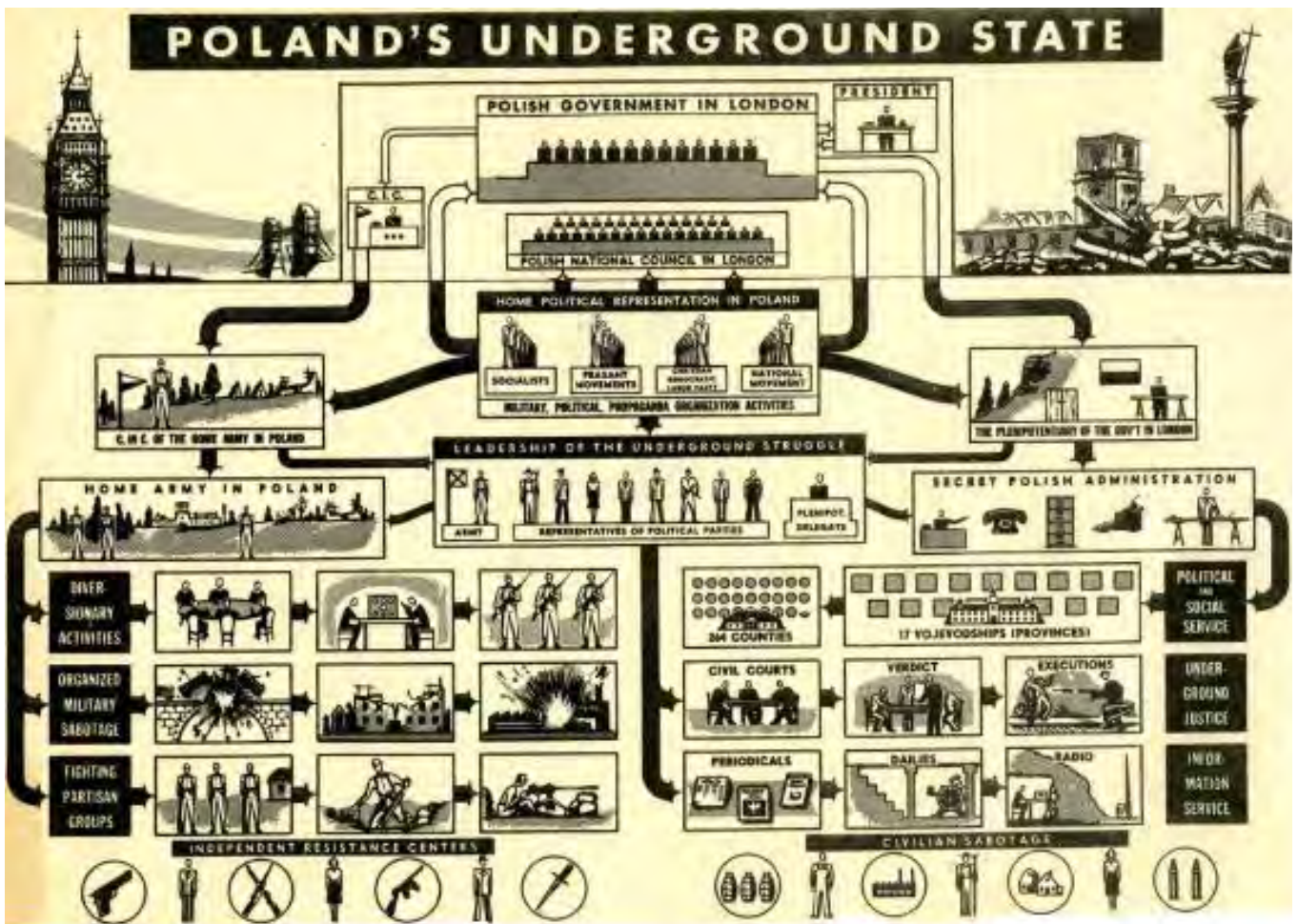




Embassy
of the Republic of
Poland in London



THE POLISH UNDERGROUND STATE DURING WWII

3rd June 2017







Embassy
of the Republic of
Poland in London

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3rd June 2017 at 10:00 am



Conference Theme

The theme of the Conference is Polish Underground State during Second World War. Poland had the ONLY Underground State in Nazi occupied Europe and operated quite differently to *resistance* in other countries.

Conference Programme

HE Ambassador Arkady Rzegocki will welcome us to the Embassy of Poland and open the proceedings.

Panel 1 (10:15-12.15) incl. 15 mins. tea break

Eugenia Maresch	Resistance in Europe 1939-1945, as the British see it	DZ
Dr Wojciech Rappak	British Attitudes towards the Polish Underground State	DZ

Tea Break (15 mins)

Dr Waldemar Grabowski, IPN*	The Civil structures of the Polish Underground State (*)	MT
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Panel 2 (12.15-15:00) incl. 60 mins. lunch break

Marysia Suchcitz (Andrzej Suchcitz)	Outside assistance in the planning for a general rising in Poland 1940-1944	CZ
Dr Paul Latawski	General Stefan Rowecki: The Intellectual Preparation of a Resistance Leader	

Lunch (circa 13.25-14.25 pm)

Dr Karol Sacewicz, IPN*	The Underground Poland with regard to "Polish" communists over the period 1939-1944 - concepts and forms of counteracting (*)	CZ
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Panel 3 (15.00-16.00)

Discussion and Meeting WWII Veterans of Home Army (AK) and SPK Combatants	CZ
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Final Reception at the Polish Embassy

Each conference session will illustrate the topics above with specialised historian and an experienced moderator who will run the Q&A sessions. Both speakers from IPN* (Institute of National Remembrance) in Warsaw will deliver their lectures assisted by the English language translators, with the summary materials being provided on the day. There will be an opportunity to meet some Polish veterans. The day to be broken up by tea/coffee breaks/lunch. **Moderators (M) and Translators(T):** (M) Gen John Drewienkiewicz (Gen DZ), (M/T) Colonel Richard Ciągłiński (Col CZ), (M/T) Major Marek Zaremba-Tymieniecki (Maj MT).



Conference Venue:

The Embassy of Republic of Poland in London
47 Portland Pl, Marylebone, London W1B 1JH



Home Army's (AK) period of operation:

14 February 1942 – 19 January 1945

Area of Operation:

Within the pre-1939 borders of the Republic of Poland

Allegiance:

Polish Government- in – Exile, based first in France then in London

Estimates of the Home Army's (AK) strength in 1944:

between 200,000 and 500,000

Military Engagements:

WWII and 1944 Warsaw Rising



Main Operations Commanders:

General Count Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski

General Stefan Grot-Rowecki,

General Leopold Okulicki,

General Emil August Fieldorf,





The Ambassador
of the Republic of Poland
to the Court of St James's



Dear Guests,

The Embassy of the Republic of Poland is delighted to welcome you all to this international conference dedicated to the Polish Underground State during World War II. It is the next instalment of the hugely successful series of history conferences organised by the Polish Heritage Society.

I am most pleased that distinguished scholars will discuss the role and legacy of the Polish Underground State. What must be emphasized is that the Polish Underground State was absolutely unique. It comprised all underground resistance organizations in Poland during World War II, both military and civilian, that were loyal to the Government of the Republic of Poland in Exile in London.

The structure and scope of this organisation is a true testament to the systemic opposition of Poles to the German occupation. And most important Poland never collaborated with Nazi Germany.

The driving force behind all the state's actions was a hope and vision for a post-war Poland based on principles of freedom and equality, led by a democratic government. This hope never died, though many lost their lives in this fight.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the speakers for their time and dedication and the Polish Heritage Society for continuously promoting Poland and its heritage in the United Kingdom.

I wish you all a successful conference in the building of the Polish Embassy in London, the former seat of the Polish Government in Exile.



Arkady Rzegocki

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO EXAMINE UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION OF POLISH UNDERGROUND STATE DURING WORLD WAR II

LONDON 12 May 2017 – Military historians and other scholars will explore the unique World War II institutions of the Polish Underground State at a special conference in London on Saturday 3rd June 2017, organised by the Polish Heritage Society (UK).

The Polish Underground State refers to multiple *underground organisations* on the ground in Poland during the war, both military and civilian, that were loyal to the Government of the Republic of Poland -in- Exile in London. Which was seen by its supporters as the legal continuation of the pre-war Government of Republic of Poland waging an armed struggle against the country's occupying powers, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

The civilian structures of the Underground State included education, culture and social services. Hundreds of thousands of people were directly involved with various agencies of the Underground State – the estimates for membership of the Armia Krajowa (Home Army) are often given at half a million people. After the Soviet-backed communist takeover of Poland at the end of the war and without the continuing support of Western Allies, all the key institutions of the Underground State were dissolved.

The conference will feature distinguished scholars covering topics such as a comparison of the Polish situation with what happened elsewhere in Europe, a look at British attitudes towards the Underground State, and a study of one of its key leaders, General Stefan Grot-Rowecki.

“The Polish Underground State was extraordinary not just in the scope of its activities and the widespread support it enjoyed, but for its durability during the extremely harsh conditions of occupation,” said Dr Marek Stella-Sawicki, PHS UK Chairman. *“This conference will shed new light on this special period of Polish history.”*



Polish Heritage Society (UK)



Dear Friends

In 2014, The Polish Heritage Society UK organised its first two-day military history conference, with The British Commission for Military History (BCMh) at The Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) in London, illustrating the huge part Poland's military leaders played in WWII. It was received to great acclaim. A number of those who attended suggested we do further Military History Conferences, so we did and this is our fourth.

