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SETTLEMENT AND POPULATION

I. Pecháčková: *Settlement and population*. – Geografie – Sborník ČGS, 103, 3, pp. 367 – 381 (1998). – This article deals with the problem of inhabitants and the development of settlement in the area of the former military area Ralsko. Because of this fact some statistical sources were hard to find and some were not possible to find at all. The article summarizes the development of this space from the historical point of view (the influence of the establishment and closure of the military area on the changes in demographic structure and the present situation of the communities).

KEY WORDS: former military area – population structure – presuppositions for the further population development

1. Delimitation and organization of the area

The area of the former military zone Ralsko is situated in the southeastern part of Česká Lípa district in close proximity to the border with the Liberec district area. The area is distant from the main thoroughfares and bigger settlements. The biggest towns in the nearest surroundings are Mladá Boleslav (45 th.), Česká Lípa (40 th.) and Liberec (100 th.). Mimoň, Doksy and Stráž pod Ralskem are the most important towns situated on the edge of the area.

The extent of the former military zone was 24,986 ha, which represented 21.5 % area of the district of Česká Lípa. Ralsko was the second largest military area in the CR. Approx. 60 km² were used for military purposes. The influence of the military zone extended beyond the border of Česká Lípa district and also reached the settlements Bělá pod Bezdězem (Mladá Boleslav district) and Osečná (Liberec).

The military zone was founded in 1949, and in 1968 – 1991 used by troops of the Soviet army. Based on international agreements from 1990, the Soviet

Table 1 – The present administrative delimitation of Ralsko – January 1998

Municipality part	Cadastral area	Settlement localities
1. Kuřivody	1. Kuřivody	1. Kuřivody
2. Boreček	2. Boreček	2. Boreček
3. Horní Krupá	3. Horní Krupá	3. Dolní Krupá
4. Hradčany nad Ploučnicí	4. Hradčany nad Ploučnicí	4. Hradčany nad Ploučnicí
5. Jabloneček	5. Jabloneček	5. Jabloneček
6. Náhlov	6. Náhlov	6. Náhlov
7. Plouznice pod Ralskem	7. Plouznice pod Ralskem	7. Plouznice pod Ralskem, Hvězdov
8. Svěbořice	8. Svěbořice	8. Svěbořice

Source: Ralsko Municipal Council

crew left the military zone in 1991, and at the same time the military zone was closed down by the ČSFR Government on 5. 9. 1991 and freed for the civil sector on 31. 12. 1991. The independent municipality Ralsko was proclaimed on 1. 1. 1992, and in march 1992 the board of representatives started acting. Through a decision of the ČSFR Government Nr. 542/92 changes came about in the administrative delimitation and arrangement of the municipality, and Kuřivody became the administrative center.

2. History

2.1 History of the rise and extinction of the military training zone Ralsko

The area of the former military training zone Ralsko always belonged to the poorer area of Česká Lípa district, economically little-developed, with bad traffic accessibility. The prevailing part of the area was wooded.

The economy of Ralsko was historically dependent on natural conditions – the main sustenance of the former population was employment in wood, agriculture, building work, and later recreation and a spa. A couple of settlements suffered from a scarcity of water, and soil used for agricultural purposes was low quality and did not enable the achievement of major profits. Cattle breeding prevailed in most of the area.

With industrial development (esp. woodworking) in Mimoň in 19. century most people left for work in the town and at the turn of this century a depopulation tendency began in the future military zone area. The population density was already before the second World War significantly lower than in neighboring economically or agriculturally more developed areas. The eastern and southeastern border of the area of that time contained the language and national border of Czechs and Germans. Most of the population of the future military zone of that time was represented by Germans, who though were ordered to withdraw after the war.

The reason for deciding to place the military training zone there was experiences from World War Two – the need of space for army-training in demanding terrain conditions, training in cooperation between different forces of the airforce, artillery and tanks. The sparsely inhabited area between Bezděz and Ralsko Hill matched these conditions. Another important argument was the Hradčany military airport, the construction of which was begun by the German army in March 1945 and a German military crew were stationed there until the end of the war. Right after the war, to secure the Czech population and enforce the Czech element in the borderland an Air Squadron Guard military formation was sent to Hradčany, and its members settled there with their families for good.

The sittings about founding the military training camp ran from the first days of peace in 1945. By the Act of the Czechoslovak republic from 27. 4. 1949 Nr. 169/1949 Sb. it was decided to found the military training zone Ralsko for the needs of the CSA army-training by 1. 7. 1950. Depopulation was ended 31. 10. 1952. The former military zone area formed the new administrative unit.

The foundation of the military area contributed to the complete extinction of about 30 settlements and totally changed the character of the settlements which survived (e.g. the noted recreation center Hradčany etc.)

After the arrival of Soviet troops in 1968, the military area was under the direct subordination of command of the Central group of the USSR troops on the territory of Czechoslovakia (staff in Milovice).

In 1969 – 1989 large areas for accommodation of troops and family members, technical parks and a couple of ammunition stores were built. In the area there lived more than 20,000 soldiers and family members from USSR, and they were concentrated in the localities Kuřivody, Hradčany, Vrchbělá, Hvězdov I and II, Svěbořice, Nový Dvůr, Jablonec, Jezová. Czechoslovak citizens stayed only in Hradčany, Plouznice, Náhlov, Boreček – mostly employees of VLS Mimoň and ČSA.

