

# Zdeněk Munzar

RAF 311 (Czechoslovak) Squadron



**Never Regard Their Numbers**



**Consolidated Liberator GR Mk. VI, 311 (Czechoslovak) Squadron, code letters PP-D, airframe number EV955, crashed on take-off from RAF Tain (Scotland) at 0406, April 10, 1945. Consolidated Aircraft was the manufacturer; a total of 18,482 were built during WWII. The first B-24s were produced for the British, who gave these the name "Liberator"; this designation appealed to and was subsequently adopted by the USAAC; GR stands for General Reconnaissance**



**EV955 at RAF Tain, circa March 1945; please note the Leigh Light slung underneath the starboard wing, outboard of #4 engine**



**Model of EV955; please note the Leigh Light (circled in red) slung underneath the starboard wing, outboard of #4 engine**

## Translation of the main poster in Senohraby, Czech Republic, October 7, 2023

### plk. Zdeněk MUNZAR member of the RAF

\*27. 7. 1920 BLATNO U PODBOŘAN / † 3. 7. 1997 HUDSON HEIGHTS (CAN)



*In the autumn of 1937, after Antonín Lavický, the then stationmaster of the local railway station, was transferred to the Directorate of State Railways in Prague, a new stationmaster, Chief Adjutant František Munzar, who had been working in Bečov nad Teplou, took over. This position included a service apartment on the first floor of the station building, which he moved into with his wife Maria, son Zdeněk and daughter Dagmar.*



Zdeněk Munzar, who was born on 27 July 1920 in Blatno near Podbořany, has just started his first year of studies at the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Prague. Before his family moved to Senohraby, he graduated from the Reform Real Gymnasium. He managed to successfully complete the third semester at the medical faculty, but after the events of 1939, when not only the occupation but also the subsequent closure of the universities took place, he decided to leave for the foreign resistance. In December 1939 he headed to Slovakia, from there to Hungary and Yugoslavia, where he is presented at the Czechoslovak Consulate in Belgrade. At the end of January 1940, he left by train via Greece, Turkey and Syria for Lebanon. On 7 February 1940, he leaves by the ship Champollion for France. He reports to the Czechoslovak foreign army in Algiers. He becomes a member of the RDZ 2nd Infantry Regiment and is eventually assigned to the NCO school in Algiers. In June 1940, he gets to the front. On 19 June, he is missing while crossing the Cher River. In November he is demobilized. Later that year he was arrested and interned in prisons in France, Algiers and Morocco. After his release, he left Casablanca for Canada. There, on 14 September 1942, he was presented as an RAF volunteer and assigned to the air force as a member of the ground staff with the rank of AC2 (Private Recruit). From February 1943 he joined the No. 3 ITF in Victorville for flight training.

He then moved to No. 9 AOS to Summerside to train as a navigator. This was followed by a navigation course and a stint with the Czechoslovak Foreign Air Force No. 111 OTU training unit in Nassau (Bahamas). On 27 July 1944, he married Canadian Mollie Barbara Chanler. In December 1944, he is transferred to Great Britain to the 311th Czechoslovak Bomber Squadron at Tain Airfield in Scotland. A month before the end of the war, on 10 April 1945, he is severely injured in the crash of Liberator PP-D, ev. 955, which crashed after taking off for a patrol over the Atlantic. A total of 7 Czechoslovak airmen were killed in the crash. After recovering, he returned to his homeland on 22 October. At the beginning of February 1946 he demobilized from the army. He started working as a navigation chief in the CSA until 1948. Two months after the Victory February, he again went into emigration when he and his family travelled to his wife's homeland - Canada. He initially worked in Eaton's commercial division in Montreal, but within a few months he joined the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), where he eventually achieved a prominent position as Assistant Director of Navigation with a wide global reach. He worked there until 1978. He was an active sportsman all his life and devoted considerable effort to the Church of England. He died on July 3, 1997 in Hudson Heights, Canada.