In October 2016, together with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland we ran the *'Major General Stanisław Maczek DSO - An Assessment of Leadership and Command 1838-1945'* conference which was keenly attended.

Last year, The Senate of the Republic of Poland announced 2016 to be the Year of the *'Cichociemni'* (Silent and Unseen). In response to this, The Polish Heritage Society UK together with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in London ran *'The Polish Section of SOE' - Cichociemni – The Airborne Soldiers of the Polish Home Army A.K. (Silent and Unseen)* Conference.

That conference highlighted the enormous contribution of members of *'Cichociemni'* in Poland under Nazi oppression as well as the work of Polish SOE Agents in their wider efforts within the Allied Forces in Europe during WWII. The plan was to inject a number of specialists trained in staff work, covert operations, intelligence, document forging, demolitions, signals and general sabotage into the Polish underground military. Volunteers included 1 general officer, 112 staff officers, 894 junior officers, 592 NCOs, 771 privates, 15 women and 28 civilian political couriers. In May 1945, Winston Churchill requested a report summing up the achievements of the Polish Intelligence Service throughout the war years. It showed that between 3rd of September 1939 and 8th of May 1945, there were 45,770 reports generated by British Intelligence, of which 22,047 (48%) had come from Polish sources covering a wide range of enemy activities.

The year 2017 opens with the Conference on **The Polish Underground State**, unique in the history of resistance during war time in Europe. We have some excellent specialists from the UK/USA and Poland who will throw an interesting light on the complex organisation of running a country from beyond its physical borders. It is a fascinating subject.

The Committee of Polish Heritage Society wish to thank the many individuals, staff of the Polish Embassy and in particular, Minister Counsellor, Deputy Head of Mission, Mr Dariusz Łaska and other organisations involved for their help, participation and support in organising this conference.

Dr Mark Stella-Sawicki MBE KM RUSI

*Chairman, Polish Heritage Society (U.K.), Visiting Professor UCL,
Military History (University of Buckingham), Royal United Services Institute*



Partisans and soldiers of the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*—AK) and other underground resistance organisations. The Home Army was eventually to become one of the largest such clandestine military organisations in Europe with over 350,000 sworn-in members. The Home Army sabotaged German operations such as transports heading for the Eastern Front in the Soviet Union. It also fought several full-scale battles against the Germans, particularly in 1943 and in Operation Tempest in 1944. The Home Army, in support of the Soviet military effort, tied down substantial German forces and destroyed much-needed German supplies. Because the Home Army was loyal to the Polish Government-in-Exile in London, the Soviet Union saw it as an obstacle to a Stalin's plans for the Soviet takeover of Poland. Consequently, over the course of the war, conflict increased between the Home Army and the Soviet forces.



Partisans of the Home Army controlled large areas of the heavily forested regions in Occupied Poland. The Polish resistance movement in World War II, with the Polish Home Army at its forefront, was the largest underground resistances in all of Nazi-occupied Europe, covering both German and Soviet zones of occupation. The Polish defense against the Nazi occupation was an important part of the European anti-fascist resistance movement. It provided military intelligence to the British, and saved more Jewish lives in the Holocaust than any other Western Allied organization or government.



On the 1st September 1939, Hitler and Nazi Germany attacked Poland. On the 17th of September Soviet Russia moved from the East. Poland stood little chance. A Wehrmacht soldier "guarding" Wawel Castle in Kraków (*...unseres Lebensraume...*), published by German propaganda in Kraków in January 1944. Buchverlag Deutscher Osten GMBH. Krakau 1944, p.73.

The Polish Underground State 1939-1945¹

During the Second World War Poland, although under foreign military occupation, developed an extensive civil and military underground organisation. This included, in addition to armed forces and their attendant training establishments, governmental structures, primary and secondary schools, several university departments, an extensive underground press, a legal system, underground theatre and musical concerts and even some limited arms manufacturing. There were also organisations to safeguard national treasures and works of art. In many respects this represented an underground state: the largest of its kind in Europe. All of this, it must be remembered, had to be conducted in the greatest secrecy, while those who became involved did so at great personal risk to themselves, to their families and friends. Between September 1939 and the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, Poland was divided into three political zones: the western part of the country which the German Reich annexed, the central German-controlled *Generalgouvernement* and the eastern lands which had been absorbed into the western republics of the USSR. The Germans also co-operated closely with the Soviet authorities in their new zone of influence in what had been Eastern Poland. While conditions were different in each of these zones, organising underground work was uniformly difficult and dangerous. A number of older Poles though had already gained some practical experience in underground work from the days of Partitions before and during the First World War, which helped them in the initial stages. It would be wrong to assume that there was an immediate general unanimity of outlook throughout the country. While everyone agreed that the occupiers had to be resisted, there was a plethora of organisations with different political platforms all jockeying to position themselves for the post-war peace, it being widely expected that France and Great Britain would overcome Germany in short order. After the 1939 defeat, up and down the country several dozen groups, most of them military, began spontaneously to organise resistance to the German and Soviet Occupiers. Indeed, it was this initial military impetus which led to the development of the Underground State. The political parties also started to develop their own military wings, an example of which would be the Peasant Party's Peasant Battalions. The Polish Government-in-Exile began working immediately to weld these groups into a single organisation, which, after being known as 'Serving Poland's Victory' and the Union for Armed Combat, eventually became the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*—AK) in February 1942. By then the Nazis were the sole enemy, the Poles and the Soviets having re-established diplomatic relations in July 1941. However, unity was still elusive and some underground organisations, such as the Nationalist Party's armed formations, the National Armed Forces, continued in some parts of the country to operate independently of the AK, while the Communists with their armed forces always stayed aloof, refusing to recognise the legitimacy of the Government-in-Exile. The Home Army, with its secret High Command in Warsaw, was eventually to become one of the largest such clandestine military organisations in Europe with over 350,000 sworn-in members. The AK's field structure had the country divided into military districts, somewhat along peace-time lines, with the basic combat formation being a platoon of about 60 men, of which by 1944 there were Partisans and soldiers of the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*—AK) and other underground resistance organisations. The Home Army was eventually to become one of the largest such clandestine military organisations in Europe with over 350,000 sworn-in members 'divisions', adopting the name of pre-war formations, but much smaller in size than a regular division. The Home Army carried out extensive intelligence gathering and military and industrial sabotage against the Germans and their lines of communications. It succeeded in disrupting German rail and road communications on numerous occasions, thus tying down large numbers of German forces, possibly as many as 150,000 at one time. The AK also liquidated informers and collaborators and those members of the occupying forces, whose

¹ Courtesy of "First to Fight" (Edited by Dr Marek Stella-Sawicki, Jarek Garliński and Stefan Mucha), Copyright MSS Consulting. All rights reserved, ISBN: 978-0-9557824-4-2.

brutality and behaviour were egregious, but since the Germans always carried out savage reprisals against the civilian population, attacks on individuals were rare and could be undertaken only after sentence had been passed by an underground court. Any armed attack on German forces also had to be planned and carried out with great care. The Home Army, therefore, had a Counter-Intelligence division to try to protect itself against penetration by German agents, as well as its own military and field police. In General Stefan Rowecki the Home Army was blessed with an able and energetic commander, until his arrest by the *Gestapo* in June 1943. He was later shot in Sachsenhausen on Himmler's personal orders on the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising. He built up the Home Army so effectively that, for instance, by the summer of 1944, AK High Command had developed an elaborate command structure with almost 4,000 people working in it. The Poles always hoped to use the Home Army as a military force in a country-wide rising against the Germans when the latter were visibly weakening, and it was hoped that when the time came, elements of the Polish armed forces in the West, notably the Parachute Brigade and the Air Force, would be able to join forces with the Home Army in Poland. However, a propitious moment never arrived and the Home Army's largest single operation was to be the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. At no time moreover was it ever fully armed, since military supplies parachuted in from the West could never keep pace with the growth of such an extensive organisation. Every attempt was made to develop a legal underground political structure embodying constitutional continuity. Both the Polish Government-in-Exile, first in France then in London, and the underground political authorities in Poland derived their legitimacy from the 1935 Constitution, and were based on those pre-war political parties which had been in opposition to the ruling *Sanacja* political group, heavily influenced by Marshal Józef Piłsudski, which had governed Poland from 1926 to 1939. The main parties were the 'Big Four'—Socialist Party, the Peasant Party, the Nationalist Party and the Labour Party. However, there were also a number of smaller ones. A Political Consultative Committee was formed in February 1940, followed in July by the creation of a Government Delegation (*Delegatura Rządu*)—the official representation in Occupied Poland of the Government-in-Exile in the West. A conscious effort was made to balance the political and the military aspects of the Polish underground structures, given that many of the underground military leaders were former professional army officers, members of the *Sanacja* faction and unused to working with civilian political entities. The first Government Delegate was appointed in December 1940, but this did not signal the end of inter-party disagreements or activity which continued throughout the war. Despite concerted efforts, the *Sanacja* faction never regained its pre-war dominance. Nevertheless, a reasonably viable structure was eventually achieved. The Delegation proceeded to set up a *quasi-governmental* apparatus with departments, which more or less corresponded to pre-war government ministries. There were between 18 and 20 such departments. Some of them, such as internal affairs, information and records, education, finance, control, justice and the Directorate of Civil Resistance, later to become the Directorate of Underground Resistance, handled current matters, whereas others, such as industry and trade, agriculture, public works, posts and telegraph, focused on the post-war period and also on documenting the Occupiers' behaviour. The Delegation had its own press, producing the official fortnightly Polish Republic (*Rzeczpospolita Polska*), and ran a number of underground cultural activities, mainly through the Department of Education. A wide range of publications was produced. The official political and military organisations were not alone in having their own press outlets, every secret group, every organisation, every political party aspired to produce its own magazine, which was proof of its existence and an opportunity to present its views. There were ideological, political, military, social, philosophical, literary, boy and girl scout, instructional, women's and humorous publications, as well as simple news sheets. The largest number were produced centrally, but there were also local ones printed in small towns. The underground press not only provided news about current affairs throughout the world, but also raised spirits and helped people to survive; it instructed, educated and published scientific and literary work; it even ran competitions. The underground authorities also used the underground press to publish proclamations, orders and commendations, as well as death sentences passed by the Special Military Courts. In 1943 and 1944, the Home Army's regularly published *Information Bulletin* (*Biuletyn Informacyjny*) had several print

runs of over 40,000 copies. During the whole German Occupation, 1,075 books and pamphlets were published, every one of them in difficult clandestine conditions. Altogether, there were probably around 1,400 magazines and newspapers published and overall, the number of copies of all publications produced ran into the millions.

