

Squadron Codes worn by BL688



132 Squadron 'City of Bombay'

Battle of Britain veteran **Flt Lt Des Fopp** in his MK Vb with codes **FF A**. He was Co of 132 Squadron.



P/O Arthur D Chiddenton, Royal Canadian Air Force flew BL688 on several occasions during 1942. He was reported missing in action after he took off from RAF Martlesham Heath on a Rhubarb on the 5th of December 1942. Reported KIA aged 20 years. Hit by enemy flak in Spitfire Vb AB369 and crashed into the North Sea. His body was never recovered.



Son of Sydney James Chiddenton and Pheobe Barbara Chiddenton of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Trained at No 5 Service Flying Training School, Brandtford, Canada – Course 41 October 26th 1941. Runnymede Memorial Panel 100.



Free French Pilot Paul Hubidos who escaped France in July 1940 to Gibraltar. There he boarded a freighter with several other Free French pilots bound for England. He trained at RAF Odium and was assigned to 132 Squadron in 1942. He flew BL688 on numerous occasions. He died on 8th March 1943 shot down by FW190 over Rouen whilst on 'Ramrod 76' with 340 Sqn RAF in Spitfire MK IX BS312 code GW F.



*Odiham, le link Trainer, Inst. P/O Bollington.
[de gauche à droite] Moi, Lt Moysan, Béasse,
Bollington, Boudier, Buiron, Hubidos.*



132 Squadron was made up of pilots from many different nations, Australian, New Zealand , Polish, Free French, Caribbean



Free French pilot Phillipe Beraud circled left fled France shortly after the Battle of France from St Jean de Luz to England on June 24, 1940 After integration into the RAF and training at RAF Odium, he was assigned to 132 Squadron and flew BL688 from March until July 1942. Sadly Beraud died on the 17th of April 1943 whilst with 341 Sqn in Spitfire MK IX BS105 on Circus 286. He was shot down when escorting Lockheed Ventura bombers over Caen and crashed between Le Havre & Fe'camp Seine Maritime. He is buried at Ste Marie Cemetery, LeHavre.

**MK Vb's with 132 Squadron codes FF – The Spitfires are clipped wing MkVb's.
BL688 is in there somewhere !**



PILOTS OF THE CARRIBEAN

Here we have two pilots who served on 132 Squadron who were from Barbados. On the left pointing up is Sgt Arthur O Weekes with Sgt C Joseph on the wing. Weekes had many flying hours on BL688 from Sept to Dec 1942. There is a high probability that the MK Vb in picture is BL688.



The pilots of BL688 serving with 132 'Bombay' Squadron 1942

Pilots name	Date	Code	Duty	Comments
Sgt AE Burbridge	28/03/42 4/07/42 30/07/42	FF _		
P/O Szyszkowski P- 76614	28/04/42 30/04/42	FF _	Scramble	KIA 22/08/42 serving with 306
Sgt P Hubidos	29/04/42 28/07/42 27/08/42	FF		
Sgt Basey	26/06/42	FF		
P/O Hammond	29/06/42 5/07/42			
Sous Lt P Beraud	2/07/42	FF	2 sorties	KIA 17/04/43 serving with 341
Sgt AD Chiddenton	30/07/42 31/10/42 1/11/42		Convoy Patrol	KIA 5/12/42 in Spitfire AB369
Sgt JOR Martineau	5/08/42 29/08/42		Scramble	

Pilots	Date	Code	Duty	Comments
Sgt WJ Johnston	27/09/42 1/10/42	FF	4 sorties	
Sgt T Wallace	27/09/42 19/10/42			
Sgt A O B Weekes	27/09/42 6/10/42 8,10,11,13,14,21 23,24,28,30/11/ 42, 1, 2/12/42	FF R (?)	2 sorties 2 sorties Night Flying Convoy patrol 2 sorties	
Sgt JF Kelman	27/09/42 27/10/42			
P/O T Nesbitt	9/10/42			
P/O VJ Verby	11/10/42			
P/O AG Russell	12/10/42			
P/O EJ Cowan	12/10/42			

