

**Stanisław Stolarczyk**

# PILGRIMS OF LIBERTY

POLISH PEOPLES' MEMORIAL SITES IN CANADA



**Fakty**

The one who remains in the memory of the living does not die.

*Fr. Jan Twardowski*



Stanisław Stolarczyk

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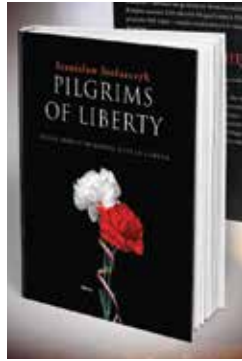
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*The book Pilgrims of Liberty is part of the Light of Remembrance project*

**T**he book-album contains 210 biographies and 300 photos of prominent Poles in Canada, including military men, Siberian-exiles, scientists, social activists, priests, people of culture and art. These Poles chose not to return to communist Poland after the end of World War II, instead choosing freedom in Canada, and now, rest on Canadian soil. Through this album, we wish to perpetuate the memory of our predecessors. We would like them to be remembered during various Polish-Canadian celebrations, so that candles are lit on their graves, which are often neglected and abandoned. The Light of Remembrance is lit in their hearts, so that they are taken care of by Polish youth with constant care as the most precious testimonies of Polish independence, the heritage and culture of Poland, Canada and the Polish Diaspora.

The documentation was published in Polish in a book version and in an electronic version. It is being distributed for FREE, since the main purpose of writing and publishing it is as an EDUCATIONAL TOOL and a REMEMBRANCE of those who have come before us. Thanks to widespread publicity on numerous websites (Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Ottawa, Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Toronto, Polish Scientific Institute, Polish media: Gonic, Życie, Wiadomości, Bejsment, Puls, Fakty, Angora, etc.), this documentation has reached tens of thousands of recipients around the world. It has also received many positive reviews. Here is an excerpt from a letter from historian Michał Młynarz in Edmonton:

“Certainly, this is a very important project for the Polish-Canadian Youth Organization and for the entire Polish community. Your book is very well-written and based on thorough and extensive research, which is why I think it should also be published in English and reach the widest possible audience of current and future generations.”

The publication of the documentation in English will be disseminated, as in Polish, FREE of charge, so that it will reach as many individual recipients and organizations as possible, including libraries in Canada (archives, Universities, schools, etc.).



**Stanisław Stolarczyk**  
*Reporter, writer, documentarian of Polish Heritage in Canada. Editor-in-Chief of the magazine "Fakty - Czas".*

**P**ilgrims of Liberty...

They fought for the sovereignty and independence of their Homeland in the formations of the Polish Army on all the fronts of the First and Second World Wars, in the allied armies of the anti-Hitler coalition and in underground resistance organizations.

They struggled for survival in concentration camps and in Soviet gulags. For their heroic deeds they received the highest orders, including the Virtuti Militari War Crosses or the Crosses of Valour...

However, after the war had ended, they still decided to remain in exile. They chose freedom.

They had rightly foreseen that upon their return to communist-ruled Poland, they would fall into the hands of the Soviet NKVD executioners, or the Polish Secret Services (SB), and thus they could share the fate of their compatriots previously murdered in Katyń or martyred in Siberia. Therefore, they opted for settlement in Canada.

In their travel packs, the exiled Poles had brought the burden of war experience, the longing for their Homeland and the memory of those who perished in war.

Here, in Canada, they had worked while dreaming of a free Poland; here they had died on their way to Her and were laid to rest in the friendly Canadian soil.

We wish to preserve the memory of them through the publication of this printed documentary entitled “Pilgrims of Liberty”. I hope that my book, being a part of the “Light of Remembrance” („Światło Pamięci”) series, will enrich the knowledge about Poles in exile among the students of Polish heritage schools and among the Polish scout guide (ZHP) teams. I hope the book will widen interest in the fates of the Polish exiles in Canada. I hope that it will also encourage the young generations of Canadian Poles to care for the final resting sites of their exiled compatriots, as these memorials are especially valuable testimonies of the heritage and culture of Poland, Canada and the Polish diaspora („Polonia”).

Let us light candles on their graves.

Let us keep them in our memory.

STANISŁAW STOLARCZYK

Chapter 1

They Dreamed of a Free  
and Independent...





*Photo from page 10  
An honorary rifle salute from  
the Canadian Guard during  
a ceremony commemorating  
the now-deceased volunteers  
for Gen. Joseph Haller's  
Army.*

*Polish camp at Niagara-on-  
the-Lake in 1918.*

*A poster by Władysław  
Teodor Benda from the  
period of recruitment to  
the Polish Army in France,  
during 1917-1919.*

In the small town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, in the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic cemetery at 73 Picton Street, there is a separate section which was presented to Poland by the Canadian government and it... still belongs to Poland. This section is commonly known as “Haller Army Cemetery”. The cemetery is tied to the founding of the Tadeusz Kościuszko military camp in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, in 1917-19. After training there, Polish volunteers fought in Europe for a free and independent Poland. Their deeds were recorded as the most captivating page in the history of the Polish Community within the United States and Canada.

With the outbreak of World War I, Poles at home and around the world recognized the opportunity to rebuild a sovereign Polish state, which had ceased to exist at the end of the 18th century, having been wiped off the maps of Europe, due to the partition of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria.

It was then that committees began to form in many countries, mainly in France and the United States, to raise funds and recruit volunteers for newly-created Polish military units, to fight alongside the Western Allies: England and France and then to join units on Polish soil.

On October 5, 1917, thanks to Ignacy Jan Paderewski’s diplomacy, US President Woodrow Wilson signed a decree allowing US Poles to form their own army. Since international treaties at the time did not allow them to train on U.S. soil, Canada came to the rescue, providing land near the picturesque border town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. It was here, on the shores of Lake Ontario, that the Tadeusz Kościuszko training camp was set up. It was financed by the French and run by the Canadians, with Colonel Arthur D’Orr LePan of the Canadian Armed Forces as Commander.

During the recruitment campaign, conducted from October 1917 to February 1919, nearly 40,000 volunteers were registered at 47 recruitment centres across America and Canada. A total of 22,395 were deemed fit for military service. All were sent to the training camp in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Most of the volunteers got there via the American border town of Buffalo in New York State, where the Polish-American Citizens Committee was active, coordinating the efforts of other Polish-American organizations and providing visitors to the camp with food, transportation and lodging. It was headed by Rev. Cezary Krzyzan and Dr. Francis E. Fronczak, who also served as Commissioner of Health Services for the City of Buffalo and was a member of the Paris-based Polish National Committee.

According to data from the Canadian Ministry of Defense, published



in the Niagara Historical Society's 1923 publication, 22,174 volunteer soldiers from the United States and Canada passed through the Tadeusz Kościuszko training camp.

"Ordinary camp life in November (1917 - author's note) was particularly enriched by two historic ceremonies. On November 4, by the dedication and display of the Polish flag on the camp flagpole and on November 21, by the dedication and presentation of the flag to the Third Battalion. This was combined with a grand parade and a few days later, with a military ball," noted Lt. Witold Hilary Trawiński, an officer at the Polish camp in Niagara-on-the-Lake, in his memoir "Odyssey of the Polish Blue Army" (Odyseja Polskiej Armii Błękitnej, Ossolineum Publishers, Wrocław 1989). The consecration of the camp flag was performed by Rev. B. Celichowski, who had arrived from Milwaukee, Wisconsin to replace Rev. Bishop Paul Rhody. The consecration of the battalion flag was performed by Rev. J. Jaworski, chaplain of the 1st Battalion. Both ceremonies were attended by quite a number of prominent representatives of the Polish community from the United States and Canada, as well as hundreds of relatives and friends of the camp volunteers."

On November 21, 1917, the 3rd Battalion's flag dedication ceremony was held. The T. Kościuszko camp had been visited by the great statesman and artist Ignacy Jan Paderewski himself. He spoke from a stand erected for the occasion - as Lt. Trawiński put it - "pouring out a solemn speech from his patriotic heart." - "I greet you, dear soldiers of Poland," he said, "I greet you as a representative of the Polish National Committee, I greet you as a representative and attorney of the National Department. I am happy to speak to the soldiers of the Polish Army, you are our hope. I am joyful and my heart is filled with pride, for I have heard praises about you. I have heard praise from the mouths of your superior officers and I have heard praise from the Military Commission, whose representative you see right next to me - in the person of my close friend, Mr. Alexander Znamięcki. I wanted to go with you and to share the hardship and discomfort, but I was not allowed. The Polish National Committee instructed me to guard the Polish cause in the capital of the United States. I am a soldier in my spirit, so I must obey. You, my dear soldiers, are the pride of the strong, the hope of the doubtful, the love of the entire Polish nation.

