

## Maurice Pellé (Douai 1863 – Toulon 1924)

### Teacher's Guide Level A

#### I. Top Student in His Class, Bright and Quick Learner in Life

*Maurice was the second born son of Charles Henri Joseph Pellé, a French military officer, in the city of Douai in northern France. Maurice was lucky: besides strong moral and religious values, his family also encouraged the development of the boy's intellect and artistic talents. Already in high school, the prestigious catholic St. Stanislaus College, it was evident that Pellé was talented not only in mathematics, but also in drawing. His intelligence as well as his father's example predestined him to study at École Polytechnique in Paris, which he started attending in 1882. He knew already then that he would follow in his father's footsteps to become a professional soldier.*



Source: Viktor Stretti: General M. Pellé, archive of the Military History Institute in Prague (VHÚ).

*École Polytechnique.*

1883-84

*Liste, par ordre de mérite, Des Élèves Déclarés  
Services publics, le 11 Août 1884 avec indication de  
chacun d'eux est classé.  
(Cette liste ne sera définitive qu'après l'approbation)*

| Noms |                      | Noms |                   | Noms |                         |
|------|----------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------------|
| 1    | Chapuy Min.          | 36   | Guillevin G. Min. | 71   | Perret G                |
| 2    | Coque Min.           | 37   | Bernheim G. Min.  | 72   | Mange "                 |
| 3    | Pellé A              | 38   | Roche G. Min.     | 73   | Bonnet Joseph Édouard G |
| 4    | Bernard Min.         | 39   | Vormand G. Min.   | 74   | Chaon G                 |
| 5    | Maurit Min.          | 40   | Ripart G. Min.    | 75   | Caillat "               |
| 6    | Pelloux Min.         | 41   | Morlot G          | 76   | Defrance G              |
| 7    | Santenoid Min.       | 42   | Mégar G           | 77   | Maugny G                |
| 8    | Vieille Charles P.C. | 43   | Fayrabort "       | 78   | Franck G                |
| 9    | Nadal Min.           | 44   | Corpet "          | 79   | Courier G               |
| 10   | Pouquet "            | 45   | Risler "          | 80   | Villecloux G            |
| 11   | Godard P.C.          | 46   | Robin A           | 81   | Renaud A                |
| 12   | Hozog P.C.           | 47   | Brogni A          | 82   | G. Lourdain A           |

Source: Ranking of Graduates from Pellé's Class at École Polytechnique; VHÚ, AM, PP.

- From the document head find out in what academic year was the ranking compiled. Compare the information with the introductory text and find out how many years did Pellé study at the Polytechnique.

**Pellé spent two years at École Polytechnique (1882/83 – 1883/84).**

- In the left column find Pellé's name. Where did he rank in the list of the best graduates?

**Pellé placed third in the academic ranking of 1883/84 graduates.**

Pellé completed his studies at the War College (École supérieure de guerre) in 1895. His original illustrated French-German dictionary dates back to this time. The notebook is inspired by monolingual type of dictionaries where students could write and draw their notes into the indicated spaces.

DOC 2: An excerpt from Pellé's Illustrated Dictionary<sup>1</sup>



Source: SANDIFORD-PELLÉ, I. *Generál Pellé, obrázkový deník*. Praha: MO ČR, 2010, p. 71.

- *Observe carefully the illustrated DOC 2 and think about the main advantage of picture dictionaries. What purpose do such pictures serve? Do you think they make learning easier? Do you have your own proven method that you use to study a foreign language?*

***A picture dictionary was used already by J. A. Komenský (John Amos Comenius) in his textbook *Orbis pictus*. It's a method that stimulates imagination and concretizes the given (abstract) vocabulary through visualization. The image itself then serves to facilitate memorization of a concrete term.***

***The goal of this task is to motivate students to think about their learning style – the so-called formal way of learning, i.e. explore and find out how to learn.***

<sup>1</sup> In the right column on top the word "Mittern acht" is spelled incorrectly. The word was left in the form in which it appeared in the original version. However, the correct form of the word is "Mitternacht".

