

469 TANKS.
1,582 AIRCRAFT.
1,090,000 RIFLES.

Seized by Hitler from Czechoslovakia in March 1939 — almost without a shot — six months after Britain and France settled the country’s fate with him in Munich, without Czechoslovakia at the table. Then turned against Poland, France and the Soviet Union.

Photo: Mladá Boleslav, March 1939 – Czech machine guns and rifles lined up for handover to the Wehrmacht. VHM Prague collection.

01 • 29–30 SEPT 1938

MUNICH

Britain and France agree with Hitler and Mussolini: Czechoslovakia must give up its border regions — and with them its fortress line. Czechoslovakia, already mobilised, is not even invited. “*About us, without us.*”

02 • 15 MARCH 1939

OCCUPATION

Hitler takes the rest of the Czech lands. An army equipped for 42 divisions and one of Europe’s biggest arms industries fall into his hands essentially intact.

THE HAUL • MARCH 1939

WHAT HITLER TOOK

Weapons of the Czechoslovak army, seized in Bohemia and Moravia

 469 TANKS	 1,582 AIRCRAFT	 2,175 FIELD GUNS	 501 ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS	 785 MORTARS
 43,876 MACHINE GUNS	 1,090,000 RIFLES	 114,000 PISTOLS	 ≈1 BILLION ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION	 ≈3 MILLION ARTILLERY SHELLS

Figures from Hitler’s Reichstag speech, 28 April 1939; weapon counts as cited by the Military History Institute Prague (VHM).

AND Early 1939: rump Czechoslovakia sold Germany its heavy artillery. It was never paid for.

PLUS THE FACTORIES

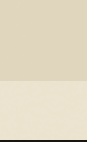
+20%

German arms production could grow by at least one-fifth once the Czech arms works were in Nazi hands.

– Military History Institute Prague (VHM)

 **ŠKODA WORKS • PLZEŇ**
Artillery, tanks, munitions — one of Europe’s largest arms makers.

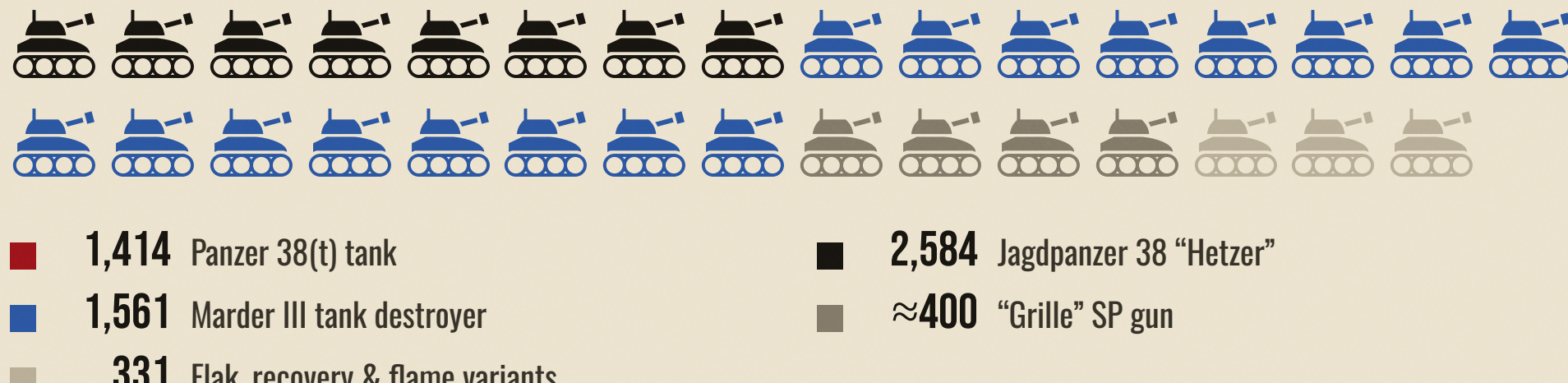
 **ČKD • PRAGUE**
Maker of the LT vz. 38 tank. Renamed BMM, it kept the line running for the Wehrmacht.

