembly. Svoboda was forced out of the army (in which he had reached the rank of General November 1945) in 1950 under pressure from Stalin. He was deputy Prime Minister of the Czechoslovak government in 1950 and 1951. In the purges which followed Svoboda was imprisoned, and released in the Khrushchev period, subsequently heading the Klement Gottwald Military Academy.

Since February 1948, some 50,000 Czechs have crossed the frontier. Organizing escapes was considerably dangerous. The agents who have the task of actually guiding refugees across the frontier do not live long. They risk being shot, or blown up by mines attached to trip wires, or being brought down by dogs. For about eighteen miles along the Czechoslovak frontier, a band of territory has been cleared of everyone except identifiable permanent residents. No Czech may enter this area without a special pass. If someone is picked up in it without a pass, he is summarily convicted of illegal frontier crossing. Patrols with dogs pass frequently. **Month by month the Communist authorities add new devices along the frontiers, all designed not to keep foreign enemies out, but to keep the Czechs in.** During the years 1951 and 1952, however escapes from Czechoslovakia have become far more dangerous. In some cases where villages are divided in half by the border, in order to give the frontier guard an unobstructed view the Czechs have evacuated the population and torn down buildings. **At all except two points, roads across the border to Germany and Austria have been closed.** Usually there was a system of four or five interlocking tank traps and concrete road blocks, and behind this a ditch six feet deep and nine feet wide. This was

becked, often, by a parapet of dirt ten or twelve feet high. And on the road beyond, spaced out at increasing intervals, were concrete road blocks...

Fortunately, due to the intervention of his influential military friends, Karel's case was resolved before the communist take-over. Later, it could have been much worse. **He was put on a three month probation, retained his rank, and was transferred as commander of a battalion to a garrison in Karlovy Vary. Basically, he came out pretty well.**

Karlovy Vary is a beautiful place, a famous resort and spa with mineral water not far from the West German border. He drove there in his BMW car, and made frequent short trips to Prague. In Karlovy Vary he made new friends and conducted some successful military exercises for which he was rewarded with an engraved silver cigarette case from his fellow officers.

In Karlovy Vary was subjected to an intense communist indoctrination. At the end of the course he was presented with the application for membership into the communist party. He did not turn the application in, with an excuse that he needed time to think it over. That act brought further harassment. During his stay in Karlovy Vary, located close to the Western German border, Karel did some exploration for a possible escape from Czechoslovakia. At the end of this stay there, he sold his BMW, to have more cash on hand. He also sold most of the furniture from his apartment in Prague. He left there only minimal furnishings but continued to keep the apartment to have a place to stay on his occasional visits in Prague.

For his refusal to apply for membership in the communist party he was transferred to a far off, remote garrison in Bruntal, in Northern Moravia by the Polish border. Karel was disgusted and bored to death there. With no friends and no social life he acquired a fishing license and on his free time went fishing.

Karel was aware that was the end of his military career, and that further persecutions would surely follow. At that time he began thinking seriously about leaving the country. He began waiting for the right opportunity.

Karel had experienced some pain in the scar of his old abdominal wound from Slovakia. He visited a doctor in Prague, who found a small hernia in the scar. After his return to Bruntal he was hospitalized and applied for a convalescent stay at a spa. He found an official approval for his convalescence in a small Moravian spa in Darkov, for six weeks from August 31 to October 11, 1948. He liked very much to be away from Bruntal and to be able to move around freely. In the middle of September 1948 Karel was definitely determined to leave the country.

From Darkov he made several trips to Prague to get together with his friend from England, Colonel Alois Hak. He was in England (1940) and in North Africa (Tobruk)- Middle East (1941- 1942) first „side-officer“ of General Klapalek with the rank of Captain. Later, at Eastern Front he was as „representative- commander“ of the 3rd Czechoslovak Infantry Brigade (1945) with the rank of Major.

They had planned to escape together. Alois Hak during his stay in England married a British girl named Mary. After the war they lived in Prague. Mary left Czechoslovakia when the communist came to power. She had no problem departing, as she was a British subject. Alois wanted to join his wife, but by no means would the communists allow him to leave the country. He had to escape illegally to rejoin his wife. It was not going to be an easy task. With the communists in full power, many freedom loving people in anticipation of persecutions decided to leave the country. Thousands of professional, well- educated people were leaving the country. In time they would have to find escape routes. Most of the refugees crossed the border to West Germany on foot over the wooded hills. The border was soon laid with obstacles and closely watched by armed border guards with trained search dogs. Some inhabitants of the nearby villages, who were familiar with the area, were willing to guide the refugees for monetary rewards. It was risky and the person had to be trustworthy. Karel with his friend Alois had done very careful planning. They researched various escape routes and visited the area near Cheb to find some contacts. They were ready, just had been waiting for the opportunity and a certain date.

In the last weekend of September 1948 Karel went Bludov for a reunion with his family, parents, brothers and a sister. Karel tried to be cheerful. He never talked with his elderly parents about his troubles and intentions to leave the country again. When he was saying goodbye, **he only told his older brother Tonik, and his brother-in- law Peter**, that he would not be around for a long time. **That was the last time he would ever see his family.** On my birthday of October 19 , Karel visited me in Prague. He gave me an engraved silver bracelet and Dvořak's opera Rusalka on long playing records. As we parted, Karel told me he would be gone for a long time. He expressed hope the communist system could not last forever, at which time he would return. That never happened, he could not come back. After Karel was gone, I realized how much I had lost. The emptiness and hopelessness were overpowering. No one ever could have replaced him.

Gone Again

After Karel's return to Bruntal, orders for his transfer to Brno were issued. Karel would not follow those orders. He decided it was now time for him to leave. He requested a furlough before moving and never came back. Karel's transfer to Brno could have been an entrapment for him. Coincidentally, at a later date, Karel's commander from the Eastern Front, General Prikryl, was also transferred to Brno. From there he was taken to a prison in Prague. Gen.Prikryl was falsely accused of espionage. He was physically tortured to confess to a crime he had not committed. Then he was sentenced to nine years of hard labor and imprisonment. Had Karel not escaped he could have faced similar persecution. Regardless of the difficulties he had yet to endure, he always remained a free man.

Karel's official furlough from Bruntal was granted from November 11th to November 25th, when he was supposed to report to Brno. In his absence from service, he contacted his friend Alois Hak. Both were sure the time was right for their escape. They met in Prague and made the last preparation for the hike across the border. On November 14th they arrived at a resort Marianske Lazne, they stayed there overnight, and on November 15th the escape action began. From Marianske Lazne Karel and Alois took a taxi and drove to the village of Zandov to meet with their guide. He gave them the necessary information and led them on a trail through the woods at 5; 15 p.m. It was already getting dark so the guide left them and returned home.

They planned to cross the border at night. They walked through the woods for about an hour. The night was so dark that they stumbled over the exposed roots of trees. Not able to use flashlights as they could have alerted the patrolling border guards, and tripping under the weight of their heavy backpacks, they decided to spend the night in the woods. At daybreak on November 16, hungry and stiff from the cold November night in the woods, Karel and Alois put on their backpacks, picked up their small luggage and headed back to the trail. They had warmed up walking up the hill to the highest point of Dylen. From there they could have seen scattered Czech villages to the East and German sites to the West. **Saying the last goodbye to their country, Alois and Karel proceeded West.**

Early in the afternoon they crossed the border and continued to Neualbenreuth, a small town on the German side, where they reported to the German border police as refugees from Czechoslovakia... Next day, an American Captain gave them a ride to Weiden, where they stayed overnight at the Officers' Club. The next day, they settled down in a small house. After the exhausting trip across the border, Karel experienced again an intensive pain in his lower abdomen. He rested here for a few days until it had subsided. November 24th was Thanksgiving Day and Karel and Alois had a traditional American feast at the Club, where

they met other Czech refugees. Karel remembered that on this date he was supposed to report for service in Brno after the end of his furlough. Instead, he was celebrating Thanksgiving in an American service club...

At the beginning of December 1948, Karel and Alois relocated to Ludwigsburg, a large Czechoslovak refugee camp in former military barracks at Jagerhof Kaserne. There were hundreds of other people there, officers, lawyers, clergy, and college students who had escaped the communist system in fear of persecution for their different political views and ideals... Most of the refugees had applied for immigration visas to other western countries, willing to accept what may come. The USA was high on the preference list. Of course, at that time there were quotas for immigration. After applying for a visa, the individuals received a number and had to wait, sometimes even for a few years before their assigned number would be called. Alois had no problem getting his visa to Great Britain to join his wife there. It took only some time for the bureaucratic formalities to get taken care of.

Karel's first choice for immigration was the USA, second came Canada or England. He submitted applications for visas to all three countries, and waited for the outcome. Most of the year 1949 Karel spent in Germany. In the camp for refugees they were provided with housing and board. Jobs were very scarce and living with no money was not easy. They did not even have money to buy cigarettes and most people had smoked out of frustration. The residents in the camp impatiently waited to immigrate to other countries to start their new lives.

In January 1949 Alois received his immigration visa to England to join his wife there. Before leaving for England, Alois introduced Karel to Mr. König, a former Czechoslovak Colonel who was in charge of an intelligence operation in Frankfurt, Germany and was using an assumed German name. His operation kept illegal contact with Czechoslovakia, sending back and forth young Czech men from Germany to get information and bring out some people who were looking to escape. These couriers usually drove across the border in trucks. In Czechoslovakia they operated at their own risk. There was always some danger involved. Basically, they were conducting espionage.

The Königs occupied a large house in Frankfurt-Burgfeld. Their associates lived there with them being provided with room and board but no salary. They were only paid for travel expenses involved with conducting the business. They had to keep records, and everything was kept under the tight control of Mr. König and his wife.

Karel met there some interesting Czech people and befriended Dr. Husek, who lived next door, and Mr. Valtr, who later would later meet up again with Karel and was presently

involved in that operation. In the Konig's house, people were coming in and out. One courier, named Henry, who made some trips to Czechoslovakia, became Karel's friend.

Before his escape, Karel left a lot of money in Czechoslovakia. He gave a large portion of it to his brother Tonik, and also paid a substantial sum to a tailor for two custom made suits. Henry sent the suits for Karel to an address in Bamberg, Germany together with some of the money he had left behind. That money, exchanged for German marks helped for a short time, the suits lasted longer. On another occasion Henry took a letter from Karel to his girl Eva Marhold to be mailed in Czechoslovakia.

Karel worked for the Konigs from January 29 until May 15, 1949. He disliked the operation, and the work did not suit him well. He especially resented the nosy and domineering Mrs. Konig, who wanted to be in charge of everything. In May he just had had enough of it and moved from Frankfurt back to the camp in Ludwigsgurg.

Once there he started to look for a job with some pay. After completing a driving test Karel received a German driver's license for all vehicles. In June he accepted a job as a driver of Truck for IRO (International Refugee Organization), carrying mail to the camp. The pay was low, but better than nothing and he felt free being relieved from the pressure of his previous job for the Konigs. One Sunday in July, after attending church, Karel met Francis, who also had worked for the Konigs. Francis told him that the courier Henry had been caught in Czechoslovakia. Henry was about to board a train. There had been some commotion in that very town earlier as its communist mayor was killed. Henry looked suspicious and was apprehended. He was sent to Prague for an interrogation and never came back. At the time Henry was carrying a letter for me which I never received.

Karel had been promised a visa for England and the USA. He had also applied for Australia, the waiting time seemed too long and Karel was ready to accept whatever destination would come first. It would be Australia, ready to accept immigrants who were willing to sign two-year labor contracts.

On October 21, 1949 Karel received a European number for immigration to the USA. Because he had already signed his contract with Australia he requested to have the document transferred to the American consulate in Sydney, Australia.

On December 14, 1949 Karel received a card and transport number for Italy and arrived by train at an IRO transit camp in Trani near Bari in southern Italy, which had a population of about 40,000 and was quite colorful with an oriental touch. He stay in the international refugee camp, however, was not very pleasant as everyone there was looking for departure to another country. This was were Karel was spending the last of his stay in Europe. Due to

some altercation with Italian police the residents of the camp were placed under a curfew and could not go out in the evenings. Another Christmas was coming and would be spent here in Italy. Karel had written cards to his family in Bludov and to friends, and also a long letter to me.

In that letter Karel indicated he would like me to join him. It was the first letter I had received since he had left Czechoslovakia. Karel and I did not have any communication for more than a year, while he was in Germany. It was just too close to Czechoslovakia. The letter from Italy was delivered to me several months later, and there were some complications involved. In 1949 I graduated from the University in Prague with a degree in education. Later I accepted a position to teach at a Gymnasium (High School) in a small Slovak town of Tisovec. After I received that famous letter from Tirani, Italy, I was called to appear at the police station in Tisovec. They ignored me there about the letter, its sender and my relationship to him. Ever since, all my correspondence from overseas went through a communist censor...

Australia

January 1, 1950 was a busy day. At 10 a.m. medical examination, then the departure from the camp and an overnight trip from the Italian eastern coast to the west port of Napoli. There he received boarding card for the American ship „General Stewart“ used for transportation of troops. January 3, 1950 this ship sailed out from Napoli on a long trip to a new world, Australia... This ship was modern and well equipped with cold and hot water, and berths with clean sheets, the organization in boarding 1,100 people was very efficient. Besides the room and board, the residents (shipmates) received coupons for shopping in the PX. Ship sailed through the Messina Strait and over the Mediterranean Sea to Port Said in Egypt. After a short stop there it continued through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea. Even though it was January, the weather there was very warm.

