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RIDERS IN THE SKY 1945

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RIDERS IN THE SKY 1945 / Liberatory GR Mk.VI a GR Mk.VIII ve službách RAF Coastal Command

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First issue

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Supplies of the GR Mk.VI and GR Mk.VIII Liberators to the United Kingdom.

Liberators of the GR Mk.VI and GR Mk.VIII versions were supplied to the United Kingdom exclusively according to "Lend and Lease" agreement. **Liberators GR Mk.VI** were B-24J aircraft coming solely from Fort Worth factory modified according to the RAF Coastal Command requirements (the only exemption was Liberator BZ970, B-24H-1-CF version which performed test flights only in the United Kingdom and was never assigned to the combat unit). The first Liberator GR Mk.VI BZ966 arrived in the United Kingdom on November 14th, 1943. RAF serial numbers were allocated from the blocks **BZ961 through BZ999, EV818 through EV998, EW288 through EW322, KG821 through KG992, KH123 through KH420, KK221 through KK378 and KL348 through KL351**. RAF received 291 Liberators GR Mk.VI in total (four of them were transferred to RCAF). No. 53 Squadron received its first two Liberators GR Mk.VI, EV895 and EV953, on May 8th, 1944 from No. 51 MU in Lichfield. First squadron sortie was performed by Liberator GR Mk.VI EV895 "H" on June 12th, 1944. No. 59 Squadron received its first Liberators GR Mk.VI only after the end of the hostilities (KK224 and KK371 on August 29th, 1945; KG916 on August 21st, 1945; EV992, EV997 and KG864 on August 29th, 1945; BZ963 on September 3rd, 1945) rebuilt to the transport version C Mk.VI. No. 86 squadron found itself in the similar situation. First Liberators C Mk.VI were received after the unit's transfer under the RAF Transport Command in July 1945 (KK265 on June 23rd, 1945 and KK368 on July 28th, 1945). No. 120 Squadron was not re-equipped to this type of aircraft. On May 23rd, 1944 the first Liberator GR Mk.VI BZ975 "R" with "Leigh Light" search light was delivered to the unit followed by Liberator BZ984 "S" on June 5th, 1945. These aircraft flew mostly Leigh Light training missions and only in November 1944 upon arrival of further Liberators equipped with search lights did the squadron start flying mostly night patrols. No. 220 Squadron received its first Leigh Light equipped Liberators GR Mk.VI on October 10th, 1944. After crew training in St. Davids the squadron commenced its operational activities by combat reconnaissance flight from St. Eval to Azores Islands. No. 224 Squadron received its first Liberator GR Mk.VI equipped with the ASG-3 radar and Leigh Light search light at the end of May, 1944. Their numbers started to steadily increase and by September 11th, 1944, when the squadron relocated to Milltown base, 15 Liberators GR Mk.VI were on strength. In the end of April 1944 Liberators GR Mk.VI equipped with ASG-3 radars and Leigh Light search lights started to arrive. On April 22nd, 1944 first Liberator GR Mk.VI was delivered to No. 547 Squadron carrying serial number EV897, it was assigned AL "E". First Liberator GR Mk.VI sortie with this squadron was performed on May 13th, 1944 by the aircraft "R". Liberator GR Mk.VI crew consisted mostly of nine to ten airmen, but the number differed based on the squadron standards or missions or the actual squadron manpower as well. Left seat in the cockpit was occupied by the captain, right seat by the second pilot. Radar operator workstation was on the flight deck behind the captain, radio operator's workstation was on the right side of the flight deck and the gunner manned the dorsal turret. The operators were mostly qualified as gunners as well and

used to rotate on their posts including the dorsal gun turret. Navigator's position was in the aircraft nose and during the attack he performed bomb aiming duties. He shared the aircraft nose with the gunner who manned the frontal turret. The gunners manned two side machine gun posts and the rear turret. During some sorties No. 311 Squadron crews included the additional navigator.

Liberators GR Mk.VIII were B-24J-CF (the single aircraft of the B-24J-FO version received by RAF at Dorval airport on August 14th, 1945, was returned to the USA on October 31st, 1945 as a surplus) and B-24L-FO modified at the Modification Centers according to RAF Coastal Command requirements. The aircraft manufactured by Consolidated at Fort Worth plant received RAF serial numbers from the series **KG848 through KG989, KH125 through KH418, KK249 through KK370**. Aircraft manufactured by Ford at Willow Run plant received RAF serial numbers from the series **KL390 through KL570, KN719 through KN835 and KP125 through KP156**.

First Liberator GR Mk.VIII KG959 arrived in the United Kingdom on August 6th, 1944, however the first aircraft assigned to the combat unit was Liberator GR Mk.VIII KG979 as late as November 27th, 1944 (No. 224 Squadron). Liberators GR Mk.VIII were assigned to the Coastal Command squadrons in the following order: No. 224 Squadron (November 1944), No. 120 Squadron (December 1944), No. 53 Squadron (January 1945), No. 86 Squadron (February 1945), No. 206 Squadron (February 1945), No. 59 Squadron (March 1945) and the last one was No. 547 Squadron (March 1945). No. 220 and 311 Squadrons were not re equipped with this type of aircraft during the war. There were in total 259 Liberators GR Mk.VIII delivered to the RAF (six out of them were received by RCAF).

Liberator GR Mk.VIII crew mostly consisted of 10, sometimes 11 airmen. Left seat in the cockpit was occupied by the crew captain, right seat by the second pilot. The navigator was seated behind the captain on the Flight Deck and the radar operator's workstation was on the right side of the Flight Deck (both were facing rear of the aircraft). Radar operator mostly held the gunner's qualification as well and periodically relieved the gunner in the dorsal turret. Navigator's post in the aircraft nose was retained but in the aircraft that carried the radar equipment for low altitude bombing (LAB) instead of the navigator it was manned by the operator of this device who shared the space with the nose turret gunner. Radio operator's workstation was above the rear bomb bay, on so called Command Deck. One or both side machine gun posts and the rear gun turret were manned by the gunners.

After the aircraft left the assembly lines they underwent the modifications in so called Modification Centers in accordance with the end users' requirements. The aircraft destined for RAF were initially modified in the American Airlines workshops at LaGuardia airport, New York, but due to the insufficient space these activities were transferred to the newly-built Modification Center Consolidated Fort Worth (during 1942-1943 there were total 212 RAF-bound aircraft modified).

Once the full production scale was reached at Fort Worth and after Consolidated fusion with Vultee, B-24 aircraft destined for RAF were modified at the new Vultee Modification Center plant in Louisville, Kentucky. During 1943-1945 there were total 1509 RAF-bound B-24s modified here.

Pg. 3 – title foto

RCAF Meteorological Flight (later renamed to Eastern Air Command Meteorological Flight) was established on Yarmouth airport, Nova Scotia on September 3rd, 1943. Initially the unit operated namely Canso aircraft but as the No. 10 (BR) Squadron disbandment was approaching several Liberators were assigned to the Eastern Air Command Meteorological Flight. Namely there were Liberators GR Mk.VI s/n 3732, 3734, 3735 and 3742, the first aircraft reached the unit on July 17th, 1945. The unit was disbanded on September 30th, 1945. The picture features Liberator GR Mk.VI 3742. AL "A" was painted in light grey color, again in smaller size on the vertical tail surface above the Fin Flash. Serial number 3742 was black.

Pg. 6

No. 311 (Czechoslovak) Squadron

From the beginning of February 1944 till the beginning of March 1944, as a replacement for the returned Liberators with the external rocket launchers, No. 311 Squadron was receiving the older Liberators GR Mk.V equipped with ASG-1 (Dumbo) radars and retractable rocket launching device located in the rear bomb bay. Between February 7th, 1944 and February 19th, 1944, the squadron then received nine ASG-3 radar equipped Liberators GR Mk.VI. Thus it became the first RAF Coastal Command combat unit equipped with this type of aircraft. At the end of February 1944, the squadron was relocated to the RAF Station Predannack in Cornwall county. In the first half of May 1944 the Liberators GR Mk.VI were handed over to Scottish Aviation Ltd. to have Leigh Light search lights installed but were not returned to the squadron inventory.

RAF Coastal Command change of the anti-submarine operations focus to the North Sea resulted in the new transfer for No. 311 Squadron, this time to the north, Scotland, RAF Station Tain. Liberators GR Mk.V combat missions at No. 311 Squadron ceased on March 2nd, 1945 and preparations for their hand over started. During the period of January 31st, 1945 through March 4th, 1945 No. 311 Squadron received in total 15 Liberators GR Mk.VI equipped with the ASG-3 radar and Leigh Light search light. First sortie with the newly assigned Liberators GR Mk.VI took place on March 11th, 1945. This version remained in No. 311 Squadron service until the end of its operation within RAF.

However, at the beginning of April 1945 RAF Coastal Command deliberated on supplying the No. 311 Squadron with ASV Mk.XA radar equipped Liberators GR Mk.VIII but on April 23rd, 1945 the No. 311 Squadron Commanding Officer objected reasoning with rapidly approaching end of war (even though ASV Mk.X radar operators training had been going on for a while). In the end the re-equipment did not take place. However several Czechoslovak aviators had the opportunity to fly some of sixteen Liberators GR Mk.VIII serving with No. 111 (C) OTU training unit based on Bahamas Islands, for example pilot-instructor F/O Jan Irving or pilots in training such as W/O Jindrich Benes or F/Sgt Josef Klesnil.

Pg. 6 - photo

No.311 Squadron members standing on the horizontal tail surface of the Liberator GR Mk.VI, KG859 "PP o U", RAF Tain, spring/summer 1945. Note the rudder long trim, A-6B tail gun turret (without gun breeches covers) and the machine gun muzzles featuring the Flash Eliminators.

Pg. 7

Liberators GR Mk.VI and GR Mk.VIII in RCAF service

RCAF received in total 15 Liberators GR Mk.V. All of these aircraft were assigned RAF serial numbers and served with No. 10 (BR) Squadron RCAF.

In the case of Liberator GR Mk.VI situation was different. RCAF received in total 38 aircraft of this version but only four of them were assigned RAF s/n. The first squadron to receive Liberators GR Mk.VI was again No. 10 (BR) Squadron, Liberator RCAF s/n 3705 was the first one to reach the unit in December 1943.

In May 1944 decision was made to re-equip No. 11 (BR) Squadron with Liberators, the unit relocated back to Dartmouth base in June 1944 and first two Liberators GR Mk.VI (3711 and 3712) arrived at the base on July 31st, 1944. First No. 11 (BR) Squadron sortie was performed by Liberator 3714 "A" on August 13th, 1944.

RCAF received in total sixteen Liberators GR Mk.VIII (six of them were assigned RAF s/n) but only two of them saw combat service. The first Liberator to reach No. 11 (BR) Squadron was GR Mk.VIII s/n 11121 on April 4th, 1944, and received AL "X". On April 12th, 1944, she was followed by second, and last, GR Mk.VIII s/n 11120, squadron assigned AL "V".

After the war No. 10 (BR) and No. 11 (BR) Squadrons were disbanded (on August 15th, 1945 and September 15th, 1945). As the unit disbandment was approaching several Liberators were handed over to Eastern Air Command Meteorological Flight. Namely they were Liberators GR Mk.VI s/n 3732, 3734 and 3742, first aircraft arrived at the unit

on July 17th, 1945. The unit was disbanded on September 30th, 1945. To complete the story No. 426 Squadron RAF composed of the Canadian personnel was transferred to RAF Transport Command on May 25th, 1945. The squadron received its first Liberators on July 11th, 1945. They were various Liberator versions modified for transport duties, initially seven Liberators GR Mk.VI and seven GR Mk.VIII were in this mix. The squadron was disbanded on December 31st, 1945.

Cover photograph: RAF Coastal Command Liberator GR Mk.VI KG868 "K o ZZ", (ex-USAAF B-24J-40-CF s/n 44-10373, MCn 29-162) of the No.220 Squadron, Azores Islands, April 18th, 1945. Liberator arrived at SAL Prestwick on June 18th, 1944 and after modifications it was delivered to No.220 Squadron on December 4th, 1944. On September 20th, 1945 it was handed over to No.1 TAMU to be converted to C Mk.VI and on October 30th, 1945 it was received by No.53 Squadron. On March 12th, 1947 the aircraft was sold to International Alloys Ltd. for scrap. Liberator had the A-6B nose gun turret installed. There is the SCR-729 set AN-148 IFF receiver antenna under the navigator's side window.

Pg. 7 - 8

Liberators GR Mk.VI and GR Mk.VIII

The first Liberators GR Mk.VI (B-24J) differed from the previous version GR Mk.V (B-24D) primarily by the front gun turret installation. Initially it was a Consolidated A-6A superseded by MPC A-6B turret and beginning with the block J-45 by Emerson A-15 turret. In the beginning the Liberators GR Mk.VI were armed with Boulton Paul Type E rear gun turret (same as GR Mk.V) but thanks to the increasing production MPC A-6B became available and therefore were installed in the Liberators destined for the RAF. The same situation was repeated with the Martin 250CE 15 "High Hat" dorsal gun turret installed in B-24J-CF starting with s/n 44-44246 (block J-90). The Liberators GR Mk.VI had the ASV Mk.VA centimeter radars installed later followed by the Mk.VB version. There was a parabolic antenna in the retractable dielectric dome mounted in the ventral gun turret location. The numbers assigned to RAF Liberators GR Mk.VI in the Modification Center started with double digit 29- (Fort Worth), double digit 37- was carried by RCAF Liberators.

Liberators GR Mk.VIII differed from GR Mk.VI version (besides manufacturing differences between the versions and production blocks of the actual aircraft) mainly by location and type of the radio and radar (ASV Mk.X and LAB) equipment and corresponding changes in the crew positioning. Since the ASV Mk.X parabolic antenna was also mounted in the dielectric retractable dome located nearby ventral gun turret it will not help to distinguish the versions GR Mk.VI and GR Mk.VIII. LAB was an automated bomb aiming device for non-visual bombing from the low altitudes. The device was mounted in the B-24 nose, the former navigator's compartment. Afore mentioned radio operator's relocation to the right-side of compartment above the rear

bomb bay, so-called Command Deck, brought about certain design changes visible from the outside. New window was added to the right side of the fuselage slightly above the wing trailing edge. Emergency exit door was installed on the opposite side. Communication set wire antenna originated in the insulator located behind the added window and connected to the original antenna at the wing level. There was a small periscope in front of the radio compass loop antenna. The trailing antenna winch of the communication set was relocated next to the retractable radar antenna dome and the wire antenna with counter weight at the end was passing through the fuselage skin on the right side next to the radome. There were IFF sets SCR-729/APN-2 or Rebecca installed in the nose of the Liberators GR Mk.VIII. All Liberators GR Mk.VIII (except KG848 which carried A-6B turret) had the Emerson A-15(A) front gun turret and MPC A-6B rear gun turret installed. It is necessary to mention herein that the nose of the Ford manufactured Liberators rather differed from the Liberator nose manufactured by the other companies, both in its shape (widening under the gun turret) and design itself (attachment of the skin metal sheets). Transition between the A-15 turret and the fuselage was simple, bombardier's workstation canopy was larger and had significantly different shape. All Liberators GR Mk.VIII manufactured by Ford had Martin 250E 15 "High Hat" dorsal gun turret installed. Liberators GR Mk.VIII manufactured in Fort Worth starting with serial number KG848 up to KH347 (plus KH388) had Martin 250CE 5 dorsal gun turret installed, Liberators with serial numbers KH387 and KH410 through KK370 had Martin 250CE 15 "High Hat" installed. The numbers assigned to Liberators GR Mk.VIII in Modification Center started with double digit 34-(Fort Worth) and 45-(Ford), double digits 42- were carried by RCAF Liberators. Standard armament of the Liberators GR Mk.VIII included, besides the depth charges, acoustic torpedoes as well (end of war was approaching, there were plenty of torpedoes available and the risk of being detected by the enemy was no longer significant) and anti-submarine bombs AS 600 lbs.