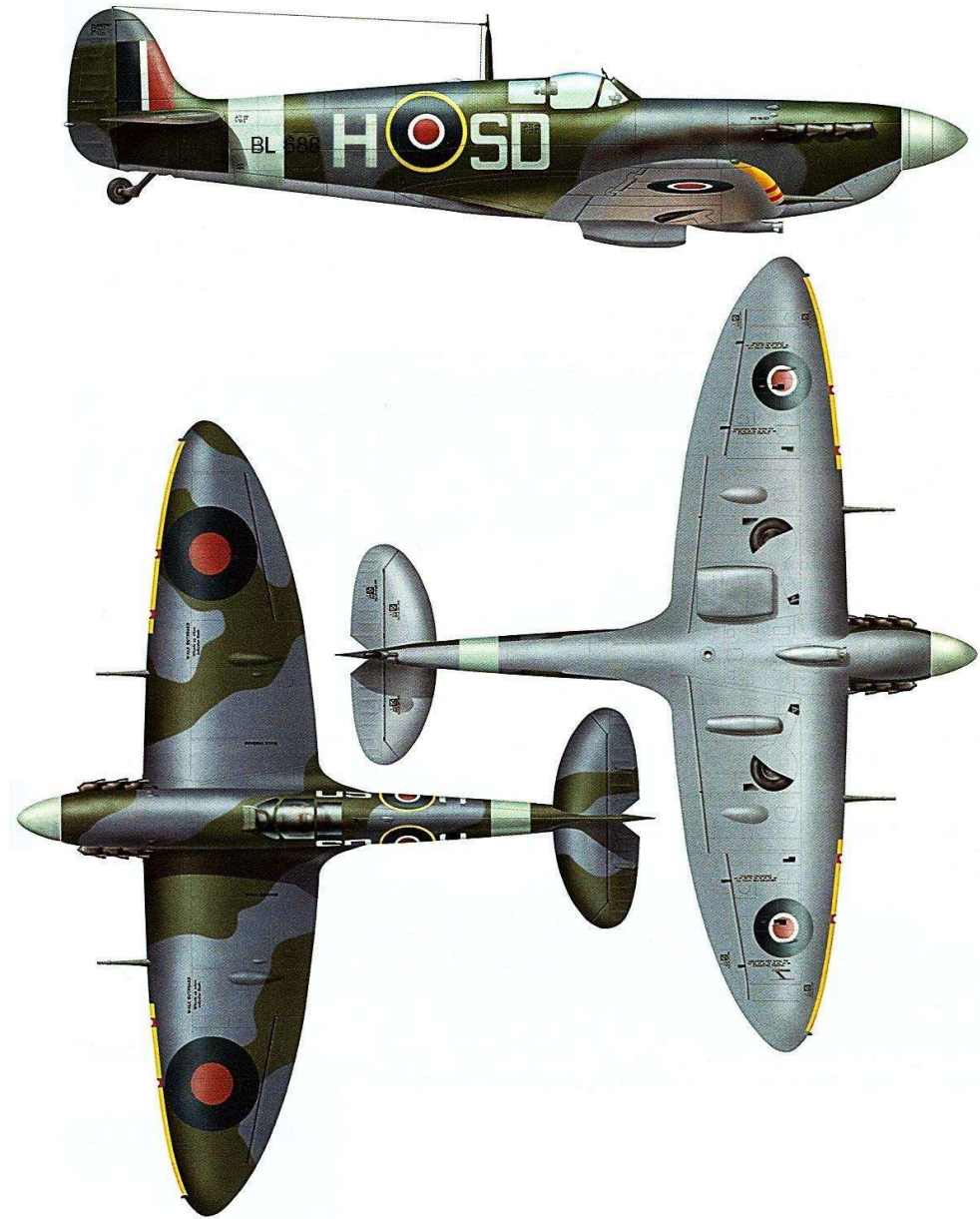
Pilot	Date	Code	Duty	Comments
P/O D Hunter	18/10/42			
P/O GP Stone	29/10/42			
P/O VJ Sumpter	25/11/42 26/11/42			
F/Lt G St CB Reid	29/11/42			
Sgt RJ Fowles	5/12/42		Search and rescue	Search for Sgt Chiddenton MIA
Sgt RA Southward	6/12/42			
Sgt WA Cruikshanks	7/12/42, 12/12/42			
Sgt DA Atchinson	8/12/42, 12/12/42			

In this photograph we have two of our Free French pilots who both flew BL688 with different squadrons and at different times of the war. This photograph was taken in 1940 at RAF Odium. (Circled) Seated is Capt Bernard Fuchs who had great success with 501 Squadron in 1943 and named BL688 Annette II. Fuchs had an illustrious career in the Air Force and went on to become Marshal of the French Air Force. He retired in 1969. Standing behind him is Phillippe Beraud who flew BL688 with 132 Squadron in early to mid 1942. Beraud died on the 17th April 1943 when serving with 341 FF Squadron and was the squadrons 1st fatality.



