

Russel W. Ellis

“Why Czechoslovakia exactly?” This was the way Russel Ellis's friends asked when he was preparing his vacation and was choosing between Florida and a communist country behind the Iron Curtain. And they added: “It is a Commie area and you don't know the language”. Though Russel Ellis had a reason. He was with 3rd Army Tanks in Czechoslovakia in Spring 1945. Russel Ellis was sent to Susice region as a young artillery officer with his unit. As described by Ellis, American soldiers' support at that time consisted in helping to establish back the Czechoslovak government control. R. Ellis lived in Rejstejn for some time and was transferred to Susice later on. He was placed in Hotel Fialka altogether with a few other officers. He met a few Susice citizens including our family. My mum worked as interpreter at that time and I as a three-year-old baby accompanied her.

R. Ellis really came to Czechoslovakia in 1987. First of all he and his wife visited Prague and then went to Susice and Rejstejn where Russel met his old friends and that was the way I got to know him as well. As an English teacher I had an ideal opportunity to practice conversation and practical application of the language that we missed a lot at that time. On the other hand as a teacher I experienced a lot of awkward situations. It was really hard to explain where the memorial tablet commemorating the participation of the US Army in the liberation of the town Susice has gone and why it was removed in the protest against something that had no relationship to 1945 liberation. The name of the Elementary School “Nejedlého” caused some more confusion, when the Ellis recognized the statue of T. G. Masaryk standing in front of school immediately. Not mentioning they offered a few facts about this worldwide known politician. I was also ashamed that I was not brave enough to bring this unique guests among my students of English. Russel was an expert in teaching English in an international school (SIT). I will forever remember the forgiving smile of the former American soldier who knew or felt how it all worked in here. We went to Sumava Museum in Kasperske Hory. Though I took this trip as a plan B to fill in a gap in our program, Ellis loved it and I loved the time we were together. I enjoyed their life style, completely different to ours. They were carried away by any improvised meetings the locals. I invited them to meet TJ Susice Volleyball Club members. Not only they had a talk with a few volleyball players, but also sang a few English and American songs accompanied by guitar at the Czech barbeque (we roasted a Czech ram). Russel Ellis captured his experience of Czechoslovakia in a short essay in Brattleboro Reformer, Vermont in December 1987. He sent

me a cut of the paper, luckily the censor overlooked the content of the article ...
Artillery officer Russel Ellis died 16th July 2012.
Pavel Kahle

Ladislav Antes

He was born in May 19th, 1924. In Policka, the birthplace of composer Bohuslav Martinu. He had six siblings, came from a poor family. Already as a young boy he was musically and artistically talented. When he was 14 years old he commenced the military school in Hradec Kralove, it was at beginning of the war. Thereafter he was preoccupied with the idea to join the British Army. And it succeeded. His journey began over Switzerland, where he and his friend went through a basic training in the internment camp. He flew to England after training and was assigned to the army unit near Oxford. Then he began a three-year saga, when he was participating in the fightings in Morocco. He was also involved in the reconstruction of destroyed roads and bridges on the orders of the president of Czechoslovakia. That was the end of the war, but Lada Antes could return from England to Czechoslovakia in late 1945. He met his future wife, Kristyna Holeckova, in Svitavy in the spring of 1946. The wedding took place in April of 1947.

And so Lada Antes became a Susice citizen. He had two daughters, Hana and Vladimira. Lada was active in culture, he joined as a co-founder and bandleader of a brass band "Solovacka". He was employed as an accountant in The SOLO factory. Apart from the fact that he was playing with brass band he became a member of the Symphonic Orchestra in Klatovy. Antes, Professor Frantisek Prochazka and other musicians founded the quartet that played at Svatobor hotel regularly. He was awarded the Medal of Merit by Antonin Novotny, president of republic, in 1965. The sixties and political easing were approaching. We stood by the foundation of the Club of Committed Non-Party Members in Susice in May 1968.

Then August 21st with the occupation came. And normalization and hard times came soon after. Lada could not work as an accountant and was transferred to the warehouse. And his health worsened. Doctors found heart disease, narrowing of the aortic and aortic insufficiency. At that time necessary pharmaceuticals were sent him from England but customs officers confiscated them. An unofficial celebration of the liberation of Susice attended by

representatives from the US Embassy took place in May 1981. At that time Ladislav Antes had a conflict with StB (Secret political service) agents. He wrote a letter about this incident to United States ambassador in May 5th, 1981. The letter was broadcasted by Radio Free Europe (see below).

