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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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50X1-HUM

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

REPORT

SUBJECT MIG-15 Gunnery Practice in the Czechoslovak Air Force at the Balzsko firing range.

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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

[redacted] report dealing with MIG gunnery practice procedures carried out in the Czechoslovak Air Force. Air-to-air and air-to-ground gunnery practice of the 4th and the 18th Fighter Regiments was performed at the Belecko (N 50-09, E 15-57) Firing Range, located northeast of Pardubice Airfield where the two regiments were based. The village of Belecko actually consisted of only a few ruins, around which the ground targets were located. The entire wooded area, 30 kilometers long, lying to the northwest and southeast of Belecko was included in the range.

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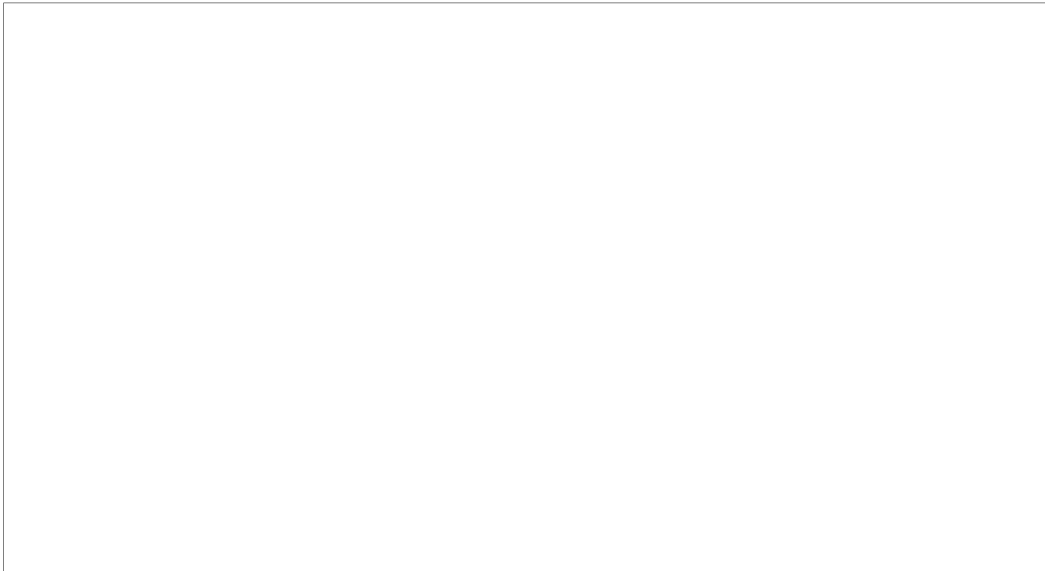


COUNTRY: Czechoslovakia

1 October 1957

SUBJECT: MIG-15 Gunnery Practice in
the Czechoslovak Air Force

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**MIG-15 Gunnery Practice in the Czechoslovak
Air Force**

General Information

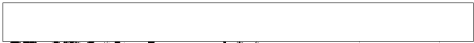
1. Air-to-air and air-to-ground gunnery practice of the 4th and the 18th Fighter Regiments were performed at the Belecko (N 50-09, E 15-57) Firing Range, located northeast of Pardubice Airfield (N 50-01, E 15-44) where the two regiments were based. The village of Belecko actually consisted only of a few ruins, around which the ground targets were located. The entire wooded area, 30 kilometers long, lying to the northwest and southeast of Belecko was included in the range.
2. The 4th Fighter Regiment conducted flying training on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and the 18th Fighter Regiment on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On the day prior to each training mission, a meeting of all participating pilots was called by the regiment commander. If the mission was to consist of gunnery practice, the officer in charge of firing was either the regiment commander, his assistant, or a member of the regimental staff.

Air-to-Air Gunnery

3. Tow aircraft utilized for gunnery exercises were equipped with a target sleeve. Each regiment had one tow aircraft. The tow cable, located in the fuselage in the regular gun carriage, was connected with the gun trigger. A target sleeve made of heavy white silk was folded and attached to a 300-meter-long cable. By squeezing the gun trigger, the cable was released and the target sleeve inflated. The deployment of the target sleeve was accomplished above the airfield immediately after take-off. Tow aircraft never flew faster than 350 kilometers per hour. Higher speeds caused the target sleeve to tear off. Flight altitude was at least 1000 meters and flight duration with auxiliary fuel tanks was one hour and ten minutes; during this period six to eight pilots performed firing practice. Immediately after the first tow aircraft had landed, it was relieved by a second tow aircraft, which, in turn, was relieved by the first aircraft; this system secured continuity of the practice. In four hours a maximum of 32 pilots could participate in the firing exercise; actually not more than 20 pilots participated because of such factors as poor weather conditions, late take-offs, etc.

