



The Hlučín-Darkovičky CS Fortification Complex



Guide



Slezské
zemské
muzeum



Installation of left-hand bell-chamber in MO-S 19 Alej (20 May 1986)

The Hlučín-Darkovičky Czechoslovak Fortification Complex

The Hlučín-Darkovičky Czechoslovak Fortification Complex is a unique artefact of its type, and of immense value in a European context. The Fortification Complex is an exhibition of military technology that gives visitors the opportunity to find out about a major aspect of the history of the first half of the 20th century.

The Czechoslovak Fortification Complex in Hlučín-Darkovičky has been part of the Silesian Museum since 1992. It forms one of the museum's six exhibition premises, with a close thematic link to the national Second World War Memorial in nearby Hrabyně.

In the context of the Silesian Museum, the Fortification Complex is specific in that, while it is located in the countryside, its thematic focus is relatively unconventional within its category. It includes a group of structures that were created as part of the Czechoslovak border defence system, and which are amongst the most interesting in the Czech Republic and the best-preserved in Europe. The Complex consists of five structures, both one-sided and two-sided, of various types and durability grades. Experts are therefore able to present the battlefield and individual structures, both in the condition and with the fittings as they were in 1938, as well as the condition they were in at the end of the war.

The complex is also symbolic of key events in Czechoslovak history, being, as it is, closely linked to the Munich Agreement and loss of the Sudetenland, and therefore one of the most dramatic moments in the history of Silesia.

Construction of the border fortifications

The second half of the 1930s was a time of rising international tension and increasing instability, caused by the militaristic policies of Hitler's Germany after 1933. In order to protect its democratic system, territorial integrity and national sovereignty Czechoslovakia, which was particularly threatened, began the construction of a massive system of permanent border fortifications. The reinforced-concrete fortresses with their military crews, together with other units of the Czechoslovakian army, were intended to ensure the effective protection of the state, which was threatened by the military aggression of Nazi Germany. The greatest threat along the then Czechoslovak-German borders, and the strategic priority, was along the northern zone stretching from Bohumín to Děčín. It was in this region, in the area between the towns of Bohumín and Háj ve Slezsku, that the construction of heavy fortifications was begun in 1935.



Map of Czechoslovak fortifications

The next three years, culminating in September 1938, saw the construction, fitting and, chiefly, arming of forty heavy-duty forts, including one artillery fort and several embedded type-37 A casemates with enhanced fortifications (known colloquially as 'řopíky' after ŘOP, the Czechoslovakian Directorate of Fortifications). An integrated system of obstacles and a cable telephone network were also built, as well as barracks for Border Regiment 4 in Hlučín.

The distinguishing factor of the 'MO' (Moravská Ostrava) sector was that during its construction the authorities sought to refine the design for future stages of the fortification system as a whole. While its form was, initially, heavily influenced by the French 'Maginot Line', this was increasingly simplified and improved over time so that the maximum level of defence could be achieved at reasonable cost.



Map of MO (Moravská Ostrava) sector of fortification system

The construction of fortifications was under the control of Engineering Command II (Ženíjná skupinové velitelství (ŽSV)), based in Bohumín and Hlučín-Dlouhá Ves. This body was directly subordinate to the Directorate of Fortifications, which, as part of the National De-

fence Ministry, was responsible for construction works. The first commander of ŽSV II was Maj. Antonín Sameš, who on 20th August 1937 was given command of the newly-created ŽSV VI in Trutnov; he was replaced by Lt.-Col. Josef Libnar.



MO-S 18 Obora as it is today

Consequences of the Munich Agreement and the Fortification Complex during the war

Following the Munich Agreement of 30th September 1938, Czechoslovakia was compelled to cede its border territories – the Sudetenland – to Germany. This resulted in the annexation of areas in which over 50% of the population was German to the Third Reich. Nazi Germany argued that the Sudeten German regions should be reunited with the Reich; however, these areas had belonged to the Czech crown since the 10th century. This agreement, made between Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy, led to the loss by Czechoslovakia of a total 41,098 km² of territory and 4,879,000 inhabitants.

At the same time, however, it lost its border fortification system. All facilities had to be surrendered without a fight. Although the network was not complete (a total of 15,463 heavy and 1,276 light structures were planned, with the final stage of construction scheduled for 1946), it was, nevertheless, relatively extensive, and

consisted of nearly 10 thousand light structures, intended as a temporary defensive shield for infantry, and 263 heavy structures, intended to be permanently manned and equipped for long-term resistance.

