Sgt Jiri Bauer 788248 CWC RAFVR



Jiri was born on 3 November 1923 in Trutnov, Hradec Kralove, Bohemia, the son of Ervin Bauer and Eliska Bauerova.

Educated at the Czechoslovak State Real Grammar School, Nachod, Hradec Kralove, when Jiri graduated in June 1939, after the annexation by Germany on 15 March 1939, anti-Jewish measures began to be introduced. Realising they needed to protect their son, Jiri's parents managed to connect with a group of volunteers around the then, still unknown, British broker Nicholas Winton.

Between March and August 1939, this group organized several so-called "Kindertransports", the aim of which was to send as many predominantly Jewish children as possible to the UK. In the last transport in August, a place was secured for Jiri.

Originally boarding in Oxford under the auspices of the Oxford Refugee Committee, in 1941 Jiri moved to Bath, Somerset, where he was employed as an agricultural mechanic and tractor driver in the village of Weston Bath, Somerset.

At the end of 1941 Jiri applied for military service and, in January 1942, he enlisted in the Czechoslovak Army in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, transferring to the RAFVR in March. After completing basic training, in June Jiri was posted to the ground staff of 310 (Czech) Sqn at RAF Exeter, Devon.

In October 1942 Jiri re-mustered as pilot and, following basic flying training in the UK, in April 1943 he was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme. Awarded his Wings, in February 1944 Jiri embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 51 OTU RAF Llandow, Glamorgan, Wales, on 9 June 1944 Jiri was posted to 310 (Czech) Sqn at RAF Appledram, Sussex, where the squadron was heavily involved in armed-reconnaissance ops over the Normandy landing zone. On 28 June the squadron moved to B.10 in Plumetot, Calvados, on the Normandy Coast.

On 29 June 1944, 310 (Czech) Sqn was tasked with an offensive reconnaissance in the Caen – Falaise – Argentan sector. At 10:30 Jiri departed B.10 Plumetot as no 2 in Blue Section, flying Spitfire IX NH570.

At 10:55, Blue section attacked a German staff car near the village of Mezidon about 15 miles SE of Caen. On pulling out of the attack, the Spitfires were separated, and Jiri did not return to the section. It is likely that Jiri was hit by anti-aircraft fire, reported as heavy at the time. This was Jiri's 10th op.

Originally buried near Roucamps, Calvados, in March 1946 Jiri was moved to the Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados, France

Jiri is commemorated on Wall Panel - Not Yet Erected

Jiri's mother died in 1940, and his father was deported from Hradec Kralove at the end of 1942, first to the ghetto in Terezín and in 1944 to the concentration camp in Auschwitz, where he was killed.

Photo Source: www.rafaci.cz