The best known underground publication, which was a reprint of a book published in London, and which connected the Homeland with its fighting men in the West, was Arkady Fiedler's *303 Squadron (Dywizjon 303)* published in 4,000 copies. In April 1941, the Government Delegate set up the Directorate of Civil Resistance. The idea was to co-ordinate all efforts directed against the Occupiers which did not involve the use of weapons. These included: ignoring official decrees, avoiding all contact with the Germans, refusing to volunteer for forced labour in the Reich (volunteers were allowed to take their families), carrying out acts of 'minor sabotage' such as tearing down posters, writing slogans on walls, posting flyers, tapping into the street speaker system, or boycotting the cinema. The Directorate was based on political and community organisations, with strong participation from members of the scouting movement, the so-called 'Grey Ranks' (*Szare Szeregi*), and a Central Committee for Civil Resistance was set up in Warsaw. There was also a psychological warfare programme, 'Operation N', which produced publications written in perfect German purporting to come from the German authorities and intended to sow confusion in the enemy's ranks. The increase in partisan activities, which was quite independent of plans for a general rising and preparations for it, not to mention a number of political issues, forced AK High Command to set up in 1943 a special entity, called the Directorate of Clandestine Resistance. It was headed by the Home Army Commander-in-Chief, with the High Command's Chief of Staff serving as his deputy and as chief of staff to the new organisation. The new entity's basic aim was to combine command and control of current operations with other armed initiatives. As the Soviet Red Army advanced through Poland in 1944 the Home Army was able to organise short-term local tactical co-operation under the auspices of Operation 'Tempest'. However, in every case, this interlude ended in the arrest and sometimes execution of the local Home Army commanders. The AK rank and file were then either deported deep into the USSR or forcibly conscripted into the Polish Communist Army. After the spring of 1943, the Soviets refused to recognise the authority of the Polish Government-in-Exile, breaking off diplomatic relations with it over the issue of Katyń, and the Western Allies, unwilling to jeopardise the anti-Nazi alliance, did not exert any pressure on the Soviets to reverse their decision. Yet during and after D-Day in June 1944, the Western Allies were keen to have as many German forces as possible tied up in the East and prevented from transferring to Normandy. They were, therefore, less than pleased at the Red Army's failure to take advantage of the co-operation offered by the Poles, which, so it was felt in some British quarters, slowed the Soviet advance. The failure of the Warsaw Uprising spelled the beginning of the end for the Home Army. It was formally dissolved in January 1945 by its final commander, General Leopold Okulicki, who would die the following year in a Soviet gaol, in unexplained circumstances. In March 1945, he, together with fourteen other leaders of the Polish Underground and their interpreter were tricked into giving themselves up to the Red Army, whereupon, despite promises of safe conduct given both to them and to the British, they were whisked off to Moscow. There they were put through a staged 'show trial' in June to demonstrate to the world that the Polish Underground had been working against the interests of the Soviet Union.

Late in the war, in January 1944 to be precise, the Government Delegate called into life the Council of National Unity. This underground *quasiparliament* consisted of 17 people with delegates representing the main political groupings. In March 1944, it issued a declaration called 'Why the Polish Nation is Fighting' and it followed this up in July 1945 with a manifesto, called 'Fighting Poland's Testament' calling on the world to ensure that Poland's freedoms were protected. After issuing the Manifesto, the Council unanimously resolved to dissolve the Government Delegacy and then itself. This was the final formal act of the Polish Underground State.



The Polish Government-in-Exile in London, envisioned the Home Army as an apolitical, nationwide resistance organization. It defined the Home Army's chief tasks as partisan warfare against the German occupiers, re-creation of armed forces underground and, near the end of the German occupation, a general armed rising. Home Army plans envisioned, at war's end, the seizure of power in Poland by the Government Delegation for Poland and by the Government-in-Exile itself, which expected to return to Poland.



Jan Karski-Kozielski (1914-2000) - Courier of the Polish Underground reporting German Nazi atrocities to the Western Allies

Jan Karski was recruited into the Polish resistance as a secret messenger. In 1939, he was a Soviet Red Army POW but managed to escape and soon after joined the Polish Underground as a courier, a role in which he was able to infiltrate the Warsaw ghetto, seeing first-hand the Jewish bravery and Nazi cruelty at their most extreme. In 1942, Jan Karski reported to the Polish, U.K. and U.S. governments on the actual situation in Poland, specifically, the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto and the German extermination of Polish Jews, bringing microfilm evidence from the Polish underground movement on the extermination of European Jews in Poland. The Polish Government in London and its Foreign Office Minister, Count Edward Raczynski, provided the Allies, one of the earliest accurate accounts of the Holocaust. A report by Edward Raczynski, followed entitled "The mass extermination of Jews in German occupied Poland", which was addressed to the governments of the United Nations, dated 10 December 1942. This was later published together with the critical evidence from Jan Karski and finally distributed internationally.

Whilst in London, Karski met with Polish politicians including the Prime Minister, as well as members of political parties and the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, giving details on what he had seen in Warsaw and the Belzec Concentration Camp. In 1943, he met journalist Arthur Koestler in London and subsequently travelled to the United States, where on 28 July 1943, he met President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the White House, informing him about the situation in Poland and becoming the first eyewitness to report the Holocaust. Jan Karski went on to meet with many government and civic leaders in the U.S. including Supreme Court Justice, Felix Frankfurter and Rabbi Stephen Wise. Frankfurter, sceptical of Karski's report, said later "I did not say that he was lying, I said that I could not believe him. There is a difference." Karski also presented his report to the U.S. media, to bishops of various denominations, and even to the Hollywood film industry, but without much impact.

He also warned about the discussions at Yalta, which he felt were treason towards Poland and highlighted the plight of stateless people - the inspiration for the formation of the Office of High Commissioner for Refugees and for the work of UNRA after the war.

In 1944, Karski published "The Story of a Secret State" first in the U.S. where he related his experiences in wartime Poland. The book was a major success, with more than 400,000 copies sold before the end of World War II. It is one of the most heartfelt memoirs of wartime resistance ever written and a testimony to a man compelled by his duty to bring his eyewitness report to the world.