- Take a careful look at Pellé’s drawings. How do you like them? Explain your opinion. (On the left: chivalric romance; mask; on the right: midnight; moon).

***Pellé’s talent for drawing is reflected in his illustrated dictionary. His drawings show artistic quality (theme, composition, technique). Students are led to an independent evaluation of work of art’, expressing and defending their opinion.***

## II. Professional Soldier – Maurice Pellé and the “Great War”

*Pellé transferred from the Polytechnic Institute in Paris to the School of Applied Artillery in Fontainebleau. After graduation (1886) he became the commander of an artillery regiment and obtained the rank of lieutenant. For his intelligence, good judgment and moral qualities, the future Marshal Joseph Joffre chose Pellé as his closest assistant. After the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Pellé was called to the very top of the military hierarchy of command – the General Staff near Paris. Here he was promoted to brigadier general and in 1918 he was appointed divisional general for his achievements at the front.*

*DOC 3: Brigadier General Pellé, Commander of the 153<sup>rd</sup> Division, at the Front in April 1917 (second from the left)*



Source: Pellé in the Trenches, April 1917, VHÚ, AM, PP.

... I marched for five hours [Pellé, author’s note] to see the trenches. I returned with **mud behind my ears** (...) I entered the passageway full of water and performed acrobatic tricks to prevent myself from getting wet. That lasted until the moment I slipped and the water poured into my boots, making a squishing sound with each step. Then I basically swam in liquid mud until my return [to the command post, author’s note]. However, at the end of the promenade I was able to wash myself and change my clothes. **Imagine what those who don’t leave the trenches and sleep in a hole for four or five rainy days must look like!**

Source: SANDIFORD-PELLÉ, I. quote, p. 146. (Original Source: Personal Letter from General Pellé from October 15, 1917. Translated.).

- Look at the image and read the text to DOC 3. Then find General Pellé (then already 54 years old) on the photograph and describe his appearance in your own words. Draw your own soldier in a trench and in a speech bubble write a short fictional text expressing his feelings and mood.

***In 1917, Pellé (second from the left) found himself in the muddy trenches as a front-line commander. The mud stains on his boots and military uniform pants are clearly visible in the photograph. After the National bloodshed at Verdun (1916), the French Government intervened and called for a change of command at the General Staff. As a result, Joffrey was removed and Pellé sent to the front. During the Allied offensive in the spring of 1917, Pellé with his 153<sup>rd</sup> Division successfully penetrated the German lines at Chemin des Dames, thus demonstrating his strategic art directly in the field. Unfortunately, the global penetration of the French divisions failed, and Pellé and his troops had to withdraw. In spring 1918, Pellé – already as a Division General, prevented with his 5th Army Corps the German breakthrough in Paris.***

***It's dirty and damp here but I would give my own life to save the life of a friend...***

***Students should use their imagination and put themselves in the shoes of an ordinary soldier at the front. After reading the motivational DOC 4 and 5 texts, they should describe with a few sentences the life in the trenches (mud, stench, lack of space in the bunker, etc.)***

### **III. Diplomat in the Service of the French Republic**

*In the years 1909–1912, Pellé served as a French military attaché in Berlin. He was predestined for this post due to his tactful demeanor, art of communication, the ability to predict and critically analyze events and of course his excellent knowledge of German. Thanks to his social awareness and perfect education he soon entered the higher circles of Berlin society; he maintained good relations with the German emperor and was invited to numerous social events (e.g. deer hunt).*

#### *DOC 4: The Duties of a Military Attaché*

An attaché **must closely monitor the press, reports from government meetings, debates in the parliament...**and must expertly analyze the content of military laws. Besides that, he should also penetrate the mentality of the military circles and predict the **reaction of the public**.

The difference is that espionage is a hostile activity, while military attachés are part of a diplomatic mission [i.e. under the leadership of an ambassador, author's note]. **Espionage is targeted against the economic and military interests of another country. The duty of military attachés is only to evaluate** the state of affairs.

- From what public resources does a military attaché draw information for his reports?

