**Paul Rausnitz´s story**

Paul Rausnitz, who was born into the family of a Jewish doctor in Jablonec nad Nisou, fled with his parents and two brothers after the outbreak of World War II to the former Soviet Union, where the whole family joined Svoboda’s Army in Buzuluk and followed it in its heavy battle all the way to Prague. When Paul joined the army, he was only 14 years old. In 1946, the family left for the U.S., where Paul Rausnitz became an influential, well-respected businessman over several decades. Paul Rausnitz is also the patron of the Smetana’s Litomyšl Opera Festival, and offers the company’s and his own finances to support Czech culture, sport and charity. He values “courage and bravery, humanity and justice” and supports the activities of the Czech-Israeli Chamber of Commerce.

**Meopta story**

While traveling in Eastern Europe with his nephew in the early 1990s in search for interesting investment opportunities, he also visited the Přerov-based Meopta. At the time, the company had already fallen into problems, was heavily in debt and facing bankruptcy. Paul Rausnitz decided to put the company back on its feet.

Meopta is an international company with a long rich tradition of developing, manufacturing and assembling world class optical, opto-mechanical and optoelectronic products. From precision medical and scientific instruments to digital cinematic projectors, aerospace technologies, military weapon systems and consumer sports optics, Meopta’s unparalleled experience allows it to design, engineer and manufacture a diverse array of high quality products across a broad spectrum of markets and industries. Thanks to Paul´s and Gerry´s intervention Meopta became a global leader in the optical field.

**Honours and awards**

* May 7th 2005, in the Spanish Hall of the Prague Castle, Czech President Václav Klaus awarded medal to Paul Rausnitz of the fight for liberation.
* August 30th 2006, Paul and Egon Rausnitz were officially promoted to lieutenant colonels.
* October 3rd 2008, Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg gave the GRATIAS AGIT 2008
* On 28 October 2012, Paul Rausnitz was awarded the Commemorative Medal for Contribution to Culture and Business, of the Senate of the Czech Parliament.
* On 28 October 2013, Paul Rausnitz was awarded by Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, the Medal of Merit to the National Economy.
* Since 2014 Member of honour of Jewish society Olomouc
* On 11June 2018, Paul Rausnitz received Arnošt Lustig Award for courage, bravery, humanity and justice.