

Sgt Frantisek Binder 787400 CWC RAFVR

Frantisek was born on 22 October 1914 in Hojna Voda, Austro-Hungary, the son of Franz Anton Binder and Anna Binder nee Berger, Stepson of Vaclav Jenik. He had one daughter with his fiancé. Frantisek was employed as an apprentice chemist in Prague when, in 1935, he was called up for his 2 years statutory Military Service and joined the 1st Infantry Regiment, based at Kaplice, near Ceske Budejovice, Bohemia.

On completing of his Military Service in 1937, Frantisek returned to Hojna Voda where he was employed as a Border Guard and later State Defence Guard in Kaplicke Chalupy/Kapellner Waldhauser, in the Vyssi Brod district. During the late Summer of 1938, the Customs office was attacked several times by the Sudetonemecky Freikorps, a paramilitary Sudeten German organisation founded to destabilise the Czechoslovak border areas by armed attacks and sabotage. On 25 September the Customs office was destroyed.



When Czechoslovakia was ceded to Nazi Germany, Frantisek joined the resistance and was able to infiltrate into the Freikorps to obtain intelligence about activities they were planning. When he was betrayed, in October 1939 Frantisek crossed the border into Slovakia, and onwards to Budapest, Hungary where he was detained by the authorities. Frantisek managed to escape, and reached Romania where again he was detained and imprisoned. Soon released, Frantisek travelled through Yugoslavia and Greece, arriving in Istanbul, Turkey on 4 January 1940. From Turkey, Frantisek sailed to Marseille, France via Beirut and in January 1940 he was posted to the 3rd Infantry Regiment. The French capitulation prevented his unit going into combat and instead, on 25 June 1940, Frantisek sailed from Marseille to the UK where, on 15 July 1940, he was recruited into the RAFVR.

On completion of basic training at the Czechoslovak Depot at Cosford, Frantisek was selected for training as an aircraft fitter. Successfully completing this training, Frantisek was posted to 312 Czechoslovak Sqn as a fitter on Hurricanes. Wanting a more active role, in May 1941 Frantisek applied for aircrew duties and was sent for Air Gunner training at No. 4 Air Bombing and Gunnery School, West Freugh, Scotland, and on 23 June 1941 he was posted to 311 (Czechoslovak) Squadron, at East Wretham, Norfolk.

On 3/4 March 1942 Frantisek's crew was one of four 311 Sqn crews tasked with an attack on Emden. At 18:52 on 3 March Frantisek, operating as the Rear Gunner, and the crew departed RAF East Wretham in Wellington 1 Z1147 (KX-G).

Whilst over the target, at 21:10 Frantisek's aircraft was intercepted by Major Werner Streib, Commander of II/NJG 2 flying a Me110 from Venlo Airfield, Holland. During the attack, Frantisek was hit in the head and stomach. The Captain managed to evade subsequent attacks, jettisoned the bomb load, and immediately set course for home.

At 00:07 on 4 March, the heavily damaged Wellington made a successful wheels up landing; however, Frantisek had already succumbed to his injuries on board. This was his 10th op.

Frantisek is buried in St Ethelbert Churchyard, East Wretham, Norfolk

Frantisek is commemorated on Wall Panel 131

Photo Source: fcafa.com