

**Vickers Wellington Mk IC T2990 KX-T**

**22/23 June 1941 02:13h**

**Base: East Wretham, United Kingdom**

**Target: Bremen, Germany**

**Shot down by Oberleutnant Egmont Prinz zur Lippe-Weißenfeld  
(Born 14 June 1918 – KIA 12 March 1944)**



**No. 311 (Czechoslovak) Squadron  
Royal Air Force**

**Lest we forget**

## Vilem BUFKA



RAF no. 787572

Flight Sergeant, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve  
1st Pilot/Captain

Vilem Bufka was born on 11 August 1915 in the town of Nymburk in the central Bohemian region. He was a qualified car mechanic. He did his national service between 1935 – 37 with the Air Force, during which he gained his basic pilot qualification. He continued to serve and during 1938– 39 and gained full qualification including night flying and instrument rating. After the occupation he left the Air Force on 1 June 1939.

He escaped from the Protectorate on 1 July 1939 via Poland where he signed for 5 years with the French Foreign Legion. He left for France aboard the ship Chrobry and he presented for active service at the Czechoslovak Consulate in Paris on 2 October 1940. He was one of the few bomber pilots who fought in France after his retraining. He served with Bombardement GB I/23 on MB-210. After the fall of France he fled to England via Africa flying a small transport aircraft Caudron C635 Simoun. He landed with an almost empty fuel tank on a beach near Maison Blanche (currently Dal El Beida) in Algeria. He joined the RAF on 26 July 1940 and was assigned to 311 Czechoslovak Bomber Squadron. He flew his first operation on 16 December 1940 as second pilot. He became first pilot/captain on his fifth operation on 2 January 1941.

Vilem Bufka managed to jump from the burning plane at the last moment. He suffered a broken leg and numerous lacerations, was taken prisoner of war by the Germans and eventually imprisoned in Colditz.

He returned to England after liberation and finally to his homeland on 16 August 1945. He was reactivated and continued to serve in the Czechoslovak Air Force until his dismissal on 1 November 1949. He reached the rank of Captain. Sadly he suffered from ill health and died on 20 November 1967. He wrote a book about his war exploits titled *Bombardier T2990 se odmlcel* (Bomber T2990 gone silent).

He was promoted to the rank of Colonel in memoriam during the rehabilitation of all Czechoslovak RAFs in 1989.

Decorations:

French Croix de Guerre

Czechoslovak War Cross 2x

Czechoslovak medal for bravery x 2

Czechoslovak merit medal first class

Czechoslovak Military Commemorative Medal with F (France) and VB (Great Britain) pins

British 1939 – 1945 Star

British Air Crew Europe Star

British Defence Medal

British War Medal

## Alois “Lojza” ROZUM



RAF no. 787169

Flight Sergeant, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot

Was born on 6 July 1912 in the town of Plzen, western Bohemia. He did his initial national service between 1931 -1933, after which he stayed in the Air Force and became a fully qualified pilot, including night vision and various instrument ratings. He flew over 1000 hours on several different types of aircraft and served until the spring 1939. He escaped from the Protectorate in June 1939 via Poland and by ship to France. He presented for duty at the Czechoslovak consulate in Paris and joined the Foreign Legion on 28 August 1939. He trained in Pau, Chateauroux and Tarbes airbases, again on several different types of aircraft. After the fall of France he left for England and docked in Liverpool on 7 July 1940.

Flight Sergeant Alois Rozum was killed on the 23 June 1941 when his plane crashed in Nieuwe Niedorp, The Netherlands. He is commemorated at the Runnymede Memorial: Panel 37.

He was promoted to the rank of Colonel in memoriam during the rehabilitation of all Czechoslovak RAFs in 1989.

Decorations:

Czechoslovak War Cross

Czechoslovak Medal for Bravery

Czechoslovak Military Commemorative Medal with F (France) and VB (Great Britain) pins

## Leonhard SMRČEK



RAF no. 82639

Pilot Officer, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Wireless operator

Was born on 29 December 1915 in Bezdišov near Třebíč in southern Bohemia. He did his national service between 1936 – 37, during which he attended officer training, followed by further training at the Military Academy at Hranice between 1937-38. He qualified as an observer (navigator). He escaped from the Protectorate on 9 December 1939 via Hungary and former Yugoslavia, and finally presented for duty at the Czechoslovak consulate in Marseille on 9 February 1940. After the fall of France he continued on to England where he arrived by ship at Liverpool on 7 July 1940. He attended the wireless operator course during which he showed a particular aptitude.