I am happy to see you in this division because in it I see a harbinger of victory for Poland. The homeland demands great sacrifices from you, but a great reward awaits you because the freedom and independence of a united Poland depends on your valour.

Today, you are consecrating the banner of the Third Battalion. Remember

*The banner of the Polish soldiers of the 3rd Battalion.*

*On November 21, 1917, T. Kościuszko camp was visited by the Polish pianist, composer, independence activist, statesman and politician Ignacy Jan Paderewski.*





*General Józef Haller's Blue Army Memorial Cross.*

*Adam Murawski's gravestone.*

that this banner is the Motherland, this banner is Her honour, all Her virtues. The banner is a symbol of discipline, by which you must stand, and defend it unto death.

Go with faith in victory, and may the Supreme God bless you and bring you good fortune!

Long live the Great, Independent and Free Poland!"

As a Polish volunteer officer noted in his diary: "After this speech, Maestro Paderewski proceeded to the flag-bearer and kissed him along with the banner. After that, three full battalions with the beginning of the fourth one paraded in front of the stage."

Lieutenant Trawiński's memoir is one of the most significant descriptions of Polish volunteer training in the T. Kościuszko camp. But it is not the only one, as camp life was also documented in few contemporary photographic plates, as well as in paintings by the famous Canadian painter Charles William Jefferys (1869-1951), which are held at the War Museum in Ottawa.

In September 1918, an epidemic of "Spanish flu" broke out in the camp. Thanks to the immediate response of headquarters and the camp doctors - 41 recruits died, 25 of whom, with the permission of authorities, were buried in the local St. Vincent de Paul Catholic cemetery (worldwide, the pandemic flu claimed some 30 million lives- far more than those lost on the frontlines of World War I).

Niagara-on-the-Lake residents played a significant part in helping to contain the disease at the camp; this included the local women who volunteered to care for the sick soldiers. One of the most active volunteers was Elizabeth Ascher, a reporter for the St. Catharines Standard, dubbed by the Polish volunteers "Angel of Mercy" or simply "Mother, since she tended to the young soldiers as a mother would. Ascher was born in Niagara in 1869; curiously, she had taken such interest in the Polish volunteers' struggle for a free Poland, that she constantly followed their fates and wrote about them for Canadian and American newspapers. For many years she organized fundraisers to help Poland.

Here are the names of the Polish soldiers buried at the "Haller Army Cemetery":

**Boruszkowski Władysław, dec. January 21, 1919,**

**Bester Wawrzyniec, dec. January 25, 1919,**

**Byszewski Michał, dec. October 8, 1918,**

**Ciopak Bartłomiej, dec. October 31, 1918,**

**Dolwa Józef, dec. August 10, 1918,**

**Głowacz Frederick, dec. September 30, 1918,**

**Jakubas Wawrzyniec, dec. October 13, 1918,**



Kempiński Adam, dec. February 16, 1919,  
 Kozłowski Kazimierz, dec. September 18, 1918,  
 Krukowski Stanisław, dec. October 22, 1918,  
 Kucia Jan, dec. September 22, 1918,  
 Łoziński Piotr, dec. September 26, 1918,  
 Marowicz Jan, dec. January 4, 1919,  
 Martin Adam, dec. December 24, 1917,  
 Murawski Adam, dec. September 29, 1918,  
 Nowak Feliks, dec. November 17, 1918,  
 Ptak Stanisław, dec. September 19, 1918,  
 Ronczka Wojciech, dec. October 16, 1918,  
 Skop Antoni, dec. February 18, 1919,  
 Siatkowski Jan, dec. February 25, 1918,  
 Sztopka Józef, dec. September 22, 1918,  
 Wiśniewski Mateusz, dec. March 15, 1918,  
 Witalec Walenty, dec. September 23, 1918,  
 Zarczyk Józef, dec. 18 September 1918,  
 Rev. Col. Jan Józef Dekowski (1882 - 1949).

The camp was shut down on March 11, 1919, after 18 months of existence. The 20,720 trained soldiers and officers had been transported to the Polish Army in France, where they joined General Józef Haller's Blue Army. Volunteers from US and Canada participated in victorious battles at the front in France and later in the Bolshevik-Polish war of 1920, thus contributing to the securing of a free and sovereign Poland. Many of them fell and never returned home.

On November 27, 1923, Lieutenant General Józef Haller, in the presence of Dr. Michał Straszewski, Consul General in Montreal, adorned the cemetery cenotaph of the Polish soldiers with the Military Order of Virtuti Militari Silver Cross.

After Poland regained its independence in 1918, the cemetery plot was handed over to our country, and to this day it still remains a part of Poland's territory.

In 1949, **Father Jan Józef Dekowski (1882 – 1949)**, the former chaplain at Kościuszko's Military Camp and Knight of the Virtuti Militari Order, was also laid to rest in this cemetery. He was a son of Polish immigrants in the United States and also a priest at the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Missionaries. In early 1918, he arrived in France with Polish volunteers and became chaplain of the Polish Army's 3rd Rifle Regiment. He participated in the fighting at Vosges, where he distinguished himself during the German assault on Polish military positions - ” setting an

*The resting places of Józef Zabczyk and Jan Kucia.*

*The grave of the former chaplain at Tadeusz Kościuszko's camp, Knight of the Order of Virtuti Militari, Rev. Jan Józef Dekowski.*



example of valour and civic virtues with his conduct”. After the war, he settled in Canada. He was pastor of many Polish parishes in Ontario. In 1992, to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the military action by Polish American and Canadian communities to regain independence for Poland, a field altar (Polish name: „Pomnik Czynu Zbrojnego Polonii Amerykańskiej”) was set up. This event was commemorated with a plaque. In 2000, the cemetery was thoroughly renovated, the old tombstones having been replaced with new, larger ones. The old ones had been embedded in the Wall of National Remembrance at the Polish Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St. Catharines, Ontario.

In 1919, the local women of Niagara-on-the-Lake, led by Elizabeth Ascher, headed to the graves of Polish soldiers, after Mass at the local church and decorated them with bunches of flowers. Since then, pilgrimages to the cemetery have been arranged, with the participation of Polish veteran and community organizations from Canada and the United States, in order to pay tribute to the fallen soldiers and to honour the military action of the expatriate Polish community, as well as the memory of General Józef Haller’s Blue Army.

For You, Poland and for Your Glory - this was the motto of the Polish volunteers who joined the ranks of the Polish Army in France, the so-called Blue Army, to fight for Poland’s independence. It also remains the motto of today’s gatherings at “Haller Army Cemetery” in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

*Polish ceremony to honour the dead, the glory of the Armed Action of Polonia and the memory of the Blue Army of General Joseph Haller.*

*“Haller Army Cemetery” in Niagara-on-the-Lake.*

The Marshal was  
their Commander





**D**uring the interwar period, some Polish veterans like the Hallerians (soldiers in Gen. Haller's Army), who participated in World War I as well as in the anti-Bolshevik battles (including the Battle of Warsaw in 1920), decided to seek "easier bread" overseas. They reached the shores of Canada and worked as farm labourers, lumberjacks, or miners. Others stayed in large cities, such as Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton and Winnipeg - seeking work there. Men mostly worked in industry, or construction and women as domestic help. They wanted to earn money as soon as possible and return to the independent Poland they had fought for.

"These are new immigrants who, having arrived in Canada just after the World War, could partly count as the so-called "return emigration". This is because after a certain period of working and earning a larger or smaller amount the individuals who are not able to labour on their own farmland begin to yearn after - and think about - returning to their homeland. The possibilities of saving are quite considerable, since a good labourer earning from \$5-7 a day with a modest lifestyle (food, subsistence including housing - which amounts for one person to about 1.25 a day), after a few years of work can come to put aside a tidy, little sum." reported "Exodus" (*Wychodźca*, No. 9, May 17, 1939).

Unfortunately, at the end of 1929, the crash of the New York Stock Exchange abruptly and brutally halted the post-war development of the economy in many countries, including Canada, where more than forty percent of the population lost their jobs. Newcomers and the unskilled in particular were laid off. Those who were still working had to "voluntarily" reduce their wages. Julian Topolnicki - a well-known Polish activist, recalled that while working as a railroad car cleaner at the CNR station in Lachine (Quebec), he reduced his earnings from 30 cents an hour to 24. Others were without jobs or livelihoods. Marcin Furman - another well-known activist, recounted how they slept in Montreal's Mount Royal Park in the summer and at the CVR train station in the winter or during inclement weather. They searched for food among restaurant scraps.