The Warsaw Uprising August-October 1944²

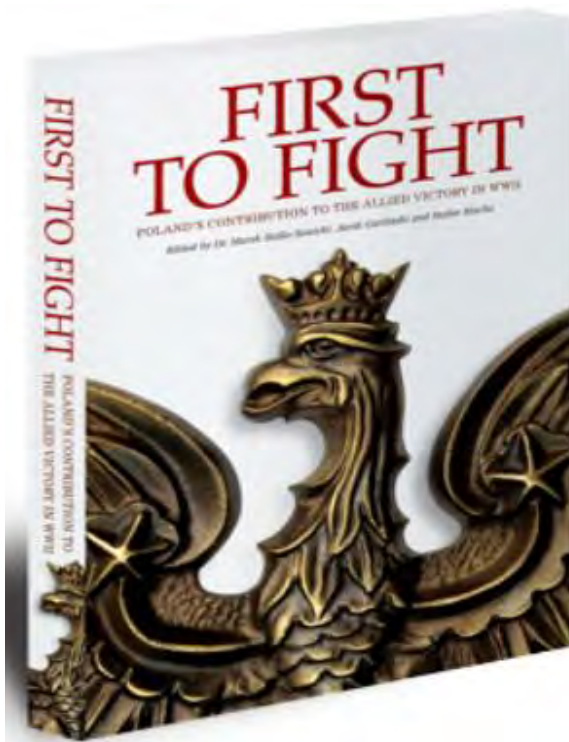
The Warsaw Uprising was a tragic failure. The Polish Home Army's leadership had always planned to mount a nation-wide rising against the Germans which would be co-ordinated with the Allies. As 1943 lengthened into 1944, it became clear that Poland would be liberated by the Red Army not the Western Allies and that the Soviets were unwilling to work with the Poles on a large-scale against the Germans. Indeed, rolling up the Home Army and any other non-communist groups in Poland was clearly very high on the Red Army's 'to-do' list. For the Poles, however, their capital was a symbol of their struggle against the Nazi invader and they wanted to repay him in kind for all the damage and pain he had caused. They also wanted to be able to greet the Red Army as masters in their own house and to disprove the Soviet line that the Home Army was reluctant to take on the Germans. As Soviet forces approached in the summer of 1944 there was a feeling in the capital that something was about to happen. At the same time, throughout the country and especially in Warsaw, a noisy Communist propaganda campaign began. Using journals and leaflets, it attacked the Polish Government in London, as well as the underground authorities in Warsaw, accusing them of passivity towards the Germans and encouraging Home Army soldiers to desert to the Communist People's Army by promising all manner of opportunities to fight the Germans. In mid-July, Soviet radio chimed in using its Polish-language station *Radio Kościuszko* to call on the population of Warsaw to take up arms against the Germans.. This propaganda campaign grew daily and by the end of July had become exceptionally strident. Since beginning his latest offensive on the 23rd of June, the senior Soviet commander in the area, Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky, himself of Polish origin, had broken the German line. Soviet forces, together with the Polish Communist First Army, had taken Lublin and Łuków and on the 26th of July they crossed the Vistula near Puławy and, further to the north, reached Garwolin and they crossed the Vistula again by the confluence of the Pilica near Magnuszew. It appeared as if the capital was to be encircled from the south. Indeed, the German authorities had started evacuating non-essential personnel from the city. On the 25th of July, the Polish Government-in-Exile, recognising the capital's mood, gave the men on the spot full authority to take their own decisions. During the last days of July, the AK detachments in the city were partially mobilised at secret locations and the High Command, meeting daily, followed developments at the front. Soviet armoured units were threatening Warsaw from the south-east, while Soviet aircraft circled the city. On the 31st of July, the Commander of AK Warsaw City District, Colonel Antoni Chruściel, brought information that Soviet armour had already taken Radzymin about 25 km (15 miles) away. A few hours earlier, German HQ had issued a communiqué that the Soviets had begun a general advance on Warsaw from the south-east and the Home Army commander, General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, had also received a cable from London that Prime Minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk had left for Moscow to meet with Stalin. This opened the possibility of reaching an agreement with the Soviets and of co-ordinating AK operations in Warsaw with the Red Army, and so the decision was taken to launch a rising at 5.00 pm on the 1st of August. The Government Delegate endorsed the decision. Even assuming that the Red Army was willing to take advantage of an uprising and would hasten to take the city, the insurgents' means were inadequate, since they only had enough arms and ammunition for a few days' fighting. Altogether, Colonel Chruściel had around 20,000 soldiers in Warsaw and a further 10,000 in the neighbouring sector. The majority of them belonged to the AK, supported by 800 men from the Nationalist Party's armed formations and 500 from the Communist People's Army, plus a few minor groups. Their arms, few in number, dated from September 1939, from parachute drops, or had been captured or bought from the enemy; some of them were even home-made. The German forces at one stage reached 40,000 men distributed as follows: 8,000 police, 2,000 men in Nazi Party

² Courtesy of "*First to Fight*" (Edited by Dr Marek Stella-Sawicki, Jarek Garliński and Stefan Mucha), Copyright MSS Consulting. All rights reserved, ISBN: 978-0-9557824-4-2.

units (SA, SD and SS), 5,000 *Waffen SS*, 6,000 men from the *Luftwaffe*, 4,000 Soviets serving with the Germans, 15,000 men from *Wehrmacht* security detachments, training battalions, vehicle park personnel and reserve units. They were all well-armed, and had artillery, armour and air power, and the *Waffen SS*, Air Force, police and Party units were well known for their determination. The Government Delegate, together with General Komorowski immediately sent a cable to London on the 1st of August informing the Government of the start of the Uprising, followed the same day by one to the Prime Minister asking them to ensure an immediate Soviet attack on the city. They asked also for the Polish Parachute Brigade to be sent to Warsaw, together with elements of the Polish Air Force, and for the German airfields in the area to be bombed. However, even before the cable was sent the situation outside Warsaw had changed: Soviet guns had fallen silent and Soviet aircraft had disappeared from the skies above the city. There was an ominous silence in the east. There was no communication with the Red Army and there were no diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, which had been broken off the previous year. Prime Minister Mikołajczyk had only just arrived in Moscow and the Western Allies had not been forewarned of the Rising. Unfortunately, General Komorowski was unaware that it was technically impossible to fly the Parachute Brigade to Warsaw, not to mention the fact that, at the beginning of June, the Polish authorities in London had put the Brigade at the disposal of the British authorities for Operation 'Market Garden'. The Polish Air Force, moreover had only the one unit, Special Duties Flight 1586, stationed at Brindisi in Italy, which was physically able to reach and help Warsaw. Thanks to the element of surprise, the insurgents succeeded in retaining the initiative for the first few days. However, the Germans managed to hold all the barracks, headquarters and command centres, which had been guarded by the army. As early as the 4th of August, the insurgents' pressure began to slacken and their commanders ordered them to adopt a defensive posture, while the Germans, bringing in armour and air power, began offensive operations aimed at controlling the main east-west arteries. They quickly overcame the weak insurgent efforts in Praga, and took Wola after a few days, while in Ochota only a small area remained in AK hands for a fortnight. The Kierbedź Bridge and its approach roads were taken by the Germans, although they were unable throughout the Rising to control a passage along the Aleje Jerozolimskie to the Poniatowski Bridge, which they had held from the first days' fighting. In Wola and Ochota, German units, together with men from General Vlasov's Russian Army, quickly demonstrated the fate awaiting the city and its inhabitants: rapes, shootings, driving people in front of tanks and burning down houses. This led to widespread panic and an exodus from these districts into the city centre. The second half of August saw a German assault on the Old Town turning it into rubble. On the 1st of September, it passed into German hands, its Polish defenders escaping to the City Centre through the sewers. The loss of this sector and German control of the Ghetto's ruins created a breach in the Polish defensive lines and the Germans were able to apply greater pressure on the City Centre, as well as on the Żoliborz and Mokotów districts. By now the battle had reached its third phase, which consisted of defending to the very last ounce of energy. AK High Command still had hopes of a Soviet attack and sought a means of communicating with the Red Army, refusing to consider capitulation. The Germans also had to take into account the possibility of a Soviet attack and thus, during the first days of September, they captured the Powiśle area, between the Kierbedź and Poniatowski Bridges. The Red Army, however, did not move. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Mikołajczyk's trip to Moscow, achieved nothing for Warsaw, for the Red Army did not receive any orders at this stage to go out of its way to help the insurgents. In fact, Poland's only diplomatic success was on the 30th of August, when the Governments of the United States and Great Britain recognised the Polish Home Army as a combatant entity and an integral part of the Polish Armed Forces. The Soviets, however, declined to join them in this statement. The Western Allies went on to state that the Geneva Conventions applied to members of the AK, thus putting the Germans on notice. Since the German military commander, *Obergruppenführer SS* Erich von dem Bach-Zalewski, had on the 18th of August proposed capitulation terms, with a guarantee of respecting the AK's combatant status, thoughts in Warsaw now turned to ending the bloodshed. On the 8th of September, initial contact was made with the Germans, who agreed to evacuate those civilians who wished to leave the city. Von dem Bach repeated his proposal

of an honourable capitulation, but before it could be considered, the city heard the sounds of fighting coming from the direction of Praga. The Red Army, despite considerable German ground pressure, had now launched an attack in Praga on the 10th of September, which lasted until the 15th and the Soviets succeeded in taking the whole district. Furthermore, during the night of the 13th/14th of September, the first Soviet drops of weapons and food were made. Two days later, on the 16th, an infantry battalion of the Polish Communist First Army landed in Czerniaków, near the Poniatowski Bridge, followed on the next day by a further landing by a small infantry unit. Given that there now appeared a real possibility of Soviet help, the idea of capitulation was temporarily shelved. Meanwhile the British had been doing their level best to send in airborne supplies dropped by parachute. Unfortunately, these had to be flown from Italy, since Stalin had refused point-blank several requests from the British and the Americans to carry out 'shuttle' missions using Soviet airfields, which would have made the Western Allies' task immeasurably easier. This decision did not sit well, particularly with the British. The night flights to the fighting city, carried out by British, South African and Polish aircrews, were a saga of heroism, technical problems and shabby Soviet intransigence. Even Polish aircrews recognised the missions to be almost suicidal and, given that the insurgents held only various pockets in the city, that accurate delivery of supplies was to all intents and purposes a hit or miss affair. Despite this, the Polish airmen insisted on continuing their missions with but little to show for them. Repeated Polish requests to send the Polish Parachute Brigade or even elements of it to Warsaw were unrealistic. Given that the Western Allies did have to constantly dodge German sniper fire Insurgents celebrate after the American supply drop, although much of it fell on German-held positions. After 63 days of heroic struggle the human cost of the Uprising is immense and forces the AK to capitulate. not have local air superiority and without Soviet co-operation would be unable to achieve it, trying to drop paratroopers into an urban combat zone possibly at night would have been suicidal. Put simply, very few of them would have made it to the ground alive. Furthermore, an adequate number of specially adapted Liberators suitable to the task of getting the men to Warsaw did not exist, and the large numbers of slow aircraft would have been sitting ducks. Trying to send Polish fighter aircraft little sense, since the AK simply did not have the ground maintenance and re-supply facilities needed to keep them operational, even assuming that the aircraft could reach Warsaw unscathed. After repeated Western pressure, the Soviets eventually relented on the 12th of September, allowing the Americans to fly a 'shuttle' mission to bases which they had on Soviet territory. Bad weather then prevented the Americans from flying until the 18th, when 110 aircraft took off from 4 airfields in Great Britain. Three of the aircraft had to turn back, but the remainder, escorted for part of the way by fighters, took a heading for Southern Denmark where they turned south across the Baltic towards Warsaw. The capital was barely hanging on, the last supply drop it had received had been 34 days earlier and hopes of anymore had evaporated, so the arrival of the mighty aerial armada produced an indescribable wave of emotion. Two days earlier, in the Powiśle district of the city, men from the Polish First Army had crossed the river and for several days Soviet supply drops had been arriving and now the Americans had come. Unfortunately, the pockets where the insurgents were still holding out were so scattered that the great American effort produced a rather modest result. The *Flying Fortresses* dropped their loads from about 5,000 metres (15,000 feet), leading to a huge spread on the ground, with the insurgents getting their hands on no more than 228 containers. Only the City Centre and Mokotów came out of it quite well, but most of the arms, ammunition and medical supplies fell into German hands. Furthermore, hopes had been prematurely raised by the landing by men of the Polish First Army in Powiśle. The bridgehead there had to be liquidated after several days' fierce fighting owing to a lack of support, while Soviet supplies of food and ammunition were dropped without using parachutes and were thus for the most part useless. Conditions for the civilian population had become truly frightful, given the lack of food and medical supplies. What medical staff remained struggled to cope with the injured, gamely assisted by the clergy and members of religious orders whose devotion to their fellow man set an example for all. Thus capitulation talks re-started on the 28th and after 63 days of very heavy fighting, indeed some of the fiercest of the war, marked by exceptional German brutality, Warsaw had no option but to lay down its arms. The act of