Pg. 8 - schemes

GR Mk.V crew on-board positioning - No. 311 Squadron GR Mk.V Liberators crew mostly consisted of the following airmen: navigator/bombardier workstation was in the nose (if necessary he also manned the machine gun installed in the plexiglass nose), captain's seat was on the left in the cockpit, second pilot was next to him. Radar operator's workstation was right behind the captain (facing the direction of flight), radio operator's workstation was behind the second pilot (facing the fuselage wall). The Flight Deck was also shared with a flight engineer who, if necessary, manned the dorsal gun turret. Several crew members rotated in regular intervals in the radar and radio operators' workstations, qualifications combination radio operator/gunner was quite common. However not all gunners qualified as radio operators. Number of the crew members also depended on the squadron personnel roster.

During 1943 and the first half of 1944 the No. 311 Squadron crews flying combat missions consisted of 8 airmen mostly. The stable crew members were captain, second pilot, navigator and radio operator. Number of gunners varied.

GR Mk.VI crew on-board positioning - No. 311 Squadron GR Mk.VI Liberators crew was mostly the same as on Liberators GR Mk.V, sometimes there was an additional gunner in the nose gun turret to make for the total of 10 crew members.

GR Mk.VIII crew on-board positioning-as opposed to the Liberator GR Mk.VI the navigator's workstation was moved from the nose to the Flight Deck behind the captain. Radar operator was seated behind the second pilot facing rear and radio operator's workstation was relocated to the right side of the Command Deck. The total number of the crew members was retained. From time to time the second navigator took part in the combat mission.

- 1 – captain
- 2 – second pilot
- 3 – navigator / bombardier
- 4 – radar operator
- 5 - wireless operator
- 6 – upper gunner
- 7 – left waist gunner
- 8 – right waist gunner
- 9 – rear gunner
- 10 – nose gunner
- 11 – LAB operator

Pg. 9 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VIII (B-24J-CF), No. 206 Squadron, 1945. The radio operator's workstation in Liberators GR Mk.VIII was relocated to the area above the rear bomb bay (Command Deck). To the left of this window (with noticeable framing) the wire antenna insulator of the communication set is visible.

Above it, on the top of the fuselage in front of the radio compass loop antenna, there is a small periscope. The dorsal gun turret was A-3D type with tall cover. Worth noticing is the aerodynamic cover of the main fuel tanks vents located on the wings upper surface

and an airfoil shaped wire riveted to the Wind Deflector which prevented the side machine gun operator from positioning the gun in a way he could hit airplane's own wing.

Pg 9. - bottom

Command Deck escape exit on Liberator GR Mk.VIII KK365 (ex-USAAF B-24J-100-CF s/n 44-44446) was located on the port side. On March 22nd, 1945, the aircraft was delivered to No. 547 Squadron at the RAF Station Leuchars and on April 3rd, 1945 it was damaged by the operation of its own on-board machine gun. Accident Report Card states machine gun shooting from the dorsal gun turret during the landing (faulty interrupter) but the repair plant in its report states as the cause of the damage the careless operation of the side machine gun. Because in the next available picture the top of the leading edge of the horizontal stabilizer right at its attachment to the fuselage shows the damage, the cause of damage stated in the Accident Report Card seems more probable.

Pg. 10 - top

In-flight picture of the Liberator GR Mk.VI BZ970 (ex-USAAF B-24H-1-CF s/n 42-64432) taken on July 15th, 1944, during the trials at A&AEE. It was the sole B-24H delivered to the RAF Coastal Command. The aircraft arrived in the United Kingdom on February 12th, 1944, on March 17th, 1944 it was received by RAE Farnborough and on March 24th, 1944 it was handed over to A&AEE for Emerson A-15 nose gun turret trials and further tests. On January 4th, 1945 BZ970 was received by No. 51 MU where it remained until the end of war in Europe. Several details are noticeable, front gun turret A-15 machine guns were removed, Martin 250CE dorsal gun turret and Boulton Paul Type E rear gun turret was installed, and the bombardier workstation canopy shape is typical for the Ford manufactured aircraft.

Pg. 10 - bottom

Starboard view of the Liberator GR Mk.VI BZ970. The aircraft does not carry any markings and the serial number BZ970 is disappearing on the Extra Dark Sea Grey background (right in front of the tail planes).

During the whole war the aircraft was not assigned to any combat unit. Only after the modification to the transport version C Mk.VI on August 29th, 1945 it was received by No. 86 Squadron which handed it over to No. 102 Squadron on November 27th, 1945. On February 9th, 1946 the airplane was handed over to No. 51 MU and on June 12th, 1946 sold for scrap to the International Alloys Ltd. Company. Camouflage weathering is well noticeable especially on the vertical tail surface. Note the aircraft whole nose section. Even though this Liberator BZ970 left the Consolidated plant assembly lines in

Fort Worth it was completed from the components supplied by Ford company. A-15 front gun turret was installed, turret-fuselage transition was straight with the cut-out for machine guns breeches, bombardier workstation transparent canopy consisted of five parts and was of a trapezoid shape from the side view.

Front wheel well covers opened outwards. SCR-729 set AN-148 IFF receiving antenna can be identified under the navigator's window and the B-3 drift meter periscope tubes are very well visible behind the bombardier workstation's canopy.

Pg. 11 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV882 "4 o L"-USAAF B-24J-10-CF s/n 42-64289), No. 206 Squadron, July 1944. Number "4" was assigned to the aircraft of No. 206 Squadron instead of SCL during its operation at RAF Station St. Eval but was retained even after the transfer to Leuchars base. A-6A front gun turret and Boulton Paul Type E rear turret were installed. The SCR-729 device IFF antenna is in the aircraft nose under the navigator's window, the flare chute opening is well visible next to the radome.

Pg. 11 - bottom

Another in-flight photograph of the Liberator GR Mk.VI EV882 "4 o L" (ex-USAAF B-24J-10-CF s/n 44-64289), No. 206 Squadron, July 1944. The aircraft had A-3C dorsal gun turret installed. Upper surfaces were camouflaged in Extra Dark Sea Grey.

Pg. 12 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VI EW309 "XB o S" (ex-USAAF B-24J-35-CF s/n 44-10312) in No. 224 Squadron colors above the British countryside, August 25th, 1944. The aircraft was received by No. 224 Squadron on July 30th, 1944. During summer 1944 the RAF Coastal Command re-introduced SCL. Since No. 224 Squadron custom was to put AL behind the side gun position two-letter code it had to be spray painted in front of the cockade. There was not enough space there though and the first letter had to be already painted above the bomb bay door. Once the bomb bay doors were opened the part of the letter "X" on the fuselage was obliterated therefore the corresponding part of the letter was also sprayed on the bomb bay door.

Pg. 12 - bottom

Top view of the Liberator GR Mk.VI EW309 "XB o S", No. 224 Squadron, August 25th, 1944. Both in-flight pictures were taken from the Liberator EW291 "Z" from No. 53 Squadron which was at that time stationed at St. Eval together with No. 224 Squadron. The photograph confirms the application of the single color on the upper surfaces i.e. Extra Dark Sea Gray. Take note of the camouflage colors demarcation line on the engines and in the front of the pilot cockpit.

Pg. 13 - top

The Liberator GR Mk.VI KG869 "2V o B" (ex-USAAF B-24J-40-CF s/n 44-10374), No. 547 Squadron. The aircraft arrived at SAL Prestwick on June 15th, 1944 and on September 23rd, 1944 it was assigned to the British No. 547 Squadron from GR A/C Pool Haverfordwest. On September 28th, 1944 the squadron commenced the transfer from St. Eval to Leuchars. During that period the change of SCL to "2V" most likely occurred. The aircraft remained in the squadron inventory until the end of war in Europe. Liberator KG869 had A-6B front gun turret installed, the machine gun muzzles featured Flash Eliminators. The flare chute opening is well visible next to ASG-3 radome. There was another chute installed on the rear entry door. Once the bomb bay doors were opened the part of number "2" marking on the fuselage was obliterated therefore the number was painted on the bomb bay door as well.

Pg. 13 - bottom

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG907 "TF" (ex-USAAF B-24J-50-CF s/n 44-10412, MC/n 29-177) of No. 1674 HCU. Liberators of this unit were marked on the fuselage behind the cockade instead of SCL and AL by the combination of two letters OL through YA in the alphabetical order, first letter from the alphabet beginning, second from the end of it. The flare chute opening is well visible next to the ASG-3 radar deployed radome. There was another chute installed on the rear entrance door.

From the beginning of the B-24J-45-CF block A-15 front gun turret was installed on Fort Worth manufactured Liberators. The aircraft arrived in Prestwick on June 14th, 1944 and after the modification was accepted by No. 1674 HCU. On August 11th, 1945 it was handed over to No. 1 TAMU to be rebuilt to C Mk.VI transport version and once the modifications were completed on October 8th, 1945 it was received by No. 102 Squadron and on November 28th, 1946 it was struck of charge.

Pg. 14

Liberator GR Mk.VI KH220 "W" (ex-USAAF B-24J-85-CF s/n 44-44081, MC/n 29-224), No. 200 Squadron. The aircraft flew along the route Gander-Prestwick-Karachi arriving on November 7th, 1944. Precisely in a month, on December 7th, 1944, it performed its first sortie carrying No. 200 Squadron insignia. It was a night anti-submarine patrol since the aircraft was equipped with the Leigh Light search light. The last sortie took place on March 2nd, 1945. On March 10th, 1945 during the "Low Level Skip Bombing" training, Liberator KH220 hit the motor boat mast approximately 20 km off shore nearby Madras. The damage extent was such that the repair was too costly and on April 26th, 1945 this aircraft was struck of charge.

Pg. 15 - top

No. 224 Squadron Liberator GR Mk.VIII "XB o O" (ex-USAAF B-24-CF MC/n 34-2) in flight, 1945. SCL "XB" were spray-painted in front of the cockade, upon opening the bomb bay door the part of the letter "X" on the fuselage was obliterated therefore the corresponding part of the letter was spray-painted on the bomb bay door. The aircraft carried the A-15 nose gun turret. AN/APS-15 radar dome is deployed. The flare chute was installed on the rear entry doors.

Pg. 15 - bottom

Liberator GR Mk.VIII KG984 (ex-USAAF B-24J-70-CF s/n 44-10649, MC/n 34-15) captured on film in August 1944. The aircraft arrived in Prestwick on August 12th, 1944. After necessary modifications it was delivered to No. 224 Squadron as late as December 15th, 1944. After the end of hostilities in Europe, on June 1st, 1945, it briefly served with No. 59 Squadron but after the conversion to the C Mk.VIII transport version it was received by No. 220 Squadron on September 15th, 1945. On November 11th, 1945 it was struck of charge. The picture was taken before the modifications started in Scottish Aviation Ltd. since this Liberator still sports non-standard Temperate Sea Scheme camouflage. The leading-edge rubber de-icing boots are not painted in the aluminum lacquer. Note the end of the communication set trailing antenna behind the radome (and the empty opening in front of the bomb bay originally intended for its installation). AN 148 IFF set receiver antenna is well visible on the aircraft nose.

Pg. 16 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VIII KH416 (ex-USAAF B-24J-95-CF s/n 44-44287, MC/n 34-83) "XB o H" in the colors of No. 224 Squadron is awaiting its end in the scrap yards, No. 51 MU, Lichfield, 1946. This Liberator reached SAL Prestwick on January 26th, 1945 and on

March 2nd, 1945 it was delivered to No. 59 Squadron. On May 31st, 1945 it was transferred to No. 224 Squadron where it was assigned AL "H". It was struck of charge on November 11th, 1947. Rebecca set IFF antenna is visible on the nose as well as large serial number KH416 on the lower wing re-introduced after the war.

Pg. 16 - bottom

A group of Liberators awaiting their end, No. 51 MU, Lichfield, 1946. In the right bottom we can see the nose of the Liberator B Mk.III FL993 "LB" from No. 111 (C) OTU which was flown from Bahamas Islands over to the United Kingdom during August 1945, on August 30th, 1945 it was handed over to No. 51 MU and on March 12th, 1945 sold to the International Alloys Ltd. Company for scrap. There is a C-87 to the left of FL993 and behind it probably Liberator GR Mk.V FL962 "LG" from No. 111 (C) OTU. In the front we can see the Liberator GR Mk.VIII KH416 "H o XB" (ex-USAAF B-24J-95-CF s/n 44-44287). Since May 31st, 1945 this plane served with No. 224 Squadron, on November 8th, 1945 it was taken over by No. 51 MU and on November 11th, 1947 it was struck of charge. Note Leigh Light search light on KH416 attached under the wing, pyrotechnics deployment chute on the rear entrance door (next to ENTRANCE BELOW sign), trailing antenna counter balance in front of Tail Bumper (communication set trailing antenna on Liberators GR Mk.VIII was installed behind the bomb bay), absence of the flare chute opening next to the AN/APS-15 radar radome and deflector-mounted frame in front of the side machine gun station preventing the gunner to hit the wing of his own aircraft.

Pg. 17 - top

Another Liberator GR Mk.VIII KK256 "XB o J" (ex-USAAF B-24J-95-CF s/n 44-44327, MC/n 34-88) in No. 224 Squadron colors awaiting its end in the scrap yards, No. 51 MU, Lichfield, 1946. This plane reached Prestwick on January 25th, 1945 and on February 1945 it was received by No. 206 Squadron ("PO o J"). On June 22nd, 1945 it was handed over to No. 224 Squadron where it retained its AL "J". It was struck of charge on November 11th, 1947. On the inner side of the engine No. 4 the Leigh Light search light is well visible as well as Rebecca set IFF receiving antenna on the nose. The propellers featured the narrow chord blades.

Pg. 17 - bottom

Liberator GR Mk.VIII KL522 (ex-USAAF B-24L-1-FO s/n 44-49139,MC/n 45-6), No. 203 Squadron, RAF Leuchars, June 1946. The aircraft was delivered to the United Kingdom in the end of March 1945 however it did not see any combat. In the fall it was dispatched to No. 203 Squadron in India with which it returned to the United Kingdom on May 27th, 1946. Behind the opened bomb bay to the left of ASV Mk.X radar antenna

radome the trailing antenna counter balance is well visible. As opposed to GR Mk.VI version the radio operator workstation was in the space above the rear bomb bay, on the so- called Command Deck.

Worth noticing is the Perspex enclosed side gunner station with the machine gun in K-6 mount, A-3D "High Hat" dorsal gun turret, rectangular window of the navigator/bombardier workstation with AN-148 antenna and the large serial number on the wing lower surface.

Pg. 18 - top

Snow-covered Liberator GR Mk.VIII KK328 "XB o C" (ex-USAAF B-24J-100-CF s/n 44-44409, MC/n 34-116) again in the No. 224 Squadron colors, awaiting its end in the scrap yards, No. 51 MU, Lichfield, 1947. It arrived in SAL Prestwick on February 15th, 1945 and was received by No. 547 Squadron on April 20th, 1945. On June 9th, 1945 it was handed over to No. 224 Squadron where it was assigned AL "C". March 12th, 1947 marks the end of its career as it was sold to the International Alloys Ltd. Company for scrap metal. Several interesting details can be identified in the picture-engine No. 3 was replaced, Leigh Light search light is partially covering the large serial number KK328 on the wing lower surface and the trailing antenna end can be seen in front of the retractable tail skid.