On September 21, 1930, in order to help and support each other, Polish veterans living in Montreal founded the Polish Veterans' Association, which considered itself as: "loyal to the new Canadian homeland and faithful to the historical ideals of the old homeland."

Those gathered elected a Board of Directors consisting of: Capt. Wiktor Ludwik (president), Eugeniusz Michaelis de Henning and Antoni Piątkowski (vice-presidents), Stanisław Batowski (secretary), and Florian Szuszkowski (treasurer).

Three years later, it was decided to amend the name of the Association and to name it after Marshal Józef Piłsudski. To this end, the following

*From page 22  
Canadian veterans' cemetery,  
the National Field of  
Honour in Pointe Claire,  
Quebec; opened on the same  
day that the Polish Veterans'  
Association in Montreal was  
established.*

*The first Board of Directors  
and members of the Marshal  
J. Piłsudski Union of Polish  
Veterans in Montreal.*

*The Union's banner, sewn  
and embroidered in Warsaw.*



*PA commemorative photo of ZWP (Polish Veterans' union) members, in 1960.*

*The grave of the well-known ZWP activist Lt. Jan Tęsiowski in Pointe Claire.*

appeal was sent to the Belvedere:

*Commander,*

*We are your former soldiers, gathered here in a distant, foreign land as members of the Polish Veterans' Association in Montreal. We have unanimously decided upon turning towards "Your Fatherly Heart" with humility –so that you might graciously accept authority over our union.*

*Simultaneously, we vow that neither distance nor long years of separation will be able to extinguish the warm affection that we have for you and the Homeland from our soldier hearts. We vow to always remain faithful to our principles and soldier traditions and we will represent the name of the Pole abroad with dignity.*

Marshal Józef Piłsudski's response was positive and very quick. He informed them that he accepted the patronage with great joy and satisfaction.

On the same day that the Polish Veterans' Association was founded, the Canadian Veterans' *National Field of Honour* cemetery was solemnly consecrated in nearby Pointe Claire, 23 kilometres west of Montreal. This unique resting place for former soldiers was established and is maintained by the Last Post Fund, a charitable organization founded by Arthur Haire in 1909.

The foundation's mission is to ensure that no veteran is deprived of a dignified funeral and burial, as well as a military headstone, due to insufficient funds at the time of death.

The *National Field of Honour* stands out among Canadian military cemeteries due to the fact that the headstones are placed level with the ground. All of the deceased, whether they were generals or privates, lie side by side as equals. Overall, more than 25,000 burials of Canadian and Allied veterans have been carried out here.

Kajetan Bieniecki and Lech A. Czerwiński in their superbly-documented guide-book: *Graves of Polish Armed Forces Soldiers at the Field of Honour Veterans' Cemetery in Pointe Claire, QC*, (Groby żołnierzy Polskich Sił Zbrojnych na cmentarzu weteranów Field of Honour w Pointe Claire, QC, Polski Instytut Naukowy w Kanadzie Polish Scientific Institute in Canada, Montreal 2003) write: "The first Pole to rest in this cemetery in 1932 was the cavalryman Andrzej Pawlas from the 1st Cavalry Regiment. There are about 500 burials of Polish veterans here." Many members of the Marshal J. Piłsudski Association of Polish Veterans have found their eternal resting place here; these include:

**Sgt. Florian Szuszkowski (1901-1989)**, former Polish-Bolshevik War veteran, who was one of the founders, treasurer, and later, president



of the Union. **Lt. Stanisław Zaleski (1906-1977)**, a reserve officer, assistant to the Chief of the Soldiers' Welfare Service at the General Staff of the Polish Army **Sgt. Nikolai Bielayev (1914-1999)**, twice-serving president of the ZPW (Union of Polish Veterans), who since the age of sixteen, had served as a musician in the orchestra of Marshal Piłsudski's 41st Suwalski Infantry Regiment. Later on, he went through the entire Italian campaign with the 2nd Corps of Gen. Władysław Anders.

**Lt. Danuta Gaglewicz (1915 -1991)**, a participant in the Warsaw Uprising, awarded the Cross of Valour four times. **Sgt. Zbigniew Edward Góra (1929-1991)**, Home Army soldier during Operation Tempest, part of the guerrilla unit commanded by "Grey" (a nickname) of the Home Army's Lublin District. **Cpl. Pfc. Józef Kliś (1914-2000)**, served in the ZWZ-AK ( Armed Struggle Alliance– Home Army) underground struggle, fought with the Swietokrzyska Brigade. **Cpl. Feliks Kwasiński (1909-1990)**, served in the 81st Grodno Rifle Regiment before the tragedy of September 1939 and later served during the Italian campaign in the II Corps of the 2nd Warsaw Gendarmerie Squadron. **Ensign Pilot Stanisław Masłoń (1917-1997)**, a flight mechanic who often flew on special missions, which included airdrops in Poland – he was awarded the Virtuti Militari Cross. **Bom. Czesław Niwiński (1925-2000)**, served in the Glider Company of the Independent Parachute Brigade and participated in Operation Market-Garden, near Arnhem.

**Cpl. Andrzej Szewczyk (1926-2002)**, participant in the Warsaw Uprising. **Lt. Jan Tešiorowski (1914-1985)**, soldier of the ZWZ-AK, well-known economist and lecturer at the College Sainte Marie in Montreal.

The Association always organizes *Memorial Day* celebrations in June in honour of all the dead who rest there. This is due to sharing a common background and the fact that many Polish veterans rest in the *Field of Honour Cemetery*, including former members of the Marshal Józef Piłsudski Polish Veterans' Association. Every year, it also actively participates in the celebration of All Saints Day, which is organized by the John Paul II Polish School in Montreal. It is also not surprising that on October 17, 2015, the Union's 85th anniversary celebration was held at the Veterans Cemetery in Pointe Claire.

The Marshal Józef Piłsudski Association of Polish Veterans, as well as the Polish Mutual Aid Society which was established in Montreal a few years later, played an important role in the integration of the Polish miners working in the mines in Rouyn-Noranda and Val-d'Or in the province of Quebec. Admittedly, mining traditions among the Polish community had already been known, if only from Coleman (Alberta) or Sudbury

*The Union of Polish Veterans' standard bearers in Montreal, named after Marshal J. Piłsudski in Montreal.*

*Grave - visiting ceremony organized by ZWP.*



Tombstone photographs of Polish miners; from left : Julian Antuchiewicz, Piotr Trościński, Jan Piekos.

The Granite plaque in Kirkland Lake commemorating all miners, including the Poles who lost their lives while working in local mines.

(Ontario), especially the fact that in the inter-war and post-war period, several hundred Poles worked in these two settlements. They made up the largest group of residents there, right after the French and English.

“When do Poles begin showing up in these mines?” This question is answered by the unknown author of *Wychodźca*. “Such young immigrants, often wandered around nearly the entire area of this country in a futile effort to find work. They did not want to take the admittedly minimal benefits of the Canadian government, before completing a 5-year stay in Canada, which would have threatened them with deportation. Eventually, they found employment in those mines, admittedly harsh, exploitative and hazardous health conditions. Nevertheless, it was relatively well-paid.