After sailing for two weeks on the open sea, the ship made a stop in Colombo, Sri Lanka for refueling. Colombo was a big and busy port. There were some anchored English destroyers along with some sunken ships from the war.

On the next day, January 18 1950, again at open sea sailing, they sailed over the equator heading into the southern hemisphere. Almost three weeks after having left Napoli the time had changed seven hours ahead of their time. On January 26th a strip of south west Australia appeared on the horizon. The ship was heading east past southern Australian shore towards

the port Melbourne. The four-week sailing was coming to an end with the time change now being 8 hours from where they had left.

January 29th the ship anchored in the Melbourne bay. The last section of the trip was the most beautiful; a splendid sunset a huge half circle of the lit-up city along the shore. The ship landed in the port of Halifax. They crew spent the last night aboard anticipating a wake-up call at 4 a.m. to start the disembarkment procedure. The last short medical examination, cleaning of the cabins, checking of the passports and luggage, and finally on January 30th at 10 a.m. the people stepped out onto the Australian land. There was a big crowd on the shore waiting for some of the newcomers. The newcomers boarded an old fashioned train with a funny locomotive puffing and whistling like the locomotives in American Westerns 50 years ago. The train was leaving Melbourne, a big southern city with some high rise business buildings and nice small family houses. It continued through farmland to Saymore for a stop and a well-prepared lunch. Around 5 p.m. the newcomers got off the train in Bonegilla, a huge camp by a lake. All seemed to be prepared and well organized.

The camp was very clean and the residents were assigned maintenance jobs immediately. The next day Karel was sweeping the streets and hauling away trash. Later he was given some kitchen duty. Karel befriended the supervisor of the first block in the camp, Mr. Roch, who advised him to join the Australian army. Karel submitted the request for acceptance, together with the documents of his previous service in WWII in Europe. He had to wait for the outcome.

In the meantime, through the employment office, Karel was assigned to first Australian job at the Perry Engineering Co. in Mile End, southern Australia outside of Adelaide. All together six people from the new arrivals were sent to the same job. Some did not speak English, and for them Karel served as their interpreter. From the camp at Bonegilla they traveled to Melbourne, and from Melbourne by train to Adelaide. The trip took all night. Sunday morning, January 12, they arrived at Adelaide, where the manager of the company was waiting for them at the railroad station. He took them to a hostel, where they were provided with housing, an inexpensive room and board. To the work they had to commute by train so they had to get up very early in the morning.

The next day, Monday January 13, was their first day on the job. Perry Engineering was a factory manufacturing small steam engines for the plantations in Queensland in northeastern Australia. Karel was assigned to the assembly of boilers for locomotives. Lifting up heavy metal parts the first day on the job made him very tired, not being used such a hard physical work. He hoped to get used to it, but the following days in the bolting shop were as hard as

ever. Pounding the bolt heads with pneumatic hammers into the boilers, with constant shaking and vibration caused him a stomachache. After a week of hard work he just looked forward to the weekend to get some rest.

Spending the first month in Australia, Karel's hopes for a better life had diminished. He was disillusioned and homesick. Australia seemed to be very difficult for European people. The climate was very hot with big differences in temperature. Social life was almost non-existent. The foreign laborers were considered second class residents, regardless of their background. They were used for the lowest unqualified jobs, with low pay for hard work. There was no relief from the contract of other job assignments. Karel requested from employment officer in the factory, Mr. Terrell, a lighter clerical job for which he could have been well qualified. Mr. Terrell was not willing to change his job assignment, being afraid of troubles with the other employees.

Considering Karel's request to join the Australian Army, he was notified of non-acceptance because he was not an Australian citizen. Karel did become a member of the RSL (Returned Soldiers' League), however, as he had spent three years during WWII in Great Britain. Veterans in Australia were recognized and the RSL was a well-respected organization with chapters in every city. Among the veterans Karel received acceptance and more understanding than at the factory where he worked.

Three months later, from the hard physical work, Karel noticed a hernia in his abdominal scar. He visited the office of the nurse at the factory. The nurse, Sister Mary, could not detect the hernia and suggested an examination in the hospital and made for him an appointment there. Karel also complained to the nurse that the job was too harsh for his condition and Mr. Terrell did not make it any easier.

After the examination at the hospital, the doctor indeed confirmed the hernia and gave Karel a certificate requesting a lighter job. The doctor also referred him to a specialist, Dr. Barbour. Karel went back to Mr. Terrell at the factory, gave him the doctor's certificate and told him that in a way Mr. Terrell had caused the situation. He was offered a lighter job in the tool shop, cleaning up, sweeping and running some errands. Karel was so fed up, he refused to do that kind of work. He then was sent to the paint shop to scrape iron rods from rust and to paint ladders.

Karel was very unhappy with his work environment and considered it one of the hardest experiences of his life. His resolution was to take care of his health, and change his job and its location. His last goal was to immigrate to the USA or Canada as soon as possible. Karel's hernia became bigger and more painful. Sister Mary made an appointment for him with Dr.

Barbour. After a thorough examination and x-rays of the abdominal scar, the doctor recommended surgery. Karel also visited the RSL welfare officer, Mr. Randle who promised him release from the labor contract and a suitable job after his recovery. He then visited the repatriation commission. After a long talk with a representative of the Ministry of Pensions, Karel was assured the insurance would pay for his surgery and work compensation, as he had acquired the hernia in the work process. They suggested a stay in a private hospital. Mr. Randle also arranged for a recovery in a Red Cross convalescent home after discharge from the hospital.

Karel was well taken care of, and everything looked brighter. Dr. Barbour set the date for the surgery for June 3, 1950. Karel came to the hospital the day before. The quiet and peaceful environment was very beneficial after his dissatisfaction with the job. Dr. Barbour with his colleague operated on Karel for two hours. The operation went very well. According to the doctor's medical report; „Repaired herniation occurring through scar tissue of an old war wound. A buried skin flap was used and the result was excellent. Excised the scar, removing the scarred skin and heavy silk sutures encysted there.“ Dr. Barbour came for visits frequently and was satisfied with the progress of Karel's healing. Some friends and co-workers from the factory, including Mr. Terrell, came to see him. In the small hospital everybody was friendly. The park-like setting with a small pond was very pleasant after Karel was able to go out for short walks.

The surgery was a blessing for Karel. The puckered old scar with some tender nodules, on the abdominal wound from the war, caused him problems even five years later. After Karel's operation in Australia the wound healed beautifully into a new smooth scar. His problems with it were solved with no more recurrences ever. Feeling well physically, his disposition improved considerably. He regained confidence in people and came to a conclusion that life in Australia was not so bad after all. This was good, as he would remain there for two years, learning more about that continent.

Karel spent almost three weeks in the hospital and was ready to move on. Mr. Terrell came for his last visit, brought him compensation pay and arranged for his transfer to the Red Cross Convalescent Home. It was a big house near the ocean with a well-kept garden. The eight residents living there were elderly pleasant people. Karel was the youngest and most outgoing person there. His three-week stay in the home was more or less recreational. He was able to walk again, strolling on a nearby beach, even going out to town to take care of some business. On his last post-operative visit with Dr. Barbour everything went well. The kind and friendly doctor gave him a personal letter, addressed to the Director of the Commonwealth

Employment, requesting Karel's release from the labor contract. Karel visited the employment office and applied for a clerical job. He was offered a position as a payroll clerk at Pope Products, Ltd., in Beverly-Adelaide. He accepted the job that started July 17, 1950.

Karel finally found a private room in a boarding house at Henley Beach, and moved out from the hostel. The family, from whom rented the room was friendly and treated the residents very well. The RSL organization had a beautiful clubhouse at Henley Beach and Karel made new friends there.

At his new job at Pope Products, Karel soon became acquainted with the clerical procedures and his coworkers. It was more interesting and better paid than the previous hard labor at the factory. He was more contented and his outlook on Australia improved more. **In his letter to me from September 1, 1950 he described the contemporary situation.**

Karel spent his first Christmas in Australia with the family of his landlords and attending some parties in the RSL club with his friends. He enjoyed strolling along the beautiful Henley Beach and swimming in the warm waters of the ocean in the hot December weather.

By the end of 1950 the American Consulate in Sydney notified Karel, that they had received his visa dossier from Stuttgart, Germany, and his name was entered on the quota waiting list. Several months later a note arrived, his turn on the quota would be reached in the near future, and he should contact the Consulate to discuss his status. Karel believed his plan to immigrate to the USA was taking a more definite shape. He considered moving to Sydney to take care of the formalities at the US General Consulate and started to put together money for the eventual trip to America.

By the end of March 1951 he submitted his resignation at Pope Products in Adelaide, and found a replacement for his job. April 6th was his last work day in South Australia. At his second job there, Karel was contented and got along well with everybody, but it was time again to say goodbye before his departure for Sydney. Also sharing good-byes with some friends at the club and RSL... Karel visited Dr. Barbour for his medical record, and places of employment at Pope Products and Perry Engineering for future references.

Upon his arrival at Sydney on April 11, 1951, friends Otto Alban and Franta Brucek, whom he met in Germany and where now living in Sydney, found him a room at a boarding house. Karel looked for a new job, and was hired by Boyded Pty. Ltd., distributor for Buick cars and parts, starting work there in the office for cost and wages.

In May 1951 Karel received an Affidavit of Support from his American sponsor, Mr. Jakes, from New York. Including with other documents, he visited the American Consulate in Sydney to fulfill his immigration requirements. Karel was given there the last document, a

visa questionnaire that was long and detailed, which he completed. After all these procedures he still had to wait for his quota number to be called.

In the meantime on his job at Boyded Ltd. He started to work overtime to earn and save more money for his future needs. Basically he was satisfied with his job. The office and coworkers were all right, and the pay was higher than in Adelaide.

The lifestyle in Sydney was different. Adelaide was a conservative provincial city. On the contrary, Sydney was a big modern cosmopolitan city with many opportunities and places to go. Karel had different plans and perspectives for his future. He still visited his favorite pub and also met there some other people. Pubs were very popular in Australia. Many working people used to go there for a drink or beer after work, but they were not open until the late evening hours. One night Karel had a long discussion there with an ex-serviceman from Queensland, who gave him the idea to leave Sydney, and move to the Australian outback to experience living in the vast open country. The lifestyle there seemed to be simple with a greater chance to save more money. Three months later Karel started inquiries into job opportunities in rural Australia. He visited a RSL employment officer who gave him a recommendation for Rural Section Employment Service. Karel submitted his application for a job in Queensland.

When Karel made-up his mind about something he would go after it. He bought two books about the operation of a sheep and cattle station and started to study in preparation for his eventual job. In November 1951 he received a call from the employment agency, they had located for him a job as a bookkeeper on a station in Queensland for the Brodie Co., which had their main office in Sydney. After an interview with the manager of Brodie, and explanation of the duties of a station bookkeeper, Karel signed a contract and was accepted for his new job in the Australian region of Queensland. On November 30th he resigned from Boyded in Sydney, leaving in good relations with all of the employees.

On his visit to the American Consulate, Karel was informed he might get visa to the USA at the beginning of the next year. He left there his future address for future mailings. On December 8th 1951, the last Saturday before his departure from Sydney, Karel visited with Franta all the familiar places, the pub, a nice restaurant, a dance club and stayed with his friends until morning. It was his goodbye to Sydney, where he had spent six lively months.

Queensland

To learn more about the vast Australian land, Karel decided to move to the inland country, where the animals, wild and domestic, greatly outnumbered the people living there.

Not too many people would have traded the life in the city for the outback country. The Brodie Company could not fill the position of a sheep and cattle station bookkeeper for several months. Therefore they offered to pay Karel's travel expenses would he remain on the job for at least six months. Karel received a travel schedule with airplane and train tickets. The company also paid for an overnight stay in the best hotel in Brisbane.

Brisbane was the last big city Karel would see for many months. The beautiful city with nice parks, palms lining the streets and many houses on pylons provided a nice view. The weather was hot and humid even at night. Karel could not fall asleep so he wrote letters and Christmas cards to his Bludov family and friends in various parts of the world through the night.

The next morning, December 15th, on the flight to Cloncurry, the countryside had changed from farmland to widespread prairies, sparsely populated, few scattered houses with artesian wells. From Cloncurry on train to Dajarra the view of the country changed to plains with bushes, granite hills, and bright red soil.

On his arrival to Dajarra, the Station Manager, Mr. Thompson, with his Ford pick-up truck, waited for Karel to take him to his new post. Dajarra was a very small community consisting of a few homes, a post office and one hotel with a pub where they could get a beer even on Sunday. After a dinner there, they took off on the way to Ardmore Station, driving on a dusty road for almost two hours.

The homestead was a large two-story building that used to be a country hotel previously. Karel moved into a large corner room. The next morning he tried to settle in by unpacking his luggage. All of the other residents, including the manager were out, he was there alone. The loneliness overcame him. The temperature of 110° with no air-conditioning was almost unbearable. The first impression indicated, the adjustment to living in the harsh Australian outback would not be easy.

The Ardmore station was a pastoral business spread over an area 120 miles long with several other homesteads and camps. They held about a hundred thousand sheep, raised for wool, and about twenty thousand cattle and horses. The employees consisted of rangers, stockmen, cowboys and handymen who lived, single or with their families, in cottages spread around the homestead.

The main homestead building was well maintained. On the second floor the manager, Mr. Thompson, a 60-year-old bachelor, had his quarters. Also the cook, Mrs. Deering, with two teenage daughters lived there. Karel took up a residence there as well in a nice large

room. On the first floor there was a big country-style kitchen, pantry, storeroom and a large dining hall. The cook was in charge of the kitchen and pantry and prepared meals for all of the residents.