The over 20-year use of the area by the soviet army after 1968 brought, apart from the construction of military buildings, the liquidation of the former building fund and historically valuable buildings. A big part of the used area was contaminated, polluted or requires pyrotechnical sanitation.

Another area handicap was caused by the mining and processing of uranium carried out since the early 70s in the mining center area Stráž pod Ralskem – Hamr na Jezeře.

The Soviet crew left the former military area in 1991. This was followed by closure of the military area, freeing it to the civil sector, the rise of the independent municipality of Ralsko and changes in their new administrative delimitation.

After the soviet army withdrawal a large area full of contrasts was given over to the public sector: an area unaffected by antropogeneous activity with significant natural values; an area strongly affected by pyrotechnical burden, the burden of uranium mining, soil contamination etc.; an area invested in with a big building fund, but nowadays unused and devastated.

Ralsko is an especially unique area from the natural values point of view. According to expert data almost 90 % of its area remained unaffected by direct influence in the last 50 years. It is quite rare in central Europe to find such a large and continuous area left in substance to natural development. From this point of view it is possible to consider Ralsko one of the most valuable areas in central Europe. At present a new use of this large specific area is being sought.

2.2. History of the demographic development of the Ralsko military training zone area

Continuous chronological data about population numbers in the area of Ralsko starts in 1869, which is the start of the regular census, and building and apartment counting according to the municipalities of the former CSSR. Because of the concealing of information about military areas it is difficult to obtain continuous chronological information about population size of particular parts of Ralsko area and even the census and the counting of buildings and apartments do not provide these data.

The poor, hardly accessible and little inhabited area of the former military area Ralsko has been affected by depopulation since the first half of the last

Table 2 – Development of population size in Ralsko 1850 – 1991

Year	1869	1900	1910	1921	1930	1950	1961	1970	1980	1991
Population size	8,275	7,773	6,747	6,427	6,221	3,494	831	768	571	524

Source: A retrospective lexicon of municipalities 1850 – 1970, SLBD 1991

Table 3 – Summary of municipalities in the area VVP Ralsko in 1910 – 1938

Municipality – munic. part	Population size		Buildings
	1910	1938	1938
Černá Novina – Schwarzwald – Dolní Novina – Böhm. Neuland	107	97	24
	172	149	33
Holičky – Hultschen	171	165	42
Hvězdov – Höflitz	537	562	90
Horní Krupá – Ob. Krupai	272	305	–
Jablonec – Gablonz – Chlum – Chlum – Pytlíkovský Mlýn – Prosíčka – Prosicka	329	314	85
	67	52	16
	9	12	–
	51	54	14
Jezová – Jesowai	361	–	71
Kotel – Kessel – Sobákov – Sobaken	243	229	–
	127	143	–
Křída – Kridai	131	127	32
Hradčany – Kummer	405	370	97
Kuřivody – Hühnerwasser – Strážov – Strassdorf	937	924	226
	38	38	13
Náhlav – Nahlau – Kracmanov – Kratzdorf – Dolní Okna – Heide	137	121	17
	89	89	27
	31	26	7
Olšina – Wolschen	232	213	44
Palohlavy – Halbehaupt	284	263	61
Ploužnice – Plauschnitz	414	425	86
Proseč – Proschwitz – Kostřice – Kosterlitz – Nový Mlýn	169	143	33
	56	49	13
	28	19	–
Svébořice – Schwabitz	635	615	142
Vrchbělá	–	390	–
Židlov – Schidel	390	375	81
Celkem	6,651	6 485	–

Source: District homeland studying museum Česká Lípa (exhibition Ralsko yesterday, today and tomorrow, 1995)

Remark: - data unfound

century. The reason was the development of industrial production in more important settlement centers in the immediate area (especially in Mimoň-production of furniture and pianos). Although the natural conditions and landscape character afforded possibilities for cattle breeding, building work and work in the wood, employment possibilities in town offered an easier living.

In the period 1900 – 1938 about 30 settlements were situated in the future military area with about 6,500 – 7,000 inhabitants. Most of the former inhabitants were Germans. Former settlements names are today suggested only by names on maps of that time. The indisputably biggest settlement in

the area at that time was Kuřivody. Other important settlements were Svěbořice, Hvězdov, Ploužnice, Jezová and Jablonec.

An important turning point, which appreciably affected demographic development of population in the area was the Second World War. Before the war German antifascists and the Czech inhabitants escaped, after the war both of these groups returned. The post-war decision about the German population transfer affected most people of the future military area settlements. Almost all German property apart from personal things were confiscated. Some of the Germans had left already before the organized German transfer began in 1946 (it was finished in the same year). Simultaneously with the transfer a new settling was carried out, especially of the central Bohemian area – Praha, Čáslav, Kolín, Poděbrady, Nymburk, Mladá Boleslav and near surroundings – Mnichovo Hradiště, which belonged to “inland” during World War Two. At the beginning the settling was very fast, overpopulation occurred and there was a scarcity of landkeepers, agricultural estates and craftsmen. New inhabitants of Hradčany for example came mostly from Prague and surroundings, because they knew Hradčany from the pre-war time as a favourite and noted center. Later the Ministry of agriculture commission for settling regulated the flow of new inhabitants.