**A military attaché analyzes public documents, i.e. legal sources of news: press, reports from meetings of the parliament, new laws, but also resources such as the reactions and moods of the public.**

- What is the difference between espionage and the intelligence provided by a military attaché?  
Write the following sentences into the corresponding columns of the table below.
  - Performs illegal activity in the territory of a foreign (enemy) country.
  - Cares about good representation because s/he is a member of the diplomatic corps.
  - Uses unofficial practices and structures and surreptitiously collects information about the enemy.
  - Looks for information in the press, legal codes and reports from foreign government meetings.
  - Provides exact data regarding the number, equipment and deployment of enemy troops.
  - His mission is to infiltrate high-level political circles of a foreign country in order to soak up the local atmosphere and get acquainted with their mentality.
  - Receives specific orders to harm the economy and the army of a foreign country.
  - Uses only legal methods in his/her reports.

| <i>Military Attaché (Diplomat)</i>   | <i>Spy</i>  |
|--|---|
| <p><b><i>Cares about good representation because s/he is a member of the diplomatic corps.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Looks for information in the press, legal codes and reports from foreign government meetings.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>His mission is to infiltrate high-level political circles of a foreign country in order to soak up the local atmosphere and get acquainted with their mentality.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Uses only legal methods in his/her reports.</i></b></p> | <p><b><i>Performs illegal activity in the territory of a foreign (enemy) country.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Uses unofficial practices and structures and surreptitiously collects information about the enemy.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Provides exact data regarding the number, equipment and deployment of enemy troops.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Receives specific orders to harm the economy and the army of a foreign country.</i></b></p> |

DOC 5: Emperor Wilhelm II and Pellé Hunting Together



Source: Pellé hunting, VHÚ, AM, PP.

- *Observe carefully the photograph in DOC 5 and identify both figures. What two countries do they represent?*

***Pellé (on the left) represents France, while Emperor Wilhelm II represents Germany.***

- *Examine the relationship between the two leaders. Are they in close or distant contact? What can you tell from the looks on their faces? What does that tell us?*

***Pellé found himself in a close contact with the German Emperor Wilhelm II while hunting together. It was a formal-friendly invitation by the Emperor and Pellé gladly made use of the opportunity. The smile on the faces of both statesman points to a friendly atmosphere.***

## IV. The Head of the French Military Mission in Czechoslovakia

*On November 11, a truce was declared on the Western front and World War I was over in Europe. For France – a victorious nation and the strongest representative of the Allies (France, Great Britain, Italy, and others) – this opened the way for peace talks with the defeated states and for collaboration with the newly emerging countries, such as Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc. Military experts – the so-called French military mission – were called into Czechoslovakia in order to help build an army and train the domestic, i.e. Czechoslovak, commissioned military officers. General Maurice Pellé became the head of this mission.*

DOC 6: Pellé Assumes His Duties in Czechoslovakia



| PERSONNEL BULLETIN<br>Of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Defense  |                                |        |
|--|--------------------------------|--------|
| Year II.   | Published on February 22, 1919 | No. 14 |
| <b>General Pellé – Chief of Czechoslovak General Staff</b>   |                                |        |
| Based on the agreement between the government of the French Republic and the government of the Czechoslovak Republic, starting on February 17, 1919, General Pellé will serve as Chief of the General Staff of the Czechoslovak Army under the Ministry of Defense and simultaneously as a Deputy to Marshal Foch, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Armies. |                                |        |
| No. 173 N. o. pres./parl. from the year 1919   |                                |        |

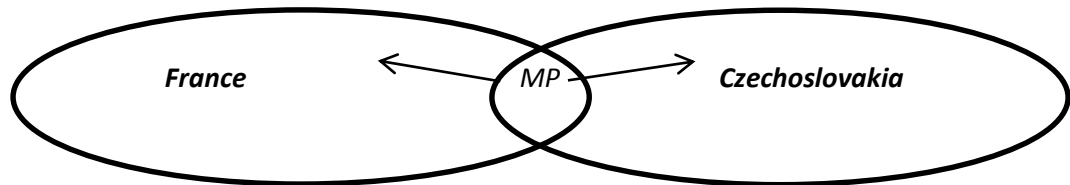
Source: BŘACH, R. Op. cit., p. 73.