501 Squadron RAF County of Gloucester

As flown by Flt Sgt S E
Nichol of New Zealand
with the codes SD H.
He survived a mid air
collision in BL688.



+3 +2		JA	FE	MR	AP	2	1	7	4	2	1	H	N	7	4	2	1	H	7	4	2	1	7	4	2	1	N	D	E	E	A	A	U	F	I	C	O	L	AM FORM 1190
PARAS		SE	OC	NO	DE	TENS			UNITS			A	O	TENS			UNITS			O	NT	D	U	B	A	C	A	C	A	F	A	T	A	L	I	N	J		
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DROME		DATE				UNIT				GROUP				C		D		M		R		F		L		C		L		O		S		S		T		R	
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INSTR		785C				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
VIS: LT.		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
REP		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
ALL		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
ICE		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
WINDSCK		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
INSTRM		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
ALL		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
INST'L		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
HYD.		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
ALL		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
RETRCT		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
DEF		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
PROB		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
W T & C		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEFIRE XP				E		ALICE		E		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A		A	
AIR		X 340				A/C TYPE AND MARK				SPITEF																													

BL 688
12/4/43

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GROUND	AIR	W/T	PROB.	DEF	REF	ALL	HYD.	INST.	ALL	INSTR.	WINDSH.	ICE	ALL	REF	VIS. LT.	INSTR.	INAD.	FLT.	DRONE	AIDS	PARAS.	+3	+2																
ERRORS		INEX.		CAUSE		STAGE		DRILL		S.F.		OTHER																											
475		95		P9741		11:00		P9741		82699		Squadron Formation Practice																											
211		108		Nockle		WOK		WOK		WOK		WOK																											
Air Coll.		- 8th wing tip Bn 699		collided with port aileron		P9741		Latter ap. crashed in spin		Bn 699 landed successfully		8075 - Sgt killed at Bn 699 to blame, but not culpably																											
negligent OC: agrees with facts		AOC: - NFA against Sgt killed		- formation was the		checked before		on ops.																															
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MONTH		COMMAND		UNIT CLASS		AIRCRAFT TYPE		FLIGHT		DAMAGE		CAS.																											
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501 Squadron RAF

BL688 was coded SD-H as **Annette II** and flown predominately by **Free French Air Force Captain Bernard Fuchs**, (pictured left sitting in the cockpit of Peggy II), throughout May to July 1943 on a variety of Op RAMROD, CIRCUS, RODEO and JIM CROWS:





Capt Bernard Fuchs sitting in BL688 – known as Annette II. He was credited with 2 confirmed kills over Abbeville. 1 x Me 109 & FW 190 and several trains, ships, transport vehicles. He was a very daring pilot and was known to return to Hawkinge with tree branches stuck in his tailwheel. After WW2 Fuchs went on to serve in the French Air Force and rose to the rank of Marshall of the Air Force. He died on the 30th October 2005 and is buried in Paris.

Pilot	Date	Code	Duty	Comments
W/O JL Lilburn	16/04/43	SD H		
Sgt S E Nicol RNAF	12/04/43	SD H	Formation Flying Ballyhalbert Northern Ireland	Involved in a mid air collision with Spitfire Vb P8741 flown by Sgt P M Rogerson Killed.
F/Lt LM Ralph	3/05/43			
J/Lt Barthold	30/06/43	SD H		
Sgt W Atkinson	16, 26, 27, 28/06/43	SD H		
Lt Bernard Fuchs	24/04/43 11,12,13,14,15, 16,17/05/43 15,17,20,24,26, 27,28,29, 30/06/43 7/10/43	SD H	Ramrod 71,73 Rodeo 215, 231 Jim Crow, Circus 298,299, 397,Air sea rescue search, Recce Dieppe, Ostende, Dunkirk, Foreland	Promoted to Capt 17/06/43 Me 109 & FW 190 destroyed



**610 Squadron in 1943 based at Tangmere
BL688 arrived in October 1943 and wore codes
DW F .The man in charge at this time, Wing
Commander and fighter Ace -Johnnie E Johnson.
The squadron conducted fighter sweeps to
France on a daily basis.**



