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10 June
I-10465

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

BORDER ZONES

Security Measures
Border Tightening
Border Guards.

Recruits' Rapid Training For Border Guards.
Men Known By Numbers Only

SOURCE FRANKFURT: A 21-year-old former border guard who was drafted for military service in March 1952 and assigned to the 4th Battalion, 18th Company, Border Guards on the Czech-Bavarian border where he remained until his escape West in September 1952.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: September 1952.

EVAL. COMMENT: Generally speaking, reports dealing with the activities, training and duties of the Border Guards lack the most vital information about the following: the exact location of the unit, the location of the escape prevention devices, the exact route of the patrols, possible leakages in the Iron Curtain in that particular area etc. The best way to obtain this vital information is by means of an accurate sketch or plan of the area where subsource carried out his duties. Otherwise, the information as presented in this report and many other reports of the same character does not offer a clear picture of the tightening of the border. These reports thus have the character of second-rate or background information and very seldom attract the attention of the editors. None of the reported names are confirmed here. For more information about the PS unit at SUSICE see Item Nos. 7376/51, 11905 and 12967/52; about the PS unit at MODRAVA see Item Nos. 9090, 12967, 10129 and 12571/52.

According to latest indications, the "Vnitřní stráž" (The Inner Guards) also participate in border defense duties but are not part of the StB.

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Three months intensive political and military training as a border guard before being assigned to a border post under cover of darkness, was the lot of source after being

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called up for military service in March 1952.

Source received his call for medical examination in March 1951 together with all young men of the years 1929-1931 in his home town of TRNAVA. About 200 men presented themselves at HASICKY DUM for this examination including source, but only the enthusiastic Communists showed any elation at this chance to serve their country.

The medical check was casual in the extreme. No X-ray examination was made; men wearing glasses up to 12 dioptries were accepted and only severe cases of flat feet, open TB, and cripples were refused. Almost all the 200 recruits were accepted. Source was asked by a soldier (vzorný vojak) whether he belonged to the CSM (Czech Youth League) and what military unit and weapon he would prefer. When source replied that he did not care, the soldier marked his papers (LET) indicating "Air Force," so source believed this would be his ultimate destination.

Source returned to TRNAVA and nothing further happened till the end of February 1952 when he received calling-up papers ordering him to report immediately at the military barracks in BRATISLAVA. Source does not remember either the name or address of this building.

Source arrived in BRATISLAVA on the first day of March together with about 100 other recruits. He was given again a casual medical examination, and sent off with the other recruits on the same evening by train to CHEB. Here they were greeted at the station by a brass band and conducted in style to the barracks located in a former convent. Source does not remember the address.

About 500 recruits were gathered there from different parts of the CSR. After a substantial lunch the prospective soldiers were issued uniforms, and source, to his great astonishment, saw they had the green shoulderboards and dog badges of the Border Guards. Although disappointed not to be in the Air Force, his first thought was he would now be able to find a way to escape. Some of his Communist companions greeted the uniforms with enthusiasm remarking "Now we can show the Western imperialists our strength." "At last we have the chance to serve Communism and world peace." The majority however, were silent, and the general feeling was that the border was not a healthy place.

Although, as far as source knows, no special check was made on the backgrounds of men selected for the Border Guards, he knew that at least 60 per cent of the 500 recruits in CHEB were Communists and the others belonged to Communist organizations. Source believes he was selected because he

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belonged to the CSM.

CHEB was a training center for other military units besides the Border Guards. During the first week the 500 recruits were organized in five companies of 100 men each with five patrols of 20 men each. The battalion was known as the 4th battalion. The battalion commander was 1st Lieutenant Prantisek FUXA (nadporucik) and his deputy was 1st Lieutenant KARASEK (fnu) (nadporucik), both enthusiastic Reds.

Fourteen days after their arrival, they were issued rifles, and source's company commander Lieutenant MACHACEK (fnu) (nadporucik) told the recruits that their battalion would be given a special assignment, but no mention was made of border duty.

During the first six weeks the men were put through normal military training, but at the end of that time, in April 1952, all officers were changed with the exception of the political officer 2nd Lieutenant KRAL (fnu) (podporucik). The men were told that the battalion was being moved to the border zone. Source did not know the names of any of these new officers with the exception of his first patrol commander 1st Lieutenant ANTALA (fnu). He observed that all these officers wore the red shoulderboards of the STB.

In April the guards also took the oath of allegiance; an unusual proceeding as this was not normally done until after about four months training. They were told that this was a military secret not to be divulged to anyone.

With the advent of the new officers, training became harder and political schooling intensified. Two hours every day were devoted to political indoctrination. Stories of Soviet soldiers' bravery, Western perfidy, and Communist greatness were daily drilled into the ears of the new guards. During the afternoon debates on political subjects and border duties were also held between the soldiers and officers-in charge.