The flow of the Czech settlers could not make up for the decrease of German population and the density of the after-war settlement did not reach the pre-war level. The reason was in considerations about the rise of the military zone, which had started already in the first post-war days and caused significant uncertainty in inhabitants. For example in 1946 there was talk from the municipalities Ploužnice – Hvězdov of quitting settlements, though there were free estates, the construction and reconstruction in the municipality were stopped. The increasing demands from the army side and the slowness of dealings negatively affected the interest of settlers.

The decision about building the military training zone and the following depopulation action ended hopes for stabilization of population and post-war settlement restoration. Inhabitants were moved to other parts of Česká Lípa district and the borderland of southern and southwestern Bohemia.

The military activity in the area in the period 1950 – 1991 practically liquidated the former settlement structure and violently discontinued the demographic development. The population decrease accounted for 85 % of permanent inhabitants and presently there does not exist any population with a firmer attitude to this area.

2.3 History of particular settlements

2.3.1 Kuřivody

Kuřivody (the original German name is Huehnerwasser) is situated 9 km southwestwards from Mimoň on the old track Zittau – Prague. It is this position that caused Kuřivody to become the most important center of the Ralsko area. The later connection and crossing of thoroughfares Mnichovo Hradiště – Mimoň and Bělá pod Bezdězem – Osečná strengthened the building-up of Kuřivody.

The town dates from approximately 1293, and was first inhabited by wood-workers and miners. Kuřivody was noted for a kind of building (squares, streets, townhall, castle, timbered houses, church, rectory, school, plague column).

Since 1868 Kuřivody has had an important post office with telephone and telegraph. The mail traffic Zittau – Prague passed there and the nearest railway station was in Mimoň. To the most significant buildings in town belonged the townhall with a town archive built in 1889. One of the oldest buildings was the lord's castle.

Table 4 – Development of number of permanent inhabitants in Kuřivody

Year	1896	1900	1910	1934	1938	1939	1991	1996	1998
Population size	1,510	1,014	1,055	827	924	826	88	208	208

Source: ÚPN VÚC Ralsko, Ralsko Municipal Council in Kuřivody

Kuřivody was surrounded by extensive woods and became an important summer healing-center. The main living of inhabitants was agriculture and work in the wood, handcraft and a small amount of trade (weaving, glass works, basket-making, working semi-finished articles for the Mimoň furniture factory).

Before depopulation Kuřivody was the most important settlement in the area, and with military activity the original settlement structure was completely destroyed.

During the Soviet army stay an extensive barracks complex connected to the training ground and shooting-range was built. The settlement itself had an accommodation function (366 flats, accommodation, shops, clubs, school, culture house, Russian and Czech laundry, tea-house, stores, auto columns). The connected shooting-range, training ground and technical parks caused an ecological load and much devastation of buildings and lands.

After the military area closure the settlement remained abandoned. In the period 1991 – 1992 people from the Kiev Chernobyl area were moved to Kuřivody in three waves. In total 58 families (185 persons) moved in. The rest of the population is formed by approximately 7 Czech families (23 persons). The absence of job opportunities at the place remain a big problem for the inhabitants.

At present 11 separate family houses and 16 “Finland houses” with 32 flats are inhabited. There are 3 apartment houses (type Kijev, 225 flats) and 1 block of flats of BANKS type (56 flats) not in use. Significant areas are occupied by produce-storing areas of the former military columns (artillery, sapper, shooting-range directorium).

The Kuřivody building study proposes keeping and increasing the population size of the settlement. The settlement is to become a center of the whole area, which would concentrate administrative services, job openings and civil facilities. The flat fund is to contribute to the modernization of three blocks of Kiev type flats, and the construction of new family houses and apartment houses.

A maximum of 1,000 permanent inhabitants has been proposed as the outlook size of the settlement. This increase in inhabitants will be closely connected with the development of job opportunities, modernization and construction of new flat units. Development of the whole settlement is conditioned by the general revival of the former military area Ralsko.

2.3.2 Boreček

At the site of the present settlement Boreček (the original German name is Haidedoerfel) there was originally an enclosure with a gamekeeper's lodge. Later these buildings served as a hunting castle, which was often visited by the lordship for hunting purposes. Nowadays this place is called “Eustach's chapel” after one of the patrons.

Local inhabitants lived mostly on agriculture or went to work in Mimoň. In 1944 a cannery works was founded by a German owner. After 1945 the works were nationalized. On 1. 1. 1993 it was privatized and the Northbohemian sanitation company Mimoň works here on dead animals from northern and eastern Bohemia and on waste of animal origin from meatcombinates.

After 1945 the Boreček municipality was included in the military area. There was a parachute dyeing facility with a building for drying the parachutes (this building later belonged to the Military research institution), permanent living and a Vet sanitation institution.

Table 5 – Number of permanent inhabitants of Boreček

Year	1987	1994	1995	1996	1998
Population size	78	70	62	62	69

Source: Česká Lípa daily paper 1996 – District encyclopedia, District archives Česká Lípa

At present there are 13 permanently inhabited family houses and 1 apartment house, and another 3 family houses are being reconstructed. The present accommodation capacities are temporarily being used as an accommodation center by the Institute of civil defence in Lázně Bohdaneč. Regarding the location of the State sanation institution in Boreček and its protective hygienic zone this locality is unsuitable for permanent living. The building study does not propose new apartment construction, and suggests preserving the present population size of the settlement.