capitulation, signed on the 2nd of October, provided for the soldiers of the AK and all subordinate organisations to be afforded the protection of the Geneva Conventions. It provided too for the complete evacuation of the entire civilian population from the city. After which, on Hitler's orders, German troops proceeded to raze to the ground what was left of the Polish capital. The decision to start the Uprising was based on two fatally flawed premises: that the Soviet Union would come to the Poles' aid and that the Western Allies would be able to provide extensive airborne support. Tragically for the Poles, Stalin was quite prepared to have his forces sit by and watch the Germans tear the heart out of the Polish Home Army. The Home Army lost about 18,000 fighters, a number which was dwarfed by the civilian death toll, which was nearer to 200,000. Nevertheless, while it is not unreasonable to assume that the decision to fight for Warsaw would have been taken, even if the underground leaders in Poland had been aware of the broader political picture, it appears that neither the Polish Government and the Polish Supreme Commander in London, nor the Polish Section of SOE had taken it upon themselves to keep Warsaw fully informed of political and military realities and of the limitations of Western air power. The Home Army Commander's requests for the Polish Parachute Brigade and Air Force to be deployed immediately to Warsaw at the outbreak of the Uprising revealed a lack of knowledge of the larger picture, which was, however, somewhat understandable given that he was working in dangerous and secret conditions in an occupied country and that he was not an airman. Ultimately, the Warsaw Uprising was a clear statement to the world that Poland was fighting for her freedom. It was also an attempt to arouse the conscience of the world. In this it was partially successful, since the Western leaders, especially Winston Churchill, were genuinely moved and for the first time lost patience with Stalin. Furthermore, the American decision to help the Uprising, when hitherto only the British had carried supplies and parachutists to Poland from the West, was a significant change of policy. For many, the Warsaw Uprising was one of the first episodes of the subsequent Cold War.



'As we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of WWII, we remember the sacrifices made by Poland, whose defiant spirit in the face of terrible suffering remains an inspiration to all humanity.'
HRH The Duke of Kent, KG

'I was so pleased to hear that there was to be a Polish War Memorial to commemorate the many who played important roles in Germany's defeat.'
HRH The Duke of Gloucester, KG GVCO

'The huge contribution and sacrifice of the Polish forces is well documented, their bravery and loyalty is well known and it is only right and fitting that we should remember them.'
Major-General the Duke of Westminster, KG CB OBE TD DL

'We, the British, owe much to those Polish men and women who came to join us in the struggle. There was a time in World War II when the only allies the British Commonwealth had were Polish and many died in battle many miles away from their own country.'
General the Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank, GCB LVO OBE DL

'My Grandfather, Winston Churchill, was always a great admirer of the Polish nation and staunch defender of their national sovereignty.'
Winston S. Churchill

'My childhood was spent in a small market town in the heart of Kent... thus Ashford was at the centre of the Battle of Britain in which the Poles played a glorious part.'
Author Frederick Forsyth, CBE

'Our age has seen no finer example of a nation's undying gallantry in the face of ferocious and bestial oppression than the struggle of the Polish people.'
Major-General Sir Colin Gubbins, KCMG DSO MC

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In August 1944, as the Soviet armed forces approached Warsaw, the government-in-Exile called for an uprising in the city, hoping to return to a liberated Warsaw and prevent a communist take-over. The AK, led by Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, launched the Warsaw Uprising. Soviet forces were less than 20 km away but Soviet High Command ordered no assistance. Stalin described the uprising as a "criminal adventure". The Poles appealed to the Western Allies for help. The Royal Air Force, and the Polish Air Force based in Italy, dropped some munitions, but it was impossible for the Allies to help the Poles without Soviet assistance. When asked for permission to land for refueling on the Soviet "liberated" parts of Poland, Stalin categorically refused. The fighting in Warsaw was desperate. The AK armed soldiers, were mainly equipped with small arms only, against a well-armed German Army of 20,000 SS and regular Army units. General Bór-Komorowski's hope that the AK could take and hold Warsaw for the return of the London government was never likely to be achieved. After 63 days of savage fighting the city was reduced to rubble, and the reprisals were savage. The SS and auxiliary units including battalion of Ukrainians under Petro Dyachenko, the 3rd Regiment of the Cossack Infantry and others, participated with Germans in crushing of Polish AK resistance against Nazis. All were acting particularly brutal towards Polish civilians.



Members of AK battalion 'Gurt' honour a fallen comrade-in-arms Young soldiers of AK battalion 'Gurt' armed with captured German hand grenades. Many fine buildings were destroyed by German shelling and bombardment. The uprising was timed to coincide with the Soviet Union's Red Army approaching the eastern suburbs of the city and the retreat of German forces. However, the Soviet advance stopped short, enabling the Germans to regroup and demolish the city while defeating the Polish resistance, which fought for 63 days with little outside support. The Uprising was the largest single military effort taken by any European resistance movement during World War II. The Warsaw Uprising began on 1 August 1944, as part of a nationwide plan, Operation *Tempest*, when the Soviet Army approached Warsaw. The main Polish objectives were to drive the Germans from the city and help with the larger fight against Nazi Germany. The secondary political objectives was to liberate Warsaw before the Soviets, to protect the Polish sovereignty by empowering the Polish Underground State before the Soviet-backed communist Polish Committee of National Liberation could assume control. The Soviet's Moscow radio was also calling for the Uprising to begin.



On 25 July, the Union of Polish Patriots, in a broadcast from Moscow, stated: *"The Polish Army of Polish Patriots ... calls on the thousands of brothers thirsting to fight, to smash the foe before he can recover from his defeat ... Every Polish homestead must become a stronghold in the struggle against the invaders ... Not a moment is to be lost."* On 29 July, the first Soviet armoured units reached the outskirts of Warsaw, where they were counter-attacked by two German Panzer Corps: the 39th and 4th SS. On 29 July 1944 Radio Station Kosciuszko located in Moscow emitted a few times its *"Appeal to Warsaw"* and called to *"Fight The Germans"*. General Bór-Komorowski and several high-ranking officers held a meeting on that day. Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, who had recently arrived from London, expressed the view that support from the Allies would be weak, but his points received little attention. Believing that the time for action had arrived, on 31 July, the Polish commanders General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski and Colonel Antoni Chruściel ordered full mobilization of Home Army forces for 17:00 the following day. Street-to-street, house-to-house and often hand-to-hand the fighting raged across Warsaw. Under almost continuous heavy bombardment Warsaw was covered by a blanket of choking smoke.



The Home Army forces of the Warsaw District numbered between 20,000 - 49,000 soldiers. Other formations also contributed soldiers; estimates range from 2,000 - 3,500 from the far-right National Armed Forces and a few dozen from the communist People's Army. Most of them had trained for several years in partisan and urban guerrilla warfare, but lacked experience in prolonged daylight fighting. The forces lacked equipment, apparently because the Home Army had shuttled weapons to the east of the country before the decision to include Warsaw in Operation *Tempest*. Other partisan groups subordinated themselves to Home Army command, and many volunteers joined during the fighting, including Polish Jews freed from the Gęsiówka concentration camp in the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto. Colonel Antoni Chruściel (codename "*Monter*") commanded the Polish forces in Warsaw. Initially he divided his forces into eight areas. On 20 September, they were reorganized to align with the three areas of the city held by Polish forces. The entire force, renamed the Warsaw Home Army Corps and commanded by General Antoni Chruściel—promoted from Colonel on 14th September to commander general of the formed three infantry divisions (Śródmieście, Żoliborz and Mokotów).



Polish Underground insurgents celebrate after the American supply drop, although much of it fell on German-held positions. Winston Churchill pleaded with Stalin and Franklin D. Roosevelt to help Britain's Polish allies, to no avail. Then, without Soviet air clearance, Churchill sent over 200 low-level supply drops by the Royal Air Force, the South African Air Force, and the Polish Air Force under British High Command. Later, after gaining Soviet air clearance, the U.S. Army Air Force sent one high-level mass airdrop as part of Operation *Frantic*. The Soviet Union continued to refuse to allow American bombers from Western Europe to land on "Soviet" airfields in Poland after dropping supplies to the Poles. Warsaw, as the capital of the Second Polish Republic, it was symbolic of the proud defiance of 1939. As one of the main centres of Polish Jewry, it was symbolic of a rich Jewish tradition. Accordingly, it too was also earmarked by Hitler for radical reorganisation. In plans devised in 1940, Warsaw's geographical area was to be reduced by one tenth, whilst its population was to fall by a quarter, with the shortfall to be made up by an influx of German settlers. At the same time it was to be systematically reduced to the status of a "secondary provincial city".