**Author's notes: the navigator's desk on a Liberator was located in the nose of the aircraft, the nose wheel and its doors being just a few feet to the rear. During takeoffs and landings, all personnel assigned to the nose area (navigator, bombardier, nose turret gunner) during flight had to move back to the rear of the cockpit, on the catwalk. Zdeněk Munzar owed this regulation his life, as he was ejected forward through the windscreen, which shattered on impact, rather than be a fatality if he had remained at his navigation station on take-off. His injuries resulted in his wearing a body cast for months; being an avid sportsman, this body cast did not deter him from playing soccer as best as he could; this must have been a sight to behold.**

## Czechoslovak War Cross 1939

The final rank that Zdenek gained in the RAF during the war was F/O - flying officer - lieutenant. After his rehabilitation in 1991-1992 he was promoted to the rank of Colonel during his lifetime.

He received decorations and medals for his wartime activities:

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*Czechoslovak War Cross*

*2x Czechoslovak Medal for Valour*

*Czechoslovak Medal for Merit 1<sup>st</sup> degree*

*Czechoslovak Commemorative Medal France - Great Britain*

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*Star 1939 – 1945*

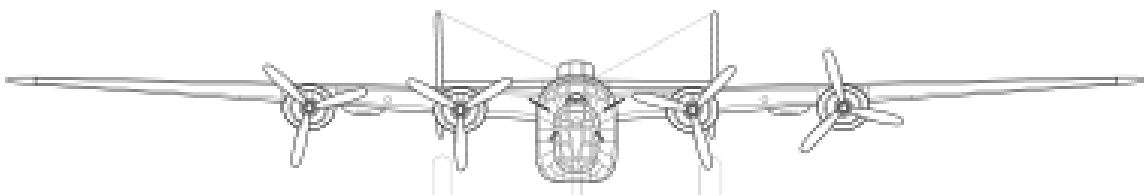
*Atlantic Star*

*Defence Medal*

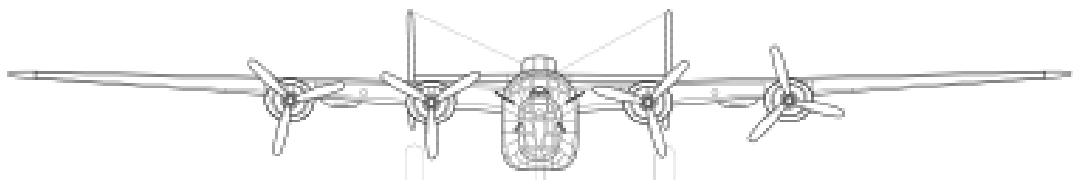
*War Medal*

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The life of the Munzar family in Senohraby, which can only be glossed from the memories of the witnesses, lasted about 10 years. Since the arrival of the Munzars in 1937, it was obvious that the whole family was sports-minded. His parents started to train in Sokol and Zdeněk very quickly developed into an important football goalkeeper. František Munzar and his wife Maria were also present when the Sokol gymnastic union was dissolved on 1 May 1941. Another unpleasant situation for the Munzars was that on 17-19 September 1943 they were arrested by the Gestapo for listening to radio stations hostile to Germany. They were released a few weeks later, but Mr. Munzar apparently could no longer serve as station manager and had to move out of his official apartment. According to their memories, they moved to No. 50 to the Dunovskis. Here their son Zdeněk, in his CSA uniform, with his wife and small child, was supposed to visit them in 1946 or 1947.







## The text that follows was mostly generated using Bing AI:

The Consolidated Liberator was developed quickly, going from design to first flight all during 1939. It was ideal as a bomber and maritime patrol aircraft due to its long-range and load capabilities. Consolidated Liberator VI GR, known in the US as a B-24J, was a four-engine heavy bomber designed by Consolidated Aircraft/Consolidated Vultee Aircraft in the U.S., and produced from 1940 to 1945. It was also used for maritime patrol by the U.S. Navy, RAF, and the RCAF during the Second World War. The Liberator, with its long range, could provide convoy protection in mid-Atlantic where other land-based aircraft were not able to operate, thus “closing” the Mid-Atlantic Gap. This capacity was instrumental in turning the tide against the U-Boats in the latter half of WWII.