To get him acquainted with the area, Mr. Thompson in his Ford took Karel on a tour of the pastoral property. They drove on a dusty road and through the bush, making stops at the other homesteads and camps. They also went to the nearest town, Mt. Isa, a small mining town 35 miles from the station. Occasionally the staff visited that town for shopping and conducting some business.

On the second day after his arrival, Karel started to make arrangements for conducting his job. He set up his office in the storeroom that was full of canned food and other supplies. The manager handed him a big box with bills, receipts and other documents. No one had taken care of the paperwork since the previous bookkeeper had left six months ago. That unorganized mess gave Karel a big headache but he was determined to put it in order. As a first order of business Karel worked out the statements of wages for the months of November and December so the employees would be paid before the end of the year.

A few days later the station manager was made aware of a bush fire in the area about 30 miles away from the homestead. Together with Karel they drove to the vicinity to observe the fire and take some preventive action. All the employees went out to make firebreaks, and move the sheep and cattle to a safe place, away from the fire. They let the fire burn out, prevented it from spreading farther. The bush fires were quite common. Sometimes they were deliberately set as a controlled burn, especially before the beginning of the rainy season.

After a month at the Ardmore station the first unpleasant impressions slowly disappeared. The work was interesting and varied. Karel could work there independently. He had sorted out the old documents putting them in order and tried to keep up with the new business. Primitivism and bad organization was everywhere. For the time being Karel seemed to be content. He was provided with relatively good housing and board. He realized it was possible to live there, work, eat and sleep, but that was about all that he could have done. There was not much of a social life, and nothing to spend money on.

The month of February was very hot and humid. Temperatures reached 110° and higher almost every day. Another trouble, around the livestock were flies, thousands of them. The small ones creeping in their noses and ears. Karel slept on the top of his bed covered with a sheet or a net against the flies. Later, when the weather cooled off the pesky flies disappeared.

The most important business transaction was sheep shearing for wool. Professional shearers did the job. It was an exciting and busy time for everybody. The sheep were chased from the pastures by the thousands. They were moved into a huge backyard, cleverly divided by fences into small fields, with many gates, ending with a narrow corridor, where the sheep walked in a single file one after another. The sheep were counted and inspected. Only the healthy ones were admitted to the woolshed where the actual shearing was done. The wool was classified for quality and packed into canvas-covered bales. Then it was loaded on trucks and shipped for processing. The shearing was completed with good results to the satisfaction of the manager, and everybody involved. It was the greatest source of income for the station.

Sometimes on weekends Karel went hunting for kangaroos, being invited by the manager to join him. Accompanied by other huntsmen, armed with rifles, they drove into the Australian bush. They also had set up traps and bait for wild dogs, dingoes. These dingoes like wolves, attacked and killed the prized sheep. Karel enjoyed the outings in the colorful wilderness with its brick red soil, straw colored grass and deep green gum trees. Once they encountered a taypan, a big and dangerously poisonous snake. The men succeeded to kill it before it had a chance to attack them.

At the beginning of April the weather changed with the arrival of a monsoon rain. The station manager was overjoyed, it was the first good rain in 14 months of drought. He came with a bottle of Scotch Whiskey to celebrate the gift of God in the form of rain. It rained intermittently for three days. With no place to go, Karel thought the homestead on a rainy day looked even more desolate and lonely. He was glad he would stay there for only three more months, then he would have enough of this outback to last his lifetime.

Some of the local people hoped to find a fortune in the mineral rich country in northwest Queensland. Mr. Thompson with two other men from the Ardmore station went prospecting. They were looking for uranium, copper and gold. It was quite a popular and adventurous sport at that time. Three days later, they returned with some rocks, themselves uncertain of what they had found. They sent them to a geological institute in Brisbane or Cloncurry for analysis. Unfortunately, the results were less than spectacular.

By the end of April the winter season had started. The once high temperatures dropped to 50o and 60oF, with lows in the mornings and evenings almost reaching the freezing point. In May 1952 Karel received from the Immigration Department in Brisbane following „Certificate of Authority to Remain in Australia“ (as a permanent resident);

Commonwealth of Australia No 89049. This is to certify that approval has been given for the removal of the limitation „Section 4“ of imposed under the Immigration Act upon the stay in Australia of

Karel HLASNY

Ex-serviceman, British Military Identity Card No. D-06229 (Allied), Member of the Returned Sailors', Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia Who is the holder of Aliens Registration Certificate No.129374.

He is now entitled to remain here indefinitely subject to the laws of the Commonwealth governing residence of Australia. This certificate will be sufficient evidence that he is no longer regarded as a temporary resident of the Commonwealth.

Dated this Foorteenth day of May 1952.

T.N. NULTY

By authority of the Minister for Immigration

Then, in June he was notified by the American Consulate in Sydney that he would soon be granted an immigration visa to the United States, his quota number coming up in July. Karel informed Mr.Thompson that he would be leaving for the USA. Mr.Thompson accepted his resignation with regret but wished him good luck. By the middle of July Karel had completed seven months at the Ardmore station. He considered living in the outback the most challenging and interesting time he had spent in Australia. At the conclusion of his job he finished everything that needed to be done, including the taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1952. Karel was satisfied he had fulfilled all all of the company's expectations. He had about 1,000 USD according to the money exchange at that time. That was enough money for the trip to the USA. He would travel as a free person, not in transport ship bound by a labor contract as he did on his way to Australia.

After the last hectic day at the station, Karel took a short vacation at the great Barrier Reef on the East Coast of Queensland. He traveled by train to Townsville. The city had a tropical character with many Royal palms. The streets with their white buildings reflected the bright sunshine even in the middle of winter. The weather was relatively warmer than inland and people there walked in shorts. Karel visited the transit bureau to make a reservation for a cruise through the Great Barrier Reef for the next day. After spending two quiet nights in Townsville, Karel departed in the morning for Sydney. The change in temperature from the

tropical Townsville to a very cold and windy Sydney was remarkable. Karel stayed there in the boarding house of Mrs. Newsway, where he had lived before. They were glad to see him back again, even for a short stay. In the next few days in Sydney, Karel visited the American Consulate to get information about the last steps he was supposed to take before receiving his visa. He had to acquire a Certificate of Identity from the Immigration Department as a substitute for a passport. For that he had to have references from his previous employers, the Boyded Ltd., and Brodie Companies conveniently had representatives in Sydney. He also needed a certificate of a recent medical examination.

After fingerprinting and an oath given to the Vice Consul on July 28, 1952 Karel received the immigration visa and other documents he would need to submit for entry to the USA. Karel had waited for this opportunity for more than three years. Finally, he had achieved it. He was overjoyed and ready to accept a new challenge.

The next step involved making travel arrangements for the trip to yet another continent. In Sydney he got together with his old friends and visited with them their many favorite places. The time he spent in Australia was a life experience he would never forget.

Wherever Karel had been, he always kept in touch with his friends all over the world. Karel possessed excellent writing skills and had written letters, expressing his feelings and observations. In return, he always liked to receive reports from his friends on how they were doing. He kept in special touch with Alois Hak in England, family and friends in Czechoslovakia, and many friends he met in the IRO camps in Germany. Some of them already having emigrated to the USA.

Dr. Husek and Mr. Valtr had moved to California and found teaching positions at the US Army Language School in Monterey. They had written to Karel and suggested that he should apply for a job there after arriving in the USA. As a final correspondence in Sydney, Karel received a letter from Jarda Husek, he would wait for him at the San Francisco airport on his arrival.

Coming to America

Having completed all official formalities, packing and saying goodbye to his all friends, Karel finally was leaving Australia on this journey to America. On August 29, 1952 in the afternoon, at Sydney airport he boarded a four-engine, propeller driven airliner of Canadian Pacific Airlines, a comfortable plane with 55 passengers aboard. The three-day trip to

America, with stopovers in New Zealand, Fiji, and Hawaii was very pleasant and exciting. The passengers were provided with overnight stays in hotels and entertainment.

The first stopover was scheduled in Auckland, New Zealand. Because of heavy fog at the airport, the plane was diverted and landed on a military airfield at the Royal New Zealand Air Force Station Ohakea, 250 miles from Auckland. The passengers were taken by bus to Palmerston for an overnight stay in a nice hotel.

At the Ohakea airfield they boarded their plane and flew to Auckland, continued to Fiji Island with a complimentary stopover there. At 1 a.m., the airliner left airport for a flight to Honolulu, Hawaii. There Karel was overcome with emotion realizing it was a beginning of a new era in his life. At the Honolulu airport all his documents checked by the immigration officer were found acceptable, and Karel was officially admitted to the USA. From the airport a shuttle to the Moana Hotel on Waikiki beach transported the passengers for an overnight stay.

In the evening of August 31, 1952 Karel boarded a United Airlines plane for an overnight flight from Honolulu, Hawaii to San Francisco, California, pushing the time several hours ahead again. The airliner landed at San Francisco in the morning of September 1, 1952, the Labor Day holiday. On his arrival at San Francisco airport, Karel was astonished when a young American addressed him in Czech, "Jste pan Plukovník Hlásný?" (Are you Colonel Hlasny?). Karel looked around, suddenly he saw the smiling face of Dr. Jarda Husek. They hugged each other. Jarda introduced the young American Lt. David Rogers, as a student of Czech at the Army Language School (ALS) in Monterey, California, where Jarda was teaching at that time.

On Wednesday Karel visited ALS, he was introduced to Mr. Mensik, the chairman of the Czech Department. They had a good conversation about Karel's background. Mr. Mensik had a good understanding of Karel's past. He himself was also stationed during WWII in England as a young soldier of Czechoslovak forces there. Mr. Mensik impressed by Karel's knowledge and military experience, suggested he might get a job in his department. He accompanied Karel to the Chief of the Slavic Division and Director of Academic Training, who gave Karel an application for the job. After submitting the long application with many points answered, Karel had an interview with the Deputy Commandant of the School that went very well.

Karel was overwhelmed by the opportunity to teach the American soldiers Czech, and to be able to use his military knowledge and experience in the US. He had never imagined that would happen to him. It had surpassed all of his expectations.

Karel greatly appreciated America. He was a free person and liked his new job very much. The Czech Department was in operation only a few years and was short of instructional materials. Karel decided to contribute from his own military knowledge, and started to write the Czechoslovak military terminology about the organization, strategies and weapons used by the Czechoslovak Army. He worked on that book on his free time for several months, devoted to it many of his weekends. The book was well accepted and used for many years to come.

In the Czech Department the instructors were exiles who had left Czechoslovakia for political reasons. They had various opinions about the future of Czechoslovakia. They hoped the communist government would be defeated, and they would have a chance to return to their homeland. In a discussion with his colleagues Karel stated the following opinion;

„The future independent Czechoslovakia should be governed by the leaders from domestic dissent who had lived there in the difficult times, know the situation, and understand the people.“

Karel wanted to be alone and found for himself a small one-bedroom redwood cottage on Johnson Avenue in Monterey. He appreciated having a decent job and living in a free country. Being an unwilling bachelor for many years he wanted to get married and have his own family. He devoted his concentrated efforts on getting me out of Czechoslovakia to join him in the USA. That was a very difficult task. As he had left Czechoslovakia illegally, the communists considered him a deserter or traitor. They would not do him a favor of letting his finance go with no strings attached.

Attempts to Get Out of Czechoslovakia

For many years keeping in touch just by correspondence both Karel and I had longed to be together. All attempts to get an immigration visa from Czechoslovakia to the USA were denied and abruptly canceled. As there was no legal way to get out, Karel considered some illegal ways to smuggle me from Czechoslovakia. He sought advice from many of his friends in various parts of the world, especially those in England. There was no easy solution. With the communists having tight control over their citizens, and the borders closely watched, in the fifties it was almost impossible to escape.

All of my correspondence was censored and from it my intentions were well known. I was held as a hostage not to be able to travel anywhere east or west, not even to the other East European countries under communist control. Simply they always denied me a passport.

Karel with his conviction and perseverance never gave up. He was a tough guy always ready to fight for what he considered right.

In the fall of 1953 a new member joined the faculty of the ALS (Army Language School) in Monterey. Rudolf Bautz was a lawyer in Czechoslovakia and had many contacts in Europe, especially in Germany. He and his wife Vera were fond of Karel and they became very good friends. Karel confided to Rudolf about his desire to get me out of the Czechoslovakia. Rudolf promised to help him. He researched a long list of his acquaintances in Germany and found one person who had smuggled some people from Czechoslovakia in the past for a monetary reward. At first, Rudolf decided he would handle this delicate operation himself. There was a possibility his friend in Germany, Jan Havlik, might not be willing to deal with someone he had not known.

In the spring of 1954 Rudolf established contact with Havlik. They exchanged letters and Havlik offered to arrange for my illegal departure from Czechoslovakia for a lump sum of 1,200 US dollars. It was a lot of money at that time. Karel was willing to pay after I would arrive safely to any place in the west. Havlik came up with some suggestions, either by a surface route in Vienna, Austria or Munich, Germany, or to be smuggled on a cargo ship sailing from the Czech port of Melnik down the river Elbe to Hamburg, Germany.

Karel and Rudolf carefully considered the advantages and perils of either action. Finally they decided on the trip by ship. It was a longer route, but did not go through so many controls, and made me less visible than traveling on land. On the other hand, some of the shipmen freely making the trip to West Germany could have been either communist spies or informants. In a situation like that it was never known what could happen, and some risk was involved.

