

VELKÁ ŠANCE POCKET GUIDE in Mosty u Jablunkova



THE HISTORICAL
FORTIFICATION
ŠANCE



This is how Velká šance
looked like in 1809



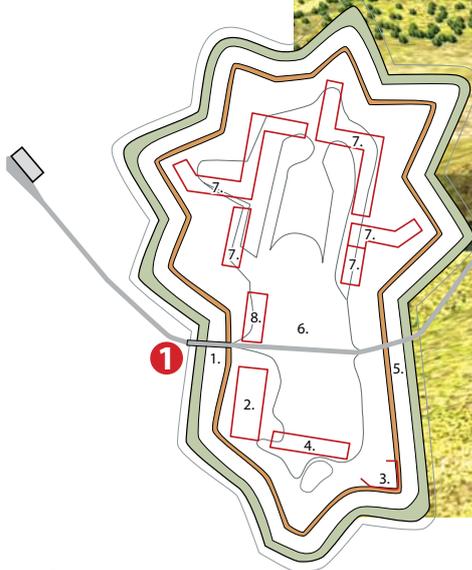
The Velká šance fortress is located on a strategically advantageous elevated position, owing to which it is possible to guard the border and the regional road intersecting the Jablunkov pass. The fortress constitutes a central point in the fortification system called the Jablunkov šance, constructed in the south-eastern part of Silesia on the border with Hungarian and Polish kingdoms from the 16th to the 19th century.

HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL

Centuries ago, the Šance fortresses and fortifications prevented foreigners from entering the Jablunkov pass and from advancing further into the county. Nowadays, they attract visitors. Let us embark on the tour of the Velká šance fortification and travel to the beginning of the 19th century.

In the course of its existence, the fortification protected the country from attacks waged by the Ottoman Empire, Hungarian anti-Habsburg rebels and also by Swedish and Danish troops. There were 21 such fortifications in total on the Silesian border.

1. HUNGARIAN GATE

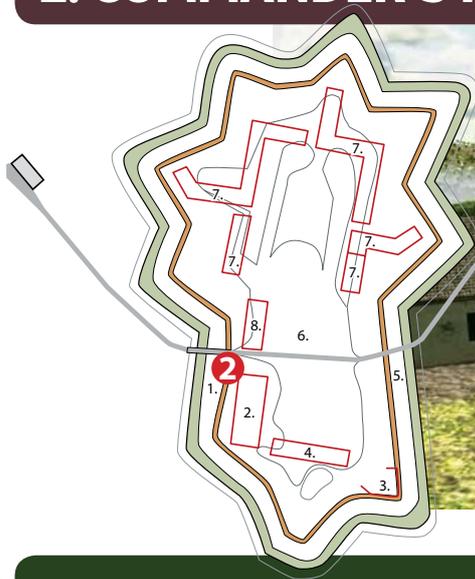


We will enter the fortress through its southern gate, which is called the Hungarian gate.

Two gates were leading inside the Velká šance fortress; they were named after the country where people were coming from. The South

gate was called the Hungarian Gate and the northern gate was the Silesian Gate. Their appearance varied in the course of reconstructions. Gates were stone structures with wooden parts and covered with a roof. The entrance itself was protected with a wooden gate and there was a drawbridge to cross the ditch.

2. COMMANDER'S HOUSE



Immediately after we enter the gate we will turn left and follow the path near the inside perimeter of the fortress to reach the commander's house, which was built during the reconstruction between 1724 and 1729.

It was a one storey brick house with three entrances. On the ground floor there were four

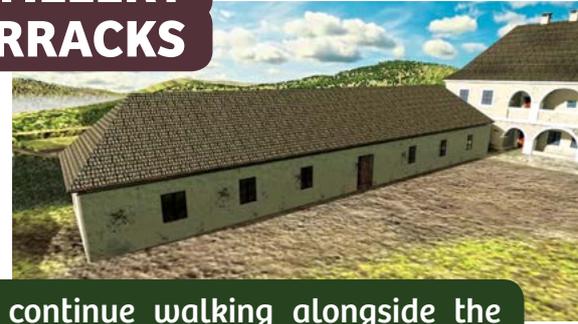
rooms with three stoves and a wooden floor, large and small kitchen and 2 small cellars. On the first above-ground floor, there were eight rooms out of which only the room had a stove. There were wooden stairs to get to the ground floor, first floor and the loft. An army chapel was also situated on the first floor of the commander's house.