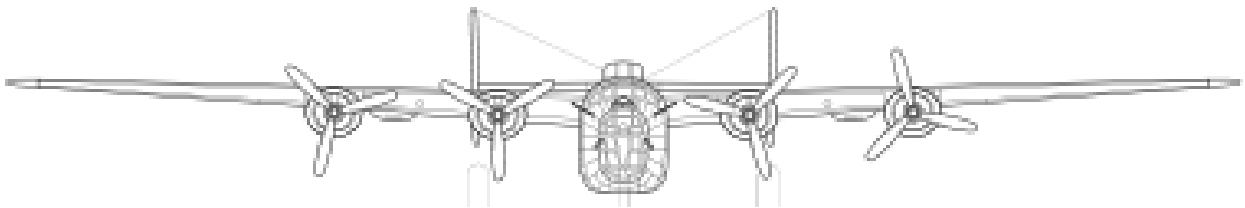
## Two excerpts from the Free Czechoslovak Air Force Ltd website [www.fcafa.com](http://www.fcafa.com) :

“Delivered to 311 Sqn 03/03/45; lost height and flew into ground after pre-dawn take off (0406 hours) from RAF Tain on 10/04/45. F/Sgt Arnost Hayek (k); F/Sgt Otto Kennedy (k); F/Sgt Zdenek Palme (k); Sgt Rudolf Scholz (k); Flt/Lt Josef Simet (k); Sgt Josef Vanis (k). P/O Zdeněk Munzar (s); F/Sgt V Vrba (s); Sgt J Chovanec (s). Struck off charge 12/04/45”. “On the 10th of April the squadron was to suffer another (and, as it turned out, its final wartime) loss, when Liberator EV955 PP-D crashed shortly after taking off at 0406 hours. The aircraft crashed 1,500 yards from the end of the runway. Five of the crew died in the crash and air gunner F/Sgt Otta Kennedy died later of his injuries. Three of the crew were injured but survived; they were the navigator, P/O Zdeněk Munzar, and two of the gunners, Sgt Josef Chovanec and F/Sgt Vladimír Vrba. Those that died were the pilot Flt/Lt Josef Simet, his co-pilot F/Sgt Zdeněk

Palme, flight engineer Sgt Rudolf Scholz, wireless operator F/Sgt Arnošt Hayek and air-gunner Sgt Josef Vaniš. The subsequent investigation suggested that the cause of the accident was an instrument error, which might have been due to a fault with the artificial horizon or the pilot's lack of instrument flying experience; the pilot had a total of 244 hours, 133 of which were on the Liberator, and only 32 of which were at night".



Leigh Light: nowhere to hide at night any longer





# Celebrations, Senorahby, Czech Republic, Saturday, October 7, 2023

(translations of the texts on the poster and plaque: scroll down to “Translations”)







Zdeněk's youngest daughter, Nancy Munzar, travelled from Toronto, Canada, to Senorahby, Czech Republic



**A candle was lit for each RAF member being honoured**



**Nancy Munzar greeted by the mayor of Senohraby,  
Mrs. Helena Pechlatova**



**Gifts of memorabilia given to each of the airmen's families participating in the ceremony**



**Joe Voychan, an RAF re-enactor from the RAF Club, recounted the story of Zdeněk Munzar, all by heart (no notes)**



**One member from each of the families of the RAF veterans being celebrated assisted with the unveiling of the new plaque honouring those veterans**

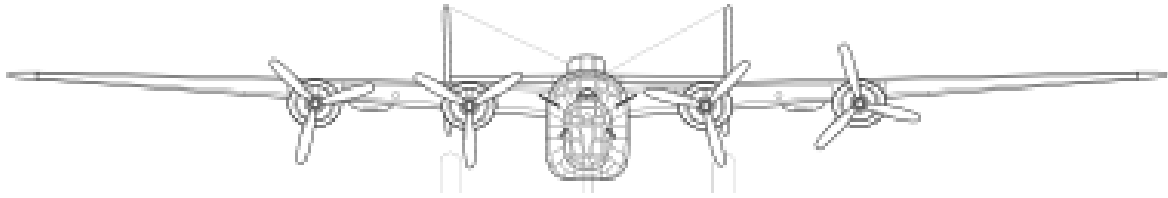




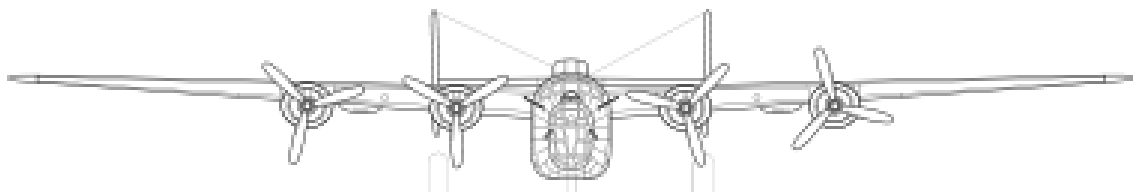
The commemorative plaque honouring the three RAF crew members, in the town square of Senohraby