Pg. 18 - bottom

The view of the same Liberator GR Mk.VIII KK328 "XB o C", this time from the rear. The rear gun turret is A-6B. The machine gun blisters were installed in the turret however the machine guns themselves were removed.

Pg. 19 - top

Transport Liberator C Mk.VIII KN743 "FH o Y" (ex-USAAF B-24L-20-FO s/n 44-50202, MC/n 45-62) captured in the picture at the very end of its service life. KN743 was supplied to the United Kingdom as a GR Mk.VIII version unfortunately arrived in Prestwick after the war in Europe ended, on June 25th, 1945. The aircraft was never received by the RAF Coastal Command and after rebuilding to transport version C Mk.VIII at No. 1 TAMU it was accepted by No. 102 Squadron in December 1945. However as early as March 21st, 1946 this Liberator was handed over to No. 53 Squadron which at that time was already under the RAF Transport Command. In this squadron colors the aircraft took part in the last transport flights from the Middle East. During that period, it received a few inscriptions, "LAST OF MANY" on the port side and Nose Art on the starboard was enhanced by the question "WOT-NO MORE LIBS?"

In June 1946 was KN743 handed over to No. 22 MU and struck of charge on June 2nd, 1947.

Pg. 19 - bottom

Liberator GR Mk.VIII KN753 "XB o L" (ex-USAAF B—24L-20-FO s/n 44-50051, MC/n 45-63) belonged to the last Liberators GR Mk.VIII which were delivered to the RAF Coastal Command squadrons and were not modified for the transport purposes. It was delivered to SAL Prestwick after the war in Europe ended, on June 23rd, 1945. After modifications were completed it was accepted by No. 51 MU in October 1945 and on December 17th, 1945 it was allocated to No. 224 Squadron. Almost after a year, on November 8th, 1946, the aircraft was returned to No. 51 MU and in the following year, on November 11th, 1947 it was officially struck of charge. After the end of war in Europe an increase in the flight rules violations was recorded, flying in the low altitudes. As a result, on July 26th, 1945 the Air Ministry issued an order to immediately re-apply serial numbers on the wing undersurfaces of all RAF aircraft except in combat zones. At the end of war, the last Liberators GR Mk.VIII belonged to the most modern anti-submarine aircraft. They were equipped with AN/APS-15A radars which thanks to the short-wave length were able to detect even a Schnorchel. Further they were equipped with LAB device which enabled the "automatic" bombing from the low altitudes when the bombs were released by the device rather than a crew member. Among the standard armament there were acoustic torpedoes Mk.24 Mine and sono-buoys.

Pg. 20 - top

No. 311 Squadron personnel (from the left: Jan Stach, Vaclav Homolka, Frantisek Mezulanik (pilot), Robert Oesterreicher, Karel Axel Reisner, Bohumil Prokopec (pilot), WAAF driver, Rudolf Soudek, Karel Stepan) in front of the squadron's Liberator, RAF Tain, 1945. It was probably Liberator GR Mk.VI EV872. There are several noticeable aircraft details-A-6A front gun turret with asymmetrically mounted machine guns featuring the muzzle Flash Eliminators, B-3 drift meter tube next to bombardier enclosure, AN-148 receiver antennas of the SCR-729 set under the navigator's workstation side windows, pitot tube masts with 2 braces, A-3C dorsal gun turret, camouflage demarcation lines on the engines, narrow propeller blades, de-icing boots on the wing leading edge painted in aluminum lacquer and Passing Light in the wing leading edge between No. 1 and No. 2 engines.

Pg. 20 - bottom

Group of No. 311 Squadron personnel (from the left: Vaclav Homolka, Frantisek Mezulanik, Rudolf Soudek, Karel Stepan, Karel Axel Reiser, WAAF driver, Bohumil

Prokopec, Robert Oesterreicher, Jan Stach) posing for the camera under the tail of the Liberator GR Mk.VI EV872 "PP o Y" (ex-USAAF B-24J-5-CF s/n 42-64229), No. 311 Squadron, Tain, spring/summer 1945. The plane had Boulton Paul Type E rear gun turret installed. Of notice is the long rudder trim. Liberator GR Mk.VI KG867 "PP o N" with A-6B rear gun turret can be seen in the background.

Pg. 21

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV872, F/Lt Jan Hrnčíř DFC, AFM, No. 311 Squadron, Tain, spring 1945

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV872 (ex-USAAF B-24J-5-CF s/n 42-64229), originally served with British No. 206 Squadron (AL "M"), by the order issued on March 2nd, 1945 it was assigned to No. 311 Squadron. The aircraft had Leigh Light search light installed. While with the Czechoslovak squadron it received AL "Y" complemented with SCL "PP". Its typical combat flight ordnance consisted of six DC250 depth charges complemented by two AS600 anti-submarine bombs but just eight AS600s were common as well.

While in service with Czechoslovak squadron this Liberator flew in total 15 sorties, anti-submarine patrols - the first one on March 23rd, 1945 with the crew of F/Lt Jan Hrnčíř DFC, AFM and the last one on June 1st, 1945 with the crew of W/O Robert Procházka.

On March 23rd, 1945 at 18:39 the 10-member crew of F/Lt Jan Hrnčíř DFC, AFM took off for the operational flight. It was a special search mission in the Baltic Sea area.

Approximately 15 minutes after midnight the radar operator on duty F/Sgt Jan Buchta detected the target on his screen in the distance of 6 miles approximately 5 degrees to the starboard. One mile from the first target Leigh Light search light was turned on and in its bright light the dorsal turret gunner Sgt Jozef Vanis spotted the submarine.

She sailed on the surface in the heading of 160 degrees leaving a wake behind her. Hrnčíř turned the Liberator to the left and in a long shallow bank was approaching her in the straight direction. The submarine was spotted again at 00:20 at the coordinates 55 degrees 12' North latitude and 15 degrees 18' East longitude barely 1 kilometer in front of the aircraft. They attacked in the shallow dive towards the submarine's starboard and dropped 6 depth charges in a row from the 90 meters altitude. Four of them hit the surface in the front of the starboard side and two of them in the front the submarine's bow. The Liberator flew another circle but to the disappointment of all airmen on board it was impossible to observe any signs of hit due to the poor visibility above the area of attack. At 00:35 hours the aircraft left the area and landed at the base having flown for 11 hours and 57 minutes. The Royal Navy Command officially evaluated Hrnčíř's crew attack as a "F" degree-submarine detected however there is a lack of proof of her damage. The RAF Coastal Command therefore awarded the attack with 3 points. Even though the squadron sorties were officially suspended on Jun 3rd, 1945, F/Sgt Bohumil Prokopec's crew executed the special flight of the operational nature "QGH-Photo" with

'PP o Y' on June 4th, 1945. Prokopec crew flight was in the duration of 2 hours and 5 minutes. The mission was to search for and photograph the surrendering German submarines and escort them to some of the British ports if necessary.

During June and July 1945 "PP o Y" aircraft was used for training flights. On July 2nd, 1945 at 17:10 F/O Josef Hubicka and navigator F/O Bohumir Krezek flew this aircraft, which had its No. 2 engine replaced, from Leuchars to Tain. On July 4th, 1945, during the training flight (pilots P/O Miroslav Sigut and F/Sgt Jan Cekal), the emergency occurred. While the second pilot F/Sgt Cekal was at the controls the left inward engine (engine No. 2) caught fire because of the fuel leaking from the carburetor. With the damaged aircraft the pilot performed the successful emergency landing with three remaining engines running at the home base at 11:10. The investigation that followed resulted in the finding that the cause of the accident was a loose ventilation duct on the carburetor fuel meter since it had not been secured. The omission occurred during the engine replacement performed by No. 4311 Servicing Echelon in Leuchars. No. 56 MU specialists determined the damage in the category B. On July 20th, 1945 the aircraft was accepted for repairs at Scottish Aviation Ltd. and the damage was re-evaluated to the category AC.

The repairs were completed on November 13th, 1945 and the aircraft was consequently returned to the No. 311 Squadron inventory. It did not participate in the squadron's transportation duties. On September 2nd, 1946 the Liberator was taken over by No. 51 MU and on January 25th, 1947 it was struck of charge.

Pg. 22

The series of photographs documenting the No. 2 engine removal performed by No. 4311 Servicing Echelon members on the Liberator GR Mk.VI EV872 "PP o Y" (ex-USAAF B-24J-5-CF s/n 42-64229) belonging to No. 311 Squadron, Leuchars, end of June 1945. The airplane still carries the British cockades and a small Czechoslovak cockade can be found under the pilot cockpit. The dorsal turret is the A-3C type.

Pg. 23

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV872 (ex-USAAF B-24J-5-CF s/n 42-64229), probably during the fall of 1945. On July 4th, 1945 during the training flight the engine No. 2 caught fire due to the leaking fuel. The cause was an improper installation after the engine replacement at No. 4311 Servicing Echelon in Leuchars in the end of July 1945. The damage degree was determined to be the category AC however the repairs were officially completed as late as November 13th, 1945. The aircraft is likely pictured already after the No. 2 engine repair as documented by replaced engine covers. The small Czechoslovak cockade under the pilot cockpit was retained and it is a reminder of the aircraft service with No.

311 Squadron however SCL and AL were overpainted. The plane had A-6A front gun turret, A-3C dorsal gun turret and Boulton Paul Type E gun turret installed, in the picture all turrets had the machine guns removed. Several details are noticeable-IFF antenna of the SCR-729 device on the aircraft nose, front wheel hub with nine spokes and propellers with narrow chord blades.

Pg. 24 - F/Lt Jan Hrnecir DFC AFM

December 14th, 1910/April 21st, 1967

The native of Znojmo in Southern Moravia studied for electro mechanic at the local electric power station and consequently enrolled into the Academy of Air Youth. He underwent his pilot training at Prostějov airport and after graduation in July 1931 (as the first in the class of 43 cadets) he joined the No. 2 Air Regiment in Olomouc as a conscript. Here he flew Letov S-328 with the No. 5 Reconnaissance Flight until November 1st, 1934 when he was posted to the No. 71 Light Bomber Flight, part of the No. 6 Air Regiment at the Praha-Kbely airport. In 1935 he completed the instrument flying course. After his conscription period was completed he decided to pursue the army career and after the sergeant course completion on April 2nd, 1938 he returned to the No. 71 Flight where he was caught by the German occupation.

On June 2nd, 1939 he decided to join the resistance abroad and passing through Poland he reached France. There he enlisted into the Foreign Legion and left for North Africa. When the war started he was transferred to the Air Force and for several months served at the African airports. Only on November 28th he started with training on the French bomber aircraft at Toulouse base. On June 10th, 1940 he was relocated to the Groupe de Bombardement I/23, but he did not manage to see any combat. On June 19th, 1940 he left France and arrived in the English port of Falmouth three days later. As early as July 29th, 1940 he enlisted into the RAF VR and with the rank of Sergeant he became one of the core personnel forming No. 311 Squadron. On September 10th, 1940 as a second pilot to S/Ldr Josef Schejbal flying Wellington Mk.IA L7778 "KX o U" he took part in the first raid on the marshalling yard in Brussels, Belgium. Until the end of 1940 he took part in nine bombing raids lasting 51 operational hours, out of which last two in the capacity of a crew captain. His extraordinary achievement however occurred outside of the combat flying. On November 15th under extremely severe weather conditions he located the No. 115 Squadron crew shot down in the North Sea which was consequently rescued.

The New Year 1941 brought significant change in his career –he was relieved of combat flying and established as a squadron instructor. On March 5th he was promoted to the first officer's rank of Pilot Officer. During the night of April 8th-9th, 1941 he was performing a routine night training flight with the pilot under training Sgt Jaroslav Nyc when their Wellington Mk.IA P9230 "KX o X" came under attack by the German night fighter. Sgt Nyc who was at the controls managed to single-handedly belly-land the

Wellington in the field at West Tofts, Norfolk, since P/O Hrcir suffered the wound in the back of his head and was unconscious. The operation saved his life however he had to remain in the hospital until the beginning of 1942. The following month, on March 5th, he was first promoted to Flying Officer and then on March 12th awarded the Air Force Medal (AFM) namely for his achievements as an instructor. In May of the same year he became the flight simulator instructor in the Czechoslovak Depot in St. Athan.

After several months he requested to be re-instated into the combat flying status again. Therefore, on February 15th, 1943 he was assigned to No. 6 (C) OTU and in May set sail for Bahamas Islands where between June 21st and September 18th, 1943 he completed the operational training at No. 111 (C) OTU as a crew captain. He reported to No. 311 Squadron before the end of October as a Flight Lieutenant already and on January 29th, 1944 he started to fly combat missions. Initially one flight as a second pilot and then since January 11th as a Liberator captain. During the operation *Chilli-II* (March 23th-24th, 1945) with the Liberator GR Mk.VI EV872 "PP o Y" he attacked a submarine but due to the dense fog the crew failed to determine the results. During the operation *Chilli-III* (March 26th-27th, 1945) Liberator GR Mk.VI EV994 "PP o G" radar operator received several contacts which turned out to be fishing boats. Finally, the Liberator encountered the pair of the speed boats and attacked one of them. The depth charges row was too long to be able to hit the target. On April 13th, 1945 for his long-lasting successful operational service Hrcir was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). Thus, he became the only Czechoslovak airman serving in the RAF who was awarded with the combination of these AFM and DFC British awards. Already after war, on May 10th, his crew patrolling with Liberator GR Mk.VI KG859 "PP o U" south of Iceland located the submarine U 532 which had surrendered and escorted her to Scotland. He performed the last patrol on May 24th, 1945 and during his second tour of duty logged 56 anti-submarine patrols lasting 658 operational hours.

After the war he was one of the captains who participated in the repatriation flights between the United Kingdom and liberated homeland. His first transport flight took place on August 12th, 1945 flying Liberator GR Mk.VI EW295 "PP o E" and his last shuttle flight took place on December 7th, 1945 with EV883 "PP o C". Since January 15th, 1946 then with the rank of Captain he flew with Air Transport Group from Prague-Ruzyně airport. In June 1946 he submitted his request for transfer to reserve and became a CSA captain. He could not avoid the political oppression in the end of 1950 and had to make the ends as a driver, worker and tram conductor. In the first half of 60s he was partially rehabilitated however soon afterwards at the age of mere 56 years he passed away. In the wake of political and moral rehabilitations in 1991 he was posthumously promoted to the rank of Colonel.

Pg. 25 - top

F/Lt Jan Hrnecir AFM in the copilot window of one of the No. 311 Liberators GR Mk.V with the external rocket launchers.

Pg. 25 - bottom

Picture of Czechoslovak Air Force Captain Jan Hrnecir DFC, AFM taken after the war.