2.3.3. Horní Krupá

The ruins of this forgotten settlement are situated 2 km eastwards from Kuřivody. The village (the original German name is Krupai) is one of the oldest settlements of the district of Česká Lípa. It was renamed “Chrui” in 1229 and its original base is situated on the site of the present Dolní Krupá (Mladá Boleslav district).

A disadvantage was the bad traffic accessibility of the settlement. Only in 1900 was a road to Židlov and Rokytky built, along with the roads Kuřivody – Osečná and Kuřivody – Mnichovo Hradiště. The population of Horní Krupá lived mostly on agriculture and wood keeping. The development of handicrafts did not start until the last century. Apart from ploughing and cattle-breeding the main employment was provided by a local mill. Also this little village has had its own school from 1904.

Table 6 – Development of number of permanent inhabitants in Horní Krupá

Year	1850	1910	1930	1931	1939	1945	1987	1995	1998
Population size	397	272	314	294	261	210	55	63	75

Source: ÚPN VÚC Ralsko, Ralsko Municipal Council in Kuřivody

After the end of the second World War a municipal council was established and its main postwar task was the transfer of the German population, which started in the autumn of 1945. After elections in June 1946 hopeful development in the village could have been expected – a board of representatives was elected, and associations and organizations, youngsters and agrarians started working. Out of the village simultaneously dealings about the rise of the military area and village transfer were carried out. In March 1947 municipal council papers were given to the district council, and on 1. 4. 1947 lands were taken over by the military government and the village was already depopulated on 22. 5. 1947.

In the period when the village was being joined to the military zone, Horní Krupá did not have any special military importance and it was only used for living. At present 75 permanent inhabitants live there and the worked-out Land-use plan Ralsko does not propose any important development and settlement restoration. The outlook size was assessed at 70 – 80 permanent inhabitants.

2.3.4 Hradčany nad Ploučnicí

Hradčany (the original hamlet German name is Kummer) is situated on the former medieval merchant road from Mnichovo Hradiště to Česká Lípa. Sandy soil and rocky terrain were not suitable conditions for agricultural production. The municipality was quite inhabited due to the woodworking industry.

In 1870 Fischels furniture factory in Mimoň was founded and it was the main source of job openings for a big part of the population. From 1789 there was a school in the municipality. At the turn of this century the municipality's importance as a recreation center started to grow. The earl of Waldstein supported the building of a swimming pool at Hradčanský pond, hotels – six hotels before W. W. Two (e.g. hotel Letka, Na pláži), pensions, villas and restaurants. After 1909 a district road from Mimoň to Doksy was built and interest in this attractive recreation center grew further.

Hradčany was in a big rush at the end of W. W. Two – in March 1945 a German military planes airport was being built there. In April the airport was bombed by allied aircraft, but the German army remained there until the last days of the war and made blitzes on Mělník and Prague from there. To maintain security a “Flyguards” column was put there, whose members, friends and relatives settled in the municipality.

Table 7 – Development of number of permanent inhabitants in Hradčany

Year	1843	1900	1939	1987	1994	1995	1996	1998
Population size	529	397	386	134	130	152	146	155

Source: Česká Lípa daily paper 1996 – District encyclopedia, District archives Česká Lípa

The main postwar problem was how to restore the recreation facilities and beaches, open the Czech school and kindergarten, start associations activities (theatre in hotel Letka). There were job openings in nearby Mimoň, in woods and tourism facilities. The municipality asked the Ministry of the Interior to return it the Czech name “Hradčany nad jezerem”.

In 1948 the airport was already being reconstructed and a military troop was placed in the settlement. From 1947 the arising military training zone completely destroyed the significance of Hradčany as a recreation center.

In March 1950 dealings about transmission of the cadastre area to the army were started, including beach and hotel buildings, where later the army government resided. By the the end of 1950 the depopulation was finished.

Hradčany belonged in the framework of the military training zone due to the military airport and its extensive background to the most important area. With its parameters and extent the airport was one of the most modern on the territory of CSFR (runway 2,500/80 m). The army built there 965 flat units, accommodation centers, barracks complex, clubs, shops, school and other technical facilities. The settled part of Hradčany close to the airport served as permanent living for employees of Military woods and estates and army government. After 1968 the staff of the army government left and the freed appartments were occupied by soviet army members. During their transfer a considerable part of buildings and facilities in particular localities was dismantled and transported to the USSR (steel halls, wooden buildings, special facilities such as airport equipment etc.).

Nowadays one block of flats and 34 family houses are permanently occupied. The building of the former hotel Na pláži is also occupied by the canteen of Military woods and estates. In the settlement there is a grocery, a phone box, bus stop and the residence of Hradčany woods administration.

In the area of Hradčany airport there are no permanently occupied buildings. Of other buildings which formerly served for living, there are five BANKS type blocks of flats – with 80 small flat units. The town council in Mimoň is interested in these for the purpose of living. Another three Czech blocks of flats – 48 flat units are wanted for use by IPB Prague as accommodation centers. Of the Czech buildings, another 53 flat units were used for living. Apart from the extensive technical background another 11 russian blocks of flats (786 small flat units, 1+1, 1+2), two buildings of the former staff, large canteen for pilots, shop, sport background (five playing fields), culture house, primary school for 1. – 9. class levels (16 classrooms, capacity 600 – 640 pupils) are situated in the area.