Pilot Officer Leonhard Smrček was killed on the 23 June 1941 when his plane crashed in Nieuwe Niedorp, The Netherlands. He is commemorated at the Runnymede Memorial: Panel 34.

He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in memoriam during the rehabilitation of all Czechoslovak RAFs in 1989.

Decorations:

Czechoslovak War Cross

Czechoslovak Medal for Bravery

Czechoslovak Military Commemorative Medal with F (France) and VB (Great Britain) pins

## Vilém KONŠTATSKÝ



RAF no. 82608

Pilot Officer, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Navigator

Was born on 17 November 1914 in Čelechovice, in the Moravian region of Prostějov. He trained to become a bank clerk. He did his national service between 1935-37, during which he attended the infantry officer course with very good results. During his national service he also completed an observer course at the Air Force training school. He continued to serve and became a qualified air force observer (navigator) on 1 December 1938. Deactivated on 1 February 1939.

Escaped from the Protectorate on 22 January 1940 via Hungary & former Yugoslavia, where he presented for duty at the Czechoslovak legation in Belgrade on 13 April 1940. He reached France on 11 May and joined active service on 13 May 1940 at Agde. He finally arrived in Liverpool on 7 July 1940. He completed a night navigator's course with excellent results. He flew 31 operations.

Pilot Officer Vilém Konšatský was killed on the 23 June 1941 when his plane crashed in Nieuwe Niedorp, The Netherlands. He is commemorated at the Runnymede Memorial: Panel 33.

He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in memoriam during the rehabilitation of all Czechoslovak RAFs in 1989.

Decorations:

Czechoslovak War Cross

Czechoslovak medal for Bravery

Czechoslovak Military Commemorative Medal with F (France) and VB (Great Britain) pins

## Jan HEJNA



RAF no. 787204

Flight sergeant, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Front gunner

Was born on 7 February 1915 in the town of Jaroměř in the region of Hradec Králové. He became a policeman. He did his national service between 1933 – 1935, after which he qualified as a policeman. He also gained his private pilot licence.

He escaped from the Protectorate on 1 November 1939 via Hungary and former Yugoslavia, eventually reaching France where he presented for duty at the Czechoslovak consulate in Marseille on 25 April 1940, but he did not see any active service before the Fall of France. He continued on to England and arrived in Liverpool on 7 July 1940. He worked as an administrative clerk at the centre in Cosford at first. Though he wished above all to complete his pilot training, he willingly accepted the position of gunner. He excelled at the Gunnery School in Dumfries, coming second overall.

Flight Sergeant Jan Hejna was killed on the 23 June 1941 when his plane crashed in Nieuwe Niedorp, The Netherlands. He is commemorated at the Runnymede Memorial: Panel 36.

He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in memoriam during the rehabilitation of all Czechoslovak RAFs in 1989.

Decorations:

Czechoslovak War Cross

## Karel VALACH



RAF no. 787551

Flight sergeant, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Rear gunner

Was born in the Moravian town of Kroměříž on 28 January 1918. After his initial national service between 1936 -38 he stayed on in the Air Force. He served at Piešťany airbase in Slovakia at the time of the breakup of Czechoslovakia and the formation of the Free (Fascist) Slovak State. Together with another seven airmen, he decided to escape to Poland by plane. They successfully landed in Deblin on 7 June 1939 and joined the Polish Air Force. He saw active service in Poland before continuing to England via France. He arrived in England by ship at Liverpool on 12 July 1940.

Whilst serving with 311 squadron he met an English girl Doreen Francis Todd and they were married on 10 December 1940. Their son was born in 1941.

Flight sergeant Karel Valach was killed on the 23 June 1941 when his plane crashed in Nieuwe Niedorp, The Netherlands. He is commemorated at the Runnymede Memorial: Panel 37.

He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in memoriam during the rehabilitation of all Czechoslovak RAFs in 1989.

Decorations:

Polish War Cross

Czechoslovak War Cross

Czechoslovak Medal for Bravery

Czechoslovak Military Commemorative Medal with F (France) and VB (Great Britain) pins

Text by Dagmar Johnson Šišková  
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We have collated the information for this leaflet from the following sources:

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Free Czechoslovak Air Force Association - FCAFA (<https://fcafa.com>)

Military History Institute Prague - VHU Praha, ([www.vhu.cz](http://www.vhu.cz))