Karel and Rudolf drafted a list of conditions for Havlik, and on September 15, gave him the permission to go ahead and start the action. Contact would be made with my younger sister Alena, who at that time lived in Prague. As proof of verification the contacting person would give Alena a photograph of a private cabin in Blatnica Valley where, Karel, Alena and I had spent several happy days in summer of 1948. The conditions for the meeting were as follows;

1. The contacting person would carry only the photograph and not any written material.
2. He would memorize the full names of Alena and Eva (myself) and their addresses.
3. The full name of Karel should not be revealed, he would be referred to by his first name only.

4. Eva should be informed about the contact and advised to take all of her personal documents including her diplomas from the High School and the Prague Charles University, when leaving the country.

5. The password, date and place of departure would be given to Eva later.

The conditions were accepted. Havlik also had been informed the money for his reward was available, and would be transferred from Karel's account at Bank of America to Havlik's account at the bank of his designation in Hamburg, after the action had been successfully completed.

In January 1955 contact with Alena was made. She received the picture of the cabin with the inscription BLATNICA 1948 in Karel's handwriting on the reverse side. Then she sent the picture to me.

Several letters between Rudolf and Havlik were exchanged with his assurance that everything was all right. He indicated March 1955 could be the E-day (exit). But Havlik was dragging his feet, postponing the action for summer. The summer of 1955 passed and nothing happened.

In October a good friend of Karel's, he had known from England and Germany, came for a visit. He stayed overnight and they had a long talk. Karel told him about his determination to get me out of Czechoslovakia with help of Jan Havlik from Germany. The name Havlik was familiar to his friend. He told Karel, Havlik was not reliable as he previously had made bad deals and defrauded money. For that reason he had not been allowed to go to Switzerland. The visitor expressed hope. Havlik might do a better job for Rudolf who was his friend.

In November a letter from Havlik to Rudolf stated he had renewed contact with the captain of a ship and the outlook was favorable.

I was supposed to meet with the captain. The meeting was arranged for the end of January 1956 at the place of my sister in Prague. The captain, who lived in Melnik, arrived dressed in casual clothes, a cap on his head and a red bandanna scarf tied around his neck. He looked common, ordinary and inconspicuous. He had not introduced himself by his real name and wanted to be called, „my uncle from the country“. He was a nonsense man, and did not talk much. He asked me if she really wanted to go, and what date would suit best into her schedule. We decided on the summer during my vacation from school. Tentatively the date was set for August 26-28. He also gave me a password for the operation, and said other details would be worked out at his next meeting with Havlik in Germany.

The preparation for that trip took more than two years. It was a clandestine operation directed from the outside. I did not know much about it. Karel was passing the information to me

between the lines in his letters. I did not talk about it with anybody, only my sister who was contacted by the captain and I knew about the operation.

Suddenly, the trip almost became a reality. The date of the departure, the password and pick-up place was confirmed and I was ready to go. Alena gave me the address where I would stay before departure. I sent there two pieces of luggage for the trip, well in advance, to be able to travel lightly at the end.

After completing the school year in Zvolen, I stayed mostly with my parents in Kremnica. Two weeks before the date of my departure for Hamburg I realized, I had been followed wherever she went. Shortly after I stepped out of the house, two men tailed me at a close distance. Not knowing who they were, I first thought they might have had some message for me, but they never said a word. I was very much aware of their presence. Fortunately, they were easily noticeable. In their twenties, one was short and the other was tall. The tall man had very big feet. Without looking at his face I could recognize him by those feet.

The days went by quickly. I was ready to travel to Prague, to the place where I was supposed to stay before my departure on the ship.

I left home on August 20, 1956 about a week before the scheduled date. Knowing that I was being followed, I did not go straight to Prague. To confuse my pursuers I decided to travel east to the Slovak National Park in the High Tatras. On the way there I made a stop to visit with my former boss from Tisovec and his wife. They had very good relations and I know they were absolutely trustworthy. They lived in Ruzomberok, a beautiful city below Tatra Mountains. I gave them a call and announced the time of my arrival said goodbye to parents (in Kremnica) and set forth for a trip.

When I purchased a train ticket at the railroad station, my pursuers already were there. They boarded the same car and accompanied me on my way. I interrupted the trip to the Tatras in Ruzomberok. My former boss, his wife and their German Shepherd waited for me at the railroad station and then escorted me to their house. My pursuers also got off the train and followed at a close distance.

My friends lived in Ruzomberok in a small house next to a big modern school where he was teaching. They had not seen each other for two years and had a lot to talk about. I told them about planned trip on the ship to Hamburg and also that I was being followed by the two men who walked behind them up to their house. My former boss did not make much of it, told me to use my best judgment and wished me good luck.

They invited me to stay overnight and arranged for me a guestroom used for official visitors to the school. During summer vacation the school was vacant, only the janitor who lived in

his quarters on the first floor was there. They walked until the late evening hours, and the boss escorted me to the school. He called the janitor who then led me to the third floor, gave me a key to the guestroom and wished me good night.

The silence in the building was tremendous. I was there all alone. A while later I heard thumping steps coming through the long hall, closer and closer to the room where I stayed. I locked the room, leaving the key in the keyhole from the inside, turned off the lights, and slipped under the bedcovers not making a sound.

The hangers-on were checking on me and walked away. They had made their way into the school and stayed in the building overnight. Spending there almost a sleepless night I waited for the morning to get out.

When I looked from the window the two men were already on the sidewalk in front of the school. I passed by them going for breakfast with my friends. My friends loved the outdoors and invited me to go with them for a walk out in the nature. Of course, the dog accompanied us, they let him run loose. He was all over the place, happily running around and jumping on us. We had a good time together, and for a moment I left carefree.

The two men stayed in the vicinity of the school knowing we had to come back. After lunch I was ready to resume my traveling. My friends with their ever-present dog accompanied me back to the railroad station, and the pursuers followed closely behind.

I took off for a short trip to Poprad and entry to the National Park High Tatras. At no surprise to me the two men traveled in the same car. From there I took a tram to a beautiful resort with a lake at the High Tatras. The place was so crowded with tourists my hangers were on my heels not to lose me in the crowd. I walked to the lake and sat down on a bench watching the magnificent scenery, high rocky mountains above and their reflection in the clear waters of a big lake below. I thought, if the men walking behind me wanted to say something they had a chance to come up and do so now. They sat on the ground in some shrubbery the bench and remained silent. After a while I got up, walked back to the tram and headed to the Poprad railroad station. There I purchased a ticket for an overnight express train to Prague. The two men were again on the train with me in the same car.

Arriving in Prague in the morning, I took a taxi to the place where I was supposed to stay before the trip on the ship. The location was in an industrial area on the outskirts of the city. It was quite a long distance from the main railroad station. On the way I noticed a car was closely following the taxi. When we arrived at the destination the car behind us stopped too. Inside were the very same two men who had been following me for more than two weeks. At this point I was certain that something went wrong. The place where I was supposed to stay

resembled a warehouse. An elderly lady had a small apartment on the upper floor. She let me in and was very kind to me.

As I left my pursuers on the street in front of the building, I did not go out any more, I called my sister and asked her to come for a visit with me. She arrived and we had a long talk. I told her all about my trip to Prague and my feelings about the operation having been betrayed. I decided to leave Prague the next morning, go back home and give up on the trip to Hamburg, Germany. It was well before the date that I was supposed to be picked-up for the trip. Most likely, I would have been picked-up by the wrong party.

Next morning I said goodbye to the kind little old lady where I stayed overnight. Left my luggage prepared for the failed trip behind in her attic and traveled back home as I had come the previous day. At the Prague main railroad station I purchased a ticket for a trip to Kremnica. There were again the same two hangers there who accompanied me on the way home.

I was exhausted, disappointed, but at the end of the trip glad to be back home. After resting a few days I returned to Zvolen to resume my teaching duties for the next school year starting in September.

In Monterey, Rudolf and Karel had been waiting impatiently for some news from Jan Havlik. In September Rudolf received a postcard from him a short statement; „I did not come out right,“ without any further explanation. When Rudolf wrote back to him, Jan was no longer in Hamburg. He was gone, no one knew about his whereabouts.

A few months later Karel read in Czech newspaper printed in London that Jan Havlik voluntarily returned to Czechoslovakia via Berlin. He had disclosed there information that was followed by some purges in the Elbe- Oder Shipping Company. Four men were arrested including Captain Adam Cerny of Melnik who my sister and I met previously in Prague.

After the disastrous failure of that operation Karel felt hurt and disappointed. He knew it would take more time before we could have a chance for something better. He never gave up his faith and hope.

Trapped

Back at school in Zvolen nobody knew what happened to me in the summer. It was business as usual, new school year started, and I was fully occupied with my job. On the outside I was under constant surveillance. The two men I had been seeing in the summer still followed me on the streets of Zvolen throughout the month of September. At the end of class hours they

would sit on the low wall by the fence of the school. After I walked out of the building they were tailing me again. I did not know why. In the summer I did not go further than Prague, and in Zvolen was back on my job. I limited all my activities to work at school, staying home afterwards, and spending weekends with my parents.

October and November passed without any disturbance, and the two men were not following me any more. In December, as Christmas time was approaching, on my free time I worked on some crafts for the Holidays. On the last weekend before Christmas break I picked at home various materials for those little projects. I packed a small suitcase and took it to Zvolen. From the weekend I traveled back Monday morning, dropped the suitcase off at the place where I lived and went straight to school.

Around 10 a.m. two Federal Police (STB- „Statni Bezpecnost“) agents walked into the office of the principal, identified themselves with their badges, and told principal I had to go with them to Prague. The date was Monday, December 17, 1956.

In the school many colleagues were shocked. No one would expect this could happen to me. They anticipated I might never come back. My supervisor wanted me to make a quick inventory of the school material items I was in charge of. It took at least an hour. My captors waiting for me grew impatient, and were visibly annoyed by the delay. They did not use any drastic measures against me. In front of the other people they wanted to look civil. On my way out I waved goodbye to some saddened friends.

In the front of the school a black car, in which my captors had arrived, was waiting for us. I insisted yet to make a stop at the place where I lived, to tell my landlords that I was going to Prague. I took the suitcase, I just brought from my weekend at home, with me. The men in the car were surprised seeing the suitcase, and told me I would not need it at the place where we were going. I maintained, when traveling somewhere, I always would carry personal items with me. So they let me have it.

We left Zvolen around noon, and had a long way to go. In the wintertime days were getting shorter, and snow was everywhere. In the car my captors sat on the front seats and I was in the back. They had some mirrors to the back seat so they could see me. On the trip, they made several stops to report to their HQ where we were at that time.

The first stop was in Bratislava. The men went for coffee and asked me to go with them. They could not leave me in the car alone. Going to the bathroom I realized that I had something compromising on me, I could have disposed of it easily. Not engaging in any discussion with the men I remained calm and quiet. From Bratislava we traveled in a northwest direction.

The second stop was in Breclav, located only a few miles from the Austrian border. One man went out to make a call and I was left in the car with the driver. He asked me if I would like to go to Vienna rather than Prague. Actually Vienna was much closer, I said „no“ as anything could have been used against me.

We arrived at Prague around 9 o'clock in the evening. Knowing the city, I realized we were already on the outskirts, the street had changed to an arterial road. I asked one of the men if we were still going any farther from Prague. He told me we were almost at the destination of our trip. The driver made a turn from the road to a complex of tall, old, dark buildings. The gated opened for the car to pass through, and closed again behind us. It was the infamous Ruzyn Prison reserved mainly for political prisoners. The captors dropped me off with my suitcase at the admission, and disappeared.

The admission clerk told me she had not yet seen anybody coming to prison with a piece of luggage. She was even more surprised when she opened the suitcase. Besides some various small items, pieces of cloth, ribbons, lace, wires and glue for crafts and Christmas decorations. The clerk was disgusted because she had to make an itemized inventory of the things left behind. She took yet from me jewelry with a watch and added it to the list one page long. She gave me back the apples and cookies. The prison had a policy not to store any food items.

The clerk called a woman guard who handed me a towel and ordered me to take a shower while she inspected my clothes. Then the guard told me to get dressed in my clothes again, and take a comb, toothbrush, the cookies and apples with me. She led me to the elevator and escorted me to a cell. She opened the door and locked it up behind me.

The solitary confinement was a very small dark room. One window with bars just below the ceiling, and one very small look-in window on the heavy wood door. The lights were never turned off. Without a watch one had no idea about the time of day or night. The cell had no moveable furniture besides two mattresses stuck together. No bed sheets or pillows just two heavy wool blankets, one spread over the mattresses, one folded on the top. In one corner a step-on flushable toilet, one folding-down seat mounted to the wall and a board mounted to the wall to be used as a table. For the worst part of life in prison there was no drinking water in the cell. On the wall above the toilet was a short, ½ inch diameter pipe. They let the water run through the pipe by a thin stream for one minute in the morning, and one minute at night. There was no cup or glass to catch some water for later use. When the water was running, one had to very quickly wash the hands and face, drink some and brush the teeth.

Food was handed to the prisoners three times a day, pushed in the room through a small opening at the bottom of the door. The food was in metal army field, mess kits. Also a quart sized bowl with some liquids, a chicory brew resembling black coffee in the morning and evening, and some thin vegetable soup or broth for lunch. With that a small loaf of heavy dark bread which looked like one half of brick. No meat in the diet just carbohydrates, like noodles sprinkled with bread crumbs or potatoes. For the food only spoons were used, no forks or knives. I was happy to have the cookies and apples from home, that was about all the food I ate there.