Pg. 26

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV985, F/O Rudolf Haering DFM, No. 311 Squadron, Tain, spring 1945

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV985 (ex-USAAF B-24J-15-CF s/n 42-99737) originally serving with the British No. 206 Squadron (AL "P") was flown over to No. 311 Squadron at RAF Station Tain on March 4th, 1945. The aircraft was fully armed and equipped and had Leigh Light search light installed. At the Czechoslovak unit it received AL "Z". On sorties it typically flew armed with six depth charges DC250 plus two anti-submarine bombs AS600 but also with ten or twelve DC250. Serving with Czechoslovak unit it performed in total 13 anti-submarine patrols out of which three were with W/O Gustav Netrefa crew and another three with F/O Rudolf Haering DFM crew. During the first sortie with the squadron, on March 26th, 1945 (operation Chilli-III) the Liberator GR Mk.VI EV985 "Z" was manned by W/O Netrefa crew. During the flight in the heading of 191 degrees at the altitude of hundred and twenty meters above the sea level, with the coordinates 55 degrees 39' North latitude and 15 degrees 11' East longitude, at 23:23 the radar operator on duty F/Sgt Josef Rudinger located the target on his screen. The target was 13 kilometers away and positioned approximately 60 degrees to the left of the flight course. Three minutes later, around 1 kilometer from the target, Leigh Light search light was turned on. In the position of 55 degrees 32' North latitude and 15 degrees 21' East longitude the airmen spotted in front of them approximately half a kilometer to the left completely surfaced German submarine sailing in the heading course of 320 degrees. Due to the short distance the Liberator was no longer suitably positioned to launch an attack. Therefore W/O Netrefa had to execute a large circle first which drew the submarine's attention and she immediately started to fire her AA guns. At 23:28 the Liberator attacked. It approached the ship's port side at the sharp angle and from the altitude of mere 75 meters dropped six depth charges. They hit the water in the row at an angle to the submarine course and exploded in short distance from her port and starboard.

During the raid the front gunner F/Sgt Stanislav Divina was shooting at the vessel's conning tower. The result of the attack was not determined and at 23:31 the aircraft left the area to carry on with the patrol mission. According to the Intelligence Officer's sketch, made according to the individual crew members' testimony having returned from the sortie, it is obvious that it was highly probably Type XXIII submarine.

Royal Navy Command officially evaluated Netrefa's crew attack as an "F" degree-submarine detected but there is a lack of proof of her damage. RAF Coastal Command then awarded the crew's the attack with 3 points.

During June and July 1945, the aircraft was used for training flights. In the second half of July it was flown over to Leuchars where the Czechoslovak mechanics performed the interim modifications of the aircraft interior for transportation purposes. On July 30th, 1945 this plane was used for No. 311 Squadron transfer from Tain to RAF Station Manston. From August to December 1945 the unit participated in at least thirteen transport flights to Prague (from the bases Manston, Pershore and Blackbushe) carrying military personnel, cargo and Czechoslovak repatriates. On December 14th, 1945 F/Lt Jan Hrnčíř DFC, AFM flew this aircraft over to the United Kingdom to RAF Station Valley. On October 3rd, 1946 it was stuck of charge.

Pg. 27 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV985 "PP o Z" (ex-USAAF B-24J-15-CF s/n 42-999737), No. 311 Squadron, probably RAF Tain, spring/summer 1945. The plane had MPC A-6B front gun turret and A-3C dorsal turret installed, drift meter B-3 periscope is visible on the nose chin. There are two machine gun barrels above each other well visible behind Leigh Light search light which points to the Boulton Paul Type E rear turret installation.

Pg. 27 - bottom

The row of No. 311 Squadron Liberators GR Mk.VI, spring/beginning of summer 1945. First in the row is Liberator GR Mk.VI EV985 "PP o Z", the second is one of three squadron Liberators equipped with A-15 nose gun turret, the third one is Liberator GR Mk.VI KG861 "PP o L". All ships still carry the British cockades and have machine guns mounted.

Pg. 30 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV985 "PP o Z" already sporting the Czechoslovak national markings and removed machine guns armament, probably at RAF Manston, summer 1945. There is an SBA set Type 1 antenna on the aircraft belly behind the front wheel. There was a small Czechoslovak cockade under the pilot cockpit and the name "Zebra".

Pg. 30 - bottom

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV985 "PP o Z" is taxiing in front of Prague-Ruzyne main terminal, shortly before the airmen ceremony on August 15th, 1945. There are the Allies aircraft in the background, from the left: American Douglas C-47 (W6 or V) of the 97th Troop Carrier Squadron USAAF, Soviet Lisunov Li-2 "5" and British Vickers Wellington modified for transport duties.

Pg. 28 – 29 - F/O Rudolf Haering DFM

February 9th, 1915/March 14th, 1976

He was born in Kutna Hora where is also trained as a car mechanic. Since childhood he was attracted to flying so he became a glider pilot. In November 1933 he was conscripted to No. 2 Air Regiment based in Olomouc and he underwent his specialist's training at Air Radio Operators' School in Caslav. After his conscription duty he served as an instructor at Military Air Force Academy in Prostejov as a career warrant officer. Since 1936 then he served with No. 73 Flight of the No. 6 Air Regiment in Hradec Kralove.

His journey to join the resistance abroad started on June 17th, 1939 crossing the border to Poland from where he arrived in France by boat on the last day of July. Since August 18th he served with the Foreign Legion in African Algeria. After the outbreak of war, he was able to enlist into the airmen training, first at the Algerian airport Blida, later in France at Saint Jean d'Angely and Toulouse bases. On May 3rd, 1940 he was assigned to Groupe de Bombardement I/23 and as one of very few Czechoslovak radio operators in the French Air Force saw combat participating in 5 air raids.

After the evacuation from defeated France on July 12th, 1940 he landed in English Liverpool and since August as a Sergeant was part of the newly-formed No. 311 Squadron cadre. Having completed the training on Wellingtons on December 27th, 1940 he took off, as a Sgt Jan Hrnecir crew member, to bomb the German submarine base located in the French port of Lorient. In the New Year 1941 he ended up in F/O Jindrich Brejcha crew whose leadership was taken over by Sgt Josef Bernat on April 28th. Until July 16th, 1941 he served the rest of his operational tour (38 raids lasting 181 hours) with this crew, already as a Flight Sergeant.

He might not have lived till the end of his combat deployment because during the night 5th - 6th of July he had his encounter with Death. Wellington Mk.IC R1532 "KX o R" returning from the bombing raid on Munster was attacked by the German night fighter whose incendiary bullets set the fuselage fabric skin on fire. He started to battle the flames and with the help of other crew members was able to put the fire out.

The radio station was hit as well but he was able to make it work again. Recommendation for his immediate decoration with British Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM) was dispatched by the squadron Commanding Officer on July 8th. The Commanding Officer of the superior RAF Station Honington recommended it with the following comment:

A splendid example of courage and determination in the face of great and immediate danger. This NCO shown total disregard for his own safety in at once fighting the fire, although he and the rest of the crew could have escaped by parachute.

On September 15th, 1941 the British King George VI approved the decoration.

During that period, he was already undergoing the pilot training, he completed the elementary phase in England and the advanced one already in Canada. Having returned to the British Isles on September 14th, 1942 he was assigned to No. 311 Squadron based in Talbenny in south Wales. As early as September 21st, 1942 he started to fly the anti-submarine patrols as a second pilot in Sgt Josef Sotola's crew. In the middle of November, he ended up in the crew of Lidice native F/Lt Josef Horak. Between December 1942 and March 1943, he underwent the combat training at No. 6 (C) OTU at RAF Station Thornaby-on-Tees as a crew captain. Starting March 17th, 1943, already as a Warrant Officer, he continued flying the sorties still as a second pilot. Only on the last two combat flights in Wellingtons on April 20th and 25th he was given command of his own crew.

In June 1943 he started his training on Liberators at No. 1 (C) OTU at Beaulieu airport which he completed in the end of August. Instead of joining the patrol flying he set sail for overseas again. This time his destination was No. 111 (C) OTU in Bahamas Islands where on September 4th already with officer's rank of Pilot Officer he began his operational training. He completed it on Christmas Day 1943 and on February 10th, 1944 reported back at No. 311 Squadron. During his first patrol against the enemy submarines on March 26th, 1944 his crew was led by F/Lt Alois Sedivy DFM, he took the captain's seat as of April 5th. On May 26th, 1945 he landed his plane after the last sortie. During his second tour of duty, divided into 3 stages, he logged 65 anti-submarine patrols (out of which 26 on Wellingtons) lasting almost 673 combat flying hours.

After the end of hostilities, he participated in the repatriation flights to the homeland, first time on July 30th at the controls of Liberator GR Mk.VI KG862 "PP o T" and last time on December 21st with Liberator GR Mk.VI EV943 "PP o F".

Back home he continued the service with the Air Force, in 1946 he was promoted twice up to the rank of the Staff Captain. In the meantime, between May 10th and July 13th he underwent the course qualifying him to fly De Havilland Mosquito at No. 13 OTU based at Middleton St. George in the United Kingdom. Since August 22nd he served with No. 24 Air Regiment based at Plzen-Bory airport. His record shows one unique mission when on March 14th and 15th, 1947 he bombed the ice blockage on the Danube river near Bratislava flying a Siebel Si-204D (C-3). None of his achievements stopped the

Communist regime from forcing him into the retirement on November 1st, 1949. In November 1951 he was arrested and based on the allegations of criticizing the current political regime he was sentenced to 3 years in jail, later the sentence was reduced to eighteen months. He spent most of his jail time in Jachymov mines until 1953 when he was set free thanks to the amnesty. After that he worked on the Lipno dam construction, later as a locksmith in Volyne and at Technical Services in Strakonice. He passed away in Volyne at the age of mere sixty-one years. During the period of the political and moral rehabilitations during 1991 he was posthumously promoted to the rank of Colonel.

Pg. 28 - bottom

Part of Haering's crew in front of the nose of Liberator GR Mk.VI in the spring of 1945.

From the left: Sgt J. Simecek (second pilot), F/O V. Horejsi (navigator), F/Sgt A. Jarmara, F/Sgt J. Brazdil (radio operators/gunners), F/O R. Haering (captain), F/Sgt V. Halata (flight engineer).

Pg. 31 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV883 "PP o C" (ex-USAAF B-24J-10-CF s/n 42-64290, MC/n 29-60), No. 311 Squadron, RAF Tain, spring 1945. The aircraft had the A-6A nose gun turret, A-3C dorsal and Boulton Paul Type E rear gun turrets installed, the gun muzzles featured Flash Eliminators. Note the fire extinguisher cover sporting FIRE EXTINGUISHER sign, paddle propeller blades, camouflage colors demarcation lines on the engine cowlings, dark shade of the gray paint used for AL and SCL application and the serial number location relative to SCL.

Pg. 31 - bottom

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV883 "PP o C", No. 311 Squadron, Prague-Ruzyne, fall/winter 1945. The aircraft no longer carries the machine gun armament. The small Czechoslovak cockade and the name "Cecilka" were painted under the pilot cockpit canopy. There was a GEE device whip antenna on the top of the fuselage behind the astrodome and the SBA device Type 1 antenna dipole behind the front wheel. The Czechoslovak cockade is visible on the wing undersurface. Camouflage colors demarcation lines on the engine cowlings were horizontal running approximately in the middle of the cowling and the upper surfaces color extended to the front cowling cover (as opposed to the earlier practice when the cowling front was entirely white).

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV883, F/Lt Rudolf Protiva, No. 311 Squadron, Tain, spring 1945

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV883 (ex-USAAF B-24J-10-CF s/n 42-64290) served initially with No. 547 Squadron followed by No. 53 Squadron (AL "J"). It was flown over to No. 311 Squadron from Ballykelly on February 27th, 1945. At Czechoslovak squadron it was assigned AL "C". The aircraft was equipped with Leigh Light search light mounted under the right wing. It flew in total 14 sorties with Czechoslovak unit-the first one on March 12th, 1945 with W/O Josef Tichy crew and the last one on May 27th, 1945 with W/O Jan Matejka crew.

On April 23rd, 1945 at 19:40 10 members' crew of F/Lt Protiva took off for a sortie loaded with eight AS600 bombs. Their mission was a special patrol in the Kattegat area. Shortly before midnight north of the island of Anholt, Protiva's crew spotted the large solitary ship with the estimated displacement approximately 5000 BRT. During the attack four 600lbs bombs were dropped and according to the crew account one must have hit the ship. However, the enemy machine gun fire hit the engine No. 3. The hydraulic system was damaged as well, and the nose gun turret could not be moved. On the return flight the aircraft was hit by the fire from enemy ships again but luckily none of the crew members was injured. After almost 10 and half hour's flight and only 3 engines working the crew managed to reach the Scottish coast on April 24th, 1945 and at 06:05 land at the Leuchars airport. Afterwards the mechanics found around 30 different bullet holes in the fuselage.

The oil was leaking from many spots, the engine No. 3 had the covers torn to pieces and damaged cylinders and the photo camera was destroyed. The crew was not credited with the ship damage although some airmen were decorated with Czechoslovak War Cross 1939 or Czechoslovak Medal for Bravery before Enemy.

The aircraft was under repair for about three weeks at Leuchars. On May 17th, 1945 F/Sgt Bohumil Prokopec's crew performed with it one of the training flights and it flew two more sorties.

On 18th of July 1945 P/O Jindrich Benes DFC flew the aircraft from Tain to nearby RAF Station Leuchars again where its interior was modified to the transport configuration. Between August and beginning of December the aircraft performed 15 transport flights to Prague carrying military personnel, cargo and Czechoslovak repatriates. On December 17th, 1945 the plane was flown over to the United Kingdom RAF Station Valley. It was struck of charge on January 23rd, 1947.

Pg. 32 - detail

The close snap shot of the small Czechoslovak cockade and name "Cecilka" under the pilot cockpit canopy of EV883. The fire extinguished cover carries FIRE only.

Pg. 33 - bottom

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV883 "PP o C" taxiing from the apron, Prague-Ruzyne airport, fall/winter 1945. Note the A-6A nose gun turret, Boulton Paul rear gun turret (lacking machine guns), overpainted British cockade on the fuselage side and the camouflage colors demarcation line on the engine cowlings.

Pg. 34 – 35 - F/Lt Rudolf Protiva

March 6th, 1908/January 17th, 1949

Native of Jenecek-Hostivice near Kladno graduated from the Business Academy in Prague. After conscription during 1928-1929 he completed the School for the Infantry Officers in Reserve in Kosice and afterwards he served with No. 41 Infantry Regiment in Zilina. In March 29th, 1930 he left for reserve as Sergeant.

In the civil life he worked as the loan insurance clerk and later as a car salesman in Kladno. In between he managed to work for Jawa as a test driver and he also participated in the international motorcycle races. During 1935-1938 he completed six semesters at Business College in Prague, became the member of College Sport Aeroclub and in 1936 passed the state exam for a tourist airplane pilot. In 1938 he also completed the courier course in Prague-Letnany and later instrument flying course at Central Pilot School in Prague.

After the occupation of Czechoslovakia, on June 14th, 1939, he left for Poland as an Infantry Lieutenant in Reserve. He decided to stay in Poland which resulted in his capture by Red Army on September 17th, 1939 and consequent internment in the Soviet Union. As late as February 21st, 1941 he could set sail for Palestine, in April he continued the journey to the United Kingdom and on July 16th he reported to the Czechoslovak Depot in Wilmslow. On July 29th he was enlisted in the RAF at the lowest officer's rank of Pilot Officer. On April 22nd, 1942 he underwent the pilot exam at No. 3 ETFS in Shellingford. Afterwards he set sail for Canada where he underwent the elementary and advanced pilot training. During this period on July 29th he was promoted to Flying Officer. On June 8th, 1943 he started his operational training as a crew captain at No. 6 (C) OTU. On July 26th he reported to No. 311 Squadron and three days later he was promoted to Flight Lieutenant.

He received his baptism of fire above the Bay of Biscay on August 26th, 1943 as a member of F/Sgt Oldrich Dolezal's crew. Until the mid-October he managed to fly only 6

sorties as a second pilot and after that he was going to set sail overseas again. On November 3rd he reported to No. 111 (C) OTU on Bahamas Islands for the operational training. On April 8th, 1944 his crew returned to No. 311 Squadron. He took off for his first sortie on June 6th, 1944, Day of the Allied invasion to France. Liberator GR Mk.VI BZ751 "Z" was under command of experienced captain F/O Vaclav Jilek, afterwards, effective June 10th, F/Lt Protiva held the captain's post until the end of war.