To the present day Hradčany airport is the most important economic priority of Ralsko, and is one of the dominant areas, which can attract significant economic activities. The project of the building study proposes the maximum use of the present accommodation capacity, and optimal area use. It is recommended to make use of all the positive values of the area for at least a partial restoration of permanent accommodation function, and its natural connection with its recreation function and tourism.

The building study counts on filling the stabilization accommodation for families – family houses, accommodation for specific age groups – small flats as well as temporary accommodation – boarding-house, tourism facilities. The outlook size of Hradčany capacity is set at 700 – 800 permanent inhabitants.

2.3.5 Hvězdov

Hvězdov (the former German name is Hoeflitz) is situated on a former commercial road Prague – Bělá pod Bezdězem – Zittau. There were good conditions for growing plants and breeding cattle. The abundance of water in particular led to building the ponds chain, water mills and a sawmill.

In 1877 a little factory for matches was founded by the Pobuda's brothers, and apart from agriculture other job openings were offered by a tanners' association, some small

quarries in the surroundings and mainly wood cutting. Part of the population went to work in Mimoň too.

In 1930 the municipality reached its highest population size – in total 587 permanent inhabitants, including 520 Germans (88,6 %) and 58 Czechs (9,9 %). The municipality lived by a successful tourism industry – at the pond a swimming pool was built, and the restaurant by Josef Pobuda was well-known. The school was first introduced in 1790.

Though after W. W. Two the municipality was occupied by the Czech population from inland, in 1950 the municipality became depopulated and was included in the military area.

For the needs of the army a large barracks complex and training ground (Hvězdov I and II) were built. 230 flat units, clubs and shops were built. Many historical buildings were liquidated (including a chapel from 1783 on so-called Svěbořická path and a cemetery chapel from 1671) especially during the Soviet army stay from 1968.

Presently Hvězdov is coming to life again and Ralsko municipality possesses 10 Finland houses, of which six are already occupied and four family houses are being finished. In Hvězdov I there are 14 unoccupied family houses and another nine in Hvězdov II, but all houses already have owners and are to be reconstructed. Among other buildings usable for living or equipment are a former school, a gym, a shop, an officers' canteen and a culture house (400 person capacity).

Part of Hvězdov is also the Pavlín Dvůr – a private property – overlookingly an agricultural farm with horse-breeding. To Hvězdov also belongs the locality of Wollman's villa – a private property – overlookingly a sanatorium for children with allergies.

Besides Ploužnice and Hradčany, Hvězdov has good presuppositions for a permanent living function of settlement restoration: historically it belongs to the biggest settlements before the military zone arose; its original shape as a settlement formation and original usable buildings are at least minimally preserved; it has easy accessibility to Mimoň; it is being reconstructed and there is interest in buildings.

Table 8 – Development of number of permanent inhabitants in Hvězdov

Year	1850	1869	1921	1930	1939	1987	1994	1995	1996	1998
Population size	502	306	562	587	562	0	0	15	21	23

Source: Česká Lípa daily paper 1996 – District encyclopedia, District archives Česká Lípa

Apart from the permanent living function the municipality has, due to its quality natural background good conditions for tourism development. The Hvězdov building study project proposes that besides the present living-fund, which already has owners, and is partly occupied, new family houses be constructed. It is about to develop a new sector of services for recreation and sport (golf grounds, pensions, hotels). The outlook settlement capacity is assessed by the building study at 180 permanent inhabitants.

2.3.6 Jabloneček

The first recorded information about Jabloneček (the original German name is Gablonz – Jablonec) comes from 1352, when the settlement was part of the Hradiště estate.

For most of the population agriculture was the main living. Part of the population worked for the Mimoň Rundbugholz's furniture factory. Some inhabitants also produced glass pearls and strung beads at the costume jewellery factories of Jablonec nad Nisou.

After 1945 the municipality started being occupied, but its inclusion in the military training zone meant the end of postwar restoration. After the occupation in 1968 the

Table 9 – Development of number of permanent inhabitants in Jabloneček

Year	1843	1900	1939	1987	1995	1996	1998
Population size	575	464	235	0	0	0	0

Source: Česká Lípa daily paper 1996 – District encyclopedia District archives Česká Lípa, Ralsko Municipal Council in Kuřivody

area belonged to the most protected areas, because a rocket base was built here. At the same time there was built a large military complex, stores of military technics and materials, a flat fund (20 flats), a shop and a club. At the same time as the former building fund was liquidated (the biggest loss was probably the church), in the southern area part they built a bomb ground Prosičská horka and explosive pit Židlov, which belong to the fourth category of the highest pyrotechnical area load. After the Soviet army withdrawal in 1991 refugees from other countries were temporarily concentrated in Jabloneček.

At the moment Jabloneček has no permanent inhabitants. The worked out building study of the settlement proposes building a quiet recreation, health-care and rehabilitation zone. There are also possibilities for fishing, hunting, mushroom-picking, horse-riding and cycling. It is not proposed to build a fully-valuable permanent living settlement.

2.3.7 Náhlov

Náhlov (the original German name is Nahlau) was a village, the first record of which comes from 1544, when it belonged to the castle Děvín estate. In the cadastre area of Náhlov there were in the past also other inhabited settlements (mostly of agricultural character), which ceased to exist during the military training zones construction: Holičky (Hultschken); Černá Novina (Schwarzwald); Dolní Novina (Bhm. Neuland); Samota (An der Kerbe); Polohlavý (Halbehaupt); Křída (Kridai); Olšina (Wolschen); Dvůr Medný (M. H. Mednay).