The border region was subsequently occupied by German forces. All armoured components were removed and later utilised by the German army and industry. In the years 1944–1945 the German army started to repair and improvise the arming of the fortifications in an effort to build the so-called Moravian Defensive Gate and Jeseníky Barrier Zone in response to the approach of the Red Army. The sophistication of the pre-war Czechoslovak fortifications system was demonstrated by the heavy fighting that took place for control of the system during the subsequent battle for the Ostrava region, which was the most intense military operation on the territory of Czechoslovakia and one that cost many lives.

Renewal and opening of the fortifications

At a relatively early stage after the end of the war, a number of people started to show an interest in the rows of reinforced-concrete defensive structures from the 1930s. However, due to more urgent tasks associated with regenerating the country, the structures gradually fell into disrepair or had their fittings stolen.

In the 1970s, however, the situation started to change and there was growing interest in the refurbishment of the structures. It was at this time that the first, often informal, groups of enthusiasts came into being; these groups showed remarkable dedication in refurbishing individual fortresses, for example in the Náchod, Kralice, Ostrava and Opava regions.

Military history and fortress enthusiasts devoted the greatest amount of attention to the group of fortresses located north of Hlučín, between the villages of Markvartovice, Šilheřovice, Darkovice and Darkovičky. These fortresses lay in ruins and it was clear that the process of reconstruction would not be an easy one. However, these fortresses included various types of structure, varying degrees of durability, one- and two-sided structures with varying types of armament, and were relatively easily accessible.

The refurbishment of the Fortifications Complex began in 1980, when the then newly-created Museum of the Revolutionary Struggle and Liberation in Ostrava created a working group, headed by Jan Polášek, whose

goal it was to refurbish several, selected fortification structures. On 28th June 1984 the group took charge of four different types of structure, the future Hlučín-Darkovičky Fortifications Complex, and the three-member working group commenced reconstruction work together with other volunteers.

The relevant plans of structures and their fittings were provided by the Military Archive in Prague. The Alej structure, for example, necessitated the removal of most of the trees and bushes that had grown up around it, forming a relatively thick growth blocking the view of the fortress.



Jan Polášek next to generator in MO-S Alej, 1985

Old tree-stumps were also removed from the vicinity of the blockhouse and a bridge was constructed over the ditch that had been created following the removal of rocks in the rear part of the blockhouse, providing temporary access to the interior of the structure. In the next phase of reconstruction, armour plating was taken, with the permission of the Regional Housing and Construction Office in Olomouc, from the fortresses in Milostovice as a replacement for plating that had been removed by the occupying forces in 1940.

A car park was constructed and a digger used to clear the anti-tank ditches on both sides of the fortress, which had been choked up for years with soil and waste. The open space around Alej was filled with obstacles, chiefly concrete cones and steel 'hedgehogs'.

The first structure to accept visitors was a *řopík*, the interior of which was fitted with technical equipment, including weapons. The interior was 'christened' on 28th May 1985. The exhibition premises then commenced full operations on 28th September 1988.



MO-S 19 Alej in 1984



Jan Polášek and Jindřich Czeniek next to a *řopík* in 1985.

Exhibition

The Hlučín-Darkovičky Fortification Complex consists of five structures. The main structure in the Complex is **MO-S 19 Alej**, which is a two-sided, two-winged, two-floored, independent infantry blockhouse, with two bells and a gun turret, supplemented by the **MO-17 Štípký**, **MO-S 18 Obora** and **MO-S 20 Orel** heavy structures and the embedded, enhanced **type-37A 140 Z casemate**, known as a **řopík**.

Overview of basic data for heavy-duty fortifications of Hlučín-Darkovičky Czechoslovak Fortification Complex

Structure	Number		MO-S 18	MO-S 19	MO-S 20
	Name		Obora	Alej	Orel
	Resistance		II	III	IV
	Date of concreting		27. 7. – 3. 8. 1936	21. 8. – 27. 8. 1936	5. 12. – 11. 12. 1936
	Strength of concrete (kg/cm²)		388	420	396
	Volume of concrete (m³)		1 193	1 993	2 856
	Steel reinforcement (c. t)		80	150	200
	Roof thickness (cm)		200	250	350
	Frontal wall thickness (cm)		225	275	350
	Thickness of other walls (cm)		100-170	125-200	150-300
	Resistant to grenade caliber (cm)		24	31	42
	Number of crew		24	36	38
Weaponry	Armoured turrets	Zlk	1	2	2
		Zp	–	–	1
		K2K	–	1	–
	Concreted	L1 (d4-k)	1	2	2
		M	1	1	2
		N	2	4	4
	Armoured	M	–	1	–
		N	1	2	2
	Cannon rounds supplied		1 824	3 648	7 232
	Machine-gun rounds supplied		198 000	475 200	796 800
	Hand grenades supplied		200	375	375
	Signalling flares supplied		160	320	320
	Manufacturer of armoured doors		Škoda	Vitkovice	Vitkovice, Škoda (Zp)

