

Sgt Jan Janek 787577 RAFVR
Za chrabrost před nepřítelem (Czech
Gallantry Medal)

Jan was born on 30 March 1918 in Přebice, South Moravia, Czechoslovakia,

Educated in Czechoslovakia, he escaped to Poland in the Summer of 1939, and then onto France where he joined l'Armée d'Air at Toulouse airbase, where he commenced training to be a bomber pilot.

When France capitulated in June 1940 he was evacuated to Britain where he joined the RAFVR. In May 1941, after completing his pilot training, he was posted to 311 (Czechoslovak) Sqn, based at RAF Honington, Suffolk flying Wellington bombers. In November 1941, he was awarded the Czechoslovak, Za chrabrost před nepřítelem, Gallantry Medal.

On 23rd January 1942 Jan, in a crew of six airmen, was posted from 311 Sqn to 138 Sqn at RAF Stradishall, Suffolk.

At 00:006 on 10 March 1942 Jan, operating as the 2nd pilot, and the crew departed RAF Stradishall in Whitley V Z9125 (NF-A) on Operation Frensham I, which was a supply drop to the French resistance.

The aircraft failed to gain height and crashed at the end of the runway. Rescuers managed to save the rear gunner before the aircraft exploded, killing the rest of the crew.

Also killed : Sqn Ldr Boris Romanoff MiD (Pilot); FO Vaclav Jelinek (Nav); Sgt Ladislav Fornůsek (WOp/AG); Sgt Maximilian Politzer (Observer)

Jan is buried in Haverhill Cemetery, Suffolk

Jan is commemorated on Wall Panel 188

Photo Source : Suffolk News