Until the military area Ralsko arose Náhlov municipality included an area of 309 ha, with 175 inhabitants, 80 occupied houses and a school. The population lived on agriculture.

After the occupation of the military area by the Soviet army Náhlov was besides Hradčany, Plouznice pod Ralskem and Boreček, the only settlement where Czech citizens remained. The settlement served as a base of agricultural and wood production for the workers of the Military woods and estates.

From very limited and sometimes very incomplete information about the area in question available data on population numbers are shown in the Table 10.

Today's Náhlov meanwhile is a forgotten settlement, remote from main thoroughfares as well as bigger settlement centers. On one side it is separated from the main building zones of Česká Lípa district and the large military Ralsko area zone, whose future development has not been resolved yet. On the other side Náhlov borders on small settlements of the not too developed Český Dub area in the district of Liberec. The nearest bigger settlement and main serviced center for Náhlov is Osečná municipality on the territory of Liberec district.

The development of Náhlov could be significantly influenced by new activities and the development of the former military zone area and Osečná, Lázně Kundratice and the whole recreation area of Hamr na Jezeře.

Table 10 – Development of number of permanent inhabitants in Náhlov

Year	1843	1900	1896	1910	1930	1987	1995	1997	1998
Population size	228	175	184	137	121	84	70	78	80

Source: ÚPN VÚC Ralsko, Ralsko Municipal Council in Kuřivody

In the Náhlov building study project it is proposed to make maximum use of the present flat fund of the settlement with these priorities: the modernization of flat units owned by the present flat fund as well as occupying unused flats; the reconstruction of the majority of original preserved family house buildings in the settlement and their subsequent use for permanent living (eventually recreation); filling the present buildings structure with new buildings – four family houses (possible use for permanent or recreational stays).

At the same time it is proposed to build business activity buildings, citizen's equipment facilities, services and some production. Regarding the interesting position of the settlement in the scenic environment it is proposed to build or reconstruct some buildings as pensions etc. The outlook settlement capacity was assessed at 160 permanent inhabitants.

2.3.8 Ploužnice

Records from 1460 describe Ploužnice (the original German name is Plauschnitz) as an empty village, part of Kuřivody, with one estate only.

Ploužnice was an agricultural municipality due to good conditions for farming and cattle-breeding prevailed. Rich woods enabled wood mining, and in the surroundings there were some pitch ovens.

Apart from a mill in the last century, a sawmill for working wood was built. The industrial development of Mimoň contributed to population work-withdrawal from the town.

In 1921, 425 permanent inhabitants lived in the municipality including 391 Germans (92.0 %) and 27 Czechs (6.6 %). In the period around 1930 the municipality experienced its busiest times, because a swimming pool was built there and Ploužnice was an important recreation centre.

After W. W. Two and the German population transfer and Czech population-from-inland occupation, the municipality was included in the military zone and repopulated. Ploužnice was the least army-affected settlement. It fulfilled a habitation function, and had in addition a joiner's trade and animal production workroom.

Table 11 – Development of number of permanent inhabitants in Ploužnice pod Ralskem

Year	1921	1930	1987	1994	1995	1996	1998
Population size	425	421	129	120	153	151	294

Source: Česká Lípa daily paper – District encyclopedia, District archives Česká Lípa

At the moment Ploužnice belongs among areas in the former military area with the most suitable conditions for partial restoration of permanent habitation function of the settlement at least: historically it belonged among the biggest settlements before the military area arose; it has at least minimally preserved its original shape as a settlement formation and original usable buildings; it has easy accessibility to Mimoň; it is under reconstruction and there is interest in its buildings.

Since 1995 Ploužnice has had the highest growth of permanent inhabitants in the Ralsko area. At present two blocks of flats with 80 flat units have been reconstructed and another 34 family houses are permanently occupied.

The Ploužnice building study proposes building another 30 family houses, which should contribute to the stabilization of new population and to the optimal use of free area. The future settlement capacity was assessed at 240 permanent inhabitants and at the moment it is exceeded.

2.3.9 Svěbořice

From the early 14. century Svěbořice (the original German name is Schwabitz) had been a big rectory settlement with a convenient position on the Mimoň-Osečná route.

The municipality had very good conditions for agricultural development – enough water, many springs and fountains in the woods and a chain of five ponds at Svěbořický brook. The municipality was one of the most occupied areas. Agricultural production and cattle-breeding prevailed, and in the surroundings there was also iron-mining and its working in Hamr na Jezeře.

Furniture production development in Mimoň contributed to part of the population withdrawing to work in Mimoň. To Svěbořice belonged also other settlements: Palohlavý,

Table12 – Development of number of permanent inhabitants in Svěbořice

Year	1910	1938	1945	1987	1994	1995	1996	1998
Population size	635	615	562	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Česká Lípa daily paper – District encyclopedia, District archives Česká Lípa

Dolní Novina, Černá Novina, Holičky, Hamr, Útěchovice, Nový Hvězdov and other three seclusions.

The first school was founded in the sixteenth century and it was always full of pupils. Until W. W. Two the municipality was one of the biggest settlements (apart from Kuřivody) in the Ralsko area. The municipality had a very rich cultural life with many associations.