- Legend:
- Zlk

observation bell-chamber
- Zp

artillery observation bell-chamber
- K2K

shooting copula for type-37 2TK
- M

type-37 twin heavy machine-guns on shared mount
- L1 (d4-k)

type-36 4cm anti-tank fortress cannon nwith type-37 heavy machine gun
- N

type-26 light machine-gun

Infantry blockhouse MO-S 19 Alej



Period view from bell of MO-S 18 Obora to MO-S 19 Alej



MO-S 19 Alej

Due to the fact that it was built in an exposed location on the then Czechoslovak-German border, in open terrain north of Hlučín that would permit a strong assault by the enemy, the structure was built with grade 3 durability. Concrete components were constructed by V. Nekvasil a.s., a company based in Prague-Karlín, within a single week in August 1936, using 1,993 m³ of concrete.

The blockhouse was designed to house a crew of six. Its reinforced-concrete front wall, oriented towards the north, is 275 cm thick, the roof 250 cm thick and side and back walls between 125-200 cm thick. The armoured ports and cupola were plated with armour of up to 30 cm thickness, guaranteeing resistance to artillery of up to 305 mm.



Bell-chamber



View of bell-chambers and cupola of MO-S 19 Alej (current state)

In front of the facing wall and around Alej is a four metre-high embankment made out of boulders and, together with the roof, covered with a layer of earth and grass, providing the facing wall with camouflage and effective protection against artillery salvos. Both side walls, with embrasures for primary weapons directed towards the east and west and allowing lateral fire in defence of the neighbouring Obora and Orel fortresses, are protected from enemy fire from the northeast and northwest. The blockhouse and its main weapons are protected by the extended side walls, in the form of wings, that extend to the sides and contain embedded ports. The upper side of embrasures are protected from shots from above (charges released from the ceiling beam in front of embrasures and the entrance; weapons salvos with a steep trajectory) by overhangs (corbels), which shade and prevent aerial monitoring similarly to camouflage material, which could be anchored on hooks on the edge of the roof plate. Protective ditches located in front of embrasures for main weapons are sometimes labelled 'diamond ditches' (breadth 175 cm, depth 310 cm) and prevent attackers gaining access to the blockhouse's embrasures and their neutralisation with explosives. Ditches also served to catch spent cartridges from gun positions. The grenade slide, above which there is an embrasure for a type-26 machine gun for the protection of the main weapons, also opens out into the ditches.

The gun positions – casemates – contained the blockhouse's main weapons, i.e. type-36, 47 mm anti-tank cannons and type-36, 47 mm heavy machine guns. The rear walls of gun positions include embrasures for type-26 light machine guns to protect the entrance. Additionally, in the left-hand gun room there is a grenade

chute protecting the rear area in front of the entrance and in the right-hand gun room another two type-37 heavy machine guns 37 mounted on a shared carriage.



Right-hand gun position of MO-S 19 Alej



Embrasure in bell-chamber



Corridor in left-hand part of structure

The actual entrance is situated in the rear wall and is protected by three weapons and a triple set of doors. The front part of the entrance corridor is fitted with a grille constructed from 3cm-thick steel bars; in the crooked corridor beyond this are two 3cm-thick and 450kg-heavy armoured, reinforced and gas-tight doors. The lower half of the first set of doors is equipped with a hatchway (emergency exit) covered by a screwed-on steel plate with an antipressure fitting, allowing the operator to block the door using a steel strut. The space between the doors thus restricts the penetration of poisonous gases into the structure, as well as guaranteeing the maintenance of the structure's internal pressure. The first set of doors can withstand grenade explosions up to 210mm in its immediate vicinity without sustaining damage.

The entry passage, in which are located the grilled ventilation ducts containing air filtration devices, protect the pistol embrasure by the entrance, designed for a type-38 9 mm machine pistol.

A passageway leads across the upper, operational level. At the left-hand side of this passageway is an infantry port with three embrasures and a height-adjustable floor. The walls of the bell-chamber are fitted with mounts for type-26 light machine gun carriages, observation holes, replacement gun barrels, store cupboards, signalling pistols, folding chairs and a lid for the periscope opening. The bell-chamber is equipped with a manual munitions lift as well as light signals, a standard telephone and brass speaking tubes. Beside the telephone is an armoured tube, which is fastened to the weapon and directs empty cartridges away into a pipe leading to a metal box underneath the bell-chamber, from which waste gases are sucked away by an exhaust.