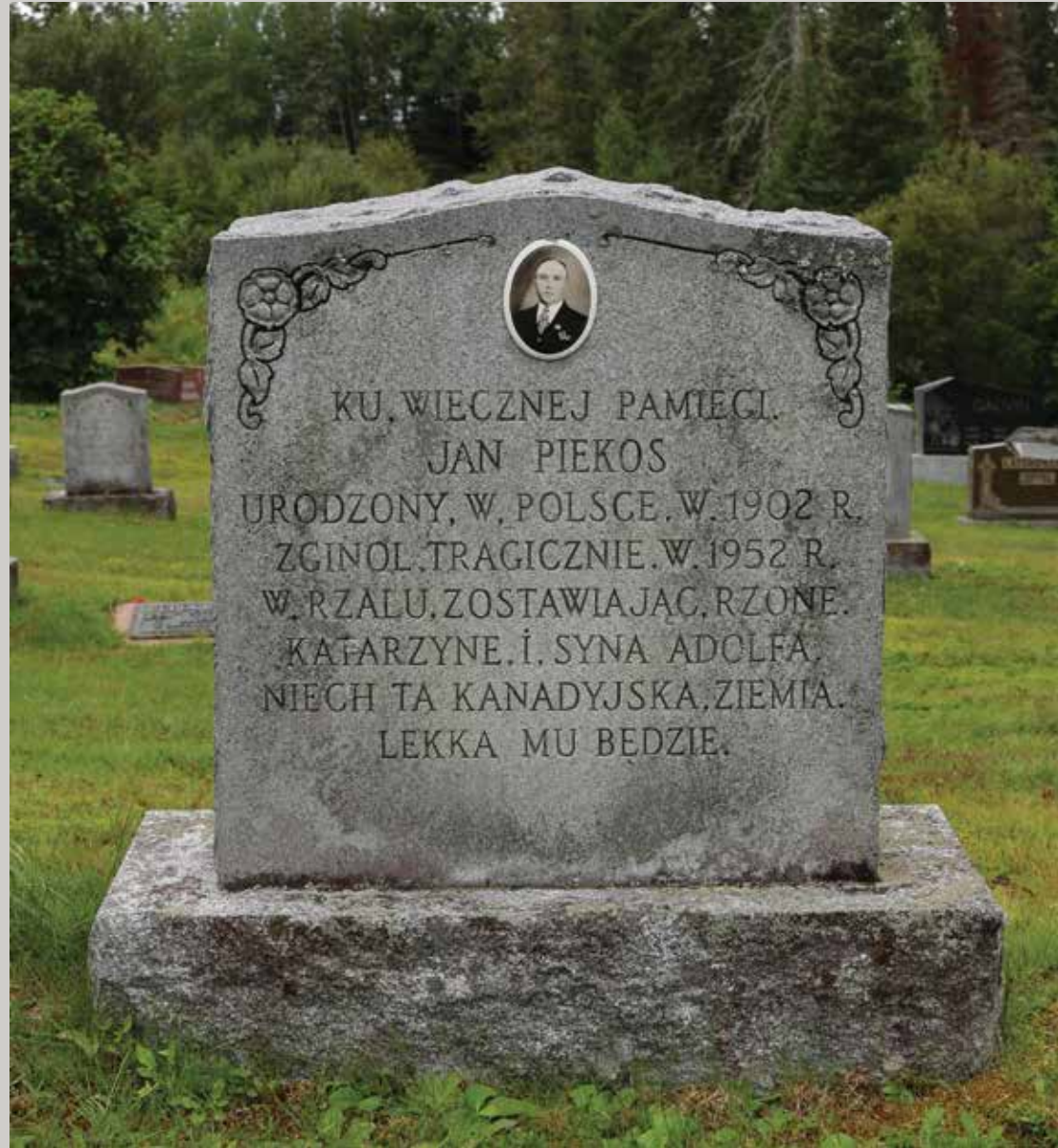
*In the Memorial Book of the Polish Mutual Aid Society 1934- 1959* (W Księdze Pamiątkowej Polskiego Towarzystwa Wzajemnej Pomocy 1934-1959, Montreal 1959), Zbigniew Waruszyński noted: “There are three copper mines and one gold mine in the Noranda area. The largest of these is Noranda Mines Ltd. which also operates a large metal-works. Residents of both cities have steady work.”

Unfortunately, some mines closed down during the crisis. So, Poles in search of work, began moving to nearby Kirkland Lake, Ontario, known for its several gold mines. These mines produced more than twenty percent of the precious ore in all of Canada, at that time. The mines were constantly in need of skilled workers. Therefore, it was easy for Polish miners to find work in the “city that sits on gold,” since they’d already had what was known as *Canadian experience*. Besides, they could count on the help of their fellow countrymen who had already been working there since 1920. It was also important that in the 1930s the local Poles had spiritual guidance. This was owing to the local English parish, which had Franciscans of Polish origin: first there was Fr. Kornelius Żak (OFM), and later Fr. Czesław Winiarz (OFM). The arrival of the new immigrants not only enlarged the local Polish community (a Polish meeting hall was set up) but also brought closer the vision of establishing a Polish parish and building their own place of worship. This came to fruition in 1953, when the consecration ceremony of St. Joseph’s Church took place. The Poles had no burial place of their own. The parish only used the local Catholic cemetery.

There are several families who have been laid to rest at this cemetery and they still lie there: Skawiński, Sowiński (*Anna born in Ukraine, Stanisław born in Poland*), Kępka, Krawczyk, Ceranowski, Wilkolaski. Those who died tragically in the surrounding gold mines are also buried here.

This includes: **Piotr Trościński (1883 - 1954), Julian Antuchiewicz**





(1920 - 1953), Jan Piekos (1902 - 1952).

The two Polish miners who rest in the cemetery are also commemorated on the plaque of a granite monument in Kirkland Lake, which was erected in 1994 by the local Miners' Memorial Foundation. Engraved on it are the names of those who died in various accidents within the local mines. This includes:

Those who died at Kerr Adolison Mine: **Chorzepa Albert (1950), Piekos Jan (1952), Antuchiewicz Julian (1953), Kubalak Jan (1956), Korytko Stanisław (1961), Gorzalczyński S. (1971),**

at Writh-Hargreaves Mine: **Szpak Walter (1934), Wojciechowski Leon (1953), Yaworski Donald (1964),**

at Lake Shore Mine: **Bagiński Paul (1932), Klimecki Jan (1933), Własniak Antoni (1935), Duda Karol (1936), Greczak Jan (1938), Susla Wiliam (1939), Pietrzak Zygfryd (1987),**

at Mocassa Mina: **Witczak Ryszard (1962), Trajkowicz A. J. (1991), at Toburn Mine: Malenczuk Michał (1941)**

and at Argonaut Consolidation Mine: **Pleban Józef**, who was the first Pole to die in 1928, out of all the Poles employed at Kirkland Lake mines. A total of 285 miners are commemorated on the plaque, including 22 Poles. However, how many more died in other mines, for example, Piotr Trościński, and now rest somewhere in cemeteries around Kirkland Lake, or Noranda?



*The Graves of the Polish miners in Kirkland Lake cemetery who tragically died in local gold mines.*



Chapter 3

Volunteers for War



**A**fter the tragic September of 1939, when Poland was hit from the west by the Germans and from the east by the Russians, the Polish Army was in disarray. Soldiers and officers made their way to France and Great Britain in considerable numbers. The total number of Polish Armed Forces in Great Britain at the time (according to a report by General Marian Kukiel on June 16, 1940) amounted to 27,614 officers, non-commissioned officers, soldiers and sailors. By the end of the year, 2,500 more servicemen had arrived from France but the number of defectors dropped notably thereafter. The army was also supplied with military volunteers, due to an evacuation campaign of the Poles from the territories of Romania and Hungary. However, this initiative had little effect. Between July and December 1939, some 3,300 soldiers arrived, via Istanbul, in Syria and Cyprus, while another 916 soldiers arrived from Greece.

In this situation, the only source of recruiting new soldiers for the rebuilding of the Polish Armed Forces was to create a military station in Canada - near the border with the United States (following the example of 1917, when more than 20,000 volunteers joined General Haller's Blue Army from among the American and Canadian Polonia). Windsor and Owen Sound were chosen as recruitment centres, where the volunteers were trained.

Not surprisingly, General Józef Haller himself embarked on his first propaganda trip to the United States in late 1939.

In turn, Colonel Franciszek Arciszewski sent a special enlistment mission to Canada in July 1940.

The commander of the Polish Military Station was General Bronisław Duch, who acted officially as Commander of the Polish Troops in Canada and as Representative of the Commander-in-Chief in Canada and the United States of America. Colonel Stefan Sznuć, on the other hand, became the director, also responsible for recruitment to the Air Force. In turn, Cmdr. Witold Zajęzkowski was appointed head of the Marine Mission.

“In the chronicle of the recruiting centre, which has entirely survived to this day, the first entry appears under the date of March 23, 1941, writes Agata Rajski in her commemorative book *100 Years of the Polish community in Windsor 1908-2008*, (100 lat Polonii w Windsor 1908-2008, Walkerville Publishing, Windsor 2008) Reading further, it says: “Just a few days before the recruiting station in Windsor was established, the first volunteers came forward: Jan Trzciniński and Stanisław Domora (...) and April 14, 1941, volunteer No. 3 was accepted- Chłędowski Edward.”



*From page 34  
Bust of Lt. Andrew Charles  
“Andy” Mynarski in Ottawa,  
at the memorial site of  
those honoured for their  
outstanding contribution to  
Canada’s military history.*

*Briefing of Polish volunteer  
troops in Canada before the  
commander of the Polish  
Military Mission,  
Gen. Bronisław Duch.*

*Building and  
commemorative plaque at the  
site of the recruitment centre  
in Windsor.*



Jan Barłóg mentions another volunteer in his book *Memories of My Life* (*Wspomnienia z mojego życia*, Century Publishing Company Limited, Toronto 1985): "The main organizer of the National Union and one of the most dedicated members of our organization, Józef Gierada, left to enlist in Windsor on April 21, 1941. By doing so, he encouraged others with his attitude and voluntary enlistment in the army. He also wanted to document his service to Poland when the country desperately needed it."