**Details, Munzar candle; note the Liberator depicted on the candle holder**



**Mr. Jiří Kozák - Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic**





**The posters for each of the three RAF members being celebrated**



A splendid cake, complete with the Czechoslovak Air Force badge

## Czechoslovak Air Force

*Československé letectvo*



Badge of the Czechoslovak Air Force



**A great turn-out by the townspeople of Senohraby participated and honoured these RAF heroes**





**A local school children's choir contributed to the success of the celebrations**

# Translations by Tomas Nemecek

Poster: Unveiling of the Memorial Plaque of Czechoslovak War Pilots from Senohraby, Members of the RAF

Lt. Col. Josef PANÝREK  
Col. Jan Maria František STEJSKAL  
Col. Zdeněk MUNZAR

## Program:

Welcome and opening  
Flyover of aircraft  
Honour guard  
Musical performance by school students  
Ceremonial unveiling of the memorial plaque  
Exhibition of artifacts

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2023, AT 2:00 PM**

**U Zvoničky, Senohraby**

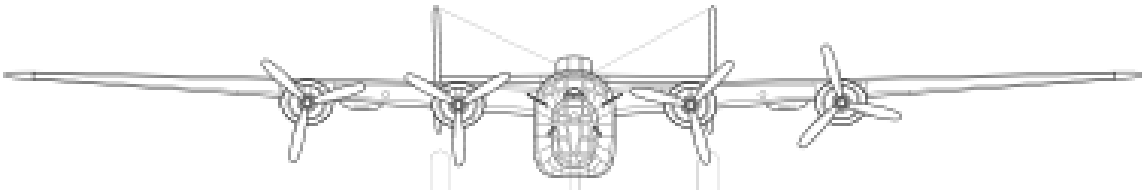
**Organized by Ing. Slavoj Chejn and the Senohraby community**

## Small plaque:

**Let the Czechoslovak war airmen, members of the RAF, be honoured  
and remembered.**

**Although they survived, they did not receive thanks.**

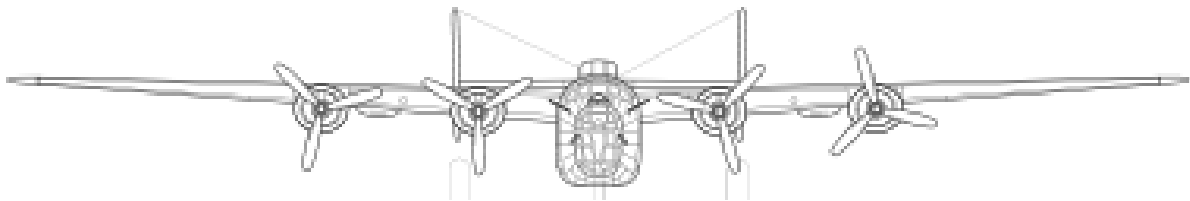
***And then the names of the three RAF crew members being honoured***





# Hudson Legion, Hudson, Quebec





# St-James Church, Hudson, Quebec



## Zdeněk Munzar, circa 1945





**Mollie and Zdeněk Munzar, Mount-Royal Hotel  
(Montreal), circa 1945**

**Observer: the RAF designation for navigator**

**The role of the observer was to navigate the bomber to the target using map reading, wireless position fixes, and astral navigation; the Liberator had a small Plexiglas dome, called an astrodome, just forward of the cockpit, through which the observer could take his readings or “shoot his fixes”. An observer wore a single-winged flying badge with a wreath containing the letter "O" on his tunic, above his left breast pocket, denoting his trade specialisation; refer to the two photographs of Zdeněk Munzar above.**

