

The Polish Heritage Society UK: www.polishheritage.co.uk

Conference Programme

1st Polish Armoured Division: From Normandy to the Baltic

18th October 2025

At the Polish Social and Cultural Association POSK

238-246 King Street, London, W5 0RF



Polish Heritage Society (UK)



**Celebrating the 14th Anniversary
of Polish Heritage Society UK**



PHS UK - 2025 Military History Conference. Saturday 18th October 2025

**BOOK
EARLY !!!**



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How to find us

POSK is located near Ravenscourt Park underground station (District line).

238-246 King Street
Hammersmith
London W6 0RF

Conference Programme

0900- 1000 Registration/Coffee

1000-1030 Welcome by Dr Marek Stella-Sawicki MBE Chairman of PHS

1030-1130 **Session 1** Overview of 1st Polish Armoured Division Operations September 1944 – May 1945, **Dr Andrzej Suchcitz**, Keeper of Archives, Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum

1130-1230 **Session 2** The Military Engineering Challenges of Crossing Water Obstacles – **Major General John Drewienkiewicz (Retd)**

1230-1330 Lunch

1330-1430 **Session 3** When Things Go Wrong: Crossing The Axel-Hulst Canal 16-19 September 1944 - **Dr Paul Latawski**, Emeritus Department of War Studies, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

14:30-1530 **Session 4** Operation Plunder: 51st Highland Division in the Crossing of the Rhine 24 March 1945 - **Dr Christopher Mann**, Department of War Studies, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

15:30-1630 **Concluding Summary** followed by Pnel Discussion with Speakers - Q and A

PHS (UK) Registration Form

1st Polish Armoured Division: From Normandy to the Baltic

Saturday, 18th October 2025 commencing at 10:00 am, Ticket Price of £30.00 per person

Please use capital letters and fill in all details as below

First Delegate

Title..... First Name.....Surname.....

Telephone No.....Email Address.....

Send your Registration Form to: - PHS (UK), 65 The Manor Drive, Worcester Park,

Surrey KT4 7L J or Email to polishheritagesocietyuk@gmail.com

Cheque made out to Polish Heritage Society (UK)

or pay by bank transfer to NatWest, Sort Code 60-07-10. Account No. 41785754

Second Delegate

Title..... First Name.....Surname.....

Telephone No.....Email Address.....

Third Delegate

Title..... First Name.....Surname.....

Telephone No.....Email Address.....

The Polish Heritage Society UK: www.polishheritage.co.uk



Dr Andrzej Suchcitz



Maj General John Drewienkiewicz



Polish Heritage Society (UK)



Dr Paul Latawski



Dr Christopher Mann





Chris Januszewski



Dr Marek Stella-Sawicki

PHS UK

THE JOURNEY SO FAR SINCE 2011

The Polish Heritage Society in the United Kingdom, in short PHS (UK), was formed to promote greater community awareness amongst present and future generations of United Kingdom citizens of Polish origin of the historical links between the two countries and the presence of acts of gratitude and remembrance across Great Britain.

Polish Heritage Society (UK) Limited was incorporated as a limited liability company on 04 February 2011 (Registered Number 07517923, England and Wales) and was registered as a charity by the Charity Commission (Registered Number 1143791) on 13 September 2011.



Embassy
of the Republic of
Poland in London



Polish Heritage Society (UK)



Major General Maczek Stanisław DSO



In 1944, **The Polish Armoured Division** under General Maczek, were ready for action again. The Polish Armoured Division landed in France in July as part of the British Liberation Army. Field Marshal Montgomery, to whom General Maczek presented all his senior commanders, visited Division on 5th August. Their attack near Caen and the heavy casualties sustained by the Division, marked the battles in Normandy. It culminated with the closure of the Falaise Gap. The German armies were confronted by Americans, Canadians, English, Scottish, French and Polish Troops.

The Polish Armoured Division played the dominant role in this encounter. Acting on the direct orders of Montgomery it penetrated deeply behind the front lines and closed the last German escape route by occupying the dominating hills of Mont Ormel near Chambois.

For three days they were surrounded fighting on one side with the German 70,000 strong army groups, now physically closed in the pocket and on the other being attacked from behind by the Second SS Panzer Division attempting to open the road for those trapped in the pocket. They were cut off from all supplies of petrol and ammunition as neither Canadians nor Americans could reach their position. On the evening of 21st August, the 4th Canadian Armoured Division fought their way to Polish position whilst at Chambois another Polish combat unit liaised with Americans.

A few months later Montgomery, when decorating General Maczek and other soldiers of the Division, said: *“In Normandy we closed the Germans into a bottle and your division was the cork of that bottle”*.



Above: Sherman V (M4A4), 2nd Armoured regiment. Below: Cruiser VIII (A27) Cromwell VII on the left, 10th Mounted Rifle Regiment and 17. pounder. Self Propelled, 1st Anti Achilles Tank Artillery Regiment, "Bydgoszcz" on the right. Both Achilles and 2 Cromwells were used by Poles in Normandy in 1944.



