

Prolog

Zbraslavice (Kutna Hora district) has been known since XIII. century during reign of Premysl Otakar II.. Since middle ages Zbraslavice town had been known as „...the open town without any ramparts, with castle fortified with bulwarks and embankments“. During and after reign of Vaclav IV. Zbraslavice had the criminal law (executions) and revenue law. The town had been growing, but Hussites' wars, seven years' war (1757), some fires and also siege of Prussian army (1866) ended its growth. However, until twentieth century, the town was growing and improving its craft and trade. Its historical urban character with eagle wing in the red field as if prefiguring the relationship of this place with flying.

{rokzoom title=|Zbraslavice-Pančava 1922|}images/stories/zbra_1922.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Zbraslavice 1935|}images/stories/zbra_1935.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Zbraslavice-Pančava 1940|}images/stories/zbra_1940.jpg{/rokzoom}

{rokzoom title=|Tower in 1942|}images/stories/letistni_vez_30.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Zbraslavice today|}images/stories/zbraslavice.jpg{/rokzoom}

Own history

{rokzoom title=|Winch towing in 1950s|}images/stories/50_leta1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Flying in 1950s, plane Fairchild UC-61 with Bücker 181 named Basa in

backwards|}images/stories/50_leta2.jpg{/rokzoom}

On 31st of October in 1931, in case of worsening weather situation, Czechoslovak airliner type Avia F.VIIb/3m, OK-AFB made emergency landing on fields near hill Poupil towards village Radvancice.

At the time representatives of ČSA in cooperation with Department of Public Works (MVP) were finding solution for question of emergency airports on the route over Czech-Moravian Highlands. Expansion of air traffic during autumn months and preparation for night flights reinforced the idea of emergency airports. Pilots were searching for the most suitable field and the final verdict (despite opposition of Uhlířské Janovice town) was released around the year 1932 by the authorized committee – the best field is near Zbraslavice.

After prolonged negotiations on the price of fields, just for a lease at first, but then the fields were bought (contemporary price was 2,80 Czech crowns per one square meter). The field could be ready for sowing in summer 1933 after solving diversion of power lines and small ground shaping. To open the airport, driveway to administration building had to be solidified and demarcating circle with a diameter of 30m had to be placed. Opening was approved by MVP yield c.j. 266 2488/6-75.337 ai34. From the beginning of 1935 it have been approved as national public and ancillary airport. On 5th of February in 1935 the approval of administration building with apartment for administrator took place (as an administrator was appointed Josef Chobot). Because of gradient of the field it was necessary to make drainage. Construction company Jar. Dajbych from Kutna Hora city was building a hangar for planes in 1937.

At that time, traffic in Zbraslavice airport was just occasional. Witnesses says, that it was used by military pilots, who landed there during orientation flights from distant airports just to get confirming stamp from administrator. More frequent guests were also planes from Baťa aviation department, which ensured connection between Zlín and branch in Zruč nad Sázavou. Layover were doing also sport planes during their sight-seeing or competition flights. There are no detailed documents and testimonies of military air force activity in the period of military emergency and mobilization in 1938. There was base of 61st intelligence and 72nd bomb squadron, which were subordinated to air force headquarters of 1st army ('Havlicek 10'). For a short term there was also 2nd observation squadron 'Slavia'. Mostly they used biplane airplanes Aero A-100/Ab-101 and twin-engine B-71. Activity of fighter squadrons with B-534 planes hasn't been clearly documented. During the occupation, MVP maintained its administration with Czech staff, although as a operators there were army schools Luftwaffe. For them, Zbraslavice were auxiliary (or working) airport area.

Until the end of 1943 there was mostly pilot school from Pardubice city Flugzeugfuhrerschule A/B 32 Pardibitz, which flew there with silver or dark camouflaged planes Heinkel He 72 Kadett, Focke Wulf Fw 44 Stieglitz and also with Bucker Kranich, SG-38. Pilot cadets were accommodated in wooden quarters at the Old pond. Today these wooden quarters are used for recreation.

In recent months of 1943 there was branch of battle school SG 102 in Nemecky (German) Brod (today Havlickuv Brod) Schlachtgeschwader 102 with Junkers Ju 87A planes. Those planes were ordered along access road. During all days complete training was taking place including flying in formations Kette (2) or Rotte (3) and dive flight. In 1944 there were Ju 87B as training planes. In this existing air traffic there was also pilot school from Pardubice with He 72 and also

with gliders. In June there was larger group of gliders – DFS Kranich, Weihe, SG-38 and also Grunau Baby..