 **ZBROJOVKA • BRNO**
Rifles and machine guns sold all over the world — now made for Germany.

In the mid-1930s Czechoslovakia ranked among the world’s top arms exporters — by some estimates it was No. 1. From March 1939 that whole capacity worked for Hitler’s war.

BUILT FOR HITLER ON ONE CZECH DESIGN: THE 38(t)

EACH TANK ICON = 100 VEHICLES • production 1939–1945



6,000+ armoured vehicles for the Wehrmacht — on one Czech design

WHERE THE CZECH TANKS WENT

OUR TANKS. THEIR WARS.

The Wehrmacht marked them **(t)** — for *tschechisch*: Czech.

SEPT 1939

POLAND

177

CZECH-BUILT TANKS

6.6% of German tanks

SHARE OF THE GERMAN TANK FORCE • BAR = 100%

112 Czech LT vz. 35s formed the core of the 1st Light Division.

MAY 1940

FRANCE

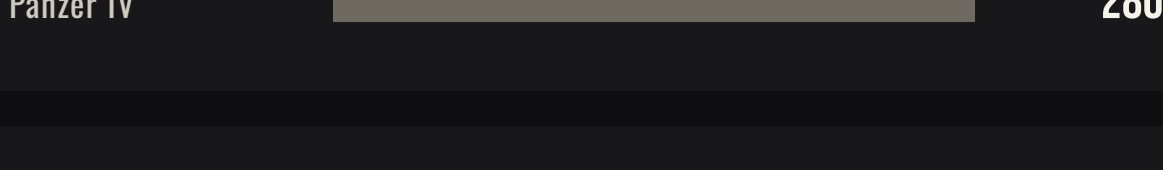
362

CZECH-BUILT TANKS

14% — 1 in 7 German tanks

SHARE OF THE GERMAN TANK FORCE • BAR = 100%

99 of them rolled with Rommel’s 7th Panzer Division.



