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Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No. 11747

CZECH PRIEST NOW R. A. F. PADRE

A young Czechoslovakian priest who served as an infantryman in France early in the war is now a Padre with a Coastal Command Czech Squadron.

Squadron leader X - he prefers his name to remain a secret - was studying for the church when the Germans marched into his country.

Obtaining a German passport he went to Italy, to complete his studies in Rome. Two weeks before Italy entered the war he crossed the frontier into France on the same German passport, and joined the Czech army there as an ordinary infantryman.

Following the fall of France, he made his way to England, where he joined up again with the Czech army, still as an infantryman. "I met an English padre", said the Squadron Leader, "who told me there was useful work waiting me as a R. A. F. padre. I took his advice and soon after that I was commissioned and attached as Padre to a Czech Coastal Command Squadron.

"My countrymen come to me with all kinds of problems that so often arise when a man is far from home. Unfortunately, I cannot give them news of our country. I myself, have had no news of my family for three years.

"The most frequent request I receive is for advice on marriage. Czech airmen come to me to say they want to marry an English girl and ask if I think she would be happy to leave her own country after the war and settle down in Czechoslovakia. I usually see the girl herself, and invariably she is prepared to make a new home in Czechoslovakia when our country is free again.

"I am now forming a Czech Brains Trust to help the squadron while away the long winter evenings in camp. Already I have brought together for this purpose a professor at law and two schoolmasters."

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