FO Josef Mohr 82622 CWCx3; MzC RAFVR



Josef was born on 5 October 1912 in Velke Hamry, Liberec, Bohemia. After graduating from a Technical School in Prague, Josef enrolled in the Military Aviation School, graduating as an Observer, and was posted to 10 Sqn of the 3rd Flight Regiment, stationed at the Milan Rastislav Stefanik Airbase at Nitra, Slovakia.

When Czechoslovakia was ceded to Nazi Germany, Josef left for Poland where he was interned at Ligota Kameralna and from there, at the end of May 1939, he was transferred via Tesin to Krakow. Released, in July 1939, Josef left Poland and joined the French Foreign Legion where he committed to at least five years of service in Africa. Following the outbreak of war, Josef was freed from the Legion and was transferred to Tours, France where he commenced an Observer refresher course and Gunnery training with the French Air Force.

The Franch capitulation prevented Josef completing his training and he was evacuated on 28 June 1940 to Gibraltar via Casablanca and onwards to the UK. On arrival on 16 July 1940, Josef was recruited into the RAFVR and, following refresher training at RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, in September 1940 he was posted to 311(Czechoslovak) Sqn at RAF East Wretham, Norfolk.

On 28/29 December 1941, Bomber Command was tasked with an attack on the German naval shipyard and harbour installations at Wilhelmshaven, Lower Saxony, Germany. A combined force of 86 Wellingtons, including thirteen 311 Sqn crews were allocated to the raid. This was due to be Josef's last op before commencing a six-month rest tour.

At 17:16 on 28 December Josef, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF East Wretham in Wellington Ic T2553 (KX-B).

Hit by flak above the target, twenty minutes into the return flight, the left engine caught fire; however, the crew managed to extinguish the flames and shut down the engine. Continuing the flight home, a propeller blade detached from the windmilling engine and embedded into the fuselage by the Wireless Operator's position, damaging the hydraulic system and making the aircraft uncontrollable. The aircraft was successfully ditched in the North Sea, 60 miles West of Petten, Noord-Holland. Although five of the crew were able to get into the dinghy, the Rear Gunner went down with the aircraft.

Shortly after midnight on 2 January 1942, after five days in the dinghy, the 2nd Pilot succumbed to the conditions, and the crew buried him at sea. Two hours later, Josef died. At 15:00 on 3 January 1942 the dinghy was washed ashore on the beach near Petten, Noord-Holland. This was Josef's 36th op.

Also Killed: Sgt Rudolf Skalicy (AG); Sgt Joseph Tomanek (Pilot)

Josef is buried in Bergen General Cemetery, Noord-Holland, Netherlands

Josef is commemorated on Wall Panel 213

Photo Source: fcafa.com