During the operation *Chilli-III* (26-27th of March, 1945) with Liberator GR Mk.VI KG861 "PP o L" he attacked one of the radar contacts which seemed to be a surfaced submarine. It finally turned out to be a ship on anchor. On April 16th, 1945 during the patrol radar operator of the Liberator GR Mk.VI EV994 "PP o G" detected the target the crew thought to be a submerging submarine. Before the aircraft reached the spot, it could only observe the whirlpool on the surface. During the patrol sortie on May 10th, 1945 in the Liberator GR Mk.VI KG898 "PP o W" Protiva's crew spotted and photographed the German submarine U 802 sailing on the surface with a black flag hoisted to indicate her surrender. He finished his tour of duty on May 14th and logged 54 anti-submarine patrols lasting almost 572 hours. Between August 1st (Liberator GR Mk.VI EV985 "PP o Z") and December 14th, 1945 (Liberator GR Mk.VI EW295 "PP o E") he took part in the repatriation flights between the United Kingdom and Czechoslovakia. He returned to homeland with the rank of Staff Captain but as early as March 1946 he retired from the military service. He decided to pursue the airline pilot career. The same month he joined the Dutch airlines KLM where he was flying until March 1947. Since June of the same year he worked as a captain with another Dutch airline, Aero Holland. The charter flight from Netherlands to Denmark on January 17th, 1949 sealed his fate when he crashed the Cessna airplane on the east coast of the Danish island of Falster. By the order of Secretary of Defense dated May 29th, 1991 he was posthumously promoted to the rank of Colonel in Reserve.

Pg. 34 - bottom

F/Lt Rudolf Protiva in the second pilot seat in the Liberator cockpit.

Pg. 35 - bottom

F/Lt Rudolf Protiva Log Book page showing the re-training for transport duties in July followed by first repatriation flights to Prague in August 1945.

May 2nd, 1924

Son of a Prague's attorney he was lucky enough that thanks to his parents' foresight on June 28th, 1939 he fled the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia in one of the Jewish children's transports organized by Sir Nicholas Winton. Having reached the age of 18 years he volunteered for Czechoslovak Army in the United Kingdom and on September 3rd, 1942 he started his journey to the aviation career at the Depot and Training Establishment where he was assigned to Infantry Training Company. As early as October 5th he reported at Czechoslovak Depot at St. Athan where he was enlisted into RAF VR. He was selected for a radio operator/gunner specialization and started his training on February 7th, 1943 at No. 1 Signals Schools in Cranwell. This was followed by gunnery training at No. 8 Air Gunnery School in Scottish Evanton and he was promoted to Sergeant.

His operational training with F/Lt Protiva's crew took place at No. 111 (C) OTU on Bahamas Islands between December 1943 and March 1944. He received his baptism of fire at No. 311 Squadron in Liberator GR Mk.V BZ751 "Z" on June 6th, 1944. Then he continued with his tour of duty as a regular member of F/Lt Protiva's crew, on September 17th he was promoted to Flight Sergeant and between the end of 1944 and beginning of 1945 he was transferred to F/O Leo Linhart's crew with which he completed three sorties. In the spring of the last war year he flew the anti-submarine patrols with three more captains: F/Lt Vladimir Slansky, F/O Vratislav Zezulka and F/O Josef Hubicka. He flew most missions with the last captain including his very last operation flight on May 21st, 1945. He logged 39 anti-submarine patrols lasting almost 430 hours. On August 12th he returned to the homeland and on September 20th retired from the military service. In 1947 he emigrated to the United Kingdom where he became co-founder of the company importing the components to manufacture bijouterie. In 1960 he moved to Israel where he worked in the real estate. After eight years he returned to the United Kingdom where he continued working in this industry. Since 1990 he lives in Prague and in the same year thanks to the political and moral rehabilitations he was given the rank of the Lieutenant Colonel in Reserve.

Out of the Liberators GR Mk.VI you can build out of this plastic model kit F/Sgt Kafka flew the combat missions in the following aircraft in 1945:

EV872 "PP o Y": 8th, 17th, 23rd and 27th of April

EV883 "PP o C": 20th of April

EV953 "PP o K": 12th of April, 12th of May

EV985 "PP o Z": 3rd of May

Pg. 36 - bottom

Two radio operators/gunners from the F/Lt Rudolf Protiva crew in front of one of the Liberators GR Mk.V, from the left Sgt Jiri Kafka and Sgt Jaroslav Kolacek.

Pg. 37 - photo

Photo: Lt.Col. Jiri Kafka visiting Eduard Model Accessories at the time of the "Riders in the Sky 1944" book completion. (January 17th, 2018)

Pg. 38

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG870, F/Lt Vladimir Slansky, No. 311 Squadron, Tain, spring 1945

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG870 (ex-USAAF B-24J-45-CF s/n 44-10375), since October 29th, 1944 served with No. 547 Squadron operating from the RAF Station Leuchars. By the order issued on March 1st, 1945 it was assigned to No. 311 Squadron. At the Czechoslovak squadron it received the AL "H". The aircraft had the Leigh Light search light installed. It typically carried six DC250 depth charges plus two DC600 (code name for an acoustic torpedo) in the bomb bay but eight, ten or twelve DC250s as well. The exception was the sortie which took place on April 26th, 1945 when the aircraft was armed with eight AS600 anti-submarine bombs.

It completed 17 missions with the squadron, the first one on March 23rd, 1945 with F/O Jaroslav Polivka's crew and the last one on May 22nd, 1945 with F/Lt Vladimir Slansky's crew. Even though the squadron's operational flights were officially suspended on June 3rd, 1945, F/Sgt Bohumil Prokopec's crew in "PP o H" as late as June 5th, 1945 together with another squadron's airplane performed the special mission of the operational nature, "QGH-Photo". Prokopec crew flight took two hours and fifteen minutes. The mission was to search for and photograph the surrendering German submarines and alternatively escort them to British ports. They took off at 10:26. Near Orkney Islands the airmen spotted the submarine sailing under the British flag.

They made the radio contact with her and demanded the black flag to be hoisted as a sign of surrender. It was U 2334 (Type XXIII, Oblt.z.S. Walter Angermann) which had surrendered in Norwegian Kristiansand on May 9th, 1945 and on May 29th set sail from there for the United Kingdom. The submarine supervision was taken over by a British destroyer which guided her to a port on the Scottish coast.

On July 18th, 1945 the plane was flown from Tain over to the nearby RAF Station Leuchars, where it underwent the interim interior modification to the transport configuration. Between August and December 1945, the aircraft performed 14 transport flights to Prague carrying military personnel, cargo and Czechoslovak repatriates. On

December 11th, 1945 F/O Riha crew flew it over to the United Kingdom RAF Station Valley. It was struck of charge on January 23rd, 1947.

Pg. 38 - photo

No.311 Squadron Liberator GR Mk.VI KG870 "PP o H", spring/summer 1945. Note the spoiler on the rear entry door, streamlined cover of the main tanks venting system exhaust on the wing upper surfaces (behind No.3 engine) and Flash Eliminators installed on the muzzles of all machine guns. Leigh Light search light was already removed.

Pg. 39 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG870 "PP o H" (ex-USAAF B-24J-45-CF s/n 44-10375), No. 311 Squadron, RAF Tain, spring 1945. The aircraft arrived in Prestwick on June 19th, 1944 and after the modifications on October 29th, 1944 it was taken over by No. 547 Squadron. By the order issued on March 1st, 1944 it was handed over to No. 311 Squadron. Liberator KG870 featured Emerson A-15 nose gun turret and Martin A-3C dorsal gun turret. There is a "Lorenz" device Type 1 antenna visible on the fuselage belly, flare chute opening behind the radome and the position light in the wing tip. Under the fire extinguisher cover we can see the number assigned by Modification Center. AL "H" and SCL "PP" are spray-painted on the bright white surfaces covering the prior markings the plane carried while serving with No. 547 Squadron.

Pg. 39 - bottom

A picture of the Liberator GR Mk.VI KG870 "PP o H" sporting Czechoslovak national markings was taken in the United Kingdom probably between period October 5th, 1945 and November 27th, 1945 as it was a part of the report investigating the Liberator KG867 accident (the accident took place on October 5th, 1945 and the report was completed on November 27th, 1945).

Liberator KG870 features Emerson A-15 nose gun turret, Martin A-3C dorsal turret and MPC A-6B rear gun turret lacking the machine gun breech covers. The machine guns were removed from the turrets. A lot of details can be seen in the photograph, there is a GEE set antenna located between the windscreen and astrodome, "Lorenz" set Type 1 antenna on the fuselage belly behind the front wheel, narrow chord propeller blades, Leigh Light search light attachment points next to the engine No. 4 and Static Discharge Units on the wing tip. Drift meter B-3 was located, unlike on the planes from previous blocks, next to the navigator's workstation (periscope tube is protruding through the

fuselage skin close to the front wheel well). Note the long trim tab on the rudder and the reflection of aluminum painted de-icing boots visible on the top of vertical tail surfaces.

Pg. 40 – 41 - F/Lt Vladimir Slansky

July 30th, 1913/August 24th, 1993

Mlada Boleslav native he was trained as tool maker in Automotive Industry Co. Ltd. (today's SKODA AUTO a.s.). In 1934 he also graduated from the foremen's school. The same year he reported as a conscript to No. 4 Air Regiment in Hradec Kralove. Gradually he passed the course at School of Communication, air gunnery course and the training at the direction finder station. On June 18th, 1939 he illegally crossed the border to Poland from where he set sail for France on June 29th and arriving there he enlisted in the Foreign Legion on August 17th. Since November 19th he served at the Algerian airport Blida, since December he was undergoing the training in Tours and as of June 14th in Bordeaux but five days later he left France.

On July 12th he was enlisted in RAF VR in Gloucester in the rank of Aircraftman 2nd Class and in the beginning of August already as a Sergeant he was at the birth of No. 311 Squadron. He took part in the very first squadron's bombing raid on September 10th, 1940 as a radio operator in Sgt Vaclav Korda's crew. He continued flying with this crew to complete the majority of his 44 missions (214 hours and 14 minutes) during his first tour of duty completed on August 5th, 1941. In the No. 311 Squadron statistics recorded during its service with RAF Bomber Command he ranks second in terms of the total operational hours logged. In the meantime, as of June 21st he was promoted to Pilot Officer's rank. The whole squadron staff called him only by his nickname "Sergeant Broom" because as per his captain's account he had acquired his own broom and used it to sweep the aircraft interiors.

In the fall of 1941 he was selected for the service with No. 138 Squadron, the unit mandated with the Special Duties, as a radio operator in the P/O Jaroslav Bala's crew. Between September 12th and October 7th, the crew underwent the training for Armstrong Whitworth Whitley aircraft at No. 19 OTU at Kinloss airport.

In October the crew also completed the course of paratroopers' deployment at Ringway airport. Official number of P/O Slansky's sorties is unknown, he himself claimed three of them. Bala's crew service at the unit did not last long due to the captain's complaints about Whitley aircraft. As early as January 20th, 1942 P/O Slansky was transferred to the Czechoslovak Depot at Wilmslow base. Afterwards until the beginning of June he served as an instructor at No. 1429 COTF. Here in the end of May and beginning of June he took part in two of so-called "thousand raids" of the RAF Bomber Command targeting Cologne and Essen. This wrapped up his radio operator's career.

He started his pilot training on August 18th, 1942 already as a Flying Officer at No. 3 EFTS in the English Watchfield and since November 7th continued in the Canadian pilot

schools. Having qualified as a pilot on June 19th, 1943 he left for No. 111 (C) OTU on Bahamas Islands. He underwent the operational training between August 9th and November 14th as a second pilot in the F/O Alois Sedivy DFM crew. He flew the first sortie of his second tour of duty on January 14th, 1944 with No. 311 Squadron with the rank of Flight Lieutenant as a second pilot in the F/Sgt Otakar Zanta's crew in the Liberator GR Mk.V BZ763 "O". He managed to take part in the four anti-submarine patrols only when in March he was sent across the Atlantic again. Between May 1st and July 24th, he underwent the operational training at No. 111 (C) OTU again, this time as a captain of his own crew. Since November 4th he flew from the captain's seat in the No. 311 Squadron Liberators and on June 1st, 1945 he completed his wartime flying with the 11 and half hours long flight in the Liberator GR Mk.VI EV872 "PP o Y". During his second tour of duty he logged 35 anti-submarine patrols lasting 371 operational hours. Between July 31st and November 29th, 1945 he participated in the air shuttle between England and Prague at the controls of the following aircraft: EV943 "PP o F", EV953 "PP o K", EW295 "PP o E", KG856 "PP o R", KG859 "PP o U", KG861 "PP o L", KG862 "PP o T", KG870 "PP o H", KG898 "PP o W", KG917 "PP o D".

In April 1946 he retired from the military service with the rank of Captain to take the airline pilot job with CSA. He worked his way up to the captain's position however in 1950 as a "Westerner" he was fired and had to make living as an ordinary worker. It did not seem enough and on October 9th, 1953 he was arrested and based on the false accusations of treason sentenced to six years jail time. He survived four years of slavery work in Jachymov uranium mines and spent the rest of his sentence in Leopoldov. Once set free he started to work as a tool machinist in Automotive National Enterprises where he stayed until his retirement in 1969.

During 1969 and 1970 he was partially rehabilitated and in 1990 in the wake of political and moral rehabilitations he was promoted to Colonel in Reserve. On May 8th, 1991 Czechoslovak President decorated him with the Order of Milan Rastislav Stefanik 3rd Class. He passed away on August 24th, 1993 in his birth town.

Pg. 40 - bottom

Part of F/Lt Slansky's crew in the spring of 1945: F/Sgt J. Saxl (radio operator/gunner), F/Sgt B. Rysanek (navigator), W/O J. Bilek (gunner), F/Lt V. Slansky (captain), F/Sgt J. Sustr (radio operator/gunner), F/O A. Vrchoťka (second pilot), F/Sgt J. Kubicek (flight engineer). In the background Liberator GR Mk.VI KG856/PP o R.

Pg. 41 - top

Czechoslovak Air Force Captain in Reserve Vladimir Slansky after return to the homeland in 1945.

Pg. 42 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG870 "PP o H", No. 311 Squadron, Prague-Ruzyne airport, summer/fall 1945. In the picture we can identify Emerson A-15 nose gun turret, Martin A-3C dorsal turret and MPC A-6B rear gun turret. Note the number assigned by the Modification Center located under the fire extinguisher cover and a small Czechoslovak cockade with a name under the pilot's cockpit canopy. According to one of the veterans' recollection the name was "Hanka" however due to the poor quality of the photograph this information cannot be confirmed.

Pg. 42 - bottom

Mechanic W/O Frantisek Prcek (No. 312 Squadron) at the left wheel of Liberator GR Mk.VI KG870 "PP o H". There is a landing light visible in front of the landing gear bay and radio altimeter antenna behind it.

Pg. 43

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG859, F/O Jan Riha DFC, No. 311 Squadron, Tain, spring 1945

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG859 (ex-USAAF B-24J-40-CF s/n 44-10364), originally served with No. 206 Squadron (AL "B"), assigned to No. 311 Squadron by the order dated March 1st, 1945 and consequently flown over to Tain airport. The aircraft was equipped with the Leigh Light search light. At Czechoslovak squadron it was assigned AL "U". It flew the combat missions armed typically with six DC250 depth charges and two AS600 anti-submarine bombs but also with ten or twelve DC250s.