Ladislav Antes had one big wish. He wanted to see the place where he was during the war – England. Accommodation was negotiated near London, where he had planned to depart in early November 1981. His daughter, Ing. Hana Kohoutova, says about this time: "I returned from work around five one day in mid-October. There were neighbors before our house and they told me that StB took my father to Klatovy. I was seeking for him. In the evening I saw slowly going hunched figure near river. It was my father who had grown old a few years during that afternoon. StB agents questioned him, he had to surrender his passport and visa and a plane ticket to England. They wanted to know with who he will be in contact. Daddy took to bed at home and was very sick. He went to the hospital after three days. He died a few hours before Christmas Eve in December 23rd, 1981." His wife died three months later. His daughter got an apologetic and rehabilitative paper at the beginning of 1990. Paper was signed by the then director of the SOLO factory, who also signed his transferring. Daughter threw away this list... Mr. Ladislav Antes would be 90 years old in May 19th, 2014. It is now almost 33 years since his untimely death. He was a great man and friend.

Josef Spevacek (2014)

On May 8th, 1981, in Susice
US Embassy
Na Trzisti – Mala Strana - Praha

Your Excellency,

I would like to inform you about a situation that I was an eyewitness. Many people were present and they would confirm my testimony. In May 6th, the delegates of the US embassy arrived to Susice and laid down a wreath reminiscent the participation of the US Army during the liberation of Susice. I came to the square at 12.25 hrs. The wreath was on the place where the plaque with English-Czech text, reminding the liberation of Susice in May 6th, 1945, used to be. The plaque was removed by order of Susice representatives 9 years ago.

A green car with chipped right wing, Lada ABI 43-15, came at 12.50 hrs., about an hour after the laying of a wreath. Two young men jumped out of the car. They were about 30 years old. They took the wreath and dragged it into the car.

I stood with my friends about 4 meters from this place and tried to prevent it. I blocked the car. I pushed my right leg in the door on the driver's side and held the door open. I said to them - Gentlemen, by what right do you take the wreath? - the answer - Mind your own business. We will not discuss with you. - my answer - Gentlemen, I was fighting there. I served in western army. But I could not keep the car door open. I said - I will find your car and report this case immediately.

I was very upset, because I had a severe heart disease some time ago. The car drove away. With friends, who stood around - all condemn this despicable act. These men are members of State Security in Klatovy area and one of them was identified by people standing around. The representatives of Susice surely watched this situation from the windows of the town hall and maybe gave an instruction to StB agents. And they forgot that leaders of the Revolutionary people's committee of Susice went to Petrovice to ask the commander of US troops to hasten movement to Susice, which was in danger before SS units just 36 years ago.

As a soldier who served in the western army, I condemn such behavior. I regard it as an insult of all my friends, comrade-in-arms, who fought for the liberation of our homeland.

Yours sincerely

Ladislav A n t e s

former member of Czechoslovak Army in England

Joseph B. Smrt

When Joseph Smrt appeared in Susice 1994, he spoke Slovak very well (parents came from Poprad). He was known with his mot: "I was brainy as death and nothing happened to me" (brainy means rapid in Czech). He found his favourite places, Svatobor hotel and U Salu restaurant, that he remembered very well. And he was pleasant they still exist. Joseph Smrt, mechanic in 94th Division of Patton's 3rd Army, was born in 1916 in North Judson, Indiana. He was awarded with the so-called European Medal with four bronze stars that represented his participation in four combat operations including the Battle of Germany. On the one hand he was a consistent American patriot, on the other he did not forget

his Slovak lineage. A death was faster than Joseph B. Smrt. He died at age of 98 in September 23rd, 2014.

John Hancock Daniels

John Hancock Daniels was born in October 28th, 1921 in St. Paul, Minnesota. He graduated from Phillips Academy, Yale University, and after the war, Harvard University. He served as a lieutenant-captain with the 738th Field Artillery Regiment in the World War II. He came with this regiment to Susice in May 6th. Then he and his unit were stationed in Podmokly and Cepice until the autumn 1945.