In the mean time, the *“improvised”* life continued. This marriage blessing (a nurse Halina Trojtler a Medical School student and Jan Bieda also student at Wawelberg Technical School) during the 1944 Rising. The above photographs originates from the records of the Home Army created by Eugeniusz Lokajski (code name *“Brok”*) who was tragically killed on 25th September under the ruins of Warsaw. In the lower picture, third person from the left, as shown is the Home Army AK Lieutenant *“Topola”* – a code name of the late mother of Dr Marek Stella-Sawicki.



PLAN SYTUACYJNY POŁOŻENIA STRON W WALCZĄCEJ WARSZAWIE W SIERPNIU (opracowany w r. 1947 w Instytucie Pamięci Narodowej na podstawie odrębnych szkiców gen. m. dm. Bucha).

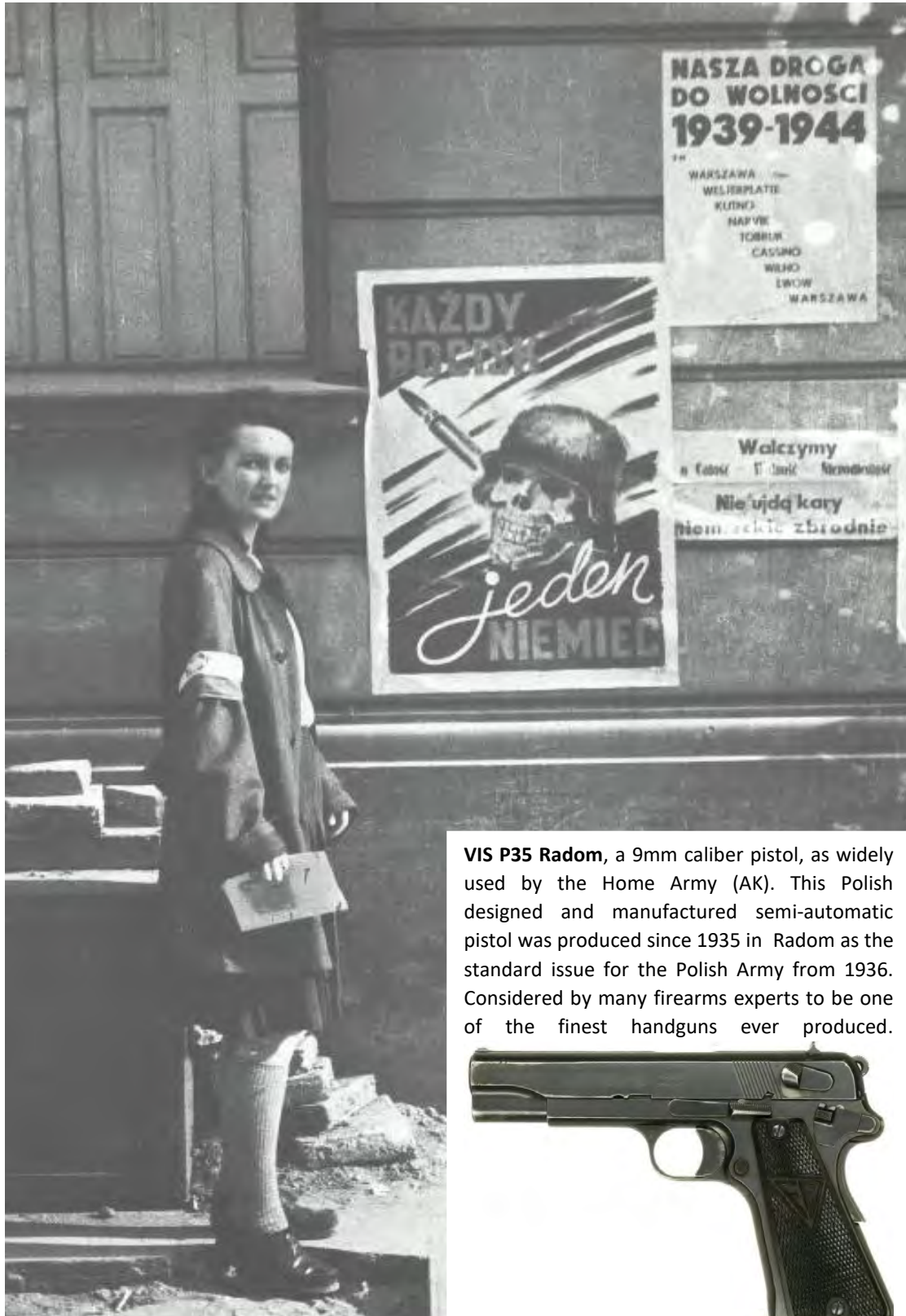
Tereny zakreślane barwnie znajdowały się początkowo w rękach powstańców i zostały kolejno zdobyte przez Niemców w ciągu 63 dni walki. Nie zakreślowany teren Śródmieścia, obwiedziony linią, skapitulował nie zdobyty 2 października 1944.

Nazwiska niemieckie na planie to nazwiska dowódców grup bojowych nieprzyjaciela rozlokowanych na oddzielnych terenach.

Oznaczenia literowe: 1 — pozycje brygady kolaboracyjnej RONA (Ruska Armia Oswobodzicielska Armijska) — pod dowództwem KAMINSKIEGO na Ochocie w końcu pierwszego tygodnia sierpnia, 2 — teren rozlokowania oddziałów grupy GEN. ROHRA w tym samym czasie, 3 — siły GEN. GRILLA osaczone przez powstańców w rejonie Alei Szucha, 4 — siły dowódcy garnizonu niemieckiego w Warszawie GEN. STABELA osaczone przez powstańców (do chwili utraty Woli) w rejonie pałacu Brühla, 5 — linia pozycji grupy bojowej GEN. REINEFARTHA na Woli koło 6 sierpnia, 6 — oddziały koscielne zabezpieczające skrywkę GEN. Heintzarta, oddział Zoltera od zachodu.

OZNACZENIA LITEROWE objaśnione w tekście artykułu.

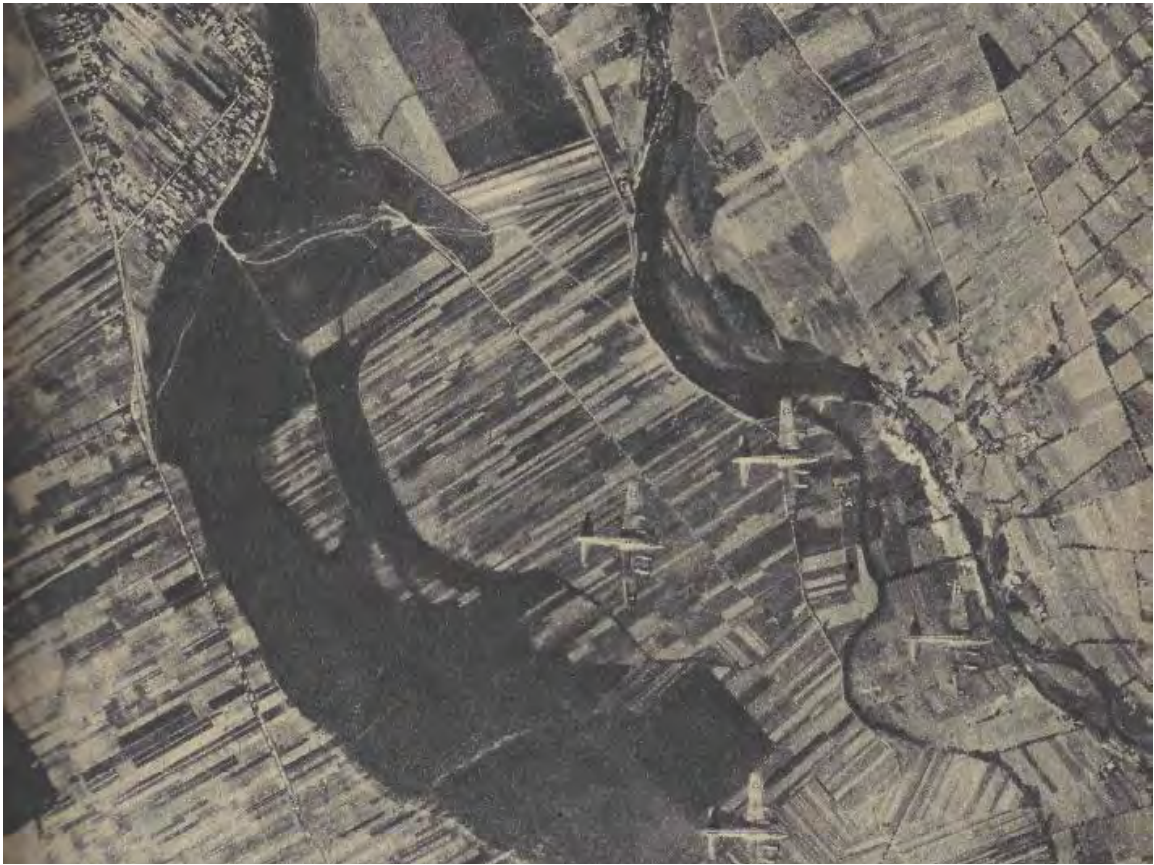
Top left: PASTA building alight during some of the most fierce 1944 fighting. This building was fortified by the Germans and a very difficult to storm by the AK fighters. Below is shown the group of civilians taking an oath before joining the Home Army during the Warsaw Rising. To the right is a map of the areas of Warsaw controlled by the Home Army AK in September 1944.