The exhaust is located in front of the entrance to the area underneath the bell-chamber, to the left of the embrasure, providing protection for blockhouse's main weapons embrasures. Embrasures can also be supplemented with an observation or gun holes. To the right of the embrasure is a trench periscope and grenade chute.

Opposite to the embrasure is a telephone exchange with a type-35 field telephone, next to which is the commander's room, directly adjacent to the telegraph room. Across the passageway is the left-hand gun position for the fort's anti-tank cannon, with a protected entrance to the embrasure supplemented by a grenade chute.



Accommodation for eight men in lower level



Type-26 light machine gun in MO-S 19 Alej bell-chamber



Embrasure for twin machine-guns



Left-hand gun position of MO-S 19 Alej



Photo no. 20: Water tanks in MO-S 19 Alej



Detail of embrasure with sealing sphere

In this room, as in other parts of the structure, exhibited areas are clad in metal, which was intended to prevent flying shard of concrete in the event of the structure taking a hit. The final row of bricks in blockhouse

partitioning walls is replaced by a layer of asphalt and cork, intended to dampen the transfer of vibrations from the reinforced-concrete roof to these walls in the event of the blockhouse being hit. By the entrance there is an store of ammunition for 47-caliber anti-tank cannons, and on the passageway behind it an embrasure for the gunman. From corridor, one enters the gun position in the copula, containing a store of some of the 7.92-caliber ammunition and from there to a fully equipped, standalone copula, containing two original sets of type-39 observation binoculars (1.1x magnification) and two type-37 heavy machine-guns on a shared carriage. The second section of the upper floor is effectively identical to the left-hand side, except for water tanks for the event that the well was damaged.

Pride of place in this half of the operations floor is taken by the gun position. The weapon here is a type-36 47-caliber 4cm cannon, with the gun-barrel head in the embrasure fitted with an armoured sealing sphere. This weapon also includes a type-37 heavy machine gun, designed for use in forts, which is mounted on the gun cradle as an auxiliary weapon. Both weapons are aimed using a shared type-36 sight with 2x magnification, fitted on the left-hand side of the gun cradle. During combat the aimer could utilise information reported from the bell-chamber by the observer via the telephone, brass speaking tube or light signals. The weapon as a whole was operated by a crew of 3 to 6 (cannon commander, aimer, loader, machine-gun operator and two ammunition carriers). This cannon was produced from the end of 1936 by the Škoda works in Plzeň, and the total price, not including the machine-gun, was 360 thousand crowns. The weapon has a range of 5.8 km and firing-rate of up to 35 rounds per minute. In its time it was one of the best fort weapons in the world.



4 cm type-36, 47 mm fort cannon in right-hand gun position of MO-S 19 Alej

The second main weapon in the gun position, a pair of type-37, 7.92 mm heavy machine guns mounted on a shared carriage, is fitted with the same optical system as the cannon. These weapons allow very precise firing, even during darkness, fog or in a smoky battlefield situation, aided by a panoramic map, located on the gun mount above the weapon and showing the surrounding terrain in relation to the weapons' field of fire and reference points. Empty cartridges are channelled to the protective ditch via two bronze tubes fitted with spring-loaded scales. The gun mount allows the right-hand machine gun an individual field of fire to increase the sweep of the weapons. The weapons are operated by a crew of three.

The auxiliary weapon at this position is a type-26 light machine gun, located in a protective embrasure and operated by a crew of one. At the time, both types of machine gun were top-of-the-range weapons, spreading the renown of Czechoslovak munitions technology around the world and becoming a popular export item for years to come.

To the right of the embrasure is an original pressure gauge and a terminal for the connection of a field telephone in case of emergency. Underneath this, ventilation ducts are located in the floor area. To the left of the embrasure are eight circular apertures, now closed off, for the purpose of ventilation.

The room formerly contained an emergency supply of ammunition (624 cannon rounds and 40 tho. machine-gun rounds), a type-23 set of locksmith's tools, cases containing necessary items for the cannon, storage containers binoculars, preserving agents and a replacement barrel for the cannon. The room is lit using electricity and also contains several petrol lamps (type-35 Meva) in case of emergency and electricity blackouts.

A staircase with sixteen steps and two handrails leads from the upper to the lower floor. Underneath the staircase is stored engineering equipment and spare parts. Opposite the staircase is the main crew accommodation area, containing six double beds.

To the left of the staircase is the entrance to the washroom, with a 210-litre water tank and wash spout. Behind the washroom are two toilets, intended for use only during combat. Waste materials are stored in a septic tank, from which a pipe leads to the control shaft in a stone ditch and further to the rear section, where it terminates in a shutter and drain. The right-hand part of the lower levels is completed with a sleeping-area for two non-commissioned officers and storage area for hand-grenades. To the right of the staircase is a sleeping-area for four men and behind it, a further sleeping-area for two bob-commissioned officers. Further there is a storage area for two weeks' provisions in the event of combat.