Below: Sherman VC Firefly, 2nd Armoured Regiment. Shermans were also used in Normandy in 1944. Polish 1st Armoured Division suffered badly from USAAF "friendly" bombing enemy (57 lost tanks and many soldiers killed in the action). On the August 8th - USAAF heavy bombers managed to bomb the headquarters of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division and 1st Polish Armoured Division during Operation Totalize, killing 65 and wounding 250 Allied soldiers.





General Maczek commanding 1st Polish Armoured Division in Holland.



Polish anti-aircraft battery on watch for German fighter-bombers.



General Alphonse Juin decorating General Maczek of the Polish 1st Division in France.



Polish casualties are evacuated from the battlefield.



General Maczek, The 1st Polish Armoured Division in Abbayeville, Normandy, 1944.

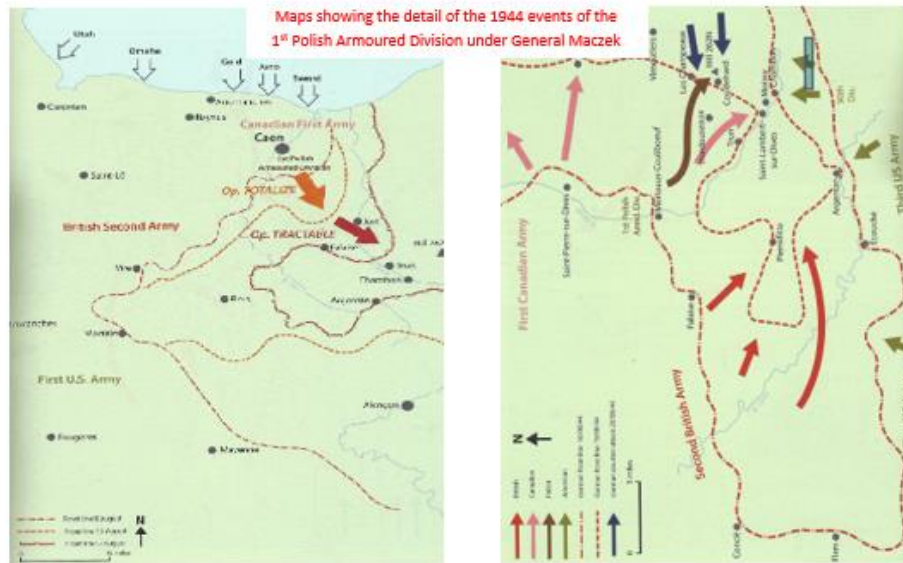


6th May 1946, over 34,000 German prisoners were captured, disarmed and reclassified as POWs.

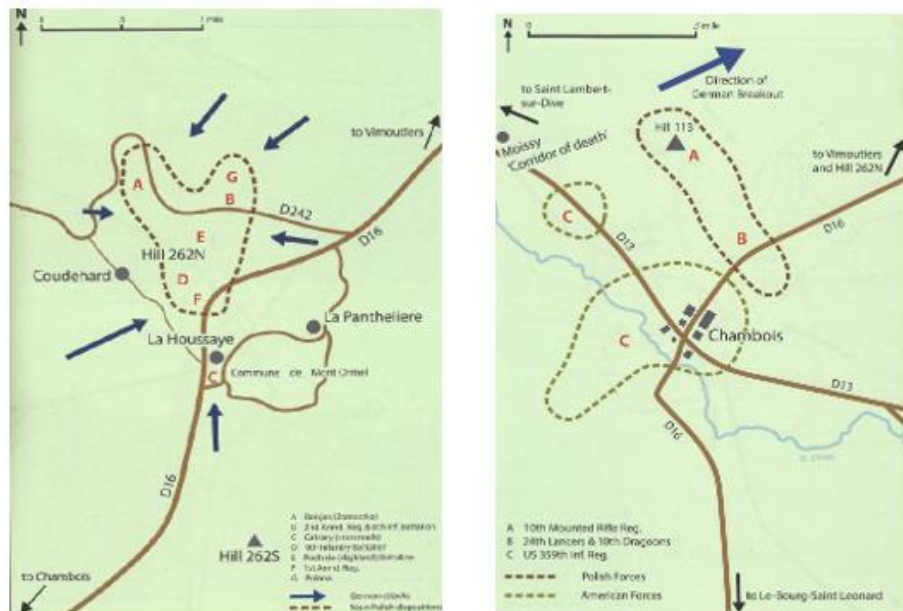


General Maczek with some of his officers at Abbayeville, Normandy, 1944.





Polish forces are in the thick of the fighting to liberate Europe.



Top left: Normandy Front 17th August 44, Top right: Falaise Pocket 16-20 August 44, Bottom left: "Maczuga" (Mace) Hill 262 North 19-21 August 44, Bottom right: Chambois 19th August 44. Originated from best available sources by Jan Jarzębowski (concept) and Helion & Company Limited (cartography).



1944, Polish forces receiving the freedom of the city of Breda in Holland.



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Polish General Stanisław Maczek leader and commander 1938 -1945.



*"In war it is the man that counts is useless unless the team inside is well trained,
and the men
in the team have stout hearts and enthusiasm for
Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, November 1944*





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General Stanisław Maczek DSO 1938-1945