3. POWDER ROOM (MUNITION STORAGE)

Alongside the fortress perimeter we will continue walking to get to the powder room, which is situated on the north-east. It is also called a magazine or an ammunition depot. It was a place where explosives were stored.



4. ARTILLERY BARRACKS



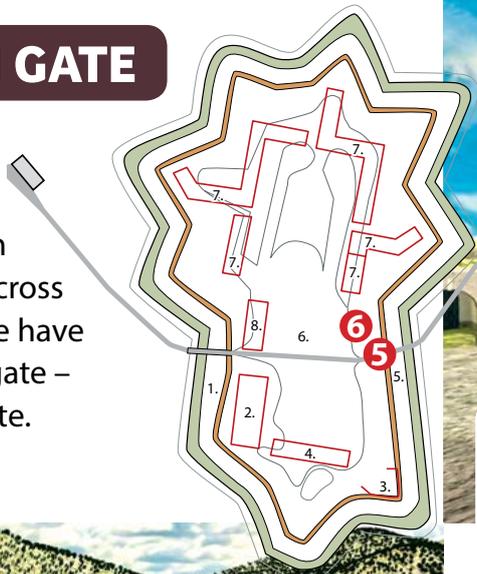
We will continue walking alongside the fortress perimeter. When you look in the direction towards the fortress and the commander's house, you will see the original artillery barracks.



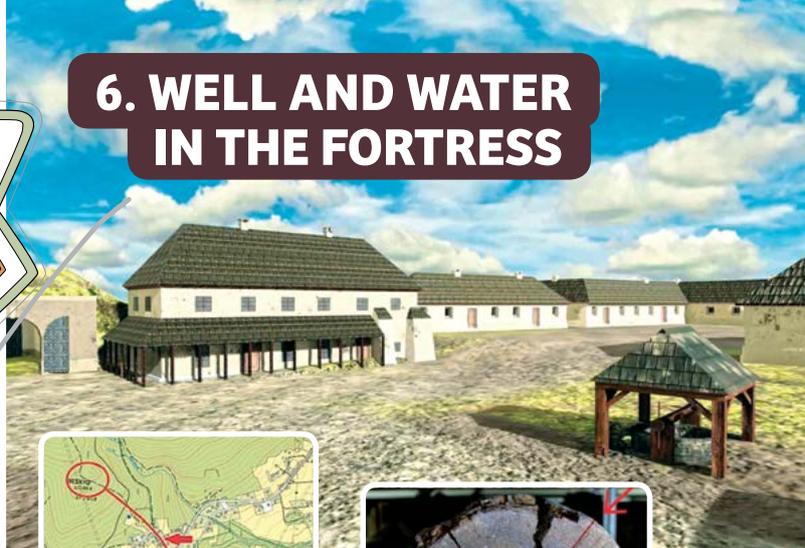
Artillery men were respected persons. In addition to the ability to aim the cannon at target, they also had to perform many other tasks. By the way, the ability to aim means they had to be good at mathematics; because the cannon ball never travels directly but it follows the ballistic curve and they had to be able to calculate where the ball would land.

5. SILESIA GATE

Let's walk to a stone-cobbled path nearby, which runs across the entire fortress. We have arrived to the other gate – called the Silesian gate.



6. WELL AND WATER IN THE FORTRESS



Water supply route



Cross-section of pipeline

Water was a real problem in the fortress. The well was very deep, but the water was of poor quality. However, there was a unique solution to this problem! Waterpipes were installed in 1724 to bring water to the fortress.



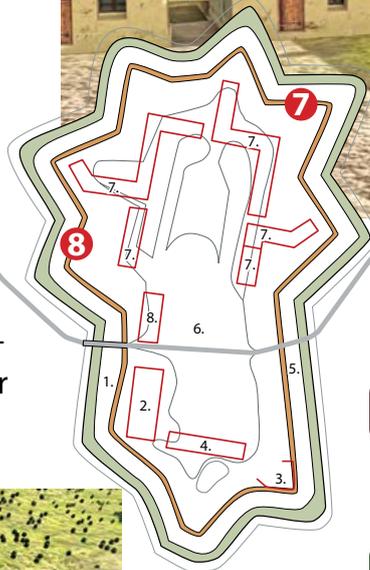
7. BLOCKHOUSES

Follow the perimeter of the west star-shaped part of the fortress.