- *To what position was General Pellé appointed and when was he supposed to take charge?*



**Starting on February 17, 1919, Pellé assumed the position of the Chief of Czechoslovak General Staff, i.e. the first army commander in the case of war.**

- Maurice Pellé (MP) was a subordinate to two people: Václav Klofáč (Minister of National Defense) and Marshal Foch (Supreme Commander of Allied Armies). What two countries did they represent? Fill in the diagram with the countries of origin of Pellé's two superiors.



- Visit the webpage of the Ministry of Defense and find out the name of the current Chief of General Staff. What is his rank?

**<http://www.acr.army.cz/struktura/veleni/nacelnik-generalniho-stabu-57546/>**  
**[12/17/2014].**

*DOC 7: The Leaders of Czecho-Slovak Political and Military Life*

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk  | General Rastislav Štefánik   | Minister of Defense Václav Klofáč   |
|  |  |  |

Source: Břach, R. Op. cit., p. 70–89.

- Observe carefully all three photographs and their descriptions. At the first glance, what are the differences between the civilian leaders (two politicians) and the member of the military (one officer). Fill out correctly the following table.

**Civilian leaders (President and Minister) dress in formal attire, while the military officer wears a military uniform.**

| Name                  | Title / Position           | Civilian or Soldier |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>...R. Štefánik</b> | <b>...General (Office)</b> | <i>Soldier</i>      |
| <b>...V. Klofáč</b>   | <i>Minister</i>            | <b>...Civilian</b>  |
| <i>T. G. Masaryk</i>  | <b>...President</b>        | <b>...Civilian</b>  |

*When the war over Slovakia ended in June 1919, Pellé was experiencing a period of great popularity among the Czechoslovak public. Under the General's command, the Czechoslovak army proved its combat readiness and regained its honor. Pellé intended to use this in his favor when promoting his concept of a permanent Czechoslovak army (i.e. officers and regularly recruited soldiers) as part of the Allied army. He intended to reflect this in the new Czechoslovak National Defense Act, which he essentially achieved in 1920.*

*DOC 8: Pellé Receives the Czechoslovak War Cross on July 14, 1919 (to the right of Pellé are General Mittelhauser and Col. Šnejdárek).*



Source: Pellé receives Czechoslovak War Cross, VHÚ, AM, PP.

- *Find President Masaryk and General Pellé on the photograph.*

***T. G. Masaryk is shown in the photograph as a civilian, i.e. without a uniform. Pellé in a general's uniform is the first person on the left.***

- *Remind yourself of what happened on July 14, 1789 in Paris (now a French national holiday). If you don't know, use the Internet to find out. Why do you think that the war heroes were honored by Masaryk on the occasion of this anniversary?*

***Pellé along with other senior officers received from the hands of President T. G. Masaryk the Czechoslovak War Cross on the day when France commemorates the Storming of the Bastille. The President wanted to pay homage to France and to his French generals (Pellé, Mittelhauser) by this gesture.***

*DOC 9: Pellé's Reflection on the Role of Czechoslovakia in the Alliance System, October 23, 1920*

**Czechoslovakia can be considered a base in Eastern Europe – organized according to individual peace treaties – on which lean all the policies of the Allies, France especially...**

Source: BŘACH, R. Op. cit., p. 150. (Original source: SHAT 7N 3109. Translated.).



Source: *Europe After World War One* <http://modernworldhistory2010.wikispaces.com/World+War+One> [12/17/2014]. Modified.