Pair of type-37, 7.92 mm heavy machine-guns in right-hand gun position of MO-S 19 Alej



Light machine-gun in right-hand part of structure



Type-26 light machine gun in protective embrasure



Poison gas detectors in MO-S 19 Alej



Filtration unit in MO-S 19 Alej

The remaining part of the lower level consists primarily of technical equipment. It is here that the main filtration unit is located, placed on a concrete base and with a switch for manual operation. The filters include an original set of detectors for the monitoring of levels of poison gases in the air.

Ventilation equipment was chosen according to armaments used and the standards of use for air for individual weapons and equipment.

A well is located in the corner of the filtration room. This well is 47.9 m deep and has an average bore diameter of 20 cm. In a further room is contained the generator, which is fixed to a concrete base and during peacetime was activated only for tests and personnel training. The room was lit using petrol lamps. The generator room also includes an exhaust for the removal of waste materials and a water tank for cooling the motor. Behind the generator room is located the storage area for fuel and lubricants, which contained fuel (11 barrels) for 14 days' generator operation, and the munitions store for the 7.92 mm machine guns.



View of bell-chamber



Periscope in bell-chamber

Infantry blockhouse MO-S 17 Štípký



Period photograph of MO-S 17 Štípký



Period view of left-hand side of MO-S 17 Štípký

This is a two-sided, two-winged two-floored infantry blockhouse of grade-2 durability with 2 observation zones and a mortar position in a lowered section of the lower floor, with an east-facing embrasure. The blockhouse was designed to accommodate one type-36, 47 mm anti-tank cannon, mounted with a type-37 heavy machine gun, as well as a further four type-37 heavy machine guns (two of which are mounted as a pair), six type-26 light machine guns and a type-38 90 mm mortar. The blockhouse was built by the Ing. V. Nekvasil,

Prague company. Concrete components were installed between 3rd and 9th September 1936. In 1945 the interior of the structure was destroyed by the Red Army, making it possible to view details of the blockhouse's structure. Worthy of attention are the exposed steel supports within the damaged concrete walls, the preserved mortar embrasure and the inspection chamber for waste in front of the rear part of the structure. Entry to the structure is not permitted for safety reasons.



View of left-hand side of MO-S 17 Štípký as it is today

Infantry blockhouse MO-S 18 Obora



Period view of MO-S 18 Obora



MO-S 18 Obora, current view

This is a one-sided, standalone infantry blockhouse built with grade-2 durability. The roof is 2 m thick. The blockhouse was crewed by twenty-four members of Border Regiment 4, based in Hlučín. In 1940, the observation chamber was removed by the German army. Observation chamber OP-S 28 Mezicestí was subsequently reinstalled in the course of refurbishment work, on 15th December 1991. The entry passage contains a commemorative plaque to Jaroslav Švarc, a member of the blockhouse crew who was dispatched as part of parachute group TIN to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia during the occupation and fell, together with other parachutists participating in the assassination on Reich Protector Reinhard Heydrich, in the crypt of the Church of Sts. Cyril and Methodius (St. Karel Boromejský) in Resslova street in Prague-Nové Město.

The blockhouse contains an original, functioning "Royal" pump, a diesel generator, fully-functioning ventilation/filtration system, water tank, accommodation area, munitions stores and a fully-equipped gun position. The embrasure, originally designed to accommodate a type-36, 47-caliber 4 cm fortress cannon, now contains part of a DOT 4 Soviet anti-tank cannon, which was originally inspired by Czechoslovak munitions technology.



The "Royal" pump, performance 21 litres per minute, can pump water from depths of up to 150 metres

When viewing the fortress, visitors can imagine what life was like in the fortress during combat, handle weapons and also pump water from depths of up to 50 m using the restored pump. Visitors will also be impressed by the fully-operational generator. Access to the fortress is only provided on an occasional basis.



Gun position of MO-S 18 Obora

Infantry blockhouse MO-S 20 Orel



Period photo of MO-S 20 Orel

This is a fortress-type, standalone blockhouse, which was originally intended to form part of the planned U Orla fortress, and is the only part of this fortress that was built. The blockhouse was built in order to fill a gap in the line until the entire fortress was built. Following completion of the fortress, the blockhouse would have essentially constituted the second line of defence and its main task would have been to observe and direct artillery fire from the observation chamber.