The last large-scale reconstruction of Velká šance was performed during the Napoleonic wars; when you look at the ruins and remnants of the fortress, you can see what it looked like then. The major change was represented by building residential log cabins – blockhouses – for ordinary soldiers, situated on the left.



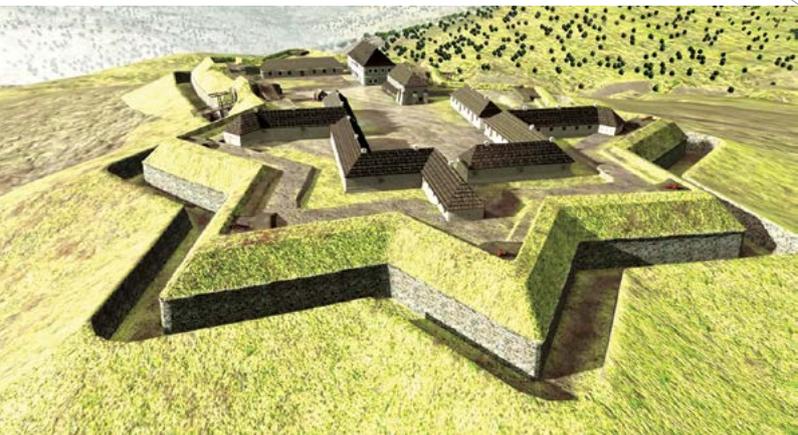
Blockhouses – detail



8. GARRISON BARRACKS

Follow the fortress perimeter.

The garrison barracks were built during the reconstruction in the 1730s. The barracks were a one-storey building, smaller than the commander's house.



Garrison barracks



GARRISON AT ŠANCE

The garrison of Velká šance consisted mainly of imperial troops, but the defence of the border was also secured by regional militia... called VYBRANCI.

The name "Vybranci" dates back to the 1640s, when Elizabeth Lucretia, Duchess of Cieszyn (Teschen) ordered to deploy – conscript every sixth subject from the villages near Jablunkov. From the military point of view, Vybranci were guard units, and their task was to prevent small



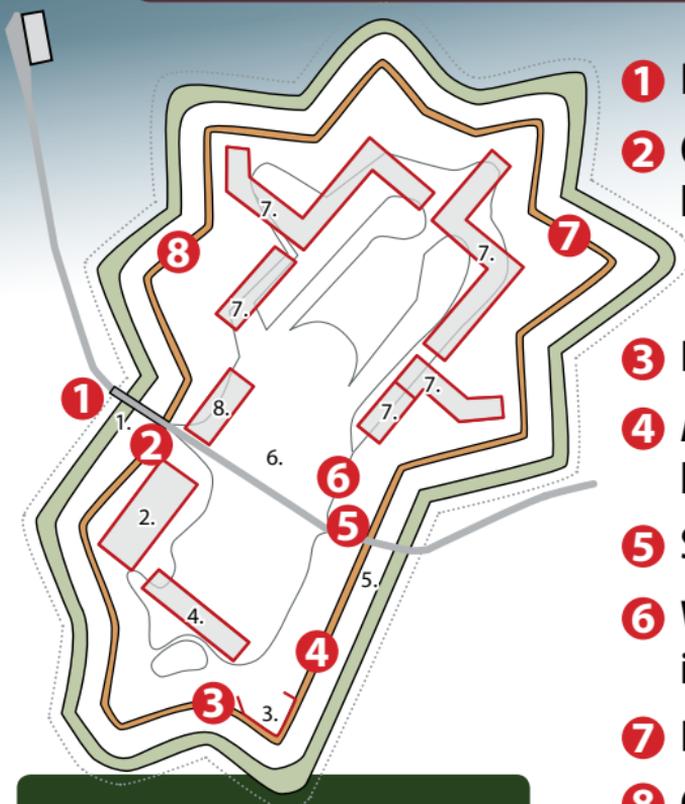
Garrison



Vybranec

number of enemies from entering the region or they could also be assigned to perform some construction works on the fortification. The garrison size always depended on the imminent danger, and it ranged from the minimum of four men up to seven hundred soldiers! The unit which stayed the most frequently at šance was the imperial line infantry (company), which had about a hundred of soldier on average.

LEGEND TO STOPS



- 1** Hungarian gate
- 2** Commander's house
- 3** Powder room
- 4** Artillery barracks
- 5** Silesian gate
- 6** Well and water in the fortress
- 7** Blockhouses
- 8** Garrison barracks

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Šance fortification

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Mosty

Milujeme hory. Ctíme tradice.