JUNE 1941

SOVIET UNION

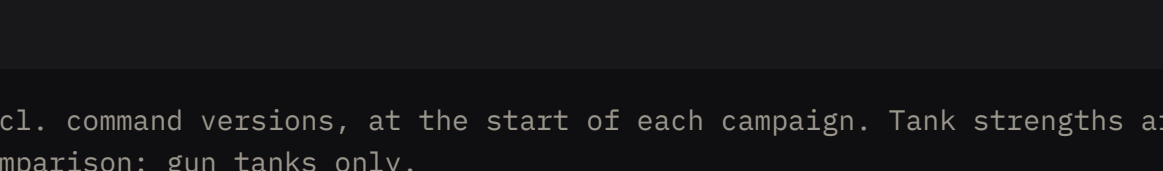
820

CZECH-BUILT TANKS

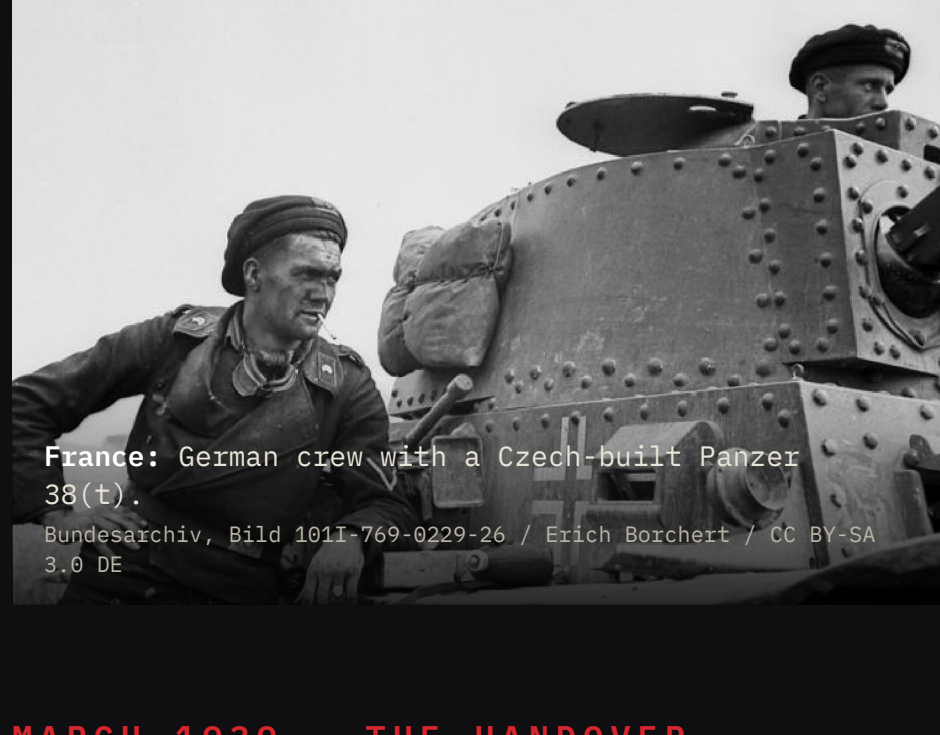
24% — nearly 1 in 4 German tanks

SHARE OF THE GERMAN TANK FORCE • BAR = 100%

Czech-built tanks outnumbered Germany’s Panzer IV almost two to one.

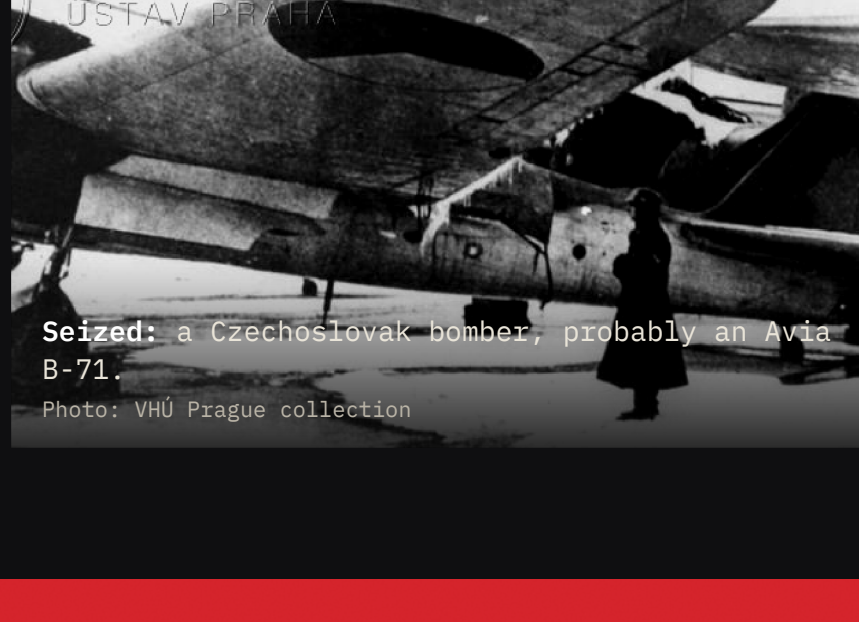


Czech-built = Panzer 35(t) + 38(t) incl. command versions, at the start of each campaign. Tank strengths after T. Jentz (panzerworld.com). Panzer IV comparison: gun tanks only.



MARCH 1939 • THE HANDOVER

SIX MONTHS AFTER MUNICH



MUNICH DIDN'T BUY PEACE.
IT ARMED THE AGGRESSOR.

Czechoslovakia had mobilised and was ready to defend itself. Its allies chose to bargain with Hitler instead. Within months, Czech tanks were rolling into Poland — then France, then the Soviet Union. Feeding an aggressor someone else’s country doesn’t stop him. It arms him.

REMEMBER MUNICH • SHARE THE FACTS

SOURCES

Military History Institute Prague (VHM): “Přebírání čs. výzbroje německými silami, březen 1939”, vhu.cz • T. Jentz / panzerworld.com: tank strengths Poland 1939, Fall Gelb 1940, Barbarossa 1941 • de.wikipedia.org: Panzerkampfwagen 38(t) (production figures) • A. Blumberg, Warfare History Network: “Czech Tanks Gave Nazis Early Edge” • J. Guttman, HistoryNet: “Panzer 38(t)” • Czech arms exports in the 1930s: Prague University of Economics (khd.vse.cz); Slavic Review, “Škoda Arms Exports in the 1930s”.

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