

PRESS RELEASE



22 Years of the Active Reserve of the Czech Armed Forces: An Increasingly Relevant Commitment to the Homeland

Prague, April 2, 2026 – This Sunday, April 5, we commemorate the Day of the Active Reserve of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. This year marks 22 years since the adoption of Defense Act No. 585/2004 Coll., which institutionalized the Active Reserve (AR) as a full-fledged component of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. This is highlighted by the Association of Military History of the Czech Republic, whose representatives stood at the birth of the Active Reserve project.

The idea of voluntary state defense began to take shape at the turn of the millennium. In 1999, the then Chief of the General Staff, Army General Jiří Šedivý, issued an order to call up the first volunteers for military exercises. Public interest exceeded all expectations. A key driving force was Capt. (Ret.) Jiří Kunc – the spiritual father of the entire project – who, together with Jiří Fuchs, František Koch, and Václav Marhoul, brought the idea of the AR from paper to reality.

As Jiří Kunc himself recalled in 2005: "With my friend Jiří Fuchs, we read materials about the Czechoslovak National Guard, from 1934 I believe, and we said, this is something absolutely current and usable." The result, as he stated, was that "another component of the army was created, called the Active Reserve of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. I primarily see in it the element of volunteerism and civic engagement, which I consider a very powerful thing in this society."

The birth of the active reserve was not easy, says Jiří Fuchs, chairman of the Association of Military History of the Czech Republic and one of the main initiators: "The creation of the Active Reserve was not the result of ideal conditions or enthusiasm from above, but rather the hard work of a few people who realized that without prepared citizens, the defense of the state would never be functional."

Today, the AR has over 4,400 active reservists, who are assigned to combat units, combat support units, regional military commands, and defense ministry staffs.

The role of the AR is growing – and will become even more important

The security environment in Europe has fundamentally changed. General Jiří Šedivý is clear in this regard: "The Active Reserves will play their role in the future, and considering how the security situation is developing, their importance will be much greater than it is today."

The founders share this view. Václav Marhoul sees the future of the AR "as 100% functional, equipped, trained, and fully integrated into all structures of the Czech Armed Forces." And Jiří Fuchs adds: "The Active Reserve must be a firm pillar of both the army and society, not just an addition on paper, because future conflicts will not wait for the state to get ready."

Defense Readiness Conference: May 20 at the Army Museum Žižkov

The topic of citizens' readiness for state defense will also be the focus of an expert conference to be held on May 20, 2026, at the Army Museum in Žižkov, Prague. The program will include a separate panel dedicated to the present and future of the Active

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Reserve. The Association of Military History of the Czech Republic is one of the co-organizers of the event.

About the Association of Military History of the Czech Republic

The Association of Military History of the Czech Republic was officially registered in 2021 and builds on the legacy of the legendary CI-5 Club and its founder, Capt. (Ret.) Jiří Kunc. The chairman of the association is Jiří Fuchs, one of the founders of the Active Reserve. The mission of the association is to spread awareness of military history, support the Active Reserve of the Czech Armed Forces, and initiate active citizen participation in the defense and security of the state. The association is a long-term and respected partner of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic.

Attachment: Statements from the co-founders of the Active Reserve of the Czech Armed Forces for further quotes

Army General (Ret.) Jiří Šedivý

How do you remember the creation of the AR of the Czech Armed Forces? The creation of the active reserves was not a matter of a short discussion concluding with building 'active reserves'. It was a process that began at the turn of 1998 and 1999, supported by the views of several General Staff officers who saw the future of the army in full professionalization and, simultaneously, in the creation of a corps of reservists who would be under contract with the Ministry of Defense of the Czech Republic. It is also true that at the beginning, there were more doubters than supporters. Today, even those who wanted nothing to do with the idea of active reserves at the time of their inception embrace it. All the more respect is deserved by those who stood at the birth of the active reserves and who continue to support them today.

How do you see the role of the AR of the Czech Armed Forces in the future? The active reserves will play their role in the future, and considering how the security situation is developing, their importance will be much greater than it is today. Their role will be shaped into both main areas of the Czech Armed Forces' activities. Thus, they will be indispensable in the part of the army that will fulfill tasks in the defense of the Czech Republic by carrying out missions in cooperation with allies outside the territory of the Czech Republic. They will play an even greater role in territorial defense. However, the current state cannot be considered optimal. Territorial forces, which will be developed on the basis of the active reserves, must be equipped with the same quality as the 'field army'. Legislation must continue to be developed for active reserve service.

Václav Marhoul

How do you remember the creation of the AR of the Czech Armed Forces? As a massive effort by the very first volunteers who unsuccessfully tried to convince the top command of the army and unit commanders that the AR is not, and does not want to be, some group of people wanting to play soldiers.

How do you see the role of the AR of the Czech Armed Forces in the future? As 100% functional, equipped, trained, and fully integrated into all structures of the Czech Armed Forces.

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Jiří Fuchs

How do you remember the creation of the AR of the Czech Armed Forces? The creation of the Active Reserve was not the result of ideal conditions or enthusiasm from above, but rather the hard work of a few people who realized that without prepared citizens, the defense of the state would never be functional. The US National Guard served as an inspiration and practical model for us, demonstrating over the long term that connecting the citizen and the soldier gives the state true resilience. It was a time when more explaining than doing took place, making it all the more necessary to persevere and build a foundation on personal responsibility, not illusions.

How do you see the role of the AR of the Czech Armed Forces in the future? The Active Reserve must be a firm pillar of both the army and society, not just an addition on paper, because future conflicts will not wait for the state to get ready. Its strength will always rest on people who are willing to take responsibility, maintain their skills, and be ready to act when needed, not when it is already too late.

Capt. (Ret.) Jiří Kunc (*transcript from a video profile, filmed in 2005; Jiří Kunc passed away on August 18, 2018*)

I mainly read non-fiction, which led me to military history, and it became another hobby of mine. It is primarily the modern history of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, the 2nd and 3rd resistance movements, and the associated historical events and facts. With my friend Jiří Fuchs, we read materials about the Czechoslovak National Guard, from 1934 I believe, and we said, this is something absolutely current and usable. So I took these materials and went to the then Chief of the General Staff, General Jiří Šedivý. So we agreed with the Army General that we would disrupt the Defense Act, which is a very complex matter because another 80, 90, or 100 legal norms are linked to this legal norm. It is a very complicated thing for lawmakers, and that we would start building organic units of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. This created another component of the army, called the Active Reserve of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. I primarily see in it the element of volunteerism and civic engagement, which I consider a very powerful thing in this society.