At No. 311 Squadron the airplane flew in total 14 sorties, the first one on March 23rd, 1945 with F/O Jan Riha's crew and the last one on May 19th, 1945 with W/O Josef Tichy's crew. On March 23rd, 1945 another anti-submarine patrol in Baltic Sea took place (*Chilli-II*) - even though on that night the visibility in the target area was severely limited due to the fog. Radar operator of Riha's crew flying in Liberator "PP o U" detected at 00:15 in the position 55 degrees and 12" North latitude and 15 degrees and 18" East longitude at one hundred meters above sea level under clear skies with the visibility 2 to 6 kilometers but with dense fog in low altitude above water, three targets directly in front of the aircraft in the distance of 15, 26 and 39 kilometers. The attempts to recognize the first two targets were unsuccessful as the bright light of the Leigh Light search light was reflected by the fog layer. The third target was recognized without the search light aid. In the position 54 degrees 57' North latitude and 14 degrees 35' East longitude, in the distance approximately 2 kilometers at the angle towards starboard

there was an idle, fully surfaced submarine. At 00:53 Liberator attacked directly from the flight heading at twenty degrees towards her starboard. From the altitude of 90 meters the crew dropped six depth charges in a row across the stern.

The nose and rear gunners fired about 40 rounds each at the conning tower and the submarine returned the fire. The submarine fire ceased after depth charges explosion and a minute after the attack the target disappeared from the radar screen. The dense fog prevented the verifiable evaluation of the raid therefore Liberator carried on with the patrol mission. The Royal Navy Command officially rated Riha's crew attack as a "F" degree – submarine detected but the proof of her damage is insufficient, and the RAF Coastal Command awarded the attack by 3 points.

On May 10th, 1945 at 03:00 F/Lt Hrcncir took off in Liberator 'PP o U' for a patrol and at 08:35 took over the escort of the U 532 (Type IXC/40, FKpt Ottoheinrich Junker) submarine from Liberator GR Mk.VI "PP o K" manned by W/O Gustav Netrefa.

In the second half of July the aircraft was flown over to the nearby RAF Station Leuchars where the interim interior modifications for transport configuration were carried out. Between August and December 1945, the aircraft flew 13 transport missions to Prague carrying the military personnel, cargo and Czechoslovak repatriates. On December 17th, 1945 W/O Bohuslav Jaros flew Liberator KG859 over to the United Kingdom to the RAF Station Valley. The airplane was struck of charge on February 10th, 1947.

Pg. 44 - photo

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG859 "PP o U" No.2 engine maintenance, summer/fall 1945. British cockade was already over sprayed with white paint.

Pg. 44 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG859 "PP o U" (ex-USAAF B-24J-40-CF s/n 44-10364), No. 311 Squadron, spring/summer 1945. The aircraft still carries the British cockades and is fully armed. The machine guns in the A-6B nose gun turret and A-6B rear gun turret feature the Flash Eliminators. The Leigh Light search light bottom part with the protruding cover of the motor controlling its lateral movement is visible on the fuselage belly in front of the bomb bay. There is a flare chute opening behind the radome. Note the camouflage colors demarcation lines on the engine covers.

Pg. 45 - top

Starboard view of the Liberator GR Mk.VI KG859 "PP o U" sporting the Czechoslovak national markings, Prague-Ruzyne airport, summer/fall 1945. A-6B nose gun turret without machine guns is well visible as well as SCR-729 set antenna under the navigator's window on the front side of the fuselage. Other noticeable details are Leigh Light search light attachment points near No. 4 engine, Static Discharge Units in the wingtip and stained fuselage skin around the radome (during spray painting of the SCL "PP" and AL "U" or British cockades over painting the white camouflage was probably touched up on the side and bottom portions of the fuselage).

Pg. 44 - bottom

Port view of the Liberator GR Mk.VI KG859 "PP o U" carrying Czechoslovak national markings, summer/fall 1945. There is a small Czechoslovak cockade and name "Ursula" under it below the pilot cockpit's side window.

Pg. 45 - bottom

Back home again after many years. Riha's crew (from the left flight engineer F/Sgt Josef Sevic, radio operator P/O Karel Stregl, navigator P/O Petr Arton, captain F/O Jan Riha and second pilot F/Sgt Miroslav Polach) in front of the Liberator GR Mk.VI KG859 "PP o U", Prague-Ruzyne airport, August 12th, 1945. In the picture we can see cockpit's flat side windows, Direct Vision Windows in the windshield, small Czechoslovak cockade, "Ursula" name inscription, SCR-729 set AN-147 IFF transmitting whip antenna and "Lorenz" device Type 1 antenna underneath the fuselage, propellers featured the narrow chord blades.

Pg. 46 – 47 - F/O Jan Riha DFC

February 26th, 1918/ November 29th, 1999

Jan Riha was born in Horazdovicka Lhota, in 1933 he enrolled in the training at the aircraft factory Letov in Prague-Letnany where he worked until 1938. In 1937 he completed the pilot training as a part of "1000 new pilots for the Republic" campaign. He started his conscription in June 1938 at No. 1 Air Regiment in Hradec Kralove where he continued to hone his pilot skills in the Praga E-39 and Letov S-328 aircraft. Before he finished his military pilot training Germany occupied Czechoslovakia and he was dismissed from the Army. He returned to Letov factory however as early as mid-July 1939 he left for Poland. From there on August 1st he set sail for France aboard the ship

Chrobry. He enlisted into the Foreign Legion and after the war broke out he continued in his pilot training at Pau airport. He did not however see any combat in French skies.

On June 23rd, 1940 he arrived in British Isles and third time in his life started his pilot career over from scratch. He was accepted by RAF VR as an Aircraftman 2nd Class and had to undergo the whole pilot training again. After the in-classroom and basic trainings on May 3rd, 1941 he commenced his elementary pilot training at No. 3 EFTS in Watchfield. There on June 23rd he crashed with the Tiger Moth aircraft and ended up in the hospital. Once he recovered he completed the elementary training and on 23rd of July continued with the advanced pilot course on Airspeed Oxford aircraft at No. 2 SFTS at Brize Norton airport. He received his RAF pilot wings on October 11th and on October 19th as a Sergeant he left for No. 311 Squadron based in East Wretham. Between December 16th, 1941 and April 9th, 1942, he went through the operational training as a second pilot in F/Lt Bohuslav Eichler's crew.

He flew his first sortie with No. 311 Squadron, a bombing raid on the French port of Dunkirk, on April 24th, 1942, as a second pilot in F/Lt Oldrich Horejsi's crew. Later being with the same unit he re-trained for RAF Coastal Command service and on May 22nd he flew his first anti-submarine patrol over the Bay of Biscay as a member of S/Ldr Josef Sejbl's crew. He flew with this captain more-less on a regular basis until the end of August, afterwards he shared the cockpit with several other captains. Since mid-September 1942 he was a right hand of the captain from his operational training and until the end of October he was honing his skills in F/Sgt Miroslav Cervinka's crew. He flew from the left seat with his own crew for the first time on November 8th. He had a close call on April 28th, 1943 when his outnumbered Wellington Mk.IC T1497 "D" battled three German Junkers Ju 88 long distance fighters. Thanks to his skillful maneuvering and gunners' well aimed fire the crew drew the attackers away. On May 14th, 1943 he completed his tour of duty as a Flight Sergeant and during 3 bombing raids and 50 anti-submarine patrols he logged nearly 424 operational hours without spotting the enemy submarine even once.

While having the rest from the combat flying he served as a test pilot at No. 32 Maintenance Unit at St. Athan. Here he was promoted to Warrant Officer on October 1st, 1943. Before returning to operational flying with No. 311 Squadron he went through the operational training at No. 111 (C) OTU on Bahamas Islands between January 23rd and July 1st, 1944. In the beginning of July, he reported for duty at No. 311 Squadron in Scottish Tain. On September 12th he flew his first sortie of the second tour of duty as a second pilot in F/O Leo Linhart's crew and since September 19th he led his own crew to patrols over the North Sea. Meantime on August 22nd, 1944 he was commissioned with the first officer's rank Pilot Officer and on February 22nd, 1945 he became Flying Officer.

During the night from 23rd to 24th March, 1945 he attacked his first submarine with the Liberator GR Mk.VI KG859 "PP o U" during the operation *Chilli-II* over the Baltic Sea. The crew could not verify how successful their attack really was but regardless for this action and his prior performance he was recommended for the Distinguished Flying

Cross (DFC) and the award was approved by British King as late as December 18th, 1945. On June 2nd, 1945 he flew his last sortie in the Liberator GR Mk.VI KG898 "PP o W" making history of his squadron being its last but one captain who took off for the combat mission. During his second tour of duty he logged 31 anti-submarine patrols lasting over 360 operational hours.

He took part in the cargo and repatriates transportation from the United Kingdom landing in Prague for the first time on August 4th, 1945 with Liberator GR Mk.VI EV943 "PP o F", last time on December 14th in the aircraft EW295 "PP o E". After his retirement from military service on March 3rd, 1946 and went flying for CSA. In November 1950 he was fired because of the political oppression. For almost fifteen years that followed he worked in the variety of manufacturing corporations but mainly as a fitter. In 1965 he enjoyed partial rehabilitation and in April of the same year could return to flying for CSA. He spent the following years at the controls in the cockpit of Ilyushin Il-12 and Il-14 airliners until August 1st, 1974 when he retired. During the wave of political and moral rehabilitations during 1990 he was promoted to the Colonel in Reserve. He passed away in Prague on November 29th, 1999.

Pg. 45 - bottom

F/O Jan Riha's crew pictured shortly before the end of war. Standing from the left: F/Lt V. Bozdech (radio operator/gunner), F/O J. Riha (captain), F/Sgt J. Muller, F/Sgt . Deutsch, Sgt I. Leichter (radio operators/gunners), sitting from the left: Sgt J. Sevic (flight engineer), W/O S. Arton (navigator), F/Sgt M. Polach (second pilot), F/Sgt J. Pecnik (radio operator/gunner).

Pg. 49

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV953, W/Cdr Jan Kostohryz DSO, No. 311 Squadron, Tain, spring 1945

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV953 (ex-USAAF B-24J-10-CF s/n 42-64334) after delivery to the United Kingdom served with No. 53 Squadron (AL "F"). On January 31st, 1945 it was assigned to No. 311 Squadron. At this Czechoslovak unit the plane received AL "K". During February and March, it performed a series of training flights. It typically flew the combat missions armed with six DC250 depth charges plus two AS600 anti-submarine bombs or just ten DC250s.

In total it flew 18 sorties while serving with Czechoslovak squadron, the first one on March 23rd, 1945 with W/Cdr Jan Kostohryz crew and the last one on May 17th, 1945 with W/O Josef Klesnil's crew.

During the night March 23rd - 24th, 1945, during the operation *Chilli-II* the radio operator of the Kostohryz crew detected the target in the position 54 degrees 41' North latitude and 14 degrees 16' East longitude 13 kilometers away. At 00:34 Liberator attacked the target dropping six depth charges. The crew heard two loud explosions and spotted red and white flames. After the attack the target disappeared from the radar screen. Royal Navy Command evaluated the attack by H degree-submarine actual presence could not be proven therefore RAF Coastal Command awarded the crew with 0 points.

The last operation in the Baltic Sea-operation *Chilli-III*, took place during the night 26th - 27th March 1945. Kostohryz crew flying again EV953 "PP o K" attacked two submarines. At 23:15 in the position of 55 degrees 20' North latitude and 15 degrees 38' East longitude flying the heading 184 degrees the radar operator spotted 2 targets on his screen, to the left of the flight direction in the distance of 22 kilometers.

He identified them as a submarine sailing in 020 degrees heading and a small supporting vessel, a trawler.

Seven minutes later, at 23:22 Kostohryz Liberator attacked the submarine at the angle from the side. It dropped a row of six depth charges from the altitude of 90 meters which exploded in front of her starboard side. After the attack the support vessel withdrew rapidly. Flying over, on the left, the airmen spotted another surfaced sailing submarine in short distance from them. Having flown eleven kilometers, the captain turned the airplane around and the crew prepared for another raid. At 23:41 in the position 55 degrees 36' North latitude 15 degrees 49' East longitude Liberator attacked with the four remaining depth charges at the 160 degrees heading from the left towards the port side of the already submerging submarine. The depth charges hit the sea surface raising the high columns of water across her trajectory. The target disappeared from the radar screen however the result of the attack was not observed. The first Kostohryz crew attack was evaluated by the Royal Navy Command as an "H" degree-insufficient proof of the actual submarine presence. RAF Coastal Command therefore awarded the attack by 0 points. In the second case the Royal Navy Command verdict was: degree "F"-submarine detected but insufficient proof of her damage and RAF Coastal Command then awarded the crew with three points. On July 2nd, 1945 at 15:31 F/Lt Protiva flew the aircraft from Tain over to nearby Leuchars where the interim modifications of the aircraft interior were made in preparation for transportation duties. On July 23rd, 1945 W/Cdr Jan Kostohryz DSO and S/Ldr Alois Sedivy DFC, DFM crew on board departed with Liberator "PP o K" from Tain to evaluate the airport in Manston, Czechoslovak squadron's new home. Two days later he was headed to Prague-Ruzyne airport for the same purpose. Several dignitaries were on board alongside the regular crew: then Liaison Officer at RAF Transport Command W/Cdr Josef Snajdr DFC, Chief of Staff ICL in London G/Cpt Josef Schejbal CBE and Czechoslovak Fighter Wing W/Cdr Jaroslav Hlado DSO, DFC. On July 27th, 1945 this Liberator returned to RAF Station Tain. Between July and August 1945, it contributed to the military personnel and cargo transportation with seven flights to Prague.

On August 20th, 1945 the very first squadron's accident took place while operating with Transport Command this time at Prague airport Ruzyně. The cause of the "PP o K" aircraft crash flown by F/Lt Vladimir Slansky crew was wet and slippery runway at Ruzyně airport. Runway 04/22 1800 meters long was covered with the wartime camouflage paint left overs. The crash occurred at 11:12 (GMT) while coming to land from Northeast. Liberator overshot the runway and ended up in the water tank. None of the crew members was injured. However, the landing gear, left wing and the tail surfaces suffered the damage (as of August 27th, 1945 the damage was determined as category AC). Having drained the tank, the aircraft was recovered but it was never repaired. Liberator "Kosta" career ended at Ruzyně airport graveyard and ultimately went to the scrap yards. Officially it was struck off charge as late as June 21st, 1947.

Pg. 48 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VI EV953 "PP o K" (ex-USAAF B-24J-10-CF s/n 42-64334) carrying the British cockades, No. 311 Squadron, RAF Tain, spring 1945. The aircraft had Boulton Paul Type E rear gun turret installed. Note the flare chute spoiler mounted on the rear entry door, radome and narrow chord propeller blades.

Pg. 48 - bottom

On July 25th, 1945 S/Ldr Alois Sedivy DFC, DFM crew landed the Liberator "PP o K" at Prague-Ruzyně airport with the following officers on board: W/Cdr Jan Kostohryz DSO (No. 311 Squadron Commanding Officer), Liaison Officer at the RAF Transport Command W/Cdr Josef Snajdr DFC, Chief of Staff of the ICL in London G/Cpt Josef Schejbal CBE and Czechoslovak Fighter Wing Commanding Officer W/Cdr Jaroslav Hlado DSO, DFC. The airplane still sports the British cockades.