Unfortunately, not many volunteers were found willing to join the Polish units. This was despite many appeals, rallies, special events, lectures and the publication of the magazine *Relief - Poland Fighting in America* (*Odsiecz - Polska Walcząca w Ameryce*), which included the names and photographs of volunteers and the profiles of soldiers.

A training camp called *Kościuszko Camp* was organized for volunteers from Owen Sound, in northern Ontario. The organizer and commander was **Colonel Arthur D'Orr LePan (1885 – 1976)**. He was born in Owen Sound, fought in World War I and had previously been commander of Haller's Polish camp in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

In total, 1,036 soldiers passed through the site. In addition to Poles, there were Americans and Canadians of Polish descent, as well as three Czechs and... a Cuban. This is according to the local newspaper *The Sun Times* who cited Lisa Marie Murphy-Gemmill – a researcher of the camp's history.

Polish officers were housed in the homes of Owen Sound residents, while soldiers occupied the buildings of a furniture factory. After training, they ended up in the Canadian and American armies.

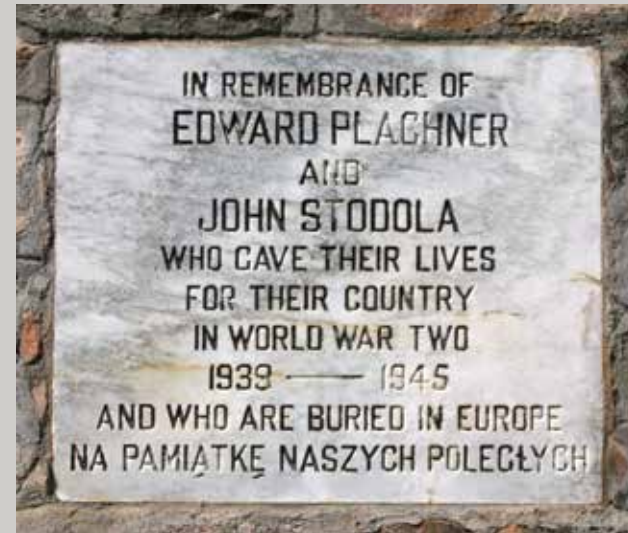
"Between December 1941 and November 1942, 903 people were sent to Great Britain in seven transports, after training, including about 30 female volunteers and instructors." - says Prof. Dr. Hab. Anna Reczyńska in her book *The Stigma of War. The Canadian Polish community as regards the Polish problems of 1939-1945*, (*Piętno wojny. Polonia kanadyjska wobec polskich problemów lat 1939-1945*, Pub. Nomos, Krakow 1997). She continues: "It is also worth noting that after the termination of the Polish Military Mission in Canada, recruitment to the Polish Army was not stopped in this country. It was continued by the recruiting station left in Windsor. According to some sources, that station accepted and then sent 323 more soldier-candidates to Britain."

The female volunteers from Canada were mostly sent to the aviation services. After it had been formed, the volunteers were sent to the Women's Auxiliary Air Service, which was popularly known as the PSLK (*Pomocnicza Służba Lotnicza Kobiet*). In time, it became a part of the



"Tree of the Polish Soldier", which is a natural monument in Owen Sound.

Plaques in the Polish church in Vilnius commemorating the participation of representatives of the Polish community in World War II.



*Obelisk commemorating the fallen from the Polish parish in Skaro.*

*Private Victor M. Golas rests in the Polish cemetery in Zbaraz, Manitoba.*

British *Women's Auxiliary Air Force* (hence the colloquial term for the Polish women serving in it - waafki)

The Polish Military Station in Canada was closed after a year of operation and the Windsor recruiting camp was finally dismantled on May 20, 1944.

Today, one of the traces of the Polish soldiers' stay in Owen Sound is the so-called "Polish Soldier's Tree". It is an old beech tree, estimated to be about 150 years old, on whose bark one of the recruits had carved the following words: "Poland is not yet lost, the Polish soldier will help" and the year: "1942".

*The Polish Soldier Tree* (Drzewo Żołnierza Polskiego) has been put under protection - it is not only a Canadian natural monument but also a historical site. It has been listed as a cultural heritage site in the province of Ontario.

In 2021, a commemorative plaque was unveiled in the town at the encouragement of the Consulate General in Toronto. It was an expression of gratitude for the hospitality shown to Polish officers, instructors and soldiers who were housed at *Kościuszko Camp* during the war.

Polish-Canadian recruits who went to the front took part in military operations and served in various units. However, not all of them managed to happily reunite with their families at home in Canada. Those who fell are often commemorated on special plaques in Polish churches, for example in Vilnius, Ontario, or Skaro, Alberta.

**Private Victor M. Golas (1921-1962)** of Zbaraz in Manitoba, was fortunate enough to have survived the turmoil of war. In time, he became so proud of his service with the Polish units that he asked that his army photo be placed posthumously on his headstone in the cemetery - located within this tiny, Canadian prairie settlement. This is also where his father **Thomas F. Golas (1886-1944)**, mother **Vasilia (1891-1952)** and his sister **Michalina (1920-1945)** rest:

*Here rests Michalina Golas*

*Born July 25, 1920*

*Died with the Lord on September 27, 1945*

*Grant her eternal rest, O Lord*

Victor did not return from the army until 1946. Unfortunately, neither his sister nor his father lived to see their brother and son return from the front.

The main reason that there were so few members of the Polish community showing up at the Polish Recruiting Station in Windsor, was the fact that recruitment for the Canadian army was announced at the same time. Second-or-third generation Poles felt more connected to their place of



birth than to the land of their ancestors and were, therefore, more likely to join the Canadian army. A typical example was **Lt. Andrew Charles "Andy" Mynarski (1916-1944)**. Although he was born and raised in a Polish family in Winnipeg, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in November 1941, after training. He received training as a bomber aircraft gunner in Calgary, Edmonton and at McDonald. In December 1942 he was sent to England; he was assigned to the RCAF's 9th Squadron in October 1943 and to the RCAF's 419th Squadron in March 1944, where he took the position of the top gunner aboard a Lancaster bomber.

On June 12, 1944, Mynarski's crew took off for their fourth mission in a new Canadian-made bomber. It was a Lancaster Mk-X with the side number KB-726 VR-A. It was also Mynarski's thirteenth mission with his current crew. The purpose of the flight was to bomb railroad areas in Cambrai, France. Unfortunately, just before completing the task, the aircraft was attacked by a German Ju-88 fighter. Three explosions occurred and both engines on the left side of the Lancaster caught fire. The captain gave the order to abandon the burning aircraft. While most of the crew members luckily evacuated the bomber, gunner Pat Brophy was trapped in the rear gun turret and could not get out. That was when Second Lieutenant Mynarski went to his friend's aid. Andrew ignored the flames, grabbed an axe and rushed to save him. He failed to free his friend, who kept shouting to him: "Get out!" However, the Pole refused to leave Pat and fought on, banging on the turret door with the axe. However, when his efforts failed, he retreated to the door of the burning and falling plane. Then he stood at attention, saluted to pay tribute to his friend and jumped out. The parachute caught fire from his burning jumpsuit. When he landed on the ground he was so badly burned, that he died a few days later. He was buried in the municipal cemetery in Meharicourt near Amiens, France.

On the other hand, Gunner Pat Brophy miraculously survived. A few months later he said: "I will always believe that God saved me so that I could tell the world about what I saw and the bravery of the man who risked and then lost his life to save a friend." That was his comment about Mynarski's heroism.

At the request of the bomber's commander, Art de Breyne, the command of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and the British Air Force (RAF) decided to posthumously award Andrew Mynarski with the highly prestigious Victoria Cross. This award expresses the highest level of recognition and undeniable heroism defined as: "exemplary courage and an exceptional act of sacrifice in the face of the enemy". Mynarski was the

*Lt. Andrew Charles "Andy" Mynarski and the obelisk unveiled at Kildonan Park in Winnipeg on the 50th anniversary of his death.*

*The crew of a Lancaster Mk-X bomber with side number KB-726 VR before the tragic flight.*



first Canadian Air Force pilot to receive this medal during World War II. On December 12, 1946, this extremely rare award was presented to Andrew's mother, Stanisława Mynarska, by the Governor of the Province of Manitoba, J.A. McWilliams.

Mynarski's Victoria Cross was donated to the Air Command by his family in 1989. It is on display in the entrance hall of the Mynarski Memorial Room at the Headquarters of the 1st Canadian Airborne Division in Winnipeg (where many other family mementos are displayed). Squadron 419 at CFB Cold Lake houses the original axe Mynarski used while trying to free his friend trapped in the gun turret.