Site Layout

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4. Figure 1 on page 5 is an overlay  scale 1:100,000 on which is outlined the course of tow aircraft over the gunnery range. Numbers in parentheses below refer to numbers on the sketch. 50X1-HUM

- (1) Village of Belec nad Orlici (N 50-12, E 15-57).

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- (2) Village of Borohradek (N 50-06, E 16-06).
 - (3) Village of Chloumek (N 50-01, E 16-11).
 - (4) Town of Kostelec nad Orlici (N 50-08, E 16-14) - firing aircraft waited in the air above this town.
 - (5) Ruins of Belecko.
 - (6) Area of Air-to-Ground Firing.
 - (7) Directions of the Tow Aircraft.
5. Tow aircraft entered the target area either at Point (1) or (3), Figure 1, when the "all clear" (cistotu) signal was given. The first firing aircraft, which had left the airfield about one minute after the tow aircraft, flew to Point (4), which was called the "waiting area" (vyckavaci prostor). Firing was permitted only to the south, west and southwest and was always carried out between Points (1) and (3) to prevent possible accidents involving civilian population. The firing MIG awaited the "all clear" signal and then flew toward the tow aircraft which had previously radioed its direction of flight. The firing aircraft, when approaching the tow aircraft, made its initial curve of pursuit from a distance of 600 meters behind and 1000 meters to the side. Firing started 150 meters from the target; firing was forbidden from a point closer than 100 meters. The firing aircraft made as many passes as possible until the tow aircraft reached Point (2) and announced "no shooting" (barrikada). Having passed this point, the tow aircraft again gave the "all clear" signal and the firing was repeated until the last round of ammunition was fired or the tow aircraft announced "no shooting". The firing aircraft was armed with 20 rounds of 23 mm ammunition for each of its two machine guns. Four minutes after the take-off of the first firing aircraft, a second aircraft followed and waited at Point (4) for the signal to start approaching the tow aircraft. The signals were changed frequently.
 6. After one hour of flying time the tow aircraft announced the end of its mission and returned to the airfield; from a height of 100 meters above the airfield, upon an order given by the officer in charge of firing, the pilot squeezed the trigger of the 37 mm gun, thus dropping the target sleeve and cable. Then he landed. The target sleeve was brought by truck to the alert stand where the gunnery officer checked the results and marked them on the "flight registry" (zapisnik letu) of each individual pilot.
 7. For firing practice 23 mm self-destroying projectiles were used; this ammunition was colored before it was used in order that hits on the target sleeve could be recognized.
 8. During the exercise the officer in charge of firing remained in the radio car, having with him the "flight plan" (tabulka letu); a copy of the plan was posted at the alert stand informing the pilots of take-off time.

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9. [redacted] the results of air-to-air firing were unsatisfactory for the 4th Fighter Regiment; the average score was two hits per 40 rounds of ammunition. These results were achieved during the annual prescribed tests (proverky). 50X1-HUM

Air-to-Ground Gunnery

10. Air-to-ground firing was accomplished in a 100 x 100 meter area. Targets consisted of white sand patches. Two targets were shaped as twin-engine aircraft with a wing span of 25 meters; they were located 50 meters apart. Two additional targets were shaped as fighters with a wing span of 11 meters, and were also 50 meters from each other. The distance between the two types of targets was 100 meters. This target area was located near the deserted village of Belesko.
11. During the pre-operation briefing, the regiment commander selected participants for the firing, the officer in charge, his assistant, and a detail which was to leave early in the morning for the firing range. This detail consisted of:
- a. The Aero radio car, with a RSI-10 radio transceiver.
 - b. A Praga NR truck carrying tools for the ground work.
 - c. An Aero ambulance.
 - d. A Skoda 805 truck with fire fighting equipment.

This detail totaled 11 people and included two guards who barred the approaches to the firing range. The vehicles were parked in the woods, 200 meters from the target.