Pg. 50 - top

The view of the Liberator EV953 "PP o K" nose, summer 1945. The picture reveals several interesting details, A-6A nose gun turret without machine guns, shape of the transition cover between the turret and fuselage, front wheel disc featuring nine spokes and "Lorenz" device antenna on the fuselage bottom behind the front wheel. There was a small Czechoslovak cockade under the pilot cockpit canopy with the inscription "Kosta" below it.

Pg. 50 - bottom

Liberator EV953 "PP o K" is readied for departure to Prague, RAF Manston, summer 1945

On the fuselage side, under the navigator's side window we can see the IFF device rod antenna. Pitot tubes with 2 braces indicate first B-24J blocks manufactured at Consolidated plants. There is a well legible inscription "Kosta" and small Czechoslovak national marking under the cockpit flat side window. Narrow chord blade propellers were installed on this aircraft. Note the fuselage door visible behind the A-6A nose gun turret.

Pg. 51 - top

Liberator EV953 "PP o K" is fueled and the luggage loaded, RAF Manston, summer 1945. The aircraft already carries the Czechoslovak national markings, British cockade on the fuselage side was over painted, machine gun armament was removed. Leigh Light search light attachment is visible under the wing bottom surface outwards of No. 4 engine.

Pg. 51 - bottom

Liberator EV953 "PP o K" during the parade taking place at Prague-Ruzyně airport on August 15th, 1945.

Pg. 52 – 53 - W/Cdr Jan Kostohryz DSO

August 23rd, 1911/November 27th, 1978

He was born in Prague however grew up in Hluboka nad Vltavou where he also attended the primary and secondary school. Having graduated from the Grammar School in Ceske Budejovice he was conscripted to the No. 1 Infantry Regiment on October 1st, 1932. He graduated from the Infantry Officers in Reserve School in Jindrichuv Hradec and on July 1st, 1935 he was commissioned as a Lieutenant having graduated from the Military Academy in Hranice. His first assignment was with the No. 20 Infantry Regiment in Michalovce, Slovakia. Afterwards he completed the course in Military Telegraph Training Center in Turnov in 1937 he returned to his original regiment as a commander of the communication platoon. On June 30th, 1939 after the German occupation he was dismissed from the military service.

On February 8th, 1940 he left the country to join the resistance abroad. Via Slovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia he arrived in Lebanon from where he set sail for France. There, on April 24th he became a deputy commander of the No. 3 Infantry Regiment in

Agde. A few days before France surrendered he was attached to the aviation group with which on board of the ship *Apapa* sailing via Gibraltar landed in Liverpool on July 7th. On July 29th he was assigned to No. 311 squadron being formed at that time and he was enlisted into RAF VR as a Pilot Officer on August 2nd. After brief training he started to fly operationally as a radio operator in F/Lt Josef Ocelka crew on Vickers Wellington Mk.IC R1021 "KX o W" bombing the Belgium port of Ostende on December 21st. He flew all his 32 sorties, minus 3, with this captain. His shortened tour of duty (barely 164 hours) was rather uneventful except of one aborted mission due to the engine failure. His last sortie on German Hannover took place on July 19th, 1941.

On September 6th, 1941 he started his elementary pilot training at No. 3 EFTS at Watchfield already as a Flight Lieutenant and as of November 29th he continued at No. 28 EFTS based in Wolverhampton. In March 1942 he set sail for Canada where he trained with No. 34 SFTS in Medicine Hat, Alberta until September. After his return to the British Isles, on January 5th, 1943 he reported at No. 6 (C) OTU for the operational training as a crew captain and on April 14th he reported at No. 311 squadron. Until mid-May 1943 he managed to complete six anti-submarine patrols on Wellington as a second pilot until the unit started to convert to the Liberators.

On July 10th he performed his first familiarization flight in Liberator GR Mk.V BZ743. When the squadron lost its Commanding Officer on August 21st, 1943 he assumed flight "A" command with the rank of Acting Squadron Leader. His next operational flight took place as late as September 14th in Liberator GR Mk.V BZ786 "G". Till the end of 1943 he flew 11 anti-submarine patrols only. In comparison to the other captains he flew rather few combat missions. During the whole year 1944 he flew only 19 operational flights and since the end of September for the rest of the year he did not fly any missions at all. This was apparently the impact of the fact that on September 1st, 1944 he assumed command of No. 311 squadron as a last war-time Commanding Officer with the rank of Acting Wing Commander. In the end of March 1945, he personally led the unit into the night operations *Chilli-II* and *Chilli-III* against German submarines in the Baltic Sea. During the first flight his crew attacked a submarine, during the second one even two of them unfortunately without any results. During the last war year he logged 6 missions only. During his second tour of duty he logged 42 patrols in total of nearly 438 hours. On April 13th, 1945 the British King awarded him, as the only Czechoslovak bomber airman, with the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

As early as July 25th, 1945 he landed Liberator GR Mk.VI EV953 "PP o K" at the Prague-Ruzyně airport with the mission to establish conditions for the return of the Czechoslovak squadrons. On August 13th he returned to Czechoslovakia for good. Since the beginning of 1946 he studied at the Military College and on September 1st, 1946, as a Lieutenant Colonel, he assumed command of No. 25 Air Regiment, one of the No. 311 Squadron successors. As one of a few former RAF personnel he "turned the coat" and became a member of KSC (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia). On September 30th, 1948 though he was recalled from his Air Regiment command post and

assigned to the Air Force Central Command in Prague as an Operations Group Chief of Staff.

On October 1st, 1949 he was promoted to Colonel but ultimately, he did not avoid the political reprisals. On June 16th, 1950 he was firstly “tucked away” to the Air Force Faculty of the Military Academy in Prague and shortly after arrested and based on the false accusations of treason and spying on February 3rd, 1954 he was sentenced to 16 years in prison. He served his jail time in Leopoldov and Valdice prisons, spent four years in Jachymov uranium mines until May 1960 when he was set free thanks to the amnesty. The political regime allowed him to take the worker occupations only, so he ended up working as a construction worker, miner and boiler operator. In March 1969 he went to the early retirement due to the health problems and after several months he enjoyed his rehabilitation and re-installation into the Colonel rank. He passed away at the age of mere 67 years in Prague.

Pg. 52 - bottom

No. 311 Squadron Commanding Officer W/Cdr Jan Kostohryz DSO at the May 16th, 1945 ceremonial decoration held at Tain receiving congratulations from the Czechoslovak Air Force Inspector AVM RNDr. Karel Janousek KCB. On the right flight “A” Commanding Officer S/Ldr Josef Sedivy DFM DFC (decorated by DFC).

Pg. 53 - bottom

Banners decorated air traffic control tower and the main terminal are visible in the background. Note the Leigh Light search light attachment points with well visible device for the emergency release, Czechoslovak national marking on the wing lower surface and the nose wheel hub featuring nine spokes.

Pg. 54

Czechoslovak airmen parade at Prague-Ruzyne airport apron on August 15th, 1945. There is a Liberator EV953 “PP o K” in the foreground, to its left Spitfire LF Mk.IXE SL628 “HL” belonging to the Czechoslovak Fighter Wing commander W/Cdr Jaroslav Hlado DSO, DFC. Avro Anson (AT-20) and B-25 Mitchell are parked on the grass behind the Liberator, both aircraft carrying the US national markings.

Pg. 55

On August 20th, 1945 Liberator EV953 "PP o K" crashed landed at Prague-Ruzyne airport. The aircraft skidded off the runway and ended up in the water tank. Picture is dated from the time of preparation for recovery and actual recovery process. In the first photograph (front view) note removed Perspex astrodome canopy (used as an emergency exit), broken off left vertical tail surface lying at the tank bottom behind the No. 1 engine and thanks to the removed machine guns well visible machine gun movement openings in the Martin 250CE 5 dorsal turret Perspex canopy. In the second picture (front left view) we can see the shape of the dorsal gun turret Perspex canopy, cockpit flat side window and the small Czechoslovak cockade with the inscription "Kosta" under the pilot cockpit canopy.

Pg. 56 - top

The port side view of the damaged Liberator EV953 "Kosta", Prague-Ruzyne airport. The picture shows the extent of the damage very well, namely damage to the wing broken at the joint of the central and left outer section, left vertical tail surface missing, rear bomb bay door torn away and bent propeller blade on No. 1 engine. The German aircraft in the background next to the hangar are awaiting their end in the scrap yards. "Kosta" met the same fate.

Pg. 56 - bottom

Liberator EV953 "PP o K", Prague-Ruzyne airport. The photograph was taken after the airplane crash-landing and following recovery from the fire-fighting water tank as can be judged by the damaged fuselage skin around the nose wheel and the bomb bay door torn away. Note the flat cockpit side window and especially the opened Direct Vision Window.

Pg. 57

Liberator GR MZK.VI KG861, W/O Jindrich Benes, No. 311 Squadron, Tain, spring 1945

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG861 (ex-USAAF B-24J-40-CF s/n 44-10366), originally serving with British No. 206 Squadron (AL "L"), was assigned to No. 311 Squadron on February 23rd, 1945. It retained its AL "L". It flew combat missions typically armed with six DC250 depth charges and two AS600 anti-submarine bombs, sometimes with twelve DC250 Mk.XI.

Serving with the Czechoslovak squadron the aircraft flew 17 mission in total, the first one on March 13th, 1945 with F/O Jan Riha's crew and the last one on May 20th, 1945 with F/O Jaroslav Polivka's crew.

On May 5th, 1945 at 15:58 Liberator "PP o L" manned by W/O Jindrich Benes crew took off for Kattegat narrows reconnaissance. At 20:31 the radar operator acquired a contact and shortly after the airmen spotted a submerging submarine in the position of 57 degrees 27' North latitude and 10 degrees 38' East longitude. The aircraft attacked immediately with four depth charges which hit the sea surface about 100 meters in front of the target. Liberator executed a very sharp turn and 35 seconds later attacked the slowly submerging submarine again. This time they dropped five depth charges. According to the crew testimony at least one direct hit was scored. After the attack the large and growing oil spill appeared and the submarine hull, turned upside down, was visible under the surface. The air bubbles approximately 30 centimeters in diameter were rising to the sea surface probably from the conning tower location. Even though the attack occurred several minutes after half past eight pm in that area and period of the year the attack was practically executed in a day-light. Having completed the patrol approximately 2400 kilometers long and lasting 10 hours and 23 minutes the aircraft landed at RAF Station Tain RAF. Liberator GR Mk.VIII "XQ o Z" (KH266) crew from No. 86 Squadron (operating from Tain as well), as per Benes' request, flew over the attack location at 20:50 and confirmed to observe the hull of a vessel turned upside down right below the surface in the middle of the oil spill and it could have been a submarine. Officially Benes' crew attack on the German submarine was evaluated by the Royal Navy Command as a degree "B" - submarine probably sunk. RAF Coastal Command therefore awarded the crew with the maximum 10 points. For this accomplishment the aircraft captain W/O Jindrich Benes was promoted to the officer's rank P/O and decorated by the British Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). Identity of the submarine attacked by Benes' crew on May 5th, 1945 became the subject of numerous debates in the years after the war and remains inconclusive even nowadays. After the war U 236 (Type XXIII, OltzS Uwe Christiansen) was identified as Benes crew victim, however she was sunk by her own crew as late as May 8^h, 1945. The latest naval historians' research re-evaluated Liberator "PP o L" sortie as an attack on "non-submarine target". In July the aircraft was modified to the transportation configuration at Leuchars. Between August and December 1945, the aircraft contributed with its 14 transport flights to Prague to the shuttle of military personnel, cargo and Czechoslovak repatriates. On December 12th, 1945 P/O Jan Lazar flew the aircraft over to the United Kingdom to the RAF Station Valley. KG861 was struck of charge on January 23rd, 1947.

Pg. 58 - top

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG861 "PP o L" (ex-USAAF B-24J-40-CF s/n 44-10366), No. 311 Squadron, RAF Tain, spring 1945. Leigh Light search light is well visible on the wing lower surface. In the foreground group of squadron members in a cheerful mood.

Pg. 58 - bottom

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG861 "PP o L", No. 311 Squadron, spring/summer 1945. The aircraft features A-6B nose gun turret and A-3C dorsal gun turret, machine gun muzzles have Flash Eliminators installed. AN-148 receiving antenna of the SCR-729 IFF set is well visible under the navigator's side window, drift meter B-3 periscope tube is behind the bombardier's position enclosure and "Lorenz" device Type 1 antenna is located on the fuselage bottom behind the front wheel. GEE set antenna is visible between the astrodome and the windshield. The propellers feature narrow chord blades. The aircraft camouflage was modified, Extra Dark Sea Grey extends to the nose gun turret and the demarcation line is in the middle of the engine cowlings.

Pg. 59 - top

Rear view of Liberator GR Mk.VI KG861 "PP o L", No. 311 Squadron, spring/summer 1945. A-6B tail gun turret without gun blisters is mounted on this aircraft, Flash Eliminators are installed on the machine gun muzzles. We can see Tunnel Gun Scanning Windows under the starboard vertical tail surface and the aerodynamic cover of the main fuel tanks venting system exhaust on the upper wing surface (to the right of the dorsal gun turret). Leigh Light search light attachment rack (outwards of No. 4 engine) is empty. Vickers Wellington is parked in the background.

Pg. 59 - bottom

Lined up Liberators GR Mk.VI, No. 311 Squadron, Prague-Ruzyne, summer/fall 1945. Last in the line is Liberator GR Mk.VI KG861 "PP o L". The rear entry door (on the fuselage bottom at Tunnel Gun Scanning Windows) are opened as well as the bomb bay doors. Not the A-6B rear gun turret (without covers of the machine gun breeches) and flag-style Czechoslovak marking on the vertical tail surface.

Pg. 60 – 61 - P/O Jindrich Benes DFC

May 2nd, 1919/December 14th, 1986

He was born in the village of Seidorf (Okrouhlicka nowadays) in Vysocina region. He trained for the stove maker-tile installer at Applied Arts School in Rychnov nad Kneznou. During the German occupation in March 1939 he worked in Zabreh na Morave. On July 15th he crossed the border to Poland and as early as August 1st set foot on the French soil. Since August 21st he served with the Foreign Legion and on September 26th he was enlisted into the newly-formed Czechoslovak Army. Having studied at Warrant Officers School in Agde in the spring of 1940 he served as a

Sergeant-Accountant. In May, on his own request, he was re-assigned to the Air Group with which he landed in Liverpool on July 7th.

After enlisting into RAF VR in the end of July 1940 he reported to No. 311 squadron as an Air Gunner with the rank of Sergeant. Having completed the operational training right at the squadron his baptism of fire waited for him on December 27th, 1940 during the raid on the German submarine base in the French port of Lorient as a member of Sgt Jan Hrnecir crew. In 1941 he was a member of F/O Jindrich Brejcha crew, from the end of April he flew with captain Sgt Josef Bernat. During the night July 5th - 6th returning from the raid on Munster the German night fighter gunfire set the fuselage canvas skin of their Wellington Mk.IC R1532 "KX o R" on fire. The hydraulic system was hit as well so while the rest of the crew was putting the fire out he alone was fending off the further fighter attacks firing from the rear gun turret which could only be operated manually. He completed his tour of duty on August 7th having logged 40 missions lasting 191 hours. In the fall of 1941 he left for No. 138 Squadron as an Air Gunner in F/O Bala crew where he performed the unknown number of the combat flights, probably three of them.