In 1973, Andrew Charles Mynarski was honoured and ceremonially inducted into the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame. Today, with a group of other Canadians, he has a place amid the pantheon of heroes in "The Land of the Maple Leaf". Several schools are named after him, including a middle school in Winnipeg, as well as a network of three lakes in northern Manitoba and a park in CFB Penhold. Furthermore, at the largest veterans' cemetery in Pointe Claire, Quebec, where alleys are named after prominent Canadian veterans, one is named after Mynarski. Meanwhile, on the fiftieth anniversary of the pilot's death, an obelisk with a commemorative plaque was unveiled in Kildonan Park in Winnipeg, near where he grew up. In 2005, a statue of the heroic pilot, sculpted by Keith Maddison, was erected in the UK at the RAF bomber base in Middleton St. George, where he served.

A year later, a bust of Mynarski was unveiled in Ottawa near a grand monument to the victims of all the wars in which Canadian soldiers had participated. It was part of a memorial to fourteen individuals honoured for their outstanding personal contribution to Canada's military history. Moreover, the *Mynarski Memorial Lancaster* is one of only two flight-worthy World War II - era bombers in the world. It was reconstructed in the pilot's honour with his plane's markings. The Lancaster can be found in the *Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum* in Hamilton, Ontario.

The crowning glory to honour this Canadian hero with Polish roots was the June 12, 2015 unveiling of a monument to Andrew Charles Mynarski at Vimy Ridge Memorial Park in Winnipeg. It was designed by the Canadian sculptor Charlie Johnston and created thanks to more than a decade of work by the tireless chairman of the building committee, Bill Zuk.

*The Mynarski Memorial Lancaster bomber dedicated to the memory of the heroic pilot.*

*Monument to Andrew Charles Mynarski at Vimy Ridge Memorial Park in Winnipeg awarded the Victoria Cross.*



# Poles in a Secret RAF Operation





*From page 46  
Obelisk on the grounds of the  
National Air Force Museum  
of Canada in Trenton,  
commemorating the pilots  
who took part in the secret  
operation "Ocean Bridge"  
of the Royal Air Force Ferry  
Command, and later of  
the 45th RCAF Transport  
Group.*

*Aircraft from Dorval:  
Lancaster bombers, Hudson  
bombers... were transported  
by pilots bearing the RAF  
Ferry Command emblem.*

**W**hen the “air battle” for Britain heated up during World War II, the Allies needed as many aircrafts as possible, which were being produced in the United States and Canada at that time. However, the problem was transporting them to Europe. It was deemed too costly and dangerous to deliver new planes by sea across the Atlantic. Therefore, on July 20, 1941, the Royal Air Force command devised a secret plan to airlift planes from their production sites to front-line operational units in Britain, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

As soon as the top-secret Operation *Ocean Bridge*, also called *Atlantic Bridge*, was established, the first aircraft took off from Dorval airfield near Montreal. Despite the great danger and chance of losses, the planes were transported to RCAF Gander Station in Newfoundland, from where they were directed towards their transatlantic flight.

Led by a handful of Imperial Airways pilots and navigators, a group of civilian aviators from Britain, Canada and the United States took on the task of piloting urgently-needed bombers, maritime-patrol aircraft, and transports for the RAF. This informal civilian organization was reinforced by graduates of the Commonwealth Air Training Plan in Canada. On March 25, 1943, it was taken over by the RAF’s 45th Transport Group, established in Dorval.



All in all, nearly ten thousand aircraft had been transported to Europe, Africa and the Middle East - to the operational squadrons overseas, by mixed civilian and military crews of *Royal Air Force Ferry Command* (RAF FC). This was accomplished without radar, using mainly “celestial navigation” by specially trained pilots.

This secret - yet very dangerous - *Atlantic Bridge* operation (unknown even today in Canadian circles) involved about 100 very experienced Polish pilots (trained mainly in bomber flights or civilian service). They had previously been crew-members of bomb squadrons stationed in England, or were civilian pilots of the Polish Airlines (LOT). The best of the best were selected for this special operation. Almost all of the Poles directed to Dorval were decorated with the highest war cross - the Order of Virtuti Militari.

The first Polish pilots to participate in this secret RAF mission sailed from Liverpool aboard the *SS Princess Seven Islands* at the end of October 1941. They were unusually unfortunate, since the convoy was repeatedly attacked by German submarines. After two weeks, they reached Halifax, Canada. The six-man crew of Polish aviators included **Sergeant Pilot Antoni Stanisław Sławiec (1896-1973)**, a LOT pilot.

In 1941 he was transferred from the RAF to Canada as part of the newly-formed FAF FC unit at Dorval Montreal. During these dangerous flights





No. 10 Air Observer (Navigation) School in Chatham, New Brunswick was part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan during World War II.

On the evening of May 7th, 1943 twenty-six Anson twin engine aircraft took off for a night flying exercise. The weather changed suddenly and heavy fog caused four of the aircraft to crash.

Anson 1 No. 6729, with four airmen on board, was attempting to let down through the low overcast when it flew into Collier Mountain, approximately ten kilometres southeast of Elgin. The aircraft, upon hitting the ground, exploded and burned.

Onboard the aircraft were:  
 Sgt. R120034 Herbert, J.P.E., Pilot, RCAF, severely injured  
 F/L P0183 Markiewicz, A.E.J., 1st Navigator, Polish Air Force, killed  
 P/O P1983 Glod, M., 2nd Navigator, Polish Air Force, killed  
 FS R77084 Roy, W.F., WAG, RCAF, slightly injured

This memorial commemorates the sacrifice of these men and our enduring friendship with our Polish allies.  
 As with all of those who are remembered on the Elgin cenotaph, these Polish airmen died far from home fighting for the freedom we enjoy today.

LEST WE FORGET

he had not only earned his officer's rank but in time was promoted to captain. He was awarded the Cross of Valour four times.

He died on October 10, 1973 at the Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue Hospital in Quebec and was buried at the Veterans' Cemetery in Pointe Claire.

**Lt. Pilot Jerzy Mitz (1905 -1963)**, is buried in the same cemetery - the second of the six pilots who were among the first Poles to serve in the RAF FC; previously a professional non-commissioned officer with the LOT Polish Airlines (LOT pilot).

The danger of this work is evidenced by the fact that in Operation Ocean Bridge (also known as Atlantic Bridge) some five hundred crew members and sixty passengers lost their lives. This included the Nobel laureate Major Sir Frederick Banting, the discoverer of insulin, who died in one of the first crashes of the Ocean Bridge air shuttle.

Tragedies also occurred during training to prepare pilots for overseas missions in Europe. On May 7, 1943, 26 aircraft took off from an air force base in what was then Chatham, (now Miramichi in the province of New Brunswick), as part of a night training exercise.

One of the crews was made up of two RCAF pilots, Sgt. JPE Herbert and WF Roy and also two Polish Air Force pilots, Maj. Andrzej Markiewicz and Lt. Mieczysław Głód. During this flight, a gray curtain of fog enveloped the hills near Elgin. In the extreme weather conditions, visibility was zero. Not surprisingly, as many as four planes crashed into nearby Collier Hill, including one with the Polish pilots. Two Canadians were seriously injured in the crash; unfortunately, the Poles were killed.

**Maj. Pilot Andrzej Markiewicz (1900-1943)**; was a very experienced pilot-observer who flew around Africa in record time, together with pilot Stanisław Skarżyński, thus completing such a long flight, for the first time, on a plane of Polish design. The voyage that took place between February 1 and May 5, 1931 was carried out aboard a Polish PZL Ł.2 (SP-AFA) aircraft. During the expedition, the pilots covered a distance of 25,770 km. The flight route included Warsaw, Belgrade, Athens, Cairo, Khartoum, Kisumu, Abercon, Elisabethville, Luebo, Léopoldville, Lagos, Abidjan, Bamako, Dakar, Port Etienne, Agadir, Villa Cisneros, Casablanca, Alicante and Paris.

**Lt. Pilot Mieczysław Głód (1916 - 1943)** was a young pilot who joined the Air Force Cadet School in Dęblin, seven years after Markiewicz's feat. He studied to become an air observer. During the war, he made his way to Great Britain, where he was sent for navigator training. In March 1943, he was sent to Canada for a practical course. After a stay at the RCAF Moncton base, he was sent to No. 10 Air Observer School. Both pilots are buried at *St. Bernard* Catholic Cemetery in Moncton.

*From left: Maj. Andrzej Markiewicz and Lt. Mieczysław Głód, who died in a plane crash, are commemorated in Elgin, New Brunswick.*



*Polish Honorary Consul Jan Skora at the graves of the Polish pilots, Maj. Andrzej Markiewicz and Lt. Głód at the St. Bernard Roman Catholic Cemetery in Moncton.*

On November 12, 2017, the deaths of the Polish airmen were commemorated in Elgin with a plaque. The unveiling was attended by Navy and Air Force military attaché Colonel Cezary Kiskowiak of the Polish Embassy in Ottawa, Honorary Consul Jan Skora, MP Alaina Lockhart, as well as several members of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly and the Polish and Canadian communities.