Pilot	Date	Code	Duty	Comments
P/O John Gower Allen Small	21/01/43	DW F		Died 14/01/1989 St Mary's New Yard, Mortehoe, North Devon

Debden Eagles 335 Fighter Squadron USAAF

Pictured right is Maj Mac McKennon of Arkansas, USA who joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. He was posted to the Eagle Squadron on the 27th of Feb 1942. According to his logbook they still referred themselves as the Eagle Squadron even after they were officially the 335 FS of the 4th FG USAAF. BL688 was with the squadron for a short period until they transitioned from Spitfire MK V's onto P47

Thunderbolts which had further range to escort the bombers. Mac was an Ace and credited with 12 aerial kills and 9 ground victories. He died in fatal air crash on 19th June 1947 in the USA in a student training accident.



1 03 SPIT I A	SELF	Formation	1:10
1 24 SPIT I B	"	Aerobatics	1:00
1 24 SPIT I B	"	Formation	1:20
1 24 SPIT I A	"	Formation	1:05
1 26 SPIT I B	"	Aerobatics	1:10
1 27 SPIT I A	"	Formation	2:45
1 27 SPIT I B	"	Formation	1:30
1 28 SPIT I A	"	Leoblighting	1:20
1 29 SPIT I B	"	Cine Gun	1:00
2 1 SPIT I A	"	Formation, Leoblighting	2:00
2 1 SPIT I A	"	Aerobatics	1:00
2 2 SPIT I B	"	Test Hop	1:15
2 2 SPIT I A	"	Formation	1:05
2 3 SPIT I B	"	Aerobatics	1:00
2 3 SPIT I B	"	Low flying	1:45
2 3 SPIT I B	"	Cine Gun	1:35
2 5 SPIT I B	"	Sector Hocco	2:15
2 6 SPIT I B	"	Cine Gun	1:45
2 6 SPIT I A	"	Aerobatics	1:20
2 7 SPIT I A	"	Aerobatics	1:30
2 7 SPIT I B	"	Aerobatics	1:10

GRAND TOTAL (Col 1) to (Col 1)		TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD
360	37	360

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
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EAGLE Sqd.

USAAF flew Spitfire MK Vb - BL688 saw service in March 1943 with the 335 Fighter Squadron based at Debden – ‘The Debden Eagles’ under the command of the American Ace Col. Don Blakeslee.



Maj. Don Willis 335 FS, 4th FG USAAF





316 Squadron RAF City of Warsaw
BL688 flew with codes SZ J & K
The Squadron would rotate
between RAF Acklington and RAF
Northolt.



S/Ldr Jan SIEKIERSKI P-1032
served with 316 & 315 Squadron



P-76806 F/Lt **Kazimierz**
DOLICHER circled below



Brunon Steinborn P-2825 was born on the 30th June 1915 in Brudzawy, Poland. In 1937, as tensions were rising in Europe, he was conscripted under National Service into the Polish Air Force. He trained as an air gunner on PZL P23B Karas light reconnaissance bombers and was posted to the 41st Reconnaissance Squadron. Following the invasion by Germany on the 1st September 1939, the 41st Squadron flew numerous operational sorties against the German forces. Attrition was however high and the Squadrons aircraft were steadily destroyed either in the air or on the ground. Brunon flew on a number of reconnaissance missions during the Polish campaign and was lucky to survive this period due to the overwhelming might of the German air force.



With the Polish forces in full retreat southwards, the remaining aircrew and ground crew of the 41st Squadron joined the many thousands of Polish servicemen heading by vehicle and foot for the borders with Hungary and Rumania. After crossing into Rumania, Brunon and the other servicemen were disarmed by the border guards and interred in holding camps by the Rumanian forces whilst their government tried to work out what to do. The guards at the internment camps were generally reluctant conscripts and security was lax. Along with a large number of other Poles, Brunon escaped from the camp and continued his journey southwards. He eventually made his way to Bucharest, where he reported to the Polish Consulate. He was given cash and identification papers stating he was injured and unfit for military service and therefore allowed to leave the country.