After his brief service at the Special Duties Squadron on December 29th, 1941 he was transferred to the Czechoslovak Depot in Wilmslow from where he left at the beginning of 1942 to obtain his pilot training which he started in England and completed in Canada. As of October 4th, 1943, he underwent the operational training at No. 111 (C) OTU on Bahamas Islands in P/O Rudolf Haering crew. On February 9th, 1944 he was assigned to No. 311 squadron, he completed his first sortie on March 21st in W/O Jan Lazar crew and consequently he flew several missions as member of Flight Commander S/Ldr Bohuslav Tobyska crew. Between April 5th and July 31st, 1944, he was F/O Haering's right hand with whom he almost finished his first tour of duty in the same crew. Between August and December 1944, he again reported at No. 111 (C) OTU again to undergo the operational course as a crew captain.

On January 22nd, 1945 he reported at RAF Station Tain and set on his first sortie on April 22nd, 1945 in Liberator GR Mk.VI EV953 "PP o K" under the supervision of no one else than the squadron Commanding Officer W/Cdr Jan Kostohryz DSO himself. Three days later he flew for the first time as an aircraft captain and took off for one of the routine patrols on May 5th with Liberator Mk.VI KG861 "PP o L" little knowing this flight will make the squadron history. During this mission, as a very last No. 311 squadron captain, he attacked the German submarine in Kattegat narrows. This action earned him the recommendation for Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) with which he was awarded as late as December 18th, 1945. His very last mission took place on May 26th, 1945 in Liberator GR Mk.VI EV872 "PP o Y" and as a pilot he logged in total 24 anti-submarine patrols lasting 232 operational hours.

After his return to homeland, since February 1st, 1946 he served with No. 24 Air Regiment in Pilsen. Year 1946 marked his rapid career advancement, in January he was commissioned as a Lieutenant followed by two promotions so by the end of the year he was a Captain. Meantime between May and July he underwent the training for

De Havilland Mosquito at No. 13 OTU at RAF Station Middleton St. George in the United Kingdom.

In September 1947 he was promoted to Staff Captain and became a flight instructor. His aviation career was interrupted by the advent of the Communist regime which dismissed him from the army on November 1st, 1949. Labeled as a "Westerner" he ended up as a working group foreman in Recyclable Materials National Enterprise. When he was sent to Tachov region for work in January 1950 he took advantage of the situation and fled to West Germany.

After he left for the United Kingdom he re-joined the RAF in April 1950 even though he had to settle with the rank of Sergeant only. Afterwards as a flight instructor he served with the variety of training units until he went to reserve in November 1958. At that time his record showed respectable 4,474 flying hours. In the civil life he worked in the factory until his retirement. He passed away on December 14th, 1986 in English Telford. In 1991 in the wake of the moral and political rehabilitations he was posthumously promoted to Colonel.

Pg. 60 - bottom

W/O Benes crew at the time of its attack on German submarine on May 5th, 1945. First row from the left: W/O A. Sipek (flight engineer), F/Lt/ V. Kocman (radio operator/gunner), W/O J. Benes (captain), F/Sgt J. Jedlicka (radio operator/gunner), F/Lt A. Sverma (navigator), F/Sgt F. Bret (second pilot). Rear row from the left: Sgt J. Schellong, F/Sgt J. Gazdarica, F/Sgt A. Kasal (radio operators/gunner).

Pg. 61

W/O Adam Sipek, flight engineer of the P/O Jindrich Benes' crew.

W/O Adam Sipek flight log-book entry recording the flights performed during May 1945.

Pg. 59 - bottom

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG861 "PP o L", No. 311 Squadron, Prague-Ruzyne airport, summer/fall 1945. The aircraft carries Czechoslovak national markings, machine guns armament was removed. The demarcation line of the upper and lower camouflage colors is well visible. There are Red Army trucks neatly parked in the foreground.

Pg. 63

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG852 "A", No. 321 (Dutch) Squadron, China Bay, Ceylon, spring/summer 1945

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG852 (ex-USAAF B-24J-40-CF s/n 44-10357) arrived in SAL Prestwick on June 10th, 1944, and here the Leigh Light search light was installed. Afterwards the aircraft was dispatched to India arriving in Karachi on August 16th, 1944. On December 26th, 1944, KG852 as one of the first five Liberators, arrived at No. 321 (Dutch) Squadron based at China Bay on the island of Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka) where it was assigned AL "A". First training flights with this Liberator are recorded in the unit's ORB in February 1945. The training took several months and only in July 1945 was the unit declared operational with its Liberators and a detachment was dispatched to Cocos (Keeling) Islands. But Liberator "A" reached Cocos Islands only on October 28th, 1945 for the first time with passengers and cargo, the aircraft with its crew was assigned to the local detachment. On December 19th, 1945 No. 321 (Dutch) was released from the RAF Command and transferred to the Dutch administration. Liberator KG852 was struck of charge on May 30th, 1946.

Pg. 64 - top

No. 321 (Dutch) Squadron Liberators, GR Mk.VI KG852 "A" on the extreme right. The aircraft can be easily identified thanks to the large Nose Art on the fuselage front.

Pg. 64 - bottom

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG852 "A" (ex-USAAF B-24J-40-CF s/n 44-10357) from No. 321 (Dutch) Squadron. Liberator KG852 received the Dutch national markings and Aircraft Letter "A". There was a large nose art painted on the aircraft front fuselage depicting a cat sitting on the bomb and making a phone call. The wing leading edge de-icing rubber boots are not painted in the aluminum lacquer. AN-148 IFF set receiving antenna is well visible on the aircraft nose.

Pg. 65 - top

Another in-flight, this time a starboard view of Liberator GR Mk.VI KG852 "A". The gun turrets are still equipped with the machine guns, but Leigh Light search light was removed. The aircraft upper surfaces carried the coat of just Extra Dark Sea Grey color. Worth noticing is the location of the Dutch national markings on the wing upper surfaces.

Pg. 65 - bottom

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG852 "A" (ex-USAAF B-24J-40-CF s/n 44-10357), No. 321 (Dutch) Squadron, Dutch naval base Morokrembangan, Surabaya, East Java province. The photograph was probably taken after the end of hostilities perhaps shortly before decommissioning the aircraft as its machine guns are removed. Liberator KG852 carries the Dutch national markings, only cat's head, visible under the front cockpit side window, remained from the original nose art.

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Liberator GR Mk.VI KG991 "C", No. 321 (Dutch) Squadron, China Bay, spring/summer 1945

Liberator GR Mk.VI KG991 (ex-USAAF B-24J-75-CF s/n 44-10656, MC/n 29-193) just arrived for modifications to be done by Lockheed company in the United Kingdom on August 28th, 1944, afterwards it was dispatched to India where it arrived on November 2nd, 1944. On December 18th, 1944, as one of the first Liberators, Liberator KG991 arrived at No. 321 (Dutch) Squadron based in China Bay on the island of Ceylon where it received AL "C". After months long training, on September 3rd, 1945, Lt. M. L. Manak flew Liberator KG991 "C" from China Bay over to Cocos (Keeling) Islands as a replacement for KG299 "Z". ORB states that the aircraft arrived without ASV Mk.V radar and gun turrets which had been removed at the end of the conflict with Japan. On September 26th, 1945 Lt. M. L. Manak with Liberator "C" was carrying the food supplies for the prisoners of war to Kalibanteng airfield in Semarang on Java island. The conditions at this airfield were unknown therefore the decision to land was left up the captain's discretion. The runway was only 1100 meters (estimated) long therefore the captain had to apply a lot of braking force right after the touch down. The front landing gear did not sustain the stress and collapsed. No one was injured however the aircraft had to be left behind. On October 25th, 1945 the possible repair was declared not feasible and KG991 was struck of charge.

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Liberator GR Mk.VI KG991 "C", No. 321 (Dutch) Squadron, probably China Bay on Ceylon. There was a huge shark mouth painted on the aircraft nose, navigator's workstation side window representing the eyes. Liberator had Emerson A-15 nose gun turret, Martin 250CE 5 dorsal gun turret and wide chord blade propellers installed. There is an AN-148 IFF set receiving antenna under the navigator's workstation side window and GEE set whip antenna behind the astrodome. Drift meter B-3 periscope tube is visible in front of the front wheel well covers. The aircraft sported the camouflage in Extra Dark Sea Grey color on the upper surfaces. The camouflage demarcation line on

the engine cowlings is unusually low. The Dutch national markings were carried on the wing upper surfaces and on the fuselage sides.

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Liberator GR Mk.VIII KH262 “NH”, No. 111 (C) OTU, Bahamas Islands, spring/summer 1945

Liberator GR Mk.VIII KH262 (ex-USAAF B-24J-85-CF s/n 44-44133) arrived in Nassau on Bahamas Islands in fall 1944 (even though Aircraft Movement Card states as late as March 10th, 1945). At the training unit No. 111 (C) OTU it received the code letters “NH”. The Czechoslovak airmen flew this aircraft as well being at this unit and one of the Czechoslovak pilots-instructors, F/O Jan Irving, often sat in its cockpit. On November 17th, 1944 he performed a training flight with F/Sgt Josef Klesnil crew, on November 23rd he test-flew it and on March 26th, 1945, as a captain, he performed “Operational Exercise” flight which was credited towards his operational flying time. In August 1945 KH262 was flown over to the United Kingdom where it was received by No. 422 Squadron. On January 5th, 1947 it was struck of charge.

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Liberator GR Mk.VIII KH262 “NH”, No. 111 (C) OTU, Bahamas Islands, 1945. The aircraft featured A-15 nose gun turret. The dorsal turret featured “High Hat” cover – probably modification/repair made after the aircraft left the assembly lines, since A-3D turrets with such cover started to be factory-installed in the block J-90-CF.

There are Direct Vision Windows in the pilot cockpit canopy windshield, cockpit side windows were bulged. The front wheel well covers opened outwards. The aircraft had wide cord blade propellers installed. There is no drift meter periscope visible on the aircraft nose. AN-148 receiving antenna with stabilizers resembling bat’s wings is noticeable behind the side window of the original navigator’s workstation.

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A detailed view of the AN-148 receiver antenna with stabilizing surfaces reminding of the bat wings installed on the B-24 nose in the USAAF service. Horizontally-oriented bi-pole on the left is the AN-147 IFF antenna of the SCR-729 set.

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Liberators belonging to No. 111 (C) OTU, Nassau, Bahamas Islands, shortly before the departure for the United Kingdom, end of July/beginning of August 1945. In the foreground, the Liberator GR Mk.VIII KN773 "NY" (ex-USAAF B-24L-20-FO s/n 44-50077, MC/n 45-75) sporting natural metal finish. The aircraft reached Nassau on July 14th, 1945 but as early as August 17th, 1945 was handed over to the Lockheed branch in the United Kingdom to be converted to the transport version C Mk.VIII. Note the large arc side window of the bombardier's workstation and Perspex covered side machine gun station with K-6 mount. Liberators GR Mk.V "LL" and GR Mk.VIII "NH" are parked behind KN773. Liberator GR Mk.V "LZ" nose is visible at the extreme right.

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Liberator GR Mk.VIII KK297 "X3", No. 111 (C) OTU, Lichfield, 1946

Liberator GR Mk.VIII KK297 (ex-USAAF B-24J-100-CF s/n 44-44378, MC/n 34-105) arrived in Prestwick on February 10th, 1945 and on February 23rd, 1945 it was handed over to the UK Lockheed branch for modifications. On March 16th, 1945 the aircraft was received by No. 59 Squadron. After the end of war in Europe the aircraft was handed over to No. 1674 HCU on June 24th, 1945 and on August 11th, 1945 KK297 was assigned to No. 111 (C) OTU which moved from Bahamas Islands back to the United Kingdom. On March 26th, 1946 it was received by No. 51 MU and on November 11th, 1947 it was struck of charge.

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Taxiing Liberator GR Mk.VIII KK297 "WE o C", No. 59 Squadron, spring 1945. Despite its poor quality this is one of very few pictures showing SCL "WE".

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Liberator GR Mk.VIII KK297 (ex-USAAF B-24J-100-CF s/n 44-44378, MC/n 34-105), No. 111 (C) OTU, Lichfield, 1946. There are several noticeable details: overpainted AL, trailing antenna counter balance of the communication set visible on the fuselage belly behind the AN/APS-15 radome (the aircraft was also equipped with the LAB device) and the frame mounted on the deflector of the side machine gun position preventing the side gunner to accidentally hit the wing and engines of his own airplane. On the wing under surface, next to the Leigh Light search light, the serial number was painted in the direction of flight. IFF Rebecca Mk.IIB set Type 346 receiving antenna is well visible behind the bombardier workstation's side window. The front wheel well covers partially

obliterate the front wheel disc featuring eight spokes. The aircraft had A-15 nose gun turret installed.

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Liberator GR Mk.VIII KH265 "OH o X", No. 120 Squadron, winter 1944

Liberator GR Mk.VIII KH265 (ex-USAAF B-24J-85-CF s/n 44-44136, MC/n 34-54) reached Prestwick on October 24th, 1944 and after modifications according to the RAF Coastal Command specifications on December 21st, 1944 was accepted by No. 120 Squadron where it was assigned AL "X". On July 16th, 1945 it was handed over to No. 51 MU and on October 15th, 1945 to No. 1 TAMU in Tempsford to be rebuilt to a transportation version C Mk.VIII. On November 24th, 1945 the aircraft in the transport modification was received by No. 59 Squadron and struck of charge on November 22nd, 1946.

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Liberator GR Mk.VIII KH265 "OH o X" pictured in flight above the snow-covered British countryside, winter 1944/45. The dorsal gun turret was removed. The wing leading edge de-icing rubber boots are not painted in the aluminum lacquer, propeller hubs are in natural metal finish. Note the Leigh Light search light attached outwards of the No. 4 engine.

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In-flight picture of Liberator GR Mk.VIII KH265 "OH o X" from No. 120 Squadron. Liberator sports the camouflage prescribed for the RAF Coastal Command aircraft, upper surfaces in Extra Dark Sea Grey, side and bottom surfaces white. Upper section of the engine cowlings is all painted in Extra Dark Sea Grey. National Markings I on the wing upper surface extend to the aileron. The photograph was probably taken shortly after the aircraft delivery to the squadron because as of January 7th, 1945 the National Markings I on the upper surfaces was to be replaced by National Markings II. Notice the aerodynamical covers of the main fuel tanks vent system exhaust on the wing upper surface behind engines No. 2 and No. 3 and Leigh Light search light attachment brace outwards the engine No. 4.

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Liberator GR Mk.VI 3742, No. 10 (BR) Squadron RCAF, summer 1945

Liberator GR Mk.VI RCAF s/n 3742 (ex-USAAF B-24J-100-CF s/n 44-44351, MC/n 37-48) received by Eastern Air Command on January 15th, 1945 and the aircraft was stored in Reserve. On February 20th, 1945 it was delivered to No. 10 (BR) where it received AL "A". On July 17th, 1945, after the war in Europe ended, the aircraft was accepted by the Eastern Air Command Meteorological Flight but after three months it was stored at Mont Joli base in Quebec. On November 22nd, 1946 RCAF sold the aircraft.

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No. 10 (BR) Squadron RCAF received Liberator GR Mk.VI 3742 on February 20th, 1945. The aircraft received the squadron AL "A" and the large shark mouth was painted on the nose around bombardier's position enclosure. There is an IFF set receiving antenna mounted behind the navigator's workstation side window. The holder design differs from the British and American design since dipoles with director are horizontally oriented. The propellers feature wide chord blades.

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In summer 1945 (before hand over to the meteorological flight) the whole head (probably lion's one) was painted to complement the shark mouth on Liberator GR Mk.VI 3742 which covered the whole aircraft nose, from A-15 gun turret to the cockpit windshield.