The tragedy had also left its mark on the Polish crew of the 45th RAF Transport Group. It went down in Montreal's history as the biggest disaster that occurred in the city during World War II.

On April 25, 1944, a Liberator VI bomber (equivalent to the American B-24J) with the serial number EW148, took off early in the morning for a supply flight to India. On board were five crew members, which included three Polish aviators: the pilot, co-pilot and navigator. Also, onboard was an RCAF officer and a RAF flight engineer.

Shortly after 10:30 a.m and following takeoff, the aircraft began having serious problems, having difficulty with acceleration and climbing upwards. It flew over Mount Royal and the downtown business district. However, it quickly lost altitude and one wing struck the tower of the city's brewery building, barely missing the *Griffintown Boys Club*. Pilot Kazimierz Burzyński realized the inevitability of disaster and in a desperate attempt to bring down the big bomber with 9,000 liters of fuel, he steered the plane into the St. Lawrence River. Unfortunately, the plane fell short by less than a kilometre. The heavy Labrador crashed into the houses near Ottawa Street and Shannon Street, exploding and starting a gigantic fire. The explosion completely destroyed 15 buildings; 10 civilians and the entire crew of the bomber died in the crash.

**Capt. pilot Kazimierz Burzyński (1897-1944)**; was sent to the Polish Airforce after graduating from the pilot school in Toruń. From 1923, he worked as an airline pilot, initially for the Polish Airline "Aerolloyd" SA, renamed "Aerolot" in 1925. From 1928 onwards, he worked for LOT Polish Airlines - after their merger with "Aero". In 1936, he became the first Pole to reach one million kilometres of flight distance. In September 1939, he participated in the evacuation of Polish Civil Aviation.

Afterwards, he went to the United Kingdom. He served as a transport pilot and received the RAF service number P-0015. From 1941 onward, he flew across the Atlantic, from Canada to England in the Royal Air Force (*Atlantic Ferry – ATFERRO*). In 1944 he flew with the rank of captain. He flew as a transport pilot. During the war he exceeded 2 million kilometers flown. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour.

**Lt. pilot Andrzej Czesław Kuźniacki (1913-1944)**, was a first officer,



*The catastrophe, which went down in Montreal's history as the city's greatest tragedy during World War II was reported in La Presse. It killed, among others, the Polish pilot Capt. Kazimierz Burzyński.*

awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari.

**Lt. pilot Jan Adolf Nowicki (1913-1944)**, he was a navigator. He had previously served in the 304th Bomb Squadron and was credited with 40 bombing flights over German territory. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari.

Flight Engineer Sergeant **Islwyn Jones**, 23, born in Swansea, Wales; he served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 and had 17 long-distance flights across the ocean to his credit.

RCAF P / O WAG **James Wilson**, a native of Trenton, New Jersey. He was just 21 years old and had arrived at Dorval two days before the catastrophe. He had previously qualified for transoceanic service at the RAF Atlantic long-range flying school in North Bay, Ontario.

“The funeral for the pilots who died tragically took place on April 28, 1944, attended by crowds of thousands of both Poles and other Montrealers,” - wrote Stefan Władysiuik in his article *Forgotten Tragedy: Polish Aviators - Victims of Catastrophe* (Zapomniana tragedia: polscy lotnicy ofiarą katastrofy, Panorama, No. 1, March 2021). “The final service for the tragically deceased aviators was attended by the mayor of the city of Montreal, a delegation of the Polish embassy from Ottawa and the Polish aviation authorities headed by Col. Stefan Sznuk. The Canadian Air Force, Army and Navy authorities were represented by high-ranking officers. Additionally, hundreds of Canadian and British officers, as well as Polish airmen attended. A farewell speech was delivered at graveside by Colonel Sznuk, who pointed to the deceased as models of sacrifice and love for the homeland.”

The pilots were buried at the *Notre Dame des Neiges* Cemetery in Montreal, in a section belonging to the *Commonwealth War Grave Commission*; this is where the Canadians who took part in British-led wars are laid to rest. The section borders the *Mount Royal* Cemetery. The gravestones of Polish airmen have so-called “aviation badges”(gapy lotnicze) engraved upon them: depicting an eagle in flight with a laurel wreath in its beak, which is the symbol of military pilots.

A few weeks after the crash, another tragedy was declared in the 45th RAF Transport Group. A Polish pilot, **Lt. observer Jan Wróblewski (1920 - 1944)**, who was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari, committed suicide at the “Ford” Hotel in Montreal. The pilot served in the 138th Special Duties Squadron of the RAF during the Battle of Britain. He was a part of the crew on a bomber plane which failed to return to base after the airdrops over southern France on the night of August 16-17, 1943.



Due to engine failure, the crew was forced to land near Arx. All seven pilots managed to avoid captivity and returned on October 29, 1943 to the British Isles, via Spain and Gibraltar, as was customary. This was the only case of the return of an entire large crew in Polish aviation, and one of very few cases in the entire RAF.

All four Polish pilots of the 45th RAF Transport Group were laid to rest in Montreal, at *Notre Dame des Neiges* Cemetery, in the British Commonwealth war graves quarters.

After the end of military operations, dozens of Polish airmen stayed at the base in Dorval. As Prof. Longin Pastusiak writes in his book *Distant and Yet Close Countries. Poland-Canada 1945-1961*, (Kraje odległe a jednak bliskie. Polska-Kanada 1945-1961, Adam Marszałek Publishing House, Toruń 1994): “The first group of servicemen who asked for the right to remain in Canada were 58 airmen (...) Fourteen of them were married to Canadian women. On September 18, 1945, they applied for the right to stay permanently in Canada but were denied. A few months later, Colonel Stefan Sznuke, former air attaché of the Polish Embassy in Canada, appealed on their behalf. On November 22, 1945, he convinced Immigration Director A.L. Jeolliffe, who agreed to allow the 28 Polish airmen to stay for a year, under the condition they met the health and financial requirements of the immigration authorities.”

Almost all of them settled in Montreal. It was here that they set up families, worked; and where most of them were buried in the city’s cemeteries, after death. Several of these heroic Polish pilots found their final resting place in Canada’s largest veterans’ cemetery. Among those resting in the *Field of Honour* are:

**Capt. pilot Zygmunt Barciszewski (1898-1957)**; a LOT pilot, he served in British sanitary and transport divisions. He was also a test-pilot of factory-refurbished aircraft being assigned to combat duties. He used to fly in operation “Atlantic Bridge,” delivering Liberator bombers to India, Scotland, the UK and Africa. He had a total of 10,677 flight hours.

**Col. pilot Antoni Buckiewicz (1918-1985)**; during the war of 1918-1920, he commanded the 11th Reconnaissance Squadron, and during World War II, he served in the RAF. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari.

**Lt. Mechanic Henryk Chętkowski (1914-2004)**; served in the 138th Special Duties Squadron. He flew with airdrops to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, France, Holland, Norway and Northern Italy as a deck mechanic aboard a Halifax bomber. He had flown more than 219 hours in 23 special operations, including 11 flights to Poland. He

*Royal Air Force Ferry Command (RAF FC) crew.*

*Celebrating the memory of three fallen Polish aviators in the Montreal crash: in the centre, Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Montreal Dariusz Wiśniewski, Father Darek Szurko - chaplain of the Marszałek J. Piłsudski Polish Veterans' Association (ZPW), Ewa and Jan Szejewski of the ZPW, and Stefan Władysiuk - librarian at the Polish Library in Montreal.*



then transferred to Canada with an assignment to the 45th Transport Group. From Dorval, he delivered Liberators to India, Scotland and Africa, having delivered the last one to Scotland on August 7, 1945. In total, he had accumulated more than 1,025 flight hours, including more than 576 at night. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour.

**Capt. pilot Zbigniew Forian (1921-1986)**; served in Squadron 1586 and piloted Halifax planes from Italy, in special operations. He was later transferred to Canada to join the 45th Transport Group in Dorval, from where he transported aircraft to Scotland, North Africa, West Africa and India. He was awarded the Order of the Virtuti Militari.

**Lt. pilot Zygfryd Górski (1916-1999)**; a radio operator for the No. 307 Night Fighter Squadron "Lviv Owls" („Lwowskie Puchcze”), and then for the No. 300 "Land of Masovia" Bomber Squadron (300 Dywizjon Bombowy Ziemi Mazowieckiej). Awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.