Physical training was stepped-up. One hour daily was given over to running, hurdling, climbing and other athletic exercises. Shooting was taught with revolver (Walter), carbine (N 98 Karabine,) light MG (Zbrojovka) and automatic pistol (Samopal T 23) at 100-400 meter range lying, standing, kneeling and sitting.

After three months of this intensive training the battalion was moved to SUSICE in June 1952. The officers remained behind in CHEB and the recruits were accompanied only by second-year soldiers and non-commissioned officers, altogether about 200.

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In SUSICE new officers were assigned to the battalion, and it was transported in trucks to MODRAVA in the border zone of SUMAVA. Here companies of 20 men each were assigned to different border posts in the woods. This was carried out at night so that source had only an approximate idea of the location.

The post at which source now found himself was only a wooden bungalow in the forest. There were ten soldiers, eight non-commissioned officers (poddustojnici) and two officers. All these men were strangers to source. It was forbidden to divulge any names and the men only knew each other by numbers, calling each other by their Christian names when together. This was done so that if any of the guards escaped across the border they could not give the names of their comrades and officers.

The bungalow was guarded by one guard only. Two guard posts of two men each were established in the 1,5 km-long "forbidden zone," the 300 meter-deep area between the border proper and the 50-cm high wire stretching along the border. The men lay hidden flat on the ground in a hollow or behind a tree. They were in pairs lying close enough together to be visible to each other in the daytime, and within hearing distance at night.

Time-off duty was spent sleeping, playing volleyball, or taking a sun bath - weather permitting. During the first month two soldiers at a time were allowed to go by truck to NEZDICE or STACHY some distance away and take part in dancing at the local inn. Usually only non-commissioned officers were given this privilege. Source never went, and after the first month this entertainment was forbidden.

Occasionally beer was brought to the bungalow by truck from MODRAVA, but usually the guards had to be content with water.

Food was insufficient and bad. They were given black substitute coffee for breakfast with bread and butter, and sometimes an egg or salami. An average luncheon was soup, dumplings and 100 gram goulash. On Sundays they sometimes had steak but the portions were very small. Supper consisted of a sort of artificial rice made from flour, with vegetables - usually peas - and sausages.

They were always hunting for meat and on one occasion caught a dog near the village which they killed and cooked. The commanding officer did not know what the meat was and also ate his share of it.

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Guard was changed at different times, usually after six hours but sometimes every four hours. The four men assigned to the border posts were checked by the commander in the bungalow before they left to take over. He checked their guns, ammunition etc. When reporting to the commander for duty the guards said "Comrade Lieutenant, the guard patrol of the Border Guards is going to fulfill the honorable task of guarding the Czechoslovakian state borders of the People's Democratic Republic of Czechoslovakia," to which the commander replied "Carry it out." (STRAZNI: SOUDRUHU PORUCIKU, HLIDKA PAHRANICNI STRAZE ODCHAZI PLNIT CESTNY UKOL, OSTRAHU CESKOSLOVENSKYCH STANICH HRANIC LIDOVE DEMOKRATICKE REPUBLIKY CESKOSLOVENSKE. VELITEL: PROVEDTE".)

The times at which the guard changed was shown on the Operation Plan written every evening at 1800 hours by the commander, showing the duties for the coming day and night. This was always written on green paper and posted on a certain spot in the bungalow corridor.

Each soldier was indicated by a cover number which did not run consecutively. Alongside this number were a number of squares, and the color of the square indicated a particular task. Mass work meant a collective game, lecture, or similar occupation in which all soldiers had to take part. It was a form of political propaganda which no-one could avoid, aiming to show that collective work can achieve more than individual work.

Source gives an example of such a plan of operations:

Operation Plan No. 34:

1800 to 2000 hours	Mass work (yellow square)
2000 to 0200 hours	Guard duty (green square)
0200 to 0800 hours	Sleep after duty (pale blue square)
1100 to 1300 hours	Guard duty in front of the bungalow (dark blue square)
1300 to 1500 hours	Off duty (indicated by the letters OV - odpoledni volno or letters DV - dopoledni volno, meaning either forenoon or afternoon off duty).
1500 to 1800 hours	Different subjects such as gymnastics, shooting, study etc. (source does not remember the colors.)

Soldiers did not receive any cigarette ration, and had to purchase all small items in the canteen in the bungalow. But this was kept very poorly, supplied by the battalion commander in MODRAVA so that sometimes not even cigarettes or beer were obtainable.

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Source gives the following information on soldier's pay:

recruit (vojin)	monthly 820 Kcs
private (svobodnik)	monthly 820 Kcs plus 2 Kcs daily = 820+60 Kcs
corporal (desatnik)	monthly 820 Kcs plus 3 Kcs daily = 820+90 Kcs
sergeant 2nd class (cetar)	monthly 820 Kcs plus 4 Kcs daily = 820+120 Kcs
sergeant 1st class (rotny)	monthly 820 Kcs plus 5 Kcs daily = 820+150 Kcs.

End.