VIS P35 Radom, a 9mm caliber pistol, as widely used by the Home Army (AK). This Polish designed and manufactured semi-automatic pistol was produced since 1935 in Radom as the standard issue for the Polish Army from 1936. Considered by many firearms experts to be one of the finest handguns ever produced.



The poster on the Warsaw's building: "One German, one bullet!" During the August 1944. When the Warsaw Rising broke at 5.00 pm on 1 August 1944, the German response was grimly predictable. It was summed up by Heinrich Himmler, who wrote to Hitler informing him of events and stating that "the action of the Poles is a blessing. We shall finish them off...Warsaw will be liquidated, and this city...capital of a nation... that has blocked our path to the east for 700 years...will cease to exist."



First of 115 German POW prisoners escorted out of the PASTA building reported 20th August 1944. This was a major tactical victory for Home Army. A large quantity of arms have also been secured. Above shown are the allied planes, most probably from Brindisi in Italy flying above Warsaw in 1944.



Mrs. Eugenia Maresh is the committee member and Chairwoman of the Polish Underground Study Trust (1939-1945) in London. Mrs. Maresh is the author of the acclaimed body of the WWII, Poland's related documentation including amongst many: *"Katyn 1940: The Documentary Evidence of the West's Betrayal"* published in June, 2010. The mass murder of 22,000 Poles by the Soviet NKVD at Katyn is one of the most shocking events of the Second World War and its political implications are still being felt today. Information surrounding Katyn came to light with Russian *perestroika*, which made it possible to disclose a key document indicating the circumstances of the massacre. The bitter dispute is ongoing between the Russian and Polish governments, to declassify the rest of the documents and concede to genocide perpetrated by the Soviets. Mrs Maresh advice in all aspects of the aspects of this conference was mission critical.



Dr. Andrzej Suchcitz PhD., FRHist.S. Educated at Divine Mercy College Fawley Court, Forest Hill Comprehensive, he studied history at the University of London (School of Slavonic and East European Studies). Since 1983 Assistant Keeper and since 1989 Keeper of Archives of the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum and the Polish Underground Movement (1939-1945) Study Trust. He has written extensively on Polish political and military history of the 20th century. Andrzej is the author, co-author, editor and co-editor of nearly 300 books and articles in Polish and English. He was a member of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee concerning wartime co-operation between the two intelligence services. His English language publications include *"Poland's contribution to the Allied Victory in the Second world War"* (1995, 1996, 2011), co-editing and contributing chapters to: E.R.Sword, *"The Diaries and Despatches of a Military Attache in Warsaw 1939-1939"* (London 2001); *"General Władysław Sikorski, Poland's wartime leader"* (London 2007); *"General Władysław Anders. Soldier and Leader of the Free Poles in Exile"* (London- 2008).



Dr. Paul Latawski is a Senior Lecturer in the Defence and International Affairs Department, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He is a Senior Associate in the Advanced Research and Assessment Group, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom and an Associate Fellow in the European Security Programme at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies (RUSI), London. He completed his Ph.D. at Indiana University USA. His principal research interests include security sector reform in post conflict peace building and state-building and the problems associated with both historical and contemporary coalition military operations. He has also written on NATO enlargement, Polish defence transformation, sub-regional co-operation, nationalism and Balkan conflict.



Dr. Wojciech Rappak was born in Gdańsk and studied philosophy and history in Canada, Warsaw, Paris and London. He has a doctorate from the University of London for research into the foundations of logic and the early philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. He is also a Reader in history in the Institute of European Culture at the London-based Polish University Abroad (PUNO). He is currently completing a post-doctoral history research project at University College London (UCL) on Jan Karski. Taking Jan Karski's life as a focal point, Dr Rappak's research examines the archival evidence on how the Polish wartime state, through Karski, tried to alert the Allies about the situation in occupied Poland, about the Holocaust and on whether the Allies had the will or the capability to provide rescue. His research also looks at the way Karski is remembered and memorialised today. Dr Rappak has published and presented papers (in both Polish and English) on Jan Karski at conferences and seminars in London, Chicago, Jerusalem and in Poland.



Dr. Waldemar Grabowski, studied at University Jagielloński in Kraków, where he originally came from, now permanently based in Warsaw. Widely published Polish historian recognised in Poland and abroad. A frequent visitor to London based PUMST (Polish Underground Study Trust 1939-1945), which is an associated part of PISM (Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum). His interest included the subject of the Polish Political Parties during WWII and the part they played in the Polish Underground State. Dr. Waldemar Grabowski works full time at IPN (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej) in Warsaw. His Facebook contact is, <https://www.facebook.com/waldemar.grabowski.14>



Dr. Karol Sacewicz, studied for his PhD at University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, where he originally came from. Widely published Polish historian, Dr. Sacewicz will give us talk on Polish Underground during WWII and its interaction with the Polish Communists and the concept of the counteraction in that turbulent period of the Polish History 1939-1944. Dr Karol Sacewicz interest includes the political, ideological and tactical reasons as well as international war situation, including the role and position of the former USSR in the anti-German coalition. Works full time at IPN (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej) in Olsztyn, Poland.



General (Retd.) John Drewienkiewicz (General DZ) CB was commissioned into the Royal Engineers in 1966 and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in 1968, captain in 1972 major in 1978, lieutenant colonel in 1984 and colonel in 1988. Promotion to brigadier came on 31 December 1989, with seniority from 30 June 1989. Drewienkiewicz attained general officer rank with promotion to acting major general on 15 December 1994 and was appointed Engineer in Chief (Army). He was granted the substantive rank of major general on 25 April 1995 with seniority from 1 July 1994. He was appointed to the NATO role of Director of Support at Joint Force Command Brunssum on 28 July 1995 and to the honorary role of Colonel Commandant, Corps of Royal Engineers in 1997. In 1998 he served as military assistant to the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and was appointed Companion of the Order of the Bath.



Colonel (Retd.) Richard Ciagliński BA MEd. Graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and served with the Adjutant Generals Corps. Knowledge of Slavonic languages and interest in defence intelligence resulted in appointments to British embassies in Poland and Bulgaria as a Military /Defence Attache. In 1998/9 was attached to the Kosovo Verification Mission where he was awarded a Mention in Despatches and subsequently testified against Slobodan Milosevic at The Hague. In retirement was seconded by the FCO to Darfur as the EU representative of the Ceasefire Commission and to Georgia with the EU Military Monitoring Mission. Colonel Richard Ciagliński is a member of the British Commission for Military History, BCMH, and an active supporter of the Polish Heritage Society (UK).



Dr. Marek Stella-Sawicki MBE KM served as a Chairman of the Polish Armed Forces War Memorial Project in National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire 2008-09, Chairman of Fryderyk Chopin Memorial Committee at Southbank Centre 2010-11, Chairman Polish Heritage Society UK 2010, Video Press Falklands Appeal in 1982. Association Polonaise des Chevaliers de Malte UK, Chairman 2012, Knight of Grace and Devotion SMOM 2008, Polish Army Gold Medal 2010, Officer's Cross Polonia Restituta 2010, Officer's Cross Pro Merito Melitensi 2011, UK Airborne Forces Association Medal Utrinque Paratus-Ad Unum Omnes 2013. He obtained his Ph.D from King's College, London 1974 -1978. Awarded MBE on Her Majesty Birthday's Honours List 2012. Military History at University of Buckingham 2013-2017. He is visiting Professor at UCL since 2007. In 2013 he produced a documentary film on the Polish story of the Battle of Arnhem, covering the fate of Major General Stanisław Sosabowski CBE and the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade at Arnhem and Driel, Sept. 1944, featuring interviews with Brigade Major Tony Hibbert MBE, MC and Sir Brian Urquhart KCMG MBE head of Intelligence at Arnhem.



Mr. Chris Januszewski is the committee member of Polish Heritage Society UK. In 2013 he helped to organise the very complex logistics of the 1st two day Conference on the Polish Military Leadership at the RCDS (Royal College of Defence Studies) in conjunction with BCMH (British Commission for Military History). This 2 day event was an outstanding success, from which the two 2016 conferences were effectively derived. The first one was the Polish Section of SOE or the Cichociemni event in June 2016 and later on in the year, on 15th October, The Falaise Gap and General Stanislaw Maczek conference was held at the Embassy of the Polish Republic. Chris is the proud son of a 1939 Polish Cavalry Officer who takes a family historic traditions very seriously. Without his commitment and time freely given, PHS UK conferences would not be the same.



Major (Retd.) Marek Zaremba-Tymieniecki TD, late R Signals and AGC(ETS), 20 Years as Territorial Army (TA) Royal Signals Officer, 5 years as Territorial Army AGC(ETS) Linguist (Polish), Author of first contemporary Polish Tri-Service Word List (SLP Level 2 (Colloquial)) for the British Armed forces.

Major (Retd.) Marek Zaremba-Tymieniecki TD, 20 Lat służby w brytyjskich wojskach Terytorialnych na rozmaitych stanowiskach jednostek łączności, 5 lat jako tłumacz, w jednostce tłumaczy wojsk Terytorialnych, główne zadanie wsparcie corocznych cyklu ćwiczeń w Polsce. Autor pierwszego współczesnego słownika terminów militarnych w Wojsku Brytyjskim.