He made his way to the port Constanza on the Black Sea, where a vessel organised by the Polish government waited. The vessel sailed through the Dardanelles and disembarked them in Beirut. There they later boarded a second ship and sailed to Marseille. In France, they reported to the Polish Air Force depot in Lyon. He remained in France whilst the Polish Air Force attempted to reorganise itself. On the 10th May 1940, the German Blitzkrieg fell on France, and the Polish forces were again forced to retreat in the face of overwhelming opposition. The airmen were ordered to make their way to Biarritz on the Bay of Biscay for evacuation. They boarded ships and in June 1940, Brunon and a large group of other Polish airmen landed in Blackpool. He reported to the Blackpool Polish Depot on the 29th June 1940.

Brunon completed English language classes and was selected for pilot training. After ground training at No.12 ITW at St. Andrews, he commenced pilot training on Magister aircraft, going solo on the 17th February 1942 at No.15 EFTS Carlisle. He later trained on Tiger Moth and Master 1 aircraft at No.16 SFTS at Newton. He then qualified on Lysander and Martinet aircraft at the No.1 Air Gunnery School, Pembrey, and was engaged on target towing duties in order to increase his flying hours and experience.

In September 1943, Brunon was posted to 58 OTU, Grangemouth, and commenced training on Spitfires. He made his first flight in a Spitfire I on the 9th September 1943. From 58 OTU, he went to 61 OTU at Mantfordbridge, where he completed his training on Spitfire IIs.

On the 14th December 1943, he was posted to 316 (Polish) Fighter Squadron RAF, which at that time was based in Acklington. The Squadron was then flying the Mk VB Spitfire with clipped wings. Brunon continued to fly the Spitfire V on numerous training and operational sorties until April 1944, when 316 Squadron commenced conversion training onto the Mustang III (P51B). RAF Fighter Command was building up to undertake the long range bomber escort role over occupied Europe, and the Spitfire as a short range defensive fighter lacked the endurance to be an effective escort.



Soon after qualifying on the Mustang III, Brunon was selected for officer training. Upon being commissioned as a Pilot Officer, he returned to 316 Squadron in November 1944 and immediately commenced operational flying duties. He later took part in numerous fighter escort missions over occupied Europe. He flew Ramrods (Bomber escort missions) to Koblenz, Dortmund, Julich, Hamburg, Solingen, Cologne, Dusseldorf, the Ruhr, Nordenhausen, Swinemunde, Helgoland, Regensburg and Bremen. In early 1945, he was promoted to Flying Officer.

He continued flying with 316 Squadron for the remainder of combat operations. After the war, Flying Officer Steinborn married an English girl and was demobbed in 1946.

Two daughters were born in England and in 1955 the family immigrated to Australia. In 1956, the family had a son. Settling in Sydney, Brunon worked for Amalgamated Wireless Australia (AWA) specialising in the military electronics field until he retired in 1978. He was a member of the Polish Air Force branch of the RAAF Association. Brunon died in Sydney, Australia in January 2015.



Fl/Sgt. **Zygmunt Kowalski** P-780689 P.A.F – He flew BL688 as shown in the Operations Record Book, but unfortunately died in a crash with Spitfire Vb W3569 SZ-E on 21st March 1944. He was only 22 years old.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK						
DETAIL OF WORK CARRIED OUT						
By <u>316 (Polish) Squadron</u>						
For the Month of <u>JANUARY</u> 19 <u>44</u>						
DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT
				Up	Down	
6.1.44	Spitfire VB.					
	927 H	P/O. Gora, T.	Operational	12.30	13.10	Scramble. Recalled by Operations. Nothing
	844 L	Sgt. Kowalski, Z.	"	12.30	13.10	"
14.1.44	"	W/O. Wisniewski, W.	"	15.25	15.40	"
	453 Z	W/O. Marek, T.	"	15.25	15.40	"
26.1.44	"	P/L. Kratowski, T.	"	12.20	12.45	"
	688 K	Sgt. Kowalski, Z.	"	12.20	12.45	"

for *Zygmunt Kowalski*
Squadron Leader, Commanding,
No. 316 Polish Squadron.