- *Read DOC 9 carefully and observe the attached map of Europe. Find Czechoslovakia on the map. In what part of Europe is Czechoslovakia located?*

***The newly formed Czechoslovakia in Central Europe was surrounded by revisionist states and Germany.***

- *How does Pellé perceive – from the point of the view of the Allies (especially France) – the role of Czechoslovakia in Central Europe?*

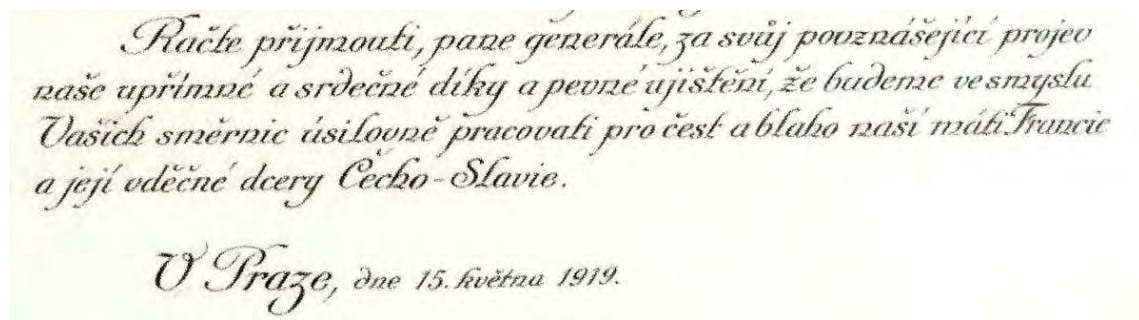
**For Pellé, Czechoslovakia was the base of the Allies (France) in Central Europe, where they could use their political influence.**

## V. Two Homelands: “Mother and Daughter” and a Wedding

As Chief of Staff, General Pellé led the French mission in Czechoslovakia since the beginning of 1919 until the end of 1920, i.e. for almost two years. As a soldier and diplomat, he fully understood his unique position in Czechoslovakia: that of an intermediary between Czechoslovakia and France. Several times, Pellé backed Czechoslovakia, risking the disapproval of his French superior. He also had personal reasons for this: after his arrival to Prague he met Jarmila Braunerová, whom he married in 1921.

Based on the Defense Act was established the first Czechoslovak military academy<sup>2</sup>, inaugurated in October of 1920 with the goal to train domestic high-ranking officers.

DOC 10: A Thank You Letter from the Participants of the First Course of Higher Officers Addressed to General Pellé



For your uplifting discourse, Mr. General, please kindly accept our sincere and heartfelt thanks and a firm assurance that we will work hard according to your directives for the honor and welfare of our mother France and her grateful daughters Czechia-Slavia.

In Prague on May 15, 1919

Source: A Letter to Pellé from the Participants of the First Officers' Course, VHÚ, AM, PP.

- Pellé was evidently able to fill his soldiers with enthusiasm. Notice how the Czechoslovak officers express their loyalty to their General and how they describe France and their native country (!). Quote from the document.

**“...that we will work hard according to your guidelines for the honor and welfare of our Mother France and her grateful daughters, Czechia and Slavia”. The sense of belonging that the Czechoslovak soldiers felt towards the leading member of the Allied Armies is truly admirable. France was after all the first country that recognized the interim**

<sup>2</sup> It was founded in Hranice, where it de facto continued the activity of the Imperial-Royal Military Academy.

**Czechoslovak government led by Masaryk and with its headquarters on Bonaparte Street in Paris (today the Consulate General of the Czech Republic, the Czech Center and the Czech School Without Borders Paris – as of December 31 2014).**

*Soon after his arrival in Prague, the old bachelor Pellé (born in 1863) fell for Jarmila Braunerová (born 1889), the niece of Czech painter Zdenka Braunerová. Pellé – known for his sense of culture and art – frequented the circles around artists such as Mucha, Kupka, Švabinský, Mařatka, etc. The young Jára also belonged to these circles, where she charmed the company with her singing and her grace. By 1920 the relationship was a serious one. Pellé's wedding with Jára Braunerová took place in Prague in the spring of 1921. A few months later their daughter Maryška was born.*

DOC 11: Jarmila Braunerová around 1920



Source: Young Jarmila Braunerová, VHÚ, AM, PP.

You will help me with your charm and all the qualities you possess. As the lady of the house and as a woman you will make the French residence pleasant and admired.

Source: SANDIFORD-PELLE, I. Op. cit., p. 157.