After 1945 the Czech school was founded in the municipality and the population number nearly reached the prewar level and postwar restoration was successfully started. In the preparations for building the military zone the municipality was included in its area. The activity of Local Government finished in March 1947 and by the year's end the municipality was depopulated. During the areas use by the Czechoslovak and Soviet armies a barracks complex with 101 flat units, clubs, shops, stores was situated in Svěbořice I. In the nearby wood they built the area Svěbořice II – fight-part with a complex of temporary habitable buildings and shooting-range and water training ground.

Although before W. W. Two Svěbořice was the second biggest settlement in the area, all the original building fund was destroyed and the present buildings are almost unusable for permanent habitation reconstruction. At present the locality is without permanent inhabitants. The shooting-range Svěbořice II. area has been reserved for the construction of a breeding station for extremely endangered animal species (150 animals and connected buildings), which would contribute suitably to using the natural values and tourist and recreation area function. In the locality Nový Dvůr (Svěbořice I) there are, apart from the store, 101 former small flat units, free-time building and a former shop. The utilization should be verified.

The Svěbořice building study does not propose restoration of the original settlement formation. It is planned to build 30 – 40 small flat units for breeding station workers, a pension (60 beds) and an hotel (150 beds) with sport facilities. The outlook settlement capacity has been assessed at 40 permanent inhabitants.

3. Present population structure

After the Soviet troops withdrawal the settlement fragment was made up of nine localities with a minimal number or no permanent inhabitants – Boreček, Hradčany nad Ploučnicí, Ploužnice pod Ralskem, Hvězdov, Svěbořice, Náhlov, Jabloneček, Horní Krupá and Kuřivody, where the Ralsko local municipal council is.

Flat and other building funds were, after the areas abandonment by the Soviet army, considerably devastated and destroyed. Permission to remove nearly all Russian buildings in the Ralsko area was given because most of these buildings do not meet the Czech standards. There is no documentation. It is necessary to technically assess all the buildings and state their further use.

Since 1991 interest in Ralsko has grown. Its population, interest in habitation as well as business activities have increased. Hradčany, Boreček, Ploužnice, Hvězdov, Náhlov and Kuřivody are inhabited localities Svěbořice and Jabloneček remain quite depopulated. All localities belong to the smallest category of settlements as regards size. The most inhabited localities are Kuřivody, Ploužnice pod Ralskem and Hradčany. The highest increase since 1995 has been seen in Ploužnice pod Ralskem, which was of all the the

Table 13 – Development of number of permanent inhabitants in the Ralsko municipality after 1991

Year	1991	1992	1993	1995	1996	1998
Population size	524	633	658	729	730	894

Source: SLBD 1991, Ralsko Municipal Council in Kuřivody (1992 – 1998)

Table14 – Development of number of permanent inhabitants in the settlement localities

Settlement locality	1992	1993	1995	1998
Kuřivody	183	183	208	208
Boreček	70	63	62	69
Dolní Krupá	50	63	63	75
Hradčany nad Ploučnicí	130	147	152	155
Jabloneček	0	0	0	0
Náhlov	80	67	70	80
Ploužnice pod Ralskem	120	135	153	294
Svébořice	0	0	0	0
Hvězdov	0	0	21	23
Ralsko totally	524	658	729	894

Source: SLBD 1991, data from Ralsko Municipal Council in Kuřivody

settlements least affected by the military activity and always fulfilled a habitation function. At present they have succeeded in reconstructing two blocks of flats with 80 flat units, which have successfully been occupied by new inhabitants.

The demographic situation in the inhabited localities is favourable. The age structure of permanent inhabitants is very young, the representation of families with more children is very common, the productive part of the population is very strong. The demographic development of the whole Česká Lípa district remain favourable at the moment.

The present population composition is a good condition for the restoration of the process of the natural population reproduction in the area and if its stabilization succeeds, this favourable development should sufficiently profit the economically active part of the population. Its stabilization will be especially influenced by the further development of habitation, job opportunities, equipment and general area attractiveness.

4. Presuppositions for the further population development

The young structure of present permanent inhabitants in the occupied localities of the Ralsko municipality as well as in the Česká Lípa district is a favourable presupposition for the restoration of the natural population reproduction. The main source of population development revival is the necessary migration from another area. Habitation and job offers can be considered an important stabilization factor not only for the presently living young generation but even for new migrants.

Although demographic development in the CR is not optimistic, the need for flats and interest in habitation are not decreasing (80 % of young households in the CR start living in a common flat with their parents). The family split, the rise of higher number of small households, the decrease of households with voluntary common life of more generations, the growing need for flats for individuals (divorces, one member households of pensioners) – these factors all contribute to the increased interest in flats. It can be expected, that the habitation possibility in the selected localities of the Ralsko area will bring new population and habitation will be the main stabilizing element of the area.

The local council in January 1998 has evidence of approximately 200 applicants for habitation and the receipt of other applications has been closed.

The interest in habitation is registered not only from the Česká Lípa district and nearest surroundings, but even from the whole CR. The total extent of the restorable and usable buildings fund for habitation has been assessed at 800 – 900 flat units.

For the settlements restoration the most suitable conditions are in those localities which have at least a partly applicable building fund, good traffic accessibility and nearness to a bigger center, concentration of the biggest shares of present inhabitants, have evidence of interest in habitation and other economical activities – Kuřivody, Hradčany, Hvězdov and Ploužnice. Ralsko is an extensive area full of contrasts, which still awaits discovery and revival.