For the four days I spent in that prison, I was dressed in the same clothes day and night and did not have any showers, except the one on my admission there. I was not mistreated physically but emotionally it was stressful. My faith always helped me to remain calm and overcome difficult situations in my life.

Next morning, the prison guard came, and escorted me to a room on the upper floor to be interrogated there. A lieutenant in uniform was sitting at a desk with a stack of files in front of him. I was asked to take a seat on the right side of his desk. On the other side sat a typist.

The Lieutenant started the interrogation with a question; „Do you know why you are here?“ I answered „no“. He told me to recall what I had done. I told him, I did not commit any criminal offense, had not stolen or killed. For that he replied had I stolen something I would not be there. Then he spelled out the accusation. „An attempt for illegal escape from Czechoslovakia and contact with persons hostile to the Republic.“ That person was Karel who now lived in the USA. It already had been forgotten that in WWII he shed his blood for the liberation of the country.

They had copies of all the letters Karel ever wrote to me, as well as mine. Reports from people who followed me and information about the planned trip to Hamburg in details unknown to me. Most likely, they already had interrogated some people involved in that failed operation before talking to me.

I felt trapped, yet had to go through it.

The Lieutenant presented the documentation reading for several hours from files prepared in advance. He asked me if I had any comments. I said „no“. Then I had to put my signature on every page of the accusation. There were possibilities, agree, disagree or do not know. I did not have many objections. Basically, what was in the files was true. They know about the failed operation more than I did. It was all arranged from the outside. My part was only to be a passenger on the ship. At the end I decided not to go. In my view I had not committed any crime and told them so.

The interrogating officer was not rude and basically was objective. Finishing his job for the day he told me the case would be continued tomorrow. Then he called the guard to escort me back to the cell. Being back, I laid down on the mattresses thinking what it would be like to spend Christmas in prison, with my parents not knowing about my whereabouts. I prayed to God to help me in my misery.

The next day the same interrogator concentrated on my relation to Karel and his personality. They had scrutinized his letters looking for some clues, underlined some elements and statements, and asked me for my explanation. Karel was aware his letteres were censored so he was very careful to what he had written. He could skillfully express some of his ideas between lines. People who read his letters were not sure what he meant by that. I would not go any farther only to say our relationship was very personal. He wanted me to come and join him in marriage.

The Lieutenant completed his interrogation in two days and handed his report to the higher authorities.

Then an official from the federal police STB, dressed in civilian clothes stepped in. He was aggressive and ruthless. He yelled to intimidate me and show they had full control over me and I could not do anything on my own. He asked me why I did not go for the trip on the Elbe River when I was so „well prepared.“ In reply I told him I changed my mind, finding out I was constantly followed. He got angry yelling those two men were just stupid.

Then he asked me what kind of a job Karel had in the United States. I did not know, Karel never mentioned it in his letters that they also had read. The STB already had known from other sources that Karel was an instructor at the American Army's language school in Monterey. Besides teaching the Czech language he also was giving out information about the Czechoslovak Army. They considered this a betrayal.

At the end of his intimidating speech the man told me I had broken the law for Protection of the Czechoslovak Republic, and could be sentenced for five years in prison. Other authorities would make the final decision, and I would be notified later.

Friday morning, December 21, 1956 the guard came for me and took me to a big room in the basement, which served as an archive and registry. Pictures of me in-face and profile as well as fingerprints of both hands were taken there. The registrar filed a questionnaire with my personal data and all the information they wanted to keep in their files.

I was to be officially discharged from the prison in a matter of an hour. They gave me back my suitcase. I requested to take a shower and change clothes. The request was granted. I took out of my suitcase some clothes to change and felt better right away. I disposed of the clothes

worn in the prison for four days and nights, not to be seen any more for the bad memories.

As I walked out, a black car with a driver and a guide was waiting for me outside. They drove me to Bratislava, dropped me off at the main railroad station and told me to buy a train ticket to Kremnica. I was prohibited to tell anybody where I had been and for what reason. Being alone again, I called my parents that I would be home in the evening.

Father waited for me at my arrival. It was so good to be home again. My sister Alena came from Prague the next day and together we had a nice quiet Christmas. My parents had no idea where I spent the previous week. I only told my sister to let her know what happened, making sure she would not talk about it with anybody.

Other Ways to Get Out

In 1957, after spending five years in the United States, Karel was eligible to become a US citizen. He gave it a lot of thought some hesitation. Being a person of strong moral principles he had a hard time to make the right decision. As an officer of the Czechoslovak Army he took an oath of allegiance to the Czechoslovak Republic to protect her and fight for her freedom. He definitely fulfilled his promise in the war.

Looking back, analyzing his beliefs, he arrived to a conclusion the oath he had taken was for the democratic republic, not for the communist system he escaped. Finally he was determined to become a US citizen, without any reservations to be loyal to his new country.

Once he became a US citizen he stirred-up the waters to get me out legally. He wrote petitions for help and intervention in his case to the US Congress, Department of State and the American Embassy in Prague. There was a new military attaché, Col. Frank Devlin, a former student of Karel's at Army Language School in Monterey. He also wrote a long letter to the UPI (United Press International) staff correspondent, C.H. McCann, in New York, about the action „Eva“.

Czech authorities changed their tactics. They took their time to explore the situation, never rushing to conclusions. They mailed to me, early in the spring of 1958, I received a message to come one Saturday at noon to a nice restaurant in Bratislava. They wanted to talk to me and had some „good news“ for me. When I arrived at the restaurant in Bratislava I caught the sight of one man sitting at a table alone. As I walked in, he got up moving towards me to his

table alone. As I walked in, he got up moving towards me to invite me to his table. He introduced himself by the assumed name Borecky, a „friend from Prague“.

I never met this „friend“ before but knew immediately where to place him. These people could have played any role, well trained for any situation, rough or smooth. Borecky was a tall man in his forties, dressed in a business suit with a tie, and manners of a gentleman.

We sat down, ordered some food and after a short small talk he came to the point of his mission. With a somewhat insincere smile he said, „ We still want to help Mr.Hlasny and you to get together. Why did you try to leave illegally? We may let you go legally if Mr.Hlasny would be willing to „cooperate“ with us.“ He asked me what Karel’s reaction would be, could they rely on him? I told Borecky I had not seen Karel for almost ten years. Those challenging years spent in foreign countries could have had influence on his outlook on the situation.

Myself, I did not know what his reaction might be. Of course, Borecky asked me to give Karel a hint about this „cooperation.“

Shortly after lunch we parted. Borecky flew back to Prague. I went to visit Karel’s brother Tonik who lived in Ivanka pri Dunaji near Bratislava. He and his wife have always been very hospitable and friendly to me. We did not talk of what was going on between Karel and me at that time. Tonik remembered his young years growing up together with his three brothers and a sister in Bludov. Tonik used to be mischievous and had some funny stories to tell. I stayed with them overnight and went back home the next day.

In the meantime Karel proceeded in his persistent quest to get me out of communist Czechoslovakia. He engaged in his plans Congressman Charles M.Teague, the State Department and the American Embassy in Prague. Karel exchanged many letters with all of them and received their help in understanding his situation and got some valuable advice. US Representative Teague and his faithful assistant Mr.Lawrence Slater took personal interest in Karel’s case, and they advanced his requests to the proper authorities for consideration. All the correspondence to the Embassy in Prague was sent through the State Department’s courier pouch. At the American Embassy in Prague the military attaché Colonel Francis Devlin, being in touch with representatives of the Czech government he was able to give Karel hints how Czech authorities might react.

In one of his letters to Karel, Col. Devlin stated, „Since you are a person for whom the regime would not like to do favors, it is hardly likely that they would grant your fiancée the necessary permission to leave the country to marry you- quite the contrary-anything that would make you happy they certainly would not assist.“ He indicated I should seek permission to leave the country temporarily, as to visit another country, and not return to

Czechoslovakia. Should my reason for seeking an exit visa be known, the results most likely would be futile.

And so it happened. In February 1958 Karel suggested in his letter I should apply for a British visitor's visa for the summer. His friends, the Bruhas, in England informed the British Embassy in Prague they would provide their hospitality during my stay in England. Colonel Josef Bruha and Karel stayed close friends since being roommates at the IRO camp in Ludwigsburg, West Germany, after both escaped from Czechoslovakia ten years ago. Josef sent me an invitation for a visit with him and his wife. We exchange some letters and gifts. I visited the British Embassy in Prague, they promised me a visitor's visa after I presented my valid Czechoslovak passport. At the same time I applied at the passport department of the Czech Foreign Ministry in Prague for issuing me a passport with an exit visa. I filled the official application, enclosed two photographs, and waited for the delivery. I was promised by the authorities to get the exit visa at last, and wrote about it to Karel.

Karel planned to join me in England to get married there and afterwards for me to accompany him to the United States as his wife. He made travel arrangements for himself, and purchased a tuxedo for his wedding. He did not disclose his intentions openly in his letters.

For me it was a long wait to get my exit papers. Inquiring what happened to my application for the passport I was told that it was lost and should reapply. When my second application „disappeared“ I realized I would not be allowed to leave the country. They simply denied me the passport and exit visa. They suspected I would not return back, and held me as a hostage, and bargaining chip for their own plans. It was a cruel game of cat and mouse, myself being a little mouse in their claws. Karel was greatly disappointed. All his efforts and high hopes unfulfilled due to the failure of delivery from the other side.

Early in September I succeeded in smuggling an uncensored letter, sewn in a souvenir, to Karel in United States. At that time, some old-timers from New Jersey were visiting their relatives in Kremnica. My mother knew these local people very well. She asked them if their visitors from the USA would kindly take a little souvenir with them and send it from New Jersey to California. They graciously agreed to do so.

I made a small heart from red felt, decorated with folks motive embroidery. Stuffed it with fine wood shavings, and smuggled a letter inside. Sewed it back, covering the seams with decorative stichery. The people from New Jersey were to send that souvenir to Karel in California, explaining in their letter to open the heart, as there was a secret message for him inside.

In that uncensored letter I described my situation and warned him what might follow. That letter read,

„My dearest,

The time goes by, and up to now has brought nothing good. I have been waiting all summer for approval of my application in vain. The whole matter has frozen, and all the promises were just empty words. I can say literally that the matter has gotten into the hands of professional liars who intend to use it for their own benefit. It is otherwise of no concern to them.

You really can not imagine what kind of difficulties are connected with it, and I am convinced that these delays are deliberate, because of this I am losing faith in their previous promises.

A favorable outcome of the matter is of no concern to them. Instead, I think it is you in whom they are interested, they would probably like to get something from you.

You have no idea how far the fingers of these people reach. When I do not hear from you for such long periods of time, I fear for your safety. I worry that they may harm you. Therefore be very careful, and act accordingly.

Perhaps they have already made themselves known to you, either by letter or in person. As far as I have come in contact with them myself- in fact they called on me before I filled the application for permission to leave the country, and took the matter in their own hands. All they gave me were promises from which up to now I have received nothing.

I pray that everything will come out well, and we will at last be together. I send you my heartfelt regards and kisses and I am looking forward to our reunion.“

After receiving the smuggled letter, it became apparent to Karel the Czech communist authorities wanted to use him for espionage. He translated the letter and sent it with his comments to the Legislative Assistant to Congressman Teague, Mr.Slater, and to Colonel Devlin, Army attaché at the American Embassy in Prague.

In October the American Consul General in Prague informed Congressman Teague that Eva Marholdova might obtain the immigration visa at one of the American Consulates in Germany assuming she was permitted to leave Czechoslovakia. I would get a non-quota visa and might readily travel to the United States to be married there.

That was very good news, except the problem of getting permission by the Czech authorities to leave the country.

Karel instructed me in his letter to visit the American Embassy in Prague to apply for the immigration visa and request again the exit papers from the Czech authorities. The communist authorities decided to now step-in and do some bargaining with Karel in return for my exit papers.

Nacvalač versus Hlasny

A newly appointed counselor for the Czechoslovak mission at the United Nations in New York City, Miroslav Nacvalač, was selected as a point of contact for Karel. Nacvalač was a tall, handsome man, ten years younger than Karel. Intelligent, precise, and articulate, he was fluent in English, German, Czech and Russian. A graduate from the soviet school for espionage in Moscow, he was well trained for his work in diplomatic service.

The first meeting with Nacvalač took place at Karel's residence in Monterey, on Monday, November 3, 1958 early in the evening after Karel's class hours. Nacvalač arrived in Monterey earlier, strolled through the town and researched Karel's neighborhood for safety reasons.

Karel lived about three street blocks from the school where he taught. Walking home, he saw a man on the opposite side of the first crossing, dressed in a long overcoat and a hat pushed over his forehead, standing on the corner looking around in all directions. As Karel crossed the street, that man started to walk on the other side of the street in the same direction watching Karel from behind.

Karel came home, changed his business suit for more comfortable clothes as he always did, and looked for something to eat.

About half an hour later at 5:45 p.m. the same man Karel saw standing on the corner, knocked on his door. Karel opened the door and the man told him in Czech, „I have greetings for you from Eva.“ Karel immediately knew he was the contact, but told him, „I don't know you, what do you want?“

Nacvalač introduced himself and told Karel he wanted to make a deal with him. I could be released from Czechoslovakia if Karel would provide some information. Karel asked, „What kind of information?“ Nacvalač said, „Anything, names of instructors, students, their ranks and characteristics, your textbooks.“ Karel said he would not give him anything and asked him to leave. Nacvalač became angry and jittery.