MO-S 20 Orel, current view

Before the installation of concrete elements, it was necessary to dig a shaft more than 26 metres deep; this was intended to connect the structure with the underground fortress. Due to the sandy soil, the digging of the shaft proved problematic, and on 17th August 1936 the shaft claimed its first victim, labourer František Haničák, who was hit on the head by a moving cage-lift when looking into the shaft. The shaft claimed further victims after the war, when some visitors, unfamiliar with the terrain, fell in. Since 1945, a minimum 6 people have fallen into the shaft, one of whom was pulled out alive, in 1970.

MO-S 20 Orel was equipped with two type-36, 47 mm anti-tank cannons, six type-37 heavy machine guns and six type-26 light machine guns. The structure was fitted with two armoured observation bell-chambers, weighing over 50 tonnes and fitted with light machine guns. An unarmed artillery observation chamber was embedded in the centre of the facing wall and was intended solely for the observation and directing of artillery fire. To this end, it was equipped with a total of three apertures, through which observations could be made using standard binoculars. At the peak of the bell-chamber was an additional aperture for a special type-38 periscope with variable 6/10x magnification, which was pro-

duced by Optikotechna Pířerov, but which could not be delivered before the Munich Agreement came into effect. In 1938, the observer assigned to the bell-chamber was Sgt. Ota Fröhlich from the 8th Artillery Regiment in Hranice, whose brigade was in charge of artillery in the area. The structure was crewed by a total 44 men and was commanded in September 1938 by Sgt. Jan Fianta.

During the war, the structure was repeatedly hit during exercises by the German army, and in the spring of 1945 was a key point in the German defence against the advancing units of the 1st Guards Army. This section of the defensive line was defended by the remnants of the 'Heinrici' army group, consisting of the 1st Tank Army and the Hungarian 1st Army, which had sustained significant losses in previous fighting. Some of the trenches have been preserved from the fighting between units commanded by Gen. Grečko against units of the 'Mitte' armies, commanded by Col.-Gen., later Field Marshal, Ferdinand Schörner, who resided at the chateau in Hlučín.

This fact, and the intensity of the fighting, continues to be documented by the fact that remains of soldiers fallen during the fighting, as well as a relatively large amount of ordnance from both sides, primarily in zone MO-S 16 – 23, but also in surrounding communities. One highly interesting find was an unexploded 120 mm mortar grenade embedded in the concrete of MO-S 19 Alej, which was only discovered, and subsequently neutralised, during refurbishment; up until then it had, for decades, been a danger to the local youth, who would meet in the immediate vicinity.

After the end of the war, damaged areas were repaired, trenches were filled in, etc. Heavy-duty structures also started to be cleared of left-over munitions. Explosives experts engaged in the removal of ordnance reported the use of new types of mine at this location. In the 1950s the entrances to the structures were bricked up. Despite this, fatal injuries did, and continue to, occur at the fortresses.

The structure has been deliberately preserved in the state it was following the end of the Second World War, i.e. without armoured bell-chambers and with the main embrasures ripped out and replaced by concrete embrasures from spring 1945. The front wall was destroyed in the course of artillery exercises and heavy fighting. The interior of the structure was damaged by an explosion caused by the retreating German forces, who detonated the munitions store. Following the explosion, the greater part of the staircase collapsed to the subterranean level. The explosion also destroyed the walled cross-beams.

Some limited remains of the original electrical fittings have been preserved within the structure. The remains of the pump and various items from the fighting in 1945, such as helmets, field shovels etc., were additionally found within the shaft. On the structure itself, the German label T-XIX, differing from the Czech numbering system, has also been preserved beneath the corbel by the entrance. The phrase 'the shaft awaits its next victim' on the wall by the shaft serves as a reminder of fatal injuries suffered here.



Period view from bell-chamber of MO-S 20 Orel to MO-S 21 Jaroš



Hardware at MO-S 20 Orel



Sgt. Ota Fröhlich, auxiliary brigade observer from artillery observation chamber MO-S 20 Orel (September 1938).

Type-37 A 140Z light fortress



Type-37A LO – řopík with memorial to fighting in 1945 in the background

This type of fortress was known as a *řopík*, and consisted of reinforced-concrete pillboxes within the Czechoslovak fortification system. The name comes from the Czech acronym ŘOP (*Ředitelství opevňovacích prací* – Directorate of Fortifications), which organised the construction of fortifications. This structure is fitted with machine-gun mounts, periscopes, a ventilator and engineering equipment. The *řopík* and surrounding area have been restored to the condition they were in 1938, and are therefore surrounded with obstacles, antipersonnel obstructions and an antitank ditch.