- *Based on the photograph and on the text in DOC 11, describe how did Pellé imagine the role of his future wife, Jára.*

***When Pellé and Jára first met, he was nearly sixty, Jára thirty. As the future lady of the house, she was supposed to charm with her grace and her good qualities; and create a pleasant and admirable environment for the future “French” family (both culturally and language-wise).***

*DOC 12: The Wedding of Maurice Pellé and Jára Braunerová*



Source: The Wedding of Maurice Pellé a Jára Braunerová, VHÚ, AM, PP.

- *From the text in the box find out when and where the wedding took place. How old were the groom and the bride?*

***Pellé married Jára after a two-year relationship in the spring of 1921 in Prague. He was 58, she 31.***

- Do you know any other couple with a similar age difference? Do you know any mixed (international) married couple? What can be the advantages and disadvantages of such marriages? Discuss with your classmates.

**The objective of the question is to provoke students' interest and curiosity. During their discussion they shall compare the advantages and disadvantages of age difference, language barriers, cultural differences, raising children, etc.**

*In December of 1920, the French government summoned Pellé to Paris, where he was told that by the end of the year and in agreement with the Czechoslovak government, he should resign from his position of the Chief of General Staff. It seems that in the eyes of the French government our General proved to be perhaps too fond of the Czechoslovak environment, and therefore needed a change. Moreover, he would face a difficult task as the French negotiator in Turkey (1921–1923), with whom a peace treaty had not been achieved yet. It did not occur until 1923 in Lausanne, Switzerland.*

DOC 13: Pellé's Last Salutation to the Czechoslovak Soldiers Proclaimed in Czech before His Departure for Paris, January 1, 1921.

It was an honor for me to be your General... Your homeland became my second homeland... Long Live the Czechoslovak Republic! Long Live President Masaryk! Salute, brothers!

Source: Srov. BŘACH, R. Op. cit., p. 199.

- What expression does Pellé use to describe his feelings towards Czechoslovakia? What does that tell us?

***Czechoslovakia became Pellé's "second homeland". This declaration proves his warm feelings towards the country and the Czechoslovak people.***

## VI. Summary

- Fill in the blank. Choose your answers from the following list:

President of the republic, Marshal Foch, Military Academy in Hranice, Chief of General Staff, Slovakia, General Rastislav Štefánik, Czechoslovak War Cross

President Masaryk named Pellé **Chief of General Staff**. During the times of a threat of war (June 1919), Pellé served as Supreme Commander of Czechoslovak Armed Forces. However, in time of peace this position is held by the **President of the republic**. After the war over **Slovakia** in July 1919, Pellé was decorated with the **Czechoslovak War Cross**. Pellé's French superior was **Marshal Foch**. The promising Slovak officer, **General Rastislav Štefánik**, was unfortunately unable to participate in establishing the Czechoslovak military education, because he died

tragically in May 1919. Pellé had a decisive influence on the establishment of the **Military Academy in Hranice** in 1920.

- Recall the chapters about Pellé’s military and diplomatic career. In each column of the table below list at least two characteristics and two places of operation or battlefields that represent General Pellé (some of these characteristics might be used in both columns).

| Soldier                |                         | Diplomat                    |                  |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| <i>...dedication</i>   | <i>...Western Front</i> | <i>...kindness and tact</i> | <i>...Berlin</i> |
| <i>...intelligence</i> | <i>...Slovakia</i>      | <i>...foresight</i>         | <i>...Prague</i> |

- Try to explain in a few sentences the truthfulness of Pellé’s words: “Your homeland has become my second homeland... Long Live the Czechoslovak Republic!” What or who tied Pellé to Prague, or Czechoslovakia?

**Students should be able to either defend or refute Pellé’s claim. In their essay, they will justify their position.**

***In the essay, student makes references to the following concepts: French-Czechoslovak relations, Pellé’s interest in the Czechoslovak culture, Pellé’s attitude during Czechoslovak crisis (1919-1920), his marriage, etc.***

### Maurice Pellé (Douai 1863 – Toulon 1924)

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