Karel shouted at him, „Go away, or I'll get my gun and shoot you as a spy!“ Nacvalač yelled back as he was leaving, „You would never see your fiancée again.“

Karel was in a stronger position than Nacvalač. He was an American citizen on his own territory. Nacvalač, a diplomat-spy, came from New York uninvited for a clandestine meeting. He did not want to go back empty-handed as his mission had failed.

On the same evening, about an hour later, he returned, and in a more humble way asked Karel to give him something to prove he was there. Karel gave him a copy of „Military Terminology and Tactics of Czech Armed Forces“ written by him, and used as a textbook in the Czech Department, nothing secret.

Nacvalač was overjoyed. He had something concrete in his hands. He sat down and started to make plans for my departure from Czechoslovakia. Nacvalač suggested I could go to East Berlin, and from there they might arrange my safe passage to West Berlin. Karel said,“No way! How many people have been shot at that crossing?“ He insisted on legal exit papers and he would find a safe route for my departure, making the arrangements himself.

Nacvalač also asked Karel for a promise not to inform the American authorities about their meeting. Karel was very sure he would not comply. At the end of the meeting Nacvalač tore a US one dollar bill in two irregular pieces, gave one piece to Karel for future identification, keeping the other piece for himself.

At the end of the same week Congressman Teague was in Monterey, being invited as a guest speaker for the graduation ceremony at the Army Language School. Karel met with Rep. Teague at his office in town and told him about the spy who paid a visit Karel a few days ago. After their conversation Congressman Teague gave Karel a letter of introduction to the federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) office in San Francisco. Karel's double-spy operation had begun.

Two FBI agents from San Francisco's office Bill and Vadja were assigned to that case. Karel made reports about the first and forthcoming clandestine meetings, and the agents cleared the material which was given away to avoid a security risk or damage.

The next meeting was arranged in Los Angeles on January 11, 1959. Information about regional military projects was requested, which actually was available from public records. Karel also passed names of some people studying Slavic languages, checked for character weaknesses that could later have been used for blackmail purposes. The FBI cleared all the information.

Nacvalač was very pleased and paid Karel \$ 600. Karel turned the money to the FBI together with a detailed report on that meeting.

Nacvalač canceled a following meeting planned for March in Los Angeles due to his busy schedule at the United Nations.

In the meantime, in February 1959 I was notified that my application for an exit visa from Czechoslovakia, submitted in December 1958, had been refused. I lost count of the applications I had already filed, all had been rejected. The Czech authorities were stalling for time to test Karel's loyalty.

At that point Karel's patience was at the end. At the May 28 meeting, which took place at Karel's residence in Monterey, Karel told Nacvalač straight, there would be no more „co-operation“ and he was going to disclose it in public, unless I was released from Czechoslovakia within a month. Nacvalač promised expeditious delivery of my exit papers. They drank to it, and Karel presented to the FBI the fingerprints from Nacvalač's glass.

From that point on, things moved fast.

I received the emigration papers, which were supposed to be submitted as soon as possible. The papers required recommendation from the employer and the trade union. When I presented those papers at the school for the appropriate signatures, the people in the administration thought I was crazy, and would not do it. Instead, they requested my resignation with provision I would stay to the end of the school year, before they could find a replacement for me.

But the papers went through the channels very fast. In two weeks I was notified they were approved and my final exit papers would follow.

I was deprived of my citizenship and the final exit paper in three languages, Czech, French and Russian stated, „Eva Marholdova, a stateless person, temporarily stationed in Czechoslovakia, may cross the border once at any crossing, for the purpose of emigration to the USA“.

It was shameful. I never got a passport or a regular exit visa. I was born in Czechoslovakia, lived there for 32 years, and worked as a teacher in public service. At the end I was expelled from my own country as an undesirable person.

I was sick and tired of the treatment I received and wanted to go as far away as I could.

Fortunately, California was far enough, and my dear Karel was waiting there for me faithfully.

Finally Together

In June 1959, before the end of the school year, I received the official papers for emigration to the USA. Notifying the school administration it came to them as a shock. They did not believe it could happen to me. I was not allowed to speak with students. Soon enough

all the faculty knew. Their reaction was varied. Some people envied me, some wished me good luck and some of the communists showed long, cold faces without saying a word. Politics deprived all of them of their feelings. They did not even attempt to give me a small farewell party after I had worked there for five years.

I did not care anymore. My mind already was far away.

My landlords wished me a lot of happiness and gave me a nice gift, a delicate fine china basket with sculptured roses and forget-me-nots.

I moved from Zvolen back to my parents to start the preparation for a long journey. My brother ordered for me two large custom-made wooden ship-trunks for my possessions to be sent by surface and sea. He already was married with two children and lived in another town but tried to help me as much as he could.

In one trunk I packed my favorite Czech books, later I thought I should have left them behind, they were heavy and took too much space. In the other trunk I packed embroidered linen, Czech crystal glass and fine china, silverware, two large goose-down pillows and some clothes.

All the items should have gone to custom inspection. The trunks were so heavy a custom's official had to come to our house to check them. By coincidence the custom officer was a father of a former student of mine. He was very kind and passed everything, even gave me some helpful hints. The trunks were sealed, certified and shipped away. They arrived in California long after I had settled there though.

On the other side Karel made a tireless effort to keep the wheel of fortune moving to his advantage with the help of people who could make it happen. Congressman Teague in a letter to the State Department had asked for intervention through the American Embassy in Prague to obtain permission for me to leave Czechoslovakia for the purpose to marry American citizen Karel Hlasny, resident of California. The American Embassy presented a note to the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs on behalf of Eva Marholdova, which had influenced the results.

Karel's demands for my release from the CSSR presented to Nacvalač at their May 28, 1959 meeting in Monterey also had contributed to the issuance of the exit permit in June.

On July 6, 1959 Congressman Teague wrote to Karel, „Have you made any plans yet where to meet Eva when she accomplishes exit from Czechoslovakia? As it appears now she will be able to come directly to the United States when she gets her visa. We are very hopeful that everything will work out satisfactorily for you very soon, of course.“

The American Embassy in Prague informed me that my petition for an Immigration visa was transferred to the American Embassy in Munich with recommendation for immediate action. Karel received the same information through correspondence with Rep. Teague.

Karel was busy making my travel arrangements for a trip from Munich to Monterey. He purchased an airplane ticket by TWA in my name. He also deposited \$200 with the American Consulate in Munich to be at my disposal after I would arrive there. The Czech money at that time was not acceptable for exchange in Germany. People traveling abroad were allowed to get an allowance of twenty dollars in money exchanged by the Czech banks. With that you could not get too far.

Karel sent me an exciting letter about my travel plans with enclosed copies for the payment of my airplane tickets and money deposited at the Consulate in Munich to prove to the Czech authorities my passage had been paid for and I would have sufficient means for my stay in West Germany. He also made a tentative timetable for my trip. Thanks to his thoroughness and thoughtful care I was all set for my journey.

The most difficult task yet was to say goodbye to my parents with whom I had a very close personal relationship. They were happy for me but regretted they might not see me for a long time, even forever. My father was in ill health so he stayed home but mother insisted to accompany me on my last trip to Prague before the final departure from Czechoslovakia. In Prague I paid a visit to the American Embassy to express my personal thanks and gratitude to Consul John Dennis and Colonel Devlin for their consideration and assistance in obtaining the immigration visa. The Consul asked me about the time schedule for my arrival to Munich and wired it to the American Consulate there.

I spent a last day in Prague with my mother doing a little shopping for the trip. At noon August 11, 1959 at the main railroad station I boarded an express train for Munich, Germany. My mother hugged me and both of us cried like at a funeral. The time had come to follow my destiny.

From the train window I watched the quickly passing scenery of my country I was leaving forever. In Cheb, at the border station with Germany the train stopped and the custom officials entered the train for inspection of the passports and luggage of the travelers. They gazed in amazement at my unusual travel document, but it was official, so they returned it to me with no questions asked. I was relieved when we finally crossed the border.

At the Munich railroad station a secretary from the American Consulate waited for me with my photograph in her hand. She welcomed me on my arrival and drove me to a Pension, a bed and breakfast inn, where she already had made a reservation for my stay. She told me to

come to the American Consulate next morning to receive my immigration visa to the USA together with other travel documents, and money deposited there by Karel for me.

At the consulate everything was done quickly and smoothly. The secretary still took me to the travel agency to confirm my flight next day from Paris to San Francisco via a polar route by TWA, and connecting flight from Munich to Paris.

Finally I sent a telegram to Karel, „Wait for me in San Francisco August 14th at 2;35 PM. Love Eva.

It came to Karel as a shock, after waiting for such a long time he did not think at the end it would happen so quickly. But he was there for me.

The flight was delayed for two hours due to the failure of one of the four engines. Finally we landed at San Francisco airport.

I looked for a dear familiar face, and thought Karel would jump for joy seeing me at last. It was not his style. He stood there calm and serious, looking very formal with a bouquet of red roses in his hand.

I hugged him, laughed and cried, and suddenly felt very insecure inside. We had not seen each other for eleven years. It was a long separation and we both had changed. Keeping in touch by carefully written correspondence, being aware it had been censored, and receiving some photographs from time to time was not the same as being in close personal contact. We had to rediscover each other. It seemed like starting all over anew for all we had missed so much, and falling in love again. After such a long absence, suddenly the time for us was just too short. Karel planned to get married in a week, and there was so much to do yet before wedding.

With the flight on which I arrived delayed we missed the connecting flight to Monterey and had to wait a few more hours for another. We had a quiet dinner at the airport restaurant, not talking too much even though there would have been so much to say. Just looking at each other in disbelief we were finally together.

Karel arranged for me to stay at The Mission Inn in downtown Monterey, a charming small hotel. Originally it was an old adobe with a lovely garden. In the years, two additional floors were put up but the old California Spanish style was preserved. The owners, a handsome young couple, Bernie and Irene McMenamin, were friendly and helpful to arrange everything for our wedding.

When we arrived there, Karel dropped me off, kissed me good night, and left me there alone, saying he would pick me up at 10 o'clock next morning. We both were tired and emotionally drained.

Next day, Saturday the 15th of August, after having a breakfast in town, we went to the Rectory of San Carlos Cathedral to see the priest, Father John Ryan, and ask him to perform for us a wedding ceremony in a week on August 22th. Father Ryan was a conservative Catholic priest of Irish origin. He just said it was impossible. How could he know I was not married before, divorced or had other obligations in the country I came from to make the marriage invalid.

Karel pleaded with him, saying we had been engaged for eleven years, due to insurmountable obstacles imposed on us by the communist government we could not get together before. Father Ryan showed understanding and compassion saying he would need some certification from a priest in my former home parish that I was eligible to be married in the Catholic Church. He offered to send a telegram in Latin to the priest in my hometown and request his reply in the same language. Then he told us, starting next Monday, we had to come every evening to his rectory for premarital religious instruction. He promised he would help us as much as he could under the unusual circumstances.

When we came back on Monday, Father Ryan told us he already had received a reply from the priest in Kremnica, Czechoslovakia., certifying I was single with no obligations in the old country. Though he had yet to ask the bishop for exception to the established rules to marry us in such a short time of preparation.

Next day he told us it was approved and set the date for our wedding for Saturday, August 22nd at 3 p.m. He also gave us the wedding vows to be memorized, especially by me. As I did not speak English the bridegroom would need to explain them to me. With that, all of the requirements by the church would be satisfactorily accomplished.

We had yet to go for a blood test, obtain a marriage license from the county clerk, and buy our wedding rings. We selected simple gold bands with my first name and the date of our wedding engraved inside Karel's ring and his first name and the same date engraved in mine. On Wednesday, Karel and I traveled by Greyhound Bus to San Francisco to buy a white wedding gown for me. Karel had no problem himself. He already had purchased his tuxedo a year ago when he planned to have our wedding in England.

Arriving at Union Square, at Macy's we picked the first wedding gown, which was just my size. It did not need any alteration and I liked it. The saleslady picked for me a head ornament in a shape of a little crown with a veil, and a nice pair of white shoes. All the shopping was done at the same store. We left it there to be packed up for us and picked it up later.

We still had time to stroll through the downtown area of the city. There we visited a theater called Cinerama with an enormous circular screen, or several screens put together. Here was a

show of Tropical islands in the South Pacific. One almost had a feeling of being there. It was spectacular.

On the bus going back to Monterey we practiced our wedding vows, with Karel correcting my pronunciation. I memorized it quite well. We just were short of time for everything.

On Thursday, Mr. Harvey Hancock, a local representative for Congressman Teague called for a press conference at The Mission Inn where Karel had to tell the story of his life and about our struggle to get me out of Communist Czechoslovakia. Herald writer, Mike Thomas, made a nice full-page article of it in the local newspaper.

The day of days was approaching very fast. Irene and Bernie offered to make a wedding reception in their private quarters at The Mission Inn. They made arrangements for the flowers, wedding cake and hired a well-known photographer Steve Crouch to be at the service. Ours was the most hastily arranged wedding but at the end all was well.

At the Inn some of the guests were excited to have a wedding there. One lady from San Francisco, staying in an adjoining room to mine, offered to take me to a beauty salon for a hairstyle and manicure, and insisted to pay for it. Some others brought in small gifts.

On the wedding day, Irene, with the assistance of some guests, dressed me in my elaborate wedding gown to see that everything was perfect. When I walked down the stairs into the lobby, all dressed up, with a little crown on my head, Karel waiting there for me said, I looked like a princess, maybe Cinderella.