Reconstruction of complex



MO-S 19 Alej blockhouse at start of renovation process



Right-hand shooting gallery before installation of embrasures



Anti-infantry obstructions in front of Alej

Everyday life in the fortresses



Part of crew of MO-S 19 Alej with dog Jiskra

Starting in 1937, the fortresses in the complex were manned on a permanent basis by members of the border regiments, who spent a week at a time at the fortresses before being relieved by their colleagues. When on duty, they would carry out exercises by lamplight, as the electricity generator was activated for only one hour per week to check that it was working. During their stay at a fortress, soldiers would, apart from demanding training, repair obstacles in the vicinity of the structure, carry out regular maintenance work, and maintain their section of fortifications in a serviceable state.

During the first platoon's week-long stay at the fortresses, food was delivered to troops daily by horse from the Hlučín barracks, where the second platoon would be occupied in the meantime. While at the fortresses, soldiers were not permitted to use the toilets, even though these were, for the time, very modern, with flush mechanisms and their own cistern, located beneath the fortress. Instead, they had to use the latrines in rear areas of the fortress. Interior toilets were intended for use only during combat.

Fortress crews did not live only at the fortresses, but also enjoyed civilian life. There were several instances of soldiers becoming acquainted with local women and settling in the area permanently after the war. However, the fortress crews are also associated with some tragic events. An incident is recorded of a gun going off and killing a soldier while it was being cleaned; then at a ball there was one instance of a soldier getting into a fight over a girl and being killed with a metal rod on his way back to the fortress. These are only two incidents associated with the fortresses. Later events and, mainly, the end of the war, were much crueller.



Photograph of Border Regiment 4



Regimental banners of Border Regiment 4



Regular events



Reconstructions being carried out by members of the Czech Army



Rally of historical vehicles on museum premises

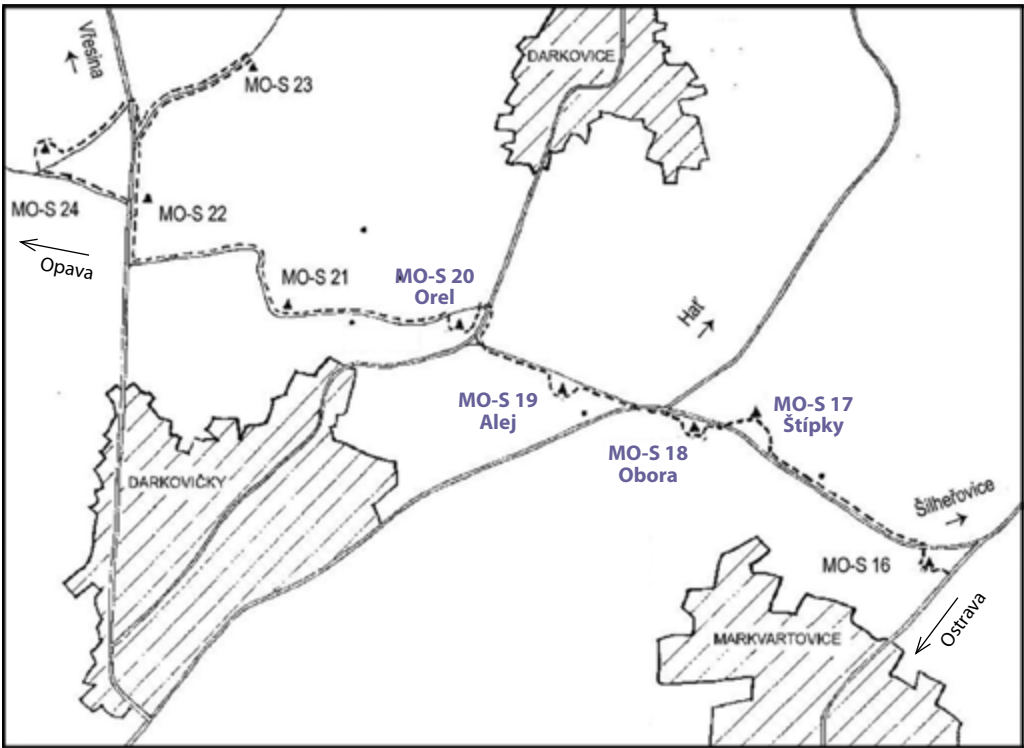
The Complex is today the venue for a number of educational and commemorative events. Regular battlefield reconstructions are organised with the cooperation of the Czech Army.

Every September there is a walk along the line of the Czechoslovak fortifications. There is also a hiking trail following the route in the Hlučín region. The route is marked green and is approximately 6.5 km long. The route is suitable as a walking and cycling trail and leads from the MO-S 16 Rozcestí infantry blockhouse around other light- and heavy-duty structures of the Hlučín-Darkovičky Czechoslovak Fortification Complex, finishing at blockhouse MO-S 24 Signál. Along the route it is possible to view a variety of structural designs documenting the development of Czechoslovak fortifications. Due to the efforts of military history clubs, who are starting to restore individual blockhouses, visitors can also view the interior of several structures along the hiking trail.



