

Warrant Officer Antonin (Tonda) Kaminek (Pilot)



Noting a cross placed on the memorial on our 9th November Remembrance Sunday service FONFA board member Richard Grycz, himself a Czech, talked to the person who had placed the cross. His name is Bernard Kuropka and he kindly later emailed FONFA the following information. “My tenuous connection toward the New Forest airfields is through my mother, a local girl, who met, married and became the widow of Warrant Officer Antonin (Tonda) Kaminek (Pilot).

W/O Kaminek pictured was based at Ibsley with 310 Czech Squadron, flying MKV Spitfires and was a highly decorated Pilot who had over 1500 hours in his RAF Logbook. One of the Spitfires he flew, documented in his Logbook, was AR501, variously NN-A and NN-D plus later squadron markings. This Spitfire AR501, is the centrepiece of the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden Airfield, Biggleswade and still maintained in flying condition.

If you follow this YouTube link

: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwCrK1p4P48>

Czech Pilots in RAF service - part II . you will see W/O Antonin (Tonda) Kaminek (a sergeant Pilot at the time) around 5mins 12secs into the film. He has dark hair, a rounded/almond face, of small stature, and can be seen covering his eyes from the glare sat in a wicker chair whilst being spoken to by the 310 CO (Sqdn Leader Dolezal).

My mother never got to see this film, shot by the BBC during 1943 at Exeter airfield in colour, to record the involvement of allied airmen in the fight against the Axis powers. The Shuttleworth Team pointed me in the right direction to view it on YouTube in 2017. I was able to share the discovery with a Czech nephew of Antonin Kaminek, with whom we have stayed in contact since the early 1970's.”

It is rare to see colour footage taken during WW2. Although the film was shot at Exeter airfield, I feel the actions taking place in the film ,would have taken also place at Ibsley.310 was at Ibsley from September 1943 to February 1944

Kaminek had a long flying career. Starting with the Czech Airforce in 1939 and ending with his death in an air crash in Bolivia in 1946.

“Private plane crashed during an adventure mission. US medic Dr Harry Theron Pitman (34/Hospital Chulumani/near La Paz) and pilot Antonin Kaminek (Czech/ex RAF). Exact date not reported ("a week ago").”Reported Tuesday 5 November 1946
Cochabamba Bolivia. **It would be good to know what the adventure mission was.**



Further links for this pilot

<https://asn.flightsafety.org/wikibase/310322>

<https://fcafa.com/2016/02/10/remembering-their-100th-2016/>

<https://fcafa.com/2011/06/16/spitfire-ar501/>

<https://www.armedconflicts.com/Kaminek-Antonin-t89750>

<https://www.armedconflicts.com/topic/view/106831>

Links to find out more about 310 Squadron

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No._310_\(Czechoslovak\)_Squadron_RAF](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No._310_(Czechoslovak)_Squadron_RAF)

<https://cz-raf.webnode.cz/czechoslovak-units/a310-squadron/>

https://www.historyofwar.org/air/units/RAF/310_wwII.html