Karel's friend Milos Jilich drove us to the church in his car, with the chatter of empty cans on a string being drawn behind.

Since we had no relatives in this country, the wedding party was small, only twelve invited guests. Karel's best friend, Rudolf, who once made arrangements for my unsuccessful escape, gave me away substituting for my father.

The wedding ceremony was solemn. When Karel and I stood side by side at the altar both of us were so overcome with emotion that we hardly could talk. Everything was done so fast that we needed some time to put ourselves back together. After a short reception we changed to our regular clothes, and just the two of us went to a nice restaurant Gallatins, a short walking distance from the Inn, for dinner and dance. We did not stay there too long and returned back to The Mission Inn, where the McMenamins offered us their best suite with flowers, wedding cake and champagne. Both of us were tired and exhausted but tried to make the best of it we could.

In the morning on Sunday, we moved our things to Karel's little cottage, and at noon flew on our honeymoon to Reno and Lake Tahoe, Nevada. Reno for me was too noisy and crazy, I did

not care much for gambling. Only when we moved to Lake Tahoe, there in a beautiful natural setting we finally could relax and enjoy ourselves.

We stayed at the Tahoe Inn, a small hotel on the North shore of the lake, a quiet place with beautiful scenery surrounding it. We took long walks into the woods, sailed on the lake and were glad we just had a time for ourselves. We were happy we had found each other again.

Starting a New Life

When we returned from our honeymoon we settled into a small one-bedroom redwood cottage in the wooded hills of Monterey, on Johnson Avenue where Karel already had lived, as a single man, for six years.

The owners of the cottage were two elderly sisters who lived together one block away on Jefferson Street. One of the ladies was disabled after a stroke and had a speech impediment from which she could hardly be understood. Her sister took care of her. Both ladies adored Karel. Knowing the story of his life, they were overjoyed he finally got married, and they became very fond of me too.

Our little cottage had its own history. A high school spanish teacher, Miss.Gregory, who was a close friend of John Steinbeck, the famous novelist, owned it previously. In the living room, on the top shelf of a built-in-bookcase, was a sculpture relief of an Italian Renaissance Madonna with Child made of Plaster of Paris. On its backside was a handwritten inscription to Miss.Gregory by John Steinbeck, bearing his signature. A few years later, when we would visit the cottage to refresh our memories, the Madonna was gone. It had disappeared with apparent help from some of the cottage's later tenants.

The cottage had a rustic look. In the center was a large living room, with a kitchen on one side, and a small bedroom and bath on the other.

The interior of the living room was made of unpainted redwood. More remarkable was a huge fireplace built of Carmel Stone. The room had small multi-pane windows and was always dark. From the beams of its cathedral ceiling hung a primitive chandelier made of an old wagon wheel holding five orange-colored, flame-shaped light bulbs. The furniture was old-fashioned and comfortable.

The kitchen was the brightest room, with walls and cupboards painted white, and large table pushed to one wall with three chairs on its sides. There we had our meals. There was a gas stove and an old refrigerator resembling an ice cave, no other appliances.

The bedroom looked unusual painted in a dark maroon color, with two single white beds pushed to opposite walls, leaving a small space in between. A built-in dresser and the closet's doors were also painted white.

The house had a large garden with grapevines clinging to a trellis on one side. Across the backyard was a large storage shed, with heavy sliding doors on its two long sides. Inside was almost everything the two old landladies did not want to use anymore, and had moved from their house to their rental property. There was various furniture, dressers and chairs, rugs, drapes, linen, old plates and flatware, old-fashioned clothes and hats.

I befriended Mrs. Fogg, who was an artist and worked at Oliver's Art Store in downtown Monterey. She lived two houses up the street from our place. For our first Christmas she helped Karel choose a set of oil paints, together with other necessary materials. It was a wonderful gift and I started to paint as a useful hobby.

As a painter, I liked the colorful scenery of Fisherman's Wharf and Cannery Row by the seashore. The smell was a different story. From the sardine canneries, the waste went back to the sea. The smell of decaying fish was quite unpleasant. Sometimes, with the wind coming from the sea, the smell was blown all over the town. Cannery Row was unique and through the years changed completely, later becoming a tourist attraction, once the canneries had shut down.

After I became pregnant with our first child we bought an used Chevrolet car which was a great improvement. On Saturdays we did all our shopping, and took the laundry to a Laundromat to wash and dry it there by machine. Sundays we went for short trips and enjoyed driving through the countryside. Of course, later the car was necessary for my doctor's appointments.

Our friends realized the redwood cottage was too small for a family. Rudolf, who was very enterprising, disliked his job at the language school and bought a large old motel, The Los Laureles Lodge in nearby Carmel Valley. He and his wife Vera sold to us their two-bedroom house in Pacific Grove, even left some furniture behind. We moved there two months before our baby was born, having enough time to prepare a nursery for him. This house was plastered inside, with light painted walls and looked much more cheerful.

Finally we had a car, a house, that with two mortgages we shared with the bank, and on June 28, 1960 our first son Peter was born. Karel was enjoyed and so was I, we had accomplished all of this in our first year of marriage.

Nacvalač Trapped

Of course, the spy case did not end with my coming to the United States. The Czech spies thought, because they had done Karel a favor in return he should deliver more information. They planned for more meetings in the future. All were supposed to be in San Francisco. Nacvalač liked San Francisco, a cosmopolitan city where foreigners could blend-in without being noticed. The meetings were all scheduled for weekends. Nacvalač flew from New York on Friday and stayed overnight in the city. Karel would come to San Francisco on a Greyhound bus on Saturday morning. The meetings were not frequent, once in four months. Nacvalač did not want to arouse suspicion for being absent from New York too much.

Though Nacvalač played his role carefully he was unaware that Karel had been working with the FBI and was reporting about their dealings in every detail.

The date for the next meeting was set for November 14, 1959 at the Milton Kreis restaurant at the corner of Union Square. Karel delivered information cleared by the FBI and received \$500 in payment. At the same time FBI agents Bill and Vadja, being on their home territory, decided to make their own documentation of the clandestine meeting. With a long-range camera, from a flat across the street, they took pictures of Nacvalač and Karel entering the restaurant separately. At the doorway was a newsstand, and a man standing in front of it appeared in both pictures. They still took more pictures of Nacvalač leaving the restaurant looking around if he was not tailed.

Inside, the meeting was conducted in a friendly tone; the participants addressed each other by their first names. Nacvalač wanted to be called „Emil“ and Karel now used that name in dealing with him. Besides their usual „business“, in friendly discussions they talked about their private lives. Emil/ Nacvalač lived in New York with his attractive wife and two young sons, eight and ten years old. The kids attended a private school provided by the Russian mission for the children of East European diplomats. Emil's wife liked New York very much. They lived in a comfortable apartment and had a good social life. Regardless of Emil's contempt for the United States, Karel had the impression Emil might defect at the end of his three-year term.

Emil in his operations was later accompanied by his two junior partners, Zdenek Vrana and Evzen Zapotocky. He used them for his security, to observe if they were not followed, and to train them for their own future assignments. Zdenek was supposed to be Emil's successor after the end of his term. Karel called them „apprentices“.

Karel would first meet Emil's associates at their April 2, 1960 meeting. Emil introduced them by their names. Karel also recognized them from the photographs already provided by the FBI.

Karel had a wedding card from his class with congratulations on our wedding more than half a year ago. Those students already had graduated from the ALS and were dispersed on their own assignments. Emil was very eager to get hold of that card for the signatures on it. He borrowed it, and promised to return it very soon. Karel wanted to have it for a keepsake. The FBI knew about the card.

For the next meeting in November 1960 Emil did not come, sending only his associates Zdenek and Evzen to California. They most likely stayed overnight in Monterey. When Karel was boarding the bus for San Francisco at 7:30 a.m., he saw the two men at the Greyhound bus station in Monterey. They observed him to see if he was alone, and let him go. They then decided to snoop around our new house in Pacific Grove. Looking from the window, I saw two men dressed in overcoats and hats walking up our driveway at an unusual time for a visit at 7:30 a.m. Soon enough they knocked on the door. When I opened it they did not introduce themselves but asked if they could speak to me in Czech. Right away I got the idea who they were. One of them asked, „Is Mr. Hlasny home? We would like to talk to him“. I told them he left for San Francisco, what they actually had known. I did not invite them inside, let them stand on the porch. They looked around and peeped in the living room through the door.

About then Peter woke up and started to cry. I told the unwelcome visitors, „Look gentlemen, I don't have time for you, have to take care of my baby. You wanted to talk to my husband, so call him in the evening after he will come home.“ So the men left. They did not make it to San Francisco for the scheduled meeting.

When Karel was coming home they waited for him at a Greyhound station in Salinas where he was supposed to change buses for Monterey. The men approached Karel, identifying themselves with the torn dollar bill and wanted to talk with him. Zdenek said, „We bring you greetings from Emil.“ Karel asked them if they brought his wedding card. Then he told them he would speak only with Emil, boarded the bus and left.

This meeting failed completely. Karel went to San Francisco in vain, and Zdenek with Evzen flew to New York without accomplishing anything. When Karel came home that evening I told him about the early morning visitors. He knew immediately who they were.

There was peace and quiet for some time. We had a beautiful Christmas, the first Christmas for our baby Peter. We celebrated the Holidays in a traditional way inviting some good friends to join us. We tried to forget having problems with those troublesome people, the spies from the CSSR. But they would not leave us alone for long.

The meeting in January 1961 was the wildest one. When Karel arrived at Blum's on Union Square in San Francisco, Emil's associates Zdenek and Evzen were waiting for him there.

They told Karel, Emil was in the city and they would meet him at another place. They called a taxi and drove to a park high on a hill by Coit Tower. From there they walked down the hill and took another hotel, the Mark Hopkins. Emil sat there in the lobby sipping a Martini. He walked out with Karel, leaving his associates behind. Outside he called a taxi, which took them to Chinatown. They walked down a street there and went to a Chinese restaurant for lunch. Zdenek and Evzen followed them in another taxi, and appeared at the same restaurant, keeping a distance from Emil. The two men sat down at another table, watching Karel and Emil, the other people there and everything else going on at that restaurant.

Emil returned to Karel the wedding card. Karel showed him a phony mobilization plan for the Army language school given to him by the FBI. Karel told Emil the papers were „classified,“ he could not give them away, they were for „eyes only“. Emil walked somewhere to take pictures of the papers. He returned them to Karel, together with the Polaroid camera to keep for future use. He also paid Karel \$200 . It was not much, but the information he got was worthless. Emil also mentioned to Karel that next time he would give invisible ink so he could write secret messages over the print of magazines. They would be sent to a certain address in Prague to be treated there so the messages could be read.

Karel did not like this business at all. After that meeting he returned home tired and very upset. Just wished never to see the spies again. He completed a thorough account of that meeting for the FBI; returned their papers, together with the camera and money he had received. At that time he did not know it actually was the last meeting with the spies. He never received the „magic ink“ neither had he heard from Emil for a long time.

Most likely Emil realized the information he received at the last meeting was false. As his three-year term at the United Nations was coming to the end he probably wanted to stay in New York and keep a low profile. He also had pretended to be interested in becoming a defector to the USA.

In June 1961, the FBI in New York received an anonymous call indicating that a diplomat of the Czech mission at the United Nations might defect to the USA. His name was Miroslav Nacvalač. A meeting with him could be arranged at noon, June 13, 1961 at the Gripsholm restaurant on 57th Street in New York City.

The FBI presumed the call was made by Nacvalač himself. Two agents were sent for that meeting, together with Colonel Frantisek Tisler, former military attaché at the Czechoslovak Embassy in Washington DC, who defected to the USA in 1960. Nacvalač and Tisler knew each other well.

At the Gripsholm restaurant Nacvalač was sitting at a table, having a discussion with a man from New York. One FBI agent walked to their table showed his badge and politely asked the other man to leave in order to talk to Nacvalač privately. Then Tisler with the second agent joined them. In the conversation Nacvalač did not express his wish to defect, instead he defended the communist system. The situation became awkward; they never came to the point or purpose of that meeting. Tisler felt useless. He wanted to help Nacvalač but did not have a chance to do it. Nacvalač was frustrated and sarcastic.

Three days later Nacvalač presented at the United Nations a protest note against the USA, claiming he was apprehended by US agents who wanted to engage him in „espionage collaboration“.

The State Department in turn charged Nacvalač with espionage against the USA for seeking information about US military installations. Nacvalač defiantly denied those charges.

In the next three days several charges by the US State Department and counter-charges by the Czechoslovak Delegation at the United Nations were exchanged. Finally the name of Karel Hlasny was disclosed as proof of Nacvalač's meetings with him in California. Still defiant Nacvalač claimed those were lies, he had never been in California or met Karel Hlasny. The FBI then provided photographs of Nacvalač and Hlasny in front of a restaurant in San Francisco. The photographs, in big detailed enlargements, were convincing evidence of spy activities by Nacvalač in California. They also proved he lied when he claimed never having been there.

The evidence was all out. In 26 months from 1958 to 1961 he had six meetings in California with Karel Hlasny who accepted \$ 1,700 in cash from the Czechoslovak source, turning it over to the FBI with reports of their meetings. In return Hlasny gave out useless and often false information about US Army mobilization plans and the names of language school graduates assigned to Europe approved by the FBI.