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Summary

SETTLEMENT AND POPULATION

The former military area Ralsko territory is situated in the southeastern part of the Česká Lípa district in close proximity to the border with the area of the Liberec district. The area is remote from the main thoroughfares as well as bigger centers of settlement. The biggest in the immediate surroundings are Mladá Boleslav (45,000) and Liberec (100,000). Of smaller towns situated on the areas edge the most important are Mimoň, Doksy and Stráž pod Ralskem by its influence Ralsko used to be the second largest military area on the territory of the ČR. Nearly 60 km² was used for military purposes. The area of the military zone exceeded the district Česká Lípa borders and Bělá pod Bezdězem (Mladá Boleslav district) and Osečná (Liberec district) belonged among the settled settlements.

The military area was founded in 1949 for the needs of the CSA. In the years 1968 – 1991 it was used by Soviet army troops. Based on international agreements, from 1990 the Soviet column left the military zone in 1991. At the same time the military zone was closed down by the Czechoslovak government on 5. 9. 1991 and it was released to the civil sector by 31. 12. 1991. The independent municipality of Ralsko was declared on 1. 1. 1992.

Already before the military zone arose, Ralsko was sparsely inhabited, poor and not so accessible. Natural conditions considerably influenced the living possibilities of local inhabitants – work in the wood, agriculture, building work and later recreation and a spa. Soil used for agricultural purposes was poor quality and did not enable much production. Therefore in most of the area cattle-breeding prevailed.

Since the last century the little inhabited area of the former military zone Ralsko has experienced depopulation tendencies. It was caused by the industrial production development in more important settlement centers in the closest-situated area (especially in Mimoň).

In the period 1900 – 1938 there were about 30 settlements, their parts and seclusions and about 6,500 – 7,000 inhabitants lived in the future military zone. Most of the original population was formed by Germans. Original settlement names are nowadays recalled only

by local names on period maps. Without any doubt Kuřivody was the biggest settlement in the area of that time. Other noted settlements were Svěbořice, Hvězdov, Ploužnice, Jezová and Jablonec.

The arising of the military area contributed to the absolute extinction of almost all settlements and thoroughly changed the character of the municipalities which survived.

After the Soviet troops arrival in 1968 extensive areas for troops and family members' accommodation, technical park and many ammunition stores, shooting-ranges and training grounds were built. The area of the military airport in Hradčany was the most noted locality. In the area more than 20,000 soldiers and family members from USSR lived permanently and they were concentrated in the localities Kuřivody, Hradčany, Vrchbělá, Hvězdov I and II, Svěbořice, Nový Dvůr, Jablonec, Jezová. Czechoslovak citizens remained only in Hradčany, Ploužnice, Náhlov, Boreček – mostly employees of VLS Mimoň and ČSA.

Over 20 years of use by the Soviet army after 1968 brought, apart from the construction of military buildings construction, the liquidation of the original building fund and historically valuable buildings. A big part of the used area was contaminated, polluted or requires pyrotechnical sanitation.

Besides military activity, the area was affected by mining and the processing of uranium started in the early 70s in the surroundings of Stráž pod Ralskem – Hamr na Jezeře.

After the Soviet army withdrawal an extensive area full of contrasts was released to the public sector: areas unaffected by antropogenous activity with significant natural values; an area highly damaged by pyrotechnical load – from uranium-mining, soil contamination, etc.; an invested-in area with an extensive building fund, but at present unused and devastated.

At present Ralsko is unique especially from the natural values point of view. According to professional data almost 90 % of the area remained directly unaffected by man in the last 50 years. It is rare to find in central Europe such a large and continuous area left in substance to natural development only. From this point of view Ralsko can be considered one of the most valuable areas in central Europe.

After the Soviet troops withdrawal the settlements fragment was formed by nine localities with a minimal number of or no permanent inhabitants – Boreček, Hradčany nad Ploučnicí, Ploužnice pod Ralskem, Hvězdov, Svěbořice, Náhlov, Jabloneček, Horní Krupá and Kuřivody, which belong to the Ralsko municipality local council.

Among inhabited localities belong Hradčany, Boreček, Ploužnice, Hvězdov, Náhlov and Kuřivody. Svěbořice and Jabloneček remain quite depopulated. All the localities belong to the smallest category of settlements in terms of size. The highest population is in Kuřivody, Ploužnice pod Ralskem and Hradčany. In these settlements the highest interest in habitation and business activities development has been seen. The reason is the easy accessibility to Mimoň, at least a minimally-preserved original settlement and usable buildings form, running reconstruction and interest in buildings. Hradčany airport area is especially attractive, and its revival would surely bring an important impulse for the areas development.

The biggest increase since 1995 has been seen in Ploužnice, which had been least affected by military activity and always fulfilled a habitation function.

The demographic situation in the inhabited localities is favourable. The age structure of the present permanent inhabitants is very young, representation of more children families is common and the productive population part is strong. The demographic development of the whole Česká Lípa district also still remains favourable.

The present population composition is a good presupposition for the restoration of the natural population reproduction process in the area, even when the principle contribution is the necessary migration of population from another territory. Its stabilization will be above all influenced by the further development of habitation, job openings, equipment and general area attractivity. Ralsko is an extensive area full of contrasts which still awaits discovery and revival.

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