{rokzoom title=|Pilots and students in 1946|}images/stories/50_leta3.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Flying in 1950s, plane Bücker 181 named Basal|}images/stories/50_leta4.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Flying in 1950s, aerobatics sailplane LF-107 Luňák, sailplane DFS Kranich in backwards|}images/stories/50_leta5.jpg{/rokzoom}

We don't know much about activity of Czech airports in the final phase of the war. At many places were found some planes nearly without any fuel which had been damaged or destroyed by people dedicated by the end of the war. Similar situation was also in Zbraslavice airport. After a short-term placement transport forces II/TG 2 with Junkers Ju 52/3m there stayed not only those planes but also Ju 87 (including 87G) and Focke Wulfy Fw 189. Supposedly one of functional transport planes type Ju 52 was from this airport, operated by Czechoslovak air force. Part of fifty-two with German crew with load flew away from here west. After liberation, Red Army settled down on the airport, it provided the necessary material. In the hangar there were many valuable gliders type Kranich, Weihe, Olympia, Grunau Baby GBII and also school gliders SG 38. From May 1945 there was actively incipient aero club near Baťa aviation department i Zruc nad Sazavou, which got two school gliders from Zbraslavice. Other gliders, some of them damaged by wrong manipulation, were after transfer of ownership to MNO allocated to somewhere else. Aero club in Zbraslavice began in August 1945.

□ Own history - 2

{rokzoom title=|Tower in 1976, plane Aero Ae-45 in forwards with besides stands L-40 Metasokol and in fully backwards Z-126 Trenér|}images/stories/letistni_vez_60.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Flying in 1960s, pilot setting in aerobatics sailplane LF-107

Luňák}}images/stories/60_leta1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Flight preparation in 1957, preparing sailplane VT-125 Šohaj}}images/stories/60_leta2.jpg{/rokzoom}

Presidential decree from 27th of October 1945, n.12456 acknowledged ownership of the Zbraslavice airport for Czechoslovak state, represented by the Ministry of Transport. Activity was restoring gradually – the influence of other aero clubs began. Not only by home aero club, but also by others – from Zruc nad Sazavou, where wasn't any suitable airport or field. Since the end of 1946 till beginning of 1950s there was also aero club from Kolin, they moved when their airport was ready for use. From 1946 members of Kutna Hora group were flying there. There also wasn't any suitable airport. In the early postwar years there was nearly motor operation only. There were some new planes Piper Cub L-4H from U.S. excesses – those planes were overflowed into the country from June 1946. Each of the mentioned aero clubs ran only one own plane. Kolin had two own planes, the second one was provided by manufacturer Navratil. This businessman and supporter of aviation in Zbraslavice had his business plane Fairchild UC-61 (license plate OK-ZEU) here. He provided his plane for Zbraslavice aero club during weekends. Later there were also two or three planes type Praga E-114 Air Baby and Z-281.

In the postwar years glider pilots had been commuting to better weather conditions in Podhorany near Zelezne hory (loosely translated Iron mountains) until 1948 when soaring traffic was finally started. As the only airport in the area, Zbraslavice had winch, which was also used by other aero clubs. Those aero clubs were going there with their own gliders. Aeroclub of Zruc and Posazavi became a center of DOSLET in 1950, aero clubs Zbraslavice, Humpolec and Havlickuv Brod were subjected to this center. In the end of 1951 provincial Central gliding school in Kralupy was canceled and its activity including all material and staff were under the leadership of Antonin Purok moved to Zbraslavice, just for a short term. In school activities, there were also other glider planes type Kranich, Kmotr and others.

{rokzoom title=|Dismounted sailplanes in 1945}}images/stories/60_leta3.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Flying in 1960s, aerobatics sailplane LF-107 Luňák and VT-125 Šohaj in backwards}}images/stories/60_leta4.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Flying in the end of 1940s, plane Piper L-4}}images/stories/60_leta.jpg{/rokzoom}

New reorganizations, with inception of Svazarm in 1952, meant a cancellation of gliding school and moving all material to somewhere else. In Zbraslavice „Winch station of aero club Svazarm“ was maintained and there also was new paid position of chief. Jaroslav Stepanek, local member of aero club Zbraslavice, was accepted as the chief of the aero club. Aero club Zbraslavice was subjected to regional aero club Jihlava, melded with all members of aero club Zruc nad Sazavou.

Besides activity of glider and motor operations, in 1953 there was also placed school for air agricultural work, which belonged to Czechoslovak airlines, who became owner of the airport. Instructors of „duster pilots“ (pilots of agricultural planes) came to train the pilots on planes type Fieseler Storch also known as „Stork“. Their activity and activity of the aero club blended well together. During air shows, which have been taking place since the end of 1940s, pilots were helping with organization and during normal traffic at the airport, they operated as tow pilots and instructors. This status lasted till 1955, when the training center was moved to Prague-Ruzyne. Zbraslavice airport

acquired status of „Aero tow station of Svazarm Zbraslavice“, Zbraslavice were subordinated to Central administration of Civil Aviation. For the second half of the 1950s, there were generous subsidies for this organization and enough planes and ancillary equipment.

During 1960s glider pilots and pilots of powered aircraft continued with their activity and activity of parachutists accrued. There are new curriculum and new trainees started to come. Glider pilots were concerned at periodical championship supported by tow pilots, there are also aerobatics pilots and cross-country flights. In aerobatic competitions, Slavoj Mezera succeeded and became Czechoslovak acrobatic tip. Pilots of powered aircraft started to compete in navigation competitions. Those activities culminated in 1970s – in 1971 there was championship in air navigation, for the first time with international participation (Polish with plane Wilga). Home crew Mezera-Štacha won second place.