Since 1945, he was keeping up a correspondence with some Susice citizens. The second time he came as leader of the group of veterans in 1988 and his wife and grandson accompanied him. The third time he was here as a participant in the celebrations in 1990.

"What have we done to them? Why are they afraid of us?", he asked in 1988, when he tried to come into the building of the former people's committee. He wanted to present the plaque, whose text ended with the words "We will not forget." Locked hall was gratitude for what he and his colleagues made for Susice in 1945.

John H. Daniels is the author of several publications relating mainly to the World War II: "War Diary"(1948),"And Then What Happened? May Day 1945" (1982), "Nothing Could Be Finer"(1996/reprint 2006). He died in September 18th, 2006.

Milos Sliva

He was born in Susice in November 8th, 1887. His father, a director of elementary school, was free-thinking and progressive teacher who was working in Susice area nearly half century. He was studying in Pilsen, Prague and then in Switzerland.

He was wounded when he went from Austria to Serbia (wound never healed properly) during the World War I. He was caught and sentenced to death, then was pardoned, when he declared that will go for the front. It was at the beginning of the war. He managed to flee and became a member of the anti-Austrian Mafia. He served as a lieutenant in the Czechoslovak army after the war. Then he worked in a diplomatic services in Belgium.

In September 1938, After the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1938, he took service with the Allies. He served voluntarily and free of charge here. He worked in the fifth office with a military attache at the French Embassy (sabotage of trains operating in Germany, reporting, obstructing the plans of German agents etc.). He was forced to leave Belgium and go to France after the invade of Germans in Belgium in May 10th, 1940. He was released by the Czechoslovak military headquarters at the request of the French Ministry of War (service spécial) and continued his activities with the French Ministry of War. He should be sent as a paratrooper with the broadcast station from England to Belgium. But it never happened because he was injured in the bombing of Orleans and could not go to England in time (before conclusion of a ceasefire Petain with Hitler). He remained in the service of the French military bureau spécial in Montpellier. Rabat in Morocco in Africa should be a next staff. In the meantime, however, it was organized the French Resistance, and he received the order to remain in France. He was searching the places where the invasion should be carried out. Perhaps his reports contributed to the successful disembarkation of Allied troops.

He organized the crossing of young people to Spain (Orolon - Pyrenees). For greater security he moved to the French countryside, the village Chevrieres-Isere, near Grenoble, where was registered on the office as a French citizen under the name of Antoine Avils (read backwards).

But he was tracked down by the Gestapo and arrested in September 9th, 1943. He was imprisoned in Fresnes near Paris and then shipped off to Düsseldorf in Germany, from where he sent the last message in August 1st, 1944 (a total of six letters, one of the Fresnes and five from Düsseldorf). Since then, no news about him. All searches remained without result and his fate is unknown to this day.

B. Velehrachova, Brussels

Matej Pavlovic

Sergeant Matej Pavlovic was born in Vlkonice, near Susice. His father, Antonin Pavlovic, was a peasant. After the finishing of the basic school he was apprenticed as a locksmith in Susice. He graduated a fighter pilot school during military service in Hradec Kralove in 1937. He was flying with the Czechoslovak fighters AVIA. During the training flight he visited a space over his native village and searched his father working in the field. It is said that he startled father's cows and father threaten with a whip him. Matej flew again, flapped his wings

and threw down a pack. He served at the airport in Hradec Kralove in 1938. There he also caught March 15th, 1939 - occupation of the republic, dissolution of the Czechoslovak Army. Matej Pavlovic did not think twice and ran away like most of pilots to Poland. Eventually he stayed there and was assigned to officer school for the observers. Jaroslav Vyhnis is also there, another flier related to the Susice region. He participated in reconnaissance flights and was awarded by the Polish Cross of War (Krzyż Walecznych). He was the first Czechoslovak with this military decoration in World War II. Matej Pavlovic joined into RAF along with Poles. He was enlisted to the Volunteer Reserve under the non-commissioned number 782594. There are no reports until December 1940. Then he attended the retraining as a reserve for Sqn. Afterwards he commenced the service with the No. 303 Polish Fighter Squadron. He was shot down in a dogfight over Le Touquet at 27,000 feet in April 21st, 1941. He flew in the Spitfire Mk II A with serial number P 7859 and unknown personal identifications (Squadron code was RF). He was shot down at 11:10 p.m. by the German fighter Bf-109 from I / JG51. Pavlovic was 26 years old in March 7th, 1941.