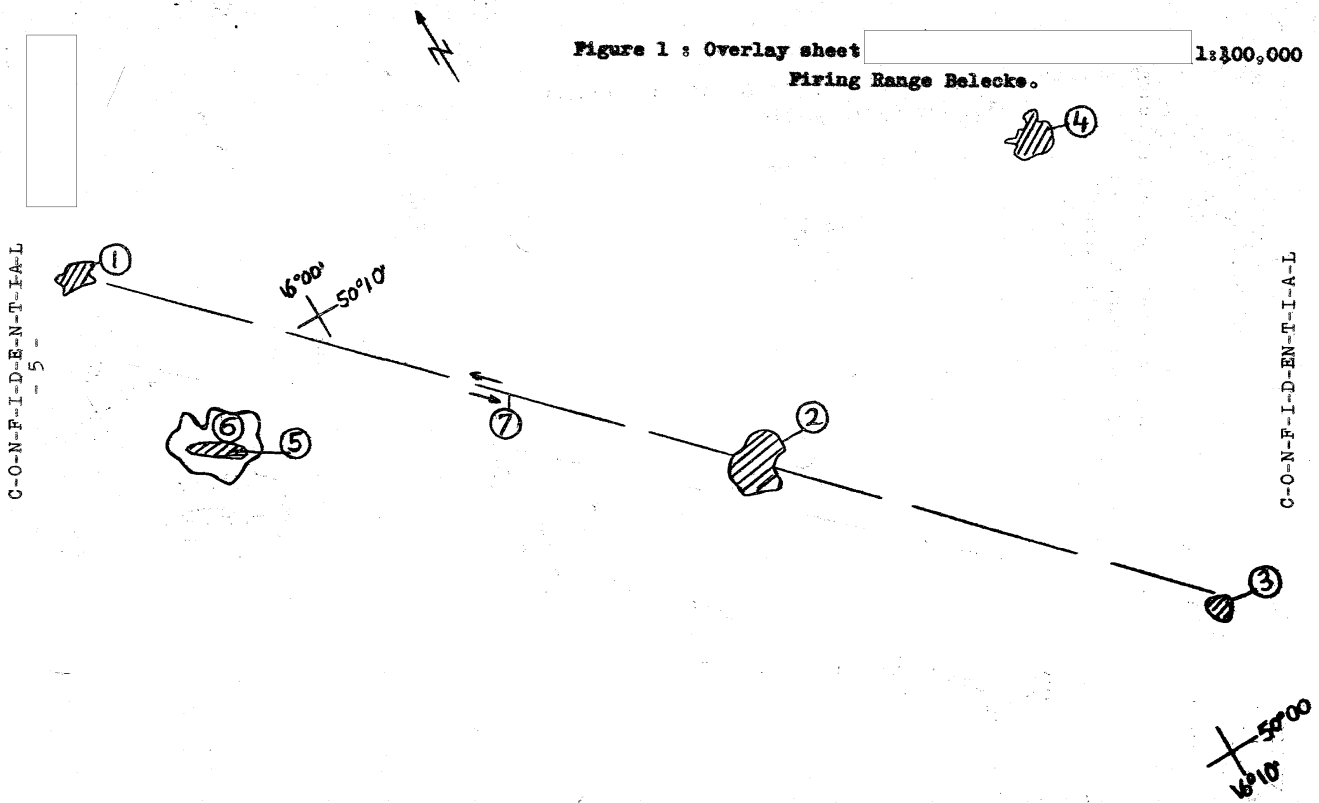
12. After the targets were ready, the airfield was notified by radio that firing could begin. The first MIG-15 left with 40 rounds of ammunition, normally all 23 mm but often also 37 mm caliber. The "all clear" signal was given and the aircraft approached the targets. At a height of 800 meters, the aircraft made a diving left turn and began firing from a height of 500 meters at an angle of at least 30 degrees. The aircraft pulled away as it reached a height of 150 meters and announced the end of firing. The radio car then announced "no shooting"; the soldiers of the detail checked the hits; they were recorded by the officer in charge of the firing. This officer would then announce the "all clear" for the next firing. The entire firing, including flights to and from the target area, lasted 20 minutes.
13. The results of the air-to-ground firing were good in the 4th Fighter Regiment. An average of 10 to 12 hits was achieved with 20 rounds of ammunition.

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Figure 1 : Overlay sheet [redacted] 1:300,000
Firing Range Belecke.

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**MIG-15 Gunnery Practice in the Czechoslovak
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