Walk along line of Czechoslovak fortification system

Hiking trail along the line of Czechoslovak fortifications in the Hlučín region



NB: As of June 2012 the trail has been extended to NO-S 10

Hlučín-Darkovičky Czechoslovak Fortification Complex

- — marked trail
- ▲ heavy fortification structure
- light fortification structure
- MO-S 17 Štípký designation of premises under administration of Silesian Museum

Contents:

The Hlučín-Darkovičky Czechoslovak Fortification Complex 3

CONSTRUCTION OF THE BORDER FORTIFICATIONS 4

**CONSEQUENCES OF THE MUNICH AGREEMENT
AND THE FORTIFICATION COMPLEX DURING THE WAR 6**

RENEWAL AND OPENING OF THE FORTIFICATIONS 6

EXHIBITION 8

 Infantry blockhouse MO-S 19 Alej 9

 Infantry blockhouse MO-S 17 Štípký 15

 Infantry blockhouse MO-S 18 Obora 16

 Infantry blockhouse MO-S 20 Orel 18

 Type-37 A 140Z light fortress 20

 Reconstruction of complex 21

EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE FORTRESSES 22

REGULAR EVENTS 24

Hiking trail along the line of Czechoslovak fortifications in the Hlučín region 25

Visit other exhibitions and premises of the Silesian Museum



The Nový Dvůr Arboretum
Stěbořice



The Petr Bezruč Memorial
Opava



The Old Exhibition Building
Opava



The Second World War Memorial, Hrabyně



The Petr Bezruč Chalet
Ostravice

The Silesian Museum can be seen as a gate to Silesia, with a scope extending from both animate and inanimate aspects of nature via prehistory and history to art history, primarily on the territory of Czech Silesia, as well as north and northwest Moravia. The Silesian Museum is a contributory organisation of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic. With a history stretching back to 1814, it is the oldest public museum on the territory of the current Czech Republic. The museum's 2,400,000 exhibits mean that it is, at the same time, the third biggest in the country.

The museum currently administers six buildings and premises: apart from the Old Exhibition Building in the centre of Opava, these are the Nový Dvůr Arboretum in Stěbořice, the Second World War Memorial in Hrabyně, the Petr Bezruč Memorial in Ostrožná street in Opava, the Hlučín-Darkovičky Czechoslovak Fortification Complex and the Petr Bezruč Chalet in Ostravice. The museum is

home to specialists from the fields of mineralogy, geology, palaeontology, botany, dendrology, entomology, zoology, museology, archaeology, ethnography, numismatics, history and art history, including the history of photography, music, literature and theatre, as well as military history, and restoration experts, museologists and librarians.

Every year the Silesian Museum organises around 30 exhibitions, with special attention being devoted to the history of and nature in Silesia and the Second World War. The museum is a research organisation involved in basic and applied research. The results of research are published in, amongst others, the peer-reviewed *Časopis Slezského zemského muzea* (Silesian Museum Journal), which is published in two editions – edition A for the natural sciences, and edition B for the historical sciences – and the *Slezský sborník* (Silesian Gazette), likewise peer-reviewed.

Guide

Guide to the Hlučín-Darkovičky Czechoslovak Fortification Complex (part of the Silesian Museum)

Author: **Petr Kuchař**

In cooperation with: **Kamila Poláková**

Editing and production: **Simona Juračková**

In cooperation with: **Petr Adamec, Ivan Berger**

Translations: **Iain Thomson (HT International s.r.o.)**

Photography: **Dan Krzyvoň, Petr Kuchař, Luděk Wünsch,**
photographic archive of the Silesian Museum

Graphic design: **Martin Feikus**

Printed by: **RETIS GROUP, s.r.o.**



www.szmo.cz

Published in 2012 in an edition of 300 by the Silesian Museum as part of the 'Open Gates to the Silesian Museum' project, supported by the Microprojects Fund of Euroregion Silesia as part of the 2007-13 Czech Republic-Poland Operational Programme for Cross-border Cooperation.



Cíl 3 / Cel 3
2007-2013



EVROPSKÁ UNIE / UNIA EUROPEJSKA
EVROPSKÝ FOND PRO REGIONÁLNÍ ROZVOJ / EUROPEJSKI FUNDUSZ ROZWOJU REGIONALNEGO
PŘEKRAČUJEME HRANICE / PRZEKRAČAMY GRANICE