

## **Mr Karol Wozny. Born 4<sup>th</sup> December 1922, died 18<sup>th</sup> May 2008.**

Karol was born in Tarnopol in Poland, the eldest of five children. His father was a shoemaker by trade and his mother kept house for them all. During 1938, they moved to a farm in either Janowka or Sloneczna.

Later, they were ordered to leave their homes with only what they could carry, and boarded a train to a part of Russia. The journey was extremely harsh and took between six and seven weeks. It was in the winter and there was very little food, just a small piece of bread each per day. On arrival, they were put into barracks with only a small wood stove for heating and cooking. Here, the fittest had to work cutting down huge trees from the forest that surrounded them. It fell to Karol, being the eldest, to work extra to earn enough to buy bread to feed his mother and younger sister. They were here for two years, during that time Karol suffered blindness through starvation and his youngest sister, Sohia, died from dysentery which was rife in the camp.

In February of 1940 the whole family was taken to Siberia, where life for them was harsher yet, and they were forced to work extremely hard to stay alive.

Karol managed to get to Kazakhstan, which was under Polish military care at the time. He managed to join the Polish army in 1942 and spent a few weeks in Iran training, before being moved to the Middle East, where they stayed in the 11<sup>th</sup> Army barracks.

In 1944 he was sent to Sicily and then to the Adriatic, where they joined the 5<sup>th</sup> Army, then later they joined the 8<sup>th</sup> Army and fought at the battle of Monte Casino.

After this, they marched to Bologna, where they crossed the River Po. He recalled the bear Goytec, which would help them carry ammunition, and he also remembered swimming with him in the river. He was treated as one of the troops.

At the end of 1944, he was demobbed in England and married a Polish girl, Veronica, in Wotton. They moved to Luton, where the rest of the family eventually joined them and he worked at two jobs – one during the day and another at night, in order to buy a house for the family to live. He had two children with Veronica, Anthony and Sophia.