Nacvalač was officially charged with espionage and expelled from the USA as „persona non grata.“ His diplomatic immunity was revoked. He could choose to leave voluntarily within 48 hours or be deported. On June 22, 1961 Nacvalač accompanied by his wife and two young sons voluntarily departed from New York's airport on his flight to Prague, Czechoslovakia. His two associates, Zdenek Vrana and Evzen Zapotocky, exposed in Nacvalač's spy case, were quietly recalled home by their government. With all three of them gone the case finally came to its conclusion.

At the end we personally felt sorry for Nacvalač who was instrumental for my coming to the USA. He returned home defeated and discredited for future foreign service. A few years later

he died in Prague (as „Colonel of KGB“) in a car accident officially reported as driving under the influence of alcohol. He was an intelligent young man who passed the opportunity to remain in the United States when he, and his family, could have had a better life.

People make their own choices- for better or worse.

The Nacvalač spy case was widely publicized all over the United States and Western Europe.

For three days our little house in Pacific Grove was buzzing with newsmen, cameras and television reporters seeking an interview with Karel Hlasny who was directly involved in the case. Karel, himself a private and humble person, did not enjoy so much publicity. Myself being pregnant with our second child, I did not need all that excitement either. We felt our privacy was violated but with news-people being persistent it was inevitable. Fortunately, news only lasts only a short time being quickly replaced by something more current.

The Commandant of the Army Language School, Colonel James Collins gave Karel a scrapbook containing a collection of newspaper clippings from the local paper all the way to papers in Washington DC. He also enclosed his personal letter of appreciation for the job well done.

Congressman Teague, the State Department, and the Assistant Director of the FBI who wrote, „You had done a marvelous job under extreme pressure, and can be proud of the great contribution you have made to this country“ also praised Karel.

Karel never sought any recognition. Most of the great people are humble. Small people seek the recognition to boost their ego. Karel never needed that.

We were very happy and greatly relieved when all the excitement was over, that we could enjoy our private life again.

In October 1961 our second son, Tom was born the cause of much happiness. Karel became a family man and devoted father to his sons Peter and Tom. Both of our sons gave us true joy and fulfillment all of our lives. We watched them grow, later participating in many of their activities. Tried to provide them a normal live in a loving home.

Karel was a deeply religious person, a true believer. His faith in God gave him strength to carry on in many difficult situations during his life. Myself, through the years we spent together, I have learned so much from him, following his example.

Karel used to say;

„Always tell the truth, do not even exaggerate. People who do not tell the truth entangle themselves in their lies and do not remember what they have said earlier. The truth always prevails.“

I have tried to write this story in memory of my great man as truthfully as I could, using his notebooks, diaries, correspondence and documentation that were available to me.

- Eva Hlasny

Conclusion, epilog or forward; by Karel's son, Peter Hlasny

Now, that was an incredible story. And, yes, it is all right to say, „wow.“

During the course of the story's timeline, my mother was, for a time, a person without a country. This was changed again in the summer of 2001, when she was granted a dual citizenship, by regaining her previously lost Czechoslovakian one.

The Huss and Carpozzi text, „Red spies at the UN,“ found in the reference section covers, in part, the spy scandal found in this story and gives mention to Karel Hlasny by name.

This story is amazing. It offers an out-of-the ordinary trek that is both heroic and riveting. A tale of unrequited love that spans decades with big losses, huge victories, a lot of drama and personal reflections all with an incredible amount of detail. Yet, most amazing of all it that it's all, true.

Be careful, however, this story will grab you and hold on to you until you reach the very last page. Just consider that you will be transported to the battle lines of World War II with victorious celebrations, crushing defeats, political oppression, a Soviet prison, daring escapes, failed escapes, espionage, and so much more. It also flows with history, culture and wisdom making its reading an educational process that you will not want to end.

The story was originally envisioned as a family-chronicle. Comprised from a large collection of notes, journals, clippings and the like, it was originally going to be written by my father. Yet, after his untimely death from a heart attack while recovering from an unrealed surgery in 1982, the materials were put aside in a folder which had been simply labeled as, „STORY OF OUR LIFE.“ In 1999, with generous encouragement, my mother started a yearlong conversion of the notes into what you have here, complete with some special pearls of wisdom.

When offered the manuscript in the summer of 2001, I was happy to get a closer look at our long-standing family stories, and even more pleased to discover humanity provided by all

of its kind and not-so-kind participants. Ones that can be easily identified are referred to by their first names while the unfriendlies have last name references.

Without any further ado, I give you the love and war story just as it appeared in the manuscript in its own inimitable style, and prepare to say „wow“ at the end.

- Peter Hlasny

Internet Archive (1961); Czechoslovak U.N. Official Violates

The Internet Archive is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that was founded to build an Internet library, with the purpose of offering permanent access for researchers, historians, and scholars to historical collections that exist in digital format. Founded in 1996 and [located in the Presidio of San Francisco](#), the Archive has been receiving data donations from [Alexa Internet](#) and others. In late 1999, the organization started to grow to include more well-rounded collections.

See the INTERNET ARCHIVE; „Department of State Bulletin“;page 65-66 (http://www.archive.org/stream/departmentofstat451961unit/departmentofstat451961unit_djvu.txt) ;

Page 65; Department of State Bulletin

Czechoslovak U.N. Official Violates

Status; U.S. Requests Departure

NOTE TO U.N. SECRETARY-GENERAL

U.S./n.N. press release 8734 dated June 20, 1961

The United States Mission to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary General of the United Nations and, on instructions from the Department of State, wishes to bring the following facts to his attention.

On June 13 the United States Mission to the United Nations informed the Permanent Mission of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the United Nations that the United States Government possessed irrefutable information that Mr. Miroslav Nacvalac had engaged in activities which constituted an abuse of the privilege of his residence within the meaning of Section 13(b) of the Headquarters Agreement and requested that arrangements be made for Mr. Nacvalac's immediate departure from the United States. A copy of this note was delivered to the Secretary General on the same day.

*Mr. Miroslav Nacvalac is known to the United States Government as **Chief of Czechoslovak Civilian Intelligence Operations in the United States** and has a long background in Czechoslovak intelligence work. **Mr. Nacvalac arrived in the United States on July 8, 1958, as a member of the Permanent Mission of Czechoslovakia to the United Nations.** As of June 13, 1961, he was Counselor of that Delegation. He had earlier been in the United States as "an inspector" and as a member of the Czechoslovak Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly.*

***On November 3, 1958, Mr. Nacvalac travelled from New York City to pay a secret visit to Mr. Karel Hlasny, a language instructor of the Army Language School in Monterey, California.** Mr. Nacvalac solicited the cooperation of Mr. Hlasny in return for an exit permit for Mr. Hlasny's fiancée, who was then in Czechoslovakia. Mr. Nacvalac informed Mr. Hlasny of code signals to be utilized in arranging future meetings, emphasizing the need for absolute secrecy.*

***On January 11, 1959, Mr. Nacvalac travelled to Los Angeles, California, where he met with Mr. Hlasny by previous arrangement.** Mr. Nacvalac assigned Mr. Hlasny certain intelligence targets and paid him \$600. Mr. Nacvalac was particularly interested in the identities of government employees attending the Army Language School and information concerning any character weaknesses that they might possess.*

***On April 2, 1959, Mr. Nacvalac met Mr. Hlasny at Monterey, California; and received information from him for which he paid \$400.** Mr. Hlasny at this meeting indicated that he would not cooperate further until his fiancée was released from Czechoslovakia. In August of 1959 Mr. Hlasny's fiancée arrived in the United States.*

On November 14, 1959, Mr. Nacvalac met Mr. Hlasny at San Francisco, California, by prearrangement, paid him \$500, and received information from Mr. Hlasny.

Page 66; Department of State Bulletin

On April 2, 1960, Mr. Nacvalac met Mr. Hlasny at San Francisco, California, in furtherance of this espionage operation.

On January 21, 1961, Mr. Nacvalac met Mr. Hlasny at San Francisco, California, paid him \$200, received information of the United States Government marked classified, and supplied Mr. Hlasny with a camera. During his contacts with other American citizens, Mr. Nacvalac indicated an interest in discussing the possibility of defecting and remaining in the United States.

On June 13, 1961, at a meeting at the Gripsholm Restaurant in New York, the time and place of Mr. Nacvalac's choice, it became unmistakably clear that his alleged interest in remaining permanently in the United States was not motivated by sincere political convictions.

The action of the United States in requesting Mr. Nacvalac's immediate departure was based on his highly improper activities heretofore cited which had no relationship with his duties as a member of the Permanent Delegation to the United Nations.

The action of the United States Government is clearly authorized under Section 13(b) of the Headquarters Agreement between the United States and the United Nations, which states that, in the case of abuse of privilege of residence by any member of any permanent delegation, it is understood that the privileges granted elsewhere in this Agreement (Section 11) shall not be construed so that such members shall be exempt from the laws and regulations of the United States regarding the residence of aliens.

Mr. Nacvalac's activities clearly constitute an abuse of his privileges of residence. In view of the fact that communications to the United Nations from the Czechoslovak Permanent Mission dated June 16, 1961, and June 19, 1961, on this subject have been circulated by the United Nations pursuant to the request of the Czechoslovak Permanent Mission, the United States Mission requests that this note be circulated to all Members of the United Nations. Circulation of its note to the Czechoslovak Permanent Mission dated June 13, 1961, a copy of which is attached, is also requested.

NOTE TO CZECHOSLOVAK REPRESENTATIVE

Press release 421 dated June 21, 1961

The United States Mission to the United Nations has the honor, upon instruction from its Government, to inform the Acting Permanent Representative of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the United Nations of the following decision taken by the Government of the United States of America.

The status accorded Miroslav Nacvalac pursuant to Section 101(a) (15) (G) of the Immigration and Nationality Act by virtue of his entry into the territory of the United States of America as a member of the Permanent Mission of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the United Nations is herewith revoked.

The effect of this revocation of status is to place Miroslav Nacvalac in the category of an alien illegally in the United States of America. Under the laws and regulations of the United States of America, Miroslav Nacvalac may elect either to depart voluntarily, or in lieu of such voluntary departure, be removed. Mr. Nacvalac left the United States on June 22, 1961.

While termination of the status of a diplomat is rare in our practice, this is precisely what was done in 1961 in the **case of Miroslav Nacvalac, a member of the Permanent Mission of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the United States**. The record indicates that prior to the revocation of Mr. Nacvalac's status under Section 101(a)(15)(G) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. Section 1101(a)(15)(G), he had indicated an interest in discussing the possibility of remaining in the United States. In Press Release 421 dated June 21, the Department of State indicated that the effect of the revocation of Mr. Nacvalac's status "is to place (him) in the category of an alien illegally in the United States of America." The press release continued: "**Under the laws and regulations of the United States of America, Nacvalac may elect to depart voluntarily or in lieu of such voluntary departure, be removed.**" A footnote to the press release, which was reprinted in the Department of State Bulletin Vol. XLV, page 67, indicated that Mr. Nacvalac left the United States the next day.

Conclusions

The start of the World War II is generally held to be in September 1939 with the German invasion of Poland and subsequent declarations of war on Nazi Germany by the British Commonwealth and France. Although the US and the Soviet Union were allied against the Axis powers during WWII, the two states disagreed sharply both during and after the conflict on many topics, particularly over the shape of the post-war world. The Soviet Union and the United States emerged from the war as the world's superpowers. This set the stage for the Cold War, which lasted for the next 45 years. Throughout this period, rivalry between the two superpowers was expressed through military coalitions, propaganda, espionage, weapons development, industrial advances, and competitive technological development, which included the space race.

The United Nations was formed in the hope of preventing another such conflicts. However, there is a spy scandal about the action of former Czech officer Karel Hlasny and a Czech spy- diplomat what was done in 1961 in the case of Miroslav Nacvalac, a member of the Permanent Mission of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the United States.

However, KGB (StB) Lt/Colonel Miroslav Nacvalac, previously (to 1958) as **chief of Czechoslovak Embassy in Vienna, he is also well known about one kidnapping operation** in Austria. Most Czech and Slovak émigrés abroad recognised the risk but some, including **former Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party leader Bohumil Lausman** - underestimated the StB's audacity and reach. The former Social Democratic Party leader who had stayed on as deputy prime minister following the fateful communist takeover before finally fleeing, was abducted in December 1953.

This abduction was provided by three StB austrian's agents, commanded by Miroslav Nacvalac (<http://www.blansko.cz/clanky/07/01/rudolf-barak-kariera-pad.php>)! Many émigrés put distance between themselves and Czechoslovakia but not everyone was fully aware of the danger. Bohumil Lausman is probably the most publicised example: he lived practically alone in Salzburg and was an easy target.

Lausman's was a classic kidnapping like you'd see on TV or in the movies: they quietly slipped drugs into his drink and he was bundled into a diplomatic car and taken through Vienna and then onto communist Czechoslovakia. Diplomatic immunity was of course abused. Mr Lausman was subjected to interrogation including the threat of psychological or physical torture. Lausman received a lengthy prison sentence and was never freed again: **he died behind bars under mysterious circumstances on May 9, 1963 (on Czechoslovak „WWII Victory Day“).**

However, **Bohumil Lausman was a „partisan member“ of the 2nd Czechoslovak Paradesant Brigade,** operating in Slovak Tatras, during Slovak National Uprising. According to the daughter of Brigade General Vladimir Prikryl, Lausman was also a Karel's friend.

In conclusion; this **world war and espionage cold war story as action of Karel Hlasny;** could be more known in former CSSR and USA and should be in interest about reporting in the popular literature etc.

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