His name is on the memorial of Polish Air Force at RAF in Northolt. He is buried in Boulogne-sur-Mer, grave No. 8-A-19. He was known among his squadron to take his cat mascot "Beast" (Potvora) with him on operational flights.

Ludvik Kral

Ludvik Kral was born in Zichovice near Susice in October 23rd, 1915. He graduated from grammar school in Susice, and then studied business academy in Pilsen. He graduated a non-com school at the 4th dragoons regiment in Klatovy after returning from Tunis, where he served as a representative of Bata Shoe Organisation. He went from Yugoslavia to France, where he reported to the newly forming foreign Czechoslovak army after the occupation of Czechoslovakia. He was admitted to the auxiliary squadron of 1st Reconnaissance Unit in January 1940. He sailed away to the UK after the defeat of France and was admitted into the RAF in October 21st, 1940. He was released in the rank of sergeant and was finally transferred to the 311th Czechoslovak Bomber Squadron as a Wireless Operator-Air Gunner after the graduating of the basic flight training.

Then Ludvik Kral was sent to full operational activity. He made his first air strike on the docks in Belgian port in February 22nd, 1942. He flew in Wellington with code name KX-H. Another night air strikes on enemy cities such as Cologne,

Hamburg, Dortmund and Bremen followed. Searching and attacking the German ships and submarines were his other tasks. He returned back to the 311th Squadron in May 1943. The unit started to fly with aircraft of American production, four- engined Consolidated B-24 Liberator. But Kral was seriously injured during the landing maneuver in June 17th, 1943. He broke both arms and injured his head. He was in the RAF Hospital in Wroughton for two and half months. As it turned out, head injuries were so serious that they became fateful in the future. He was transferred to the Transport Command RAF in June 1944. That was the end of his career with the famous 311th Czechoslovak Squadron. Ludvik Kral and the rest of his crew were the first Czechoslovak pilots who landed on the liberated country after a flight from the UK. It was in May 17th, 1945. Ludvik Kral ended his service at RAF in August 1945. He flew a total of 1626 hours and achieved the British rank of Flight Lieutenant during the service at RAF. He was honored for his war successes: fourtimes Czechoslovak War Cross, one Czechoslovak medal "For gallantry in the face of the enemy", one Czechoslovak Military Medal "For the Merit" 1st Class, one Commemorative Medal of the Czechoslovak Army abroad, one War Medal (UK), one Defence Medal (UK), one 1939–45 Star (UK), one Air Crew Europe Star (UK), one Atlantic Star (UK). He stayed at the air force after the war. His health was deteriorating after a head injury. He suffered from pains and therefore left the Air Force in April 25th, 1946. He died four years later, in April 1950.

Cpt. Vaclav Kojzar

Captain Vaclav Kojzar, born on February 26, 1916 in Stachy, district Susice, demonstrated heroism in battles in North Africa and on the Western Front during World War II.

He became a member of the Czechoslovak Infantry Battalion 11 - East, with which he participated in the fighting in the port of Tobruk and other places in the desert as an artilleryman. As a tank driver of British troops, he participated in the siege of Dunkirk. In May 1945 he arrived with his tank and with his colleagues from Czechoslovakia. armored brigade to Susice. Here he rented a bicycle at the Fialka Hotel and went to Stachy to greet his parents, who already considered him dead, after six years.

He was awarded the Czechoslovak War Cross in 1939, the Czechoslovak Medal for Bravery, the Czechoslovak Military Medal for Merit, the Medal of the 8th Army of the Middle East. In 2006, pres. Václav Klaus awarded a medal for

outstanding services to the state in the field of the development of democracy, humanity and human rights.

After February 1948, he was convicted as politically uncomfortable by his comrade-in-arms from Tobruk, prosecutor of the Prague State Prosecutor's Office and Deputy Chief Military Prosecutor Juraj Vieska (formerly Juraj Wiesz) for treason in a fabricated trial to life imprisonment and spent seven and a half years in uranium mines. he was on amnesty in 1960.

After 1989 he was an active member of the Czechoslovak Legionary Society. Since 1999 he has lived in Susice.

He died on January 21, 2006 at the age of ninety.