1960s were marked by yellow wooden gliders – next to aging Šohaj gliders, which were slowly leaving, number of wooden glider planes Orlik started to grow. Since the beginning of this decade, times of immortal L-13 Blanik, metal glider for training, have begun. Today, Blanik planes have been used as training planes for more than 30 years!

{rokzoom title=|Flying in 1970s, fully hand start of Zlín Z-126

engine}}images/stories/70_leta1.jpg{/rokzoom} {rokzoom title=|Flying in 1957, unique plane of Czech flying C-104 - originally Bücker 131 Jungmann}}images/stories/70_leta2.jpg{/rokzoom}

In the mid 1970s, unfortunately the activity of glider pilots was scaled down and so the activity of other pilots. But the location of the airport in suitable and convenient area led to organizing Czechoslovakia women championship and later also men championship. During competitions, most of competition days were used. The only problem was coordination with air traffic in Caslav-Chotusice airport. In the years 1976-77 concentrations of aero club Tocna caused that many members from this aero club moved to aero club Zbraslavice. Intense training had been taking place since 1979, but in 1982 the activity of glider pilots was changed a little bit. Aero club started to climb up in the ranking of national competition and since 1983 aero club was pushing into the first period of the rank of aero clubs in former ČSSR-ČSFR.

Parachute training was ended in 1979 because of complicated situation (lack of airborne aircraft, etc.) and restrictive terrain. They moved to Kolin.

We also can't forget about the activity since sixties-seventies of planes Z-37 Cmelak („Bumble-bee“) in Zbraslavice which belonged to contemporary Slov-Air.

1980s

Let's come back to the activity of the aero club. In 1982 some juniors started to struggle in aero club's activity. In 1986 Ivan Hodan won CSR junior championship, in 1982 he achieved 5th place in federal soaring ranking. In 1982 Petr Tichy won 3rd place at CSR junior championship. But achievements of other pilots were improved too. In 1988 Jaroslav Němec first acquired all diamonds for golden C and today many pilots have to master just one condition (cant 5000m) to acquire the highest award. As a variegation, aero club organized concentration for glider pilots in Ruzomberok (Slovakia), so they could fly in the mountains. Since then collective have remembered all these great concentrations.

Training motor pilots was under way really intensively too. Many pilots have had permission for towing from fields, flying in the night and many of them achieved commercial pilot license (CPL). To improve their flight abilities was used motor glider L-13 SW Vivat. Recently many pilots extend their qualifications to ULL. Quality of air activities and responsibility can document also a fact, that during the last twenty years there was no accident with injury. Planes, which suffered light damages, were all returned to the traffic after repair. From the above you can see a very

good relationship of members of the aeroclub to all air material. This can be also documented repair of two planes type VT-116, otherwise they would be eliminated. L-60 Brigadyr (OK-MJP) was also put into operation again with original engine. Coordination with BMZ Air Service company Praha-Letnany was prepared thoroughly, they helped us with total overhaul of L-40 Meta Sokol (OK-MMM). In our own premises there were also made extensive renovations of historical aerobatic glider LF.107 Lunak (technical performance was subject of the thesis of R.Jensen). We could say, that this Lunak has the most sophisticated technical reinsurance of all renovated Lunaks from the present. In our hangar, we have all eliminated planes under slung under the hangar roof. Who knows, probably they will be able to fly again in the future.

{rokzoom title=|Airfield view in 1992|}images/stories/80_leta1.jpg{/rokzoom}

Sociable team, nice atmosphere and background create something special for all aero club members, their families and kith, who spend their weekends or vacations during and also out of the season here. To create pleasant background contributed also a rebuilding of the control tower (realized in 1983, 1987, 1992/93 and 1999/2000), building a fire tank (pool used during hot days in summer), landscaping and building a tennis court. Gradually members brought there their dwelling units to have comfort here. In 1987 the biggest airplane Avia Av-14 made its last landing i Zbraslavice airport, it was transmitted to the aero club, because it was eliminated by the army. For many years it was dominating factor of our airport area next to the hangar. Aeroclub Zbraslavice has long tradition, which have started over 60 years ago. In this historical period there appeared many personalities participating on life of the aero club. Mostly there appear no political effects of all previous eras and for the vast majority activity of the aero club wasn't connected with personal ambitions. It's really hard to name all personalities to maintain objectivity and all merits. In any event, one of those significant personalities of the aero club was longtime chief Jaroslav Stepanek and his later successor Slavoj Mezera. Jaroslav Nemecek was flying all over the republic in glider, devoted glider and motor pilot was also Ferdinand Kares and many others.

On the occasion of 21st. IVGC Rallye prepared as a supplement of the periodical Letecké listy (Air newspaper)

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Aero club Zbraslavice