Pilot	Date	Code	Duty	Comments
F/Lt J Siekierski P-1032	23/12/43	SZ J	Patrol	After the war settled in UK.
Flt/Sgt Steinborn	11/01/44 24/04/44	SZ K	Scramble	Died in Sydney, Australia in January 2015
F/Lt Kazimierz Dolicher P76806		SZ K		He flew with both 316 & 308 Squardon's RAF. Returned to Poland after the war. Died 17/11/1999 in Poznan, Poland.
Sgt Z Kowalski P-780689	26/01/44	SZ K	Scramble	Died 21 March 1944 in Spitfire Vb W3569 SZ - E

D - Day 6 June 1944

A Supermarine *Spitfire* MK Vb fighter receives maintenance from mechanics of **U.S. Navy Cruiser Scouting Squadron Seven** (VCS-7), which used these planes to spot Naval gunfire during the June 1944 Normandy invasion. Present are (from left to right): James J. O'Connor; C.N. Pfanenstiel; Chief Aviation Machinist's Mate V.G. Disa; Aviation Machinist's Mate Third Class R.P. Theirauld; and Edmund Pachgio. VCS-7 switched from their usual Curtiss SOC *Seagull* floatplanes to Supermarine *Spitfire* fighters - given the paper designation "FS-1" by the U.S. Navy - during the Normandy operation. VCS-7 was based at Royal Naval Air Station Lee-on-Solent, Hampshire (UK), and drew planes from a pool of *Spitfire* or *Seafire* fighters. **BL688 was assigned to 63 Squadron** and flew Forward Air Control. The squadron flew a total of 191 sorties between 6 and 25 June 1944, losing one aircraft to ground fire.



D –Day June 6th 1944

Ten squadrons, five RAF, four Royal Navy FAA (Fleet Air Arm) and VCS-7, were brought together at Lee-on-Solent to provide air spotting for the fire support ships of the Western and Eastern Naval Task Forces. The Western Naval Task Force, Rear Admiral Alan G. Kirk commanding, would land the US. First Army on beaches Utah and Omaha. The Eastern Naval Task Force would land the British Second Army on beaches Gold, Juno and Sword. Two of the RAF squadrons, Nos. 26 and 63, flew Spitfires. The other three, Nos. 2, 268 and 414, flew Mustang Mk. Is and Mk. IAs. The four FAA squadrons, Nos. 808, 897, 885 and 886, were assigned Seafire Mk. IIIs. On D-day, all aircraft were pooled. This meant that VCS-7 flew whatever type was available, either Seafire or Spitfire.



4Z was a late-production Spitfire Mk. V featuring individual exhaust manifolds of the same type which were adopted for Spitfire Mk. IX. An interesting and non-standard feature is the single reinforcing “fence” above the wheel well.

The pilots are Lieutenant Robert F. Doyle, USNR, shaking hands with his wingman, Ensign John F. Mudge, USNR, after their return from a gunfire-spotting and strafing mission over the Normandy. [US Navy]

Pilot	Date	Code	Duty	Comments
F/Lt A H Greenhalgh 49603	8/09/44	4 _	Naval Bombardment Spotting	In support of HMS Erebus off Le Havre
F/Lt FM Sheret 116926	10/09/44	4_	Naval Bombardment Spotting	Le Havre – HMS Erebus
	2/11/44		Naval Bombardment spotting	Walcheren Island, Holland
F/Lt R N Vickers 130180	26/09/44		Fighter escort to B 25 Mitchells and Bostons over Breskens, Holland	
F/Lt Coggins	2/11/44		Naval Bombardment	Walcheren, Holland
F/Lt J Mills 134111	4/11/44		Non Op flight from Manston to North Weald	BL688 landing accident and damaged. Pilot okay.

The Fate & Recovery of BL688



On 29.05.1945 Spitfire Mk. Vb, Serial No. BL688 was being flown by 20 year old Sgt. Zygmunt Bauerek on a Sector Reconnaissance flight, as he was a new pupil at No. 58 O.T.U. based at Hawarden. The flight lasted 45 minutes and the aircraft carried a normal fuel load only, i.e. no ammunition as the War in Europe was over by now.

The pilot was killed instantly when the aircraft struck high ground at 700 feet in "very bad" visibility. His body was reported as recovered during a five-day operation by No. 75 M.U. (Maintenance Unit), though local newspaper reports noted that those first on the scene had, in fact, pulled the pilot clear and extinguished his burning clothing with wet soil.

Nevertheless, this is one of the few such recoveries to be documented in considerable detail in the Operational record book for the unit. Weather conditions were described as appalling and the lifting cables on the two Coles cranes they were using broke no less than five times! Sgt. Zygmunt Bauerek is buried at Newark Cemetery, Section N, Grave No. 329. The major parts were recovered and placed in RAF storage.