For a number of years Polish Heritage Society UK took part in the Horse Guards to Cenotaph Parade, top left: Col Richard Ciagliński, Mrs Hanka Januszewska and Col Mike Russell in 2016. The Cenotaph Parade goes from Whitehall south towards Parliament Square then turns right into Great George Street, and right again into Horse Guards Road. Below shown are our veterans of WWII. Second from right is Mr Otton Hulacki, followed by Mrs Marzenna Schejbal from the Polish Home Army or Armia Krajowa – (AK).

The Sewers of Warsaw³

Marzenna Maria Schejbal by Andrzej Formaniak



There is an old Polish saying, ‘where the devil doesn’t dare to go, there he sends a woman’, an interesting motto to highlight a short account of Mrs Marzenna Maria Schejbal’s WW II experiences that made her a living legend in London. She was born as Maria Karczewska before the war and was only 15 when the Germans invaded Poland in 1939. During the German Occupation she got involved in making up cigarettes for Polish soldiers lying wounded in hospitals. She and her sister Ewa would make parcels for them, or take them soup cooked in special field kitchens, she says. Polish resistance forces against the German Occupation consolidated in the Polish Home Army or Armia Krajowa – (AK), and by 1944 the AK numbered 300,000 men and women and maintained a campaign of harrying the German garrison forces, keeping open routes for escaped prisoners and setting up a very successful intelligence service. The AK spy network supplied the Western Allies with invaluable early warnings of the German V-weapon programme. However, Marzenna’s parents had forbidden both their daughters to join the resistance. Her father was already helping to smuggle Jews and partisans to safe houses, and feared the girls might compromise these efforts. Despite this, her sister Ewa, slightly younger, somehow had already got involved in the AK through her boyfriend and so it became inevitable that Marzenna would soon follow in her footsteps. By the summer of 1944, the whole of Warsaw was in a state of conspiring, and the momentum of untamed hatred against the Germans was growing with the speed of light. Almost five years after the German invasion of Poland, the bubbling lava of the Polish Underground was ready to erupt. Almost by accident, both girls stumbled upon ‘W’ hour, the 5pm start of the Warsaw Uprising on August 1st 1944. They were out in the city centre when the shooting and shelling started which trapped both sisters. It took four days to cover the two miles to get back home to say they were safe. Shortly after this episode, they reported for duty to the nearest AK unit. Ewa was already sworn in as an AK soldier, now it was ‘Marzenna’ (her pseudonym), who recited the oath to Poland’s Black Madonna and so became an AK soldier too. Marzenna was not trained to fight but she was ready to do anything and was soon acting as a messenger, stretcher-bearer, and forager for medical supplies. Female soldiers represented at least 10% of AK personnel. There were about 5,000 women who fought in the Uprising, which was meant to last less than a week! After the first week, the AK seized the central districts—happy days when they all celebrated these first victories. Slowly, however, the whole military situation changed as the Germans amassed additional forces and as August progressed, the Germans relentlessly wore down the Poles using flamethrowers, rockets, explosive charges and remote-controlled tracked vehicles fitted with

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explosives—‘*Goliaths*’, to supplement their tanks, artillery and bombers. As the Poles fought their way through the streets of Warsaw, the Germans behaved in a particularly brutal fashion, executing civilians and prisoners alike, setting fire to hospitals full of patients, and driving civilians in front of their troops when attacking AK positions. On the nights of the 1st and 2nd of September, Warsaw’s Old Town was about to fall, the Poles, cut off from each other, kept communications going through their city’s intricate sewer system. Marzenna was in the group fighting in the Old Town and once cut off from other AK troops, the group decided to escape from the area using the sewers. Her sister who had been wounded on August 13th was in a hospital and Marzenna didn’t want to leave her to face the Germans. During the evacuation of her sister from hospital, a ‘*Goliath*’ exploded killing three hundred people. Luckily, she survived and managed to find her sister and piggybacked her to safety. Ewa was then transferred with other wounded personnel through the sewers to the town centre. Marzenna stayed on with her group of 39 soldiers; they were almost the last people to leave the old town through the sewer. She had no idea what it would be like to crawl through an 80 cm diameter pipe; it was a terrifying experience. They were told that the whole journey would take two and a half hours—it lasted seventeen hours! Somebody had died in the tunnel in front of them and the swollen body blocked the whole tunnel. They couldn’t move—so they had to push the body to another manhole with a bigger opening. Everything was done in darkness as the Germans were becoming vigilant and could throw gas, petrol or grenades into the sewers. People panicked and started shouting, especially the men who became claustrophobic; some were ready to give themselves up to the Germans, and others who wanted to survive silenced them by covering their mouths. There was some fighting as they were calmed down to allow the group to get moving. People were so exhausted that the first person who reached the last open manhole couldn’t get out and collapsed from the sudden onslaught of fresh air after so many hours in the sewer. After this, the others were pulled out with ropes. Marzenna developed a fever and later collapsed when they were washing themselves in the public bath. Fortunately, she was found by her colleagues and the group doctor, who was in the sewers with them, tended her scratches and infections. A few days she recovered and returned to her duties—this time finding food for starving wounded soldiers. The Uprising was nearing its end with only one month’s fighting left. On 2nd October 1944, the Warsaw Uprising was finally over. After 63 days of long struggle, General Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski, the Home Army Commander-in-Chief surrendered to the German Commander, SS General Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski. AK soldiers were recognised by the Germans in the armistice as army personnel under the Geneva Conventions. The Polish troop leaders gave their soldiers two days to decide if they wanted to stay in the town or go as prisoners to a POW camp with the Germans. The capitulation agreement guaranteed that women fighters would be treated as soldiers, with the same rights as the men. By this time, Marzenna knew that her mother hadn’t made it through the sewers and that her father’s fate was unknown, so together with her sister they decided to go as POWs not wanting to be liberated by the Russians. Marzenna and Eva, and 1,728 other Warsaw women were designated as the first women POWs in WW II. After a few transit camps, they ended up, in the freezing, ratinfested barracks of Oberlangen in Germany, near the Dutch border. This camp, previously closed by the Red Cross as completely unsuitable for POWs, was then re-opened for the Polish women soldiers. Over six months later at 18.00 hrs on 12th April 1945, the Oberlangen camp was liberated by soldiers of General Maczek’s 1st Armoured Division. The immense joy of being liberated by a Polish force lasted for weeks, but since the war was still on, and they had to wait another month before the women soldiers of the Polish Home Army and former POWs in the Third Reich could start the next chapter in their lives. She found out that mother had been sent to Bergen-Belsen and had survived but that her father had been taken to a labour camp and perished. He was never seen again. After Oberlangen both sisters ended up in Murnau. Oflag VII-A Murnau was a POW camp for Polish Army officers and generals in the Bavarian town of Murnau am Staffelsee. After the end of WW II, it became one of the camps for displaced persons. The girls did not want to go back to Poland as they knew what it would be like under Russian rule. Instead they chose Italy and after a few months there, the two sisters and their mother, who had by then joined them, left and arrived at a refugee camp near Pulborough in West Sussex.



Another chapter opened up in Marzenna's life who was by now married to Witold Schejbal whom she had met in Murnau. This however is another story to be told on a different occasion. Marzenna's struggle with the vagaries of life did not stop there but throughout her life as a civilian she remained as decisive, bold and efficient as she was in the AK. A woman who had resisted her fate by her persistence and untameability, perhaps that old Polish proverb should read, 'Where the devil doesn't dare to go, there he sends Marzenna'.

The Un-named Polish Soldier Buried in Brookwood 54 years ago

While renovation work was being carried out on a grave in Brookwood Cemetery at the request of the Polish Ministry of Defence in Warsaw and The Embassy of Republic of Poland in London, a member of the committee of The Polish Heritage Society UK, an English Charity “with a Polish heart”, came across the grave of an un-named Polish soldier.

The committee unanimously decided that this matter had to be dealt with immediately. Here was a Polish Soldier who had fought in the Polish Army in WWII under British Command, died and lay buried on foreign soil without a name or proper grave. The cemetery records were made available to us and we were able to find the details of this burial.

It gives us great pleasure to be able to give Władysław Kopytnicki (1901-1963) the grave he has deserved for nearly 60 years. There will be a memorial mass and blessing of the grave on Wednesday 7th June 2017 and the celebrant will be Rev Father Canon Dr Władysław Wyszowadzki, the Vice Rector of the Polish Catholic Mission to England and Wales. As our main memorial project this year, this grave has been funded by The Polish Heritage Society UK with donations made throughout 2017.



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Embassy
of the Republic of
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The BATTLE OF BRITAIN - THE POLISH STORY

7th October 2017 commencing at 10:00 am



- Conference Title:** The Battle of Britain –The Polish Story
- Conference Date:** 7th October 2017
- Conference Venue:** The Embassy of the Republic of Poland, London
- Format:** Full day Conference jointly organized with the Polish Embassy, made up of a series of lectures, ending with a Q & A session.
- The day to be broken up by tea/coffee breaks, lunch and final reception.
- Proposed Partners:** The Embassy of the Republic of Poland
- Polish Heritage Society UK



Conference Venue

The Embassy of Republic of Poland in London
47 Portland Pl, Marylebone, London W1B 1JH

Due to the popular demand for the Polish Heritage Society UK military history conferences, early booking is essential, via the contact provided below. Voluntary donations to the Polish Heritage Society welcome.

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