**Major pilot Edward Hajdukiewicz (1913-1998)**; served in the No. 300 "Land of Masovia" Bomber Squadron. Initially, he flew as the second and then the first pilot. He had no permanent crew. On the night of March 23-24, 1941, he commanded one of the first four Polish crews dropping bombs on the German capital. During his second raid on Berlin, on the night of April 17-18, his plane was damaged by anti-aircraft artillery. After completing 15 combat flights, he received flight training in landing approaches without ground visibility. He was then transferred to Dorval. He remained in the 45th Transport Group until the end of 1946. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.

**Capt. pilot Michał Ryszard Kowalski (1918-1996)**; air gunner in the No. 305 Josef Piłsudski Polish Bomber Squadron "Greater Poland" (305 Dywizjon Bombowy „Ziemi Wielkopolskiej im. Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego). In 1943 he was transferred to the 45th Transport Group in Canada. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.

**Lt. Władysław Benedykt Molik (1919-2005)**; served as a gunner/radio operator in the No. 300 Bomber Squadron "Land of Masovia", then in the No. 305 Polish Bomber Squadron "Greater Poland" (Ziemia Wielkopolska). In 1943, he was transferred to Canada with an assignment to fly in the so-called operation "Atlantic Bridge". He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour three times.

**Capt. pilot Bolesław Pomian-Piątkowski (1905-1981)**, a graduate of the Officer Flight School in Dęblin, served in the RAF. In 1943, he was sent to the 45th Transport Group at Dorval. He was a writer and the

*Maj. pilot Edward Hajdukiewicz began his service with the Polish No. 300 Bomber Squadron "Mazowiecka Land" (Land of Masovia); then was transferred to Canada to the newly - established FAF FC unit in Dorval. He rests in the cemetery in Pointe Claire.*



*Master Sergeant Pilot Antoni Stanislaw Slawiec, a distinguished LOT pilot and Major Mieczyslaw Taras are laid to rest at the military cemetery in Pointe Claire.*

author of several books: *To the Brightest of Stars, The Cross of the South or Pines and Palms (Ku najjaśniejszej z gwiazd, Krzyż Południa czy Sosny i palmy)*. He was awarded the Cross of Valour.

**Capt. Jan Sokołowski (1917-1978)**; pilot of the 301st Polish Bomber Squadron “Land of Pomerania” (301 Dywizjon Bombowy “Ziemi Pomorskie”). Transferred to the 45th Transport Group in Dorval. Awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari.

**Capt. Franciszek Szuba (1914-1989)**; in Great Britain he had been assigned to the No. 300 Bomber Squadron “Land of Masovia”(300 Dywizjon Bombowy “Ziemi Mazowieckiej), where he flew as a radio operator until March 13, 1942. In September 1942, he was posted to the Cadet School in Scotland, and upon graduation, became an instructor at the 18th *Operational Training Unit* (OTU). In February 1944, he was assigned to the 45th Transport Group at Dorval. Awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.

**Major pilot Mieczysław Taras (1906-1983)**; served in the no. 300 Land of Masovia” Bomber Squadron (300 Dywizjon Bombowy “Ziemi Mazowieckiej). Shot down over France in 1941, he made his way to Gibraltar and from there sailed to England and rejoined the squadron. From there he was recommissioned to Dorval. After the war, in Montreal, he was twice elected president of the Canadian Polish Congress, Quebec District. He served six terms as president of the Polish Airmen’s Association in Canada - 310 “Vilnius” Wing(Skrzydło 310 “Wilno”), in Montreal. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour twice.

**Capt. Józef Marian Jan Waszak (1914-2001)**; during the September campaign, he was a corporal pilot of the 217th Bomb Squadron. He landed in Romania on September 21 aboard a “Łoś” (“Moose”) bomber. In the UK he was assigned to the No. 301 Bomber Squadron “Land of Pomerania, where he completed 42 combat flights during two operational tours. Recommissioned on February 23, 1943 to the No. 138 Special Duties Squadron RAF, he flew with airdrops to Norway, Poland, France and Belgium. He had flown twice to Norway and Poland and once to France and Belgium. He completed more than 57 flight hours in 6 operations from March 7, 1943 to April 13, 1943. In January 1944, he was assigned to the 45th Transport Group in Dorval. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.

In Saint-Souveur cemetery, rests:

**Col. pilot Franciszek Xawery Piniński (1896-1959)**; during World War I, he was commander of the 11th Uhlán Regiment (11 Pułk Ułanów) squadron. During the 1918 defense of Lviv, he took part as a



*Royal Air Force Ferry Command (RAF FC) crews transported nearly ten thousand aircraft to operational squadrons overseas – in Europe, Africa, the Middle East.*

pilot in operations with the American Kościuszko Squadron. From 1942 to 1945, he worked as a *Royal Air Force* aircraft inspector at the Dorval airfield. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour three times. He died in Montreal and was buried in the Polish section of the Saint-Sauveur cemetery.

At the *Holy Sepulchre* Catholic Cemetery in Burlington, Ontario, rests: **Capt. pilot Ludwik Małata (1918-1967)**; in Britain, he joined the *Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserve*, then the Polish Air Force. He was a pilot of the No. 305 Polish Bomber Squadron „Ziemia Wielkopolska” (“Greater Poland”) (305 Dywizjon Bombowy “Ziemi Wielkopolskiej im. Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego”). He completed more than 40 combat flights. He was the first pilot in history to fly over Germany with a two-ton bomb on board. In 1942, he was transferred to the 18th OTU (Operational Training Unit) in Bramcote, as a pilot instructor. In 1942-43 he was transferred to Canada with the task of training future groups of pilots, and after that, in 1943, he was transferred to the 45th RAF *Ferry Command* Group. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.

The secret operation *Ocean Bridge* of the *Royal Air Force Ferry Command* (RAF FC), later known as the 45th RCAF Transport Group operation, involved some 100 Polish pilots. It was commemorated in Canada with a granite obelisk on the grounds of the *National Air Force Museum of Canada* in Trenton, Ontario. On top of the memorial, there are drawings of the aircraft that had been transported from Dorval: the Lancaster bomber, the Dakota carrier and the Hudson carrier/bomber.





Chapter 5

Betrayed by  
Their Allies



On March 5, 1940, the Political Bureau of the of the Soviet Union's Communist Party, its Central Committee, passed a resolution to execute Polish prisoners of war held in the Soviet camps at Kozelsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov, as well as Polish prisoners held by the NKVD in the pre-war eastern provinces of the Polish Republic. As a result of this decision, at least 21,768 Polish citizens were slain, mostly by gunshots to the back of the head, including more than 10,000 Polish Army and State Police officers.

Thirty-six years after this war crime, a resolution was passed at the XXIII General Assembly of the Canadian Polish Congress, which met from October 12th to the 16th, 1974 in St. Catharines, to erect a Katyń Monument dedicated to the memory of the victims of this simply unimaginable genocide. One of the most active initiators of the monument's construction was **Tadeusz Kazimierz Walkowski (1898 -1983)**. He was a colonel in the Controller Corps of the Polish Army (Korpus Kontrolerów - KK), formerly an officer of the 14th Jazłowiec Uhlan Regiment(14 Pułk Ułanów Jazłowieckich) in Lviv, where he graduated from the *Foreign Trade College* (Wyższa Szkoła Handlu Zagranicznego). His brother Władysław was killed in Katyń.

Col. Walkowski died in Edmonton and is buried in Holy Cross Cemetery. The monument, designed by architect Tadeusz Janowski from the United States, was solemnly unveiled on September 14, 1980 in one of Toronto's Polish neighborhoods.

It is the world's first monument dedicated to the Katyń massacre. It was erected despite objections to its placement in a public space provided by the city authorities and voiced by many foreign diplomats in Canadian embassies.

The Katyń Monument and the obelisk erected next to it, dedicated to the victims of the Smolensk catastrophe, is the site of annual ceremonies for the Polish-Canadian community, to honour those who had been murdered. Simultaneously, on May 3rd, they also celebrate Independence Day and the anniversary of the Constitution.

Furthermore, in the province of Nova Scotia in Halifax rests the only surviving witness of the Katyń Massacre, **Stanisław Swianiewicz (1899-1997)**; professor of economics, lawyer and writer. In September 1939, he was taken prisoner by the Soviets, while trying to cross into Hungary and ended up in the Kozelsk camp. On April 29, 1940, he was deported to Gniezdowo station by train with a transport of prisoners. It was there that the process of unloading all of the prisoners began. However, Prof. Swianiewicz was held back on the train at the last moment. Through

*From page 64  
The Katyń Monument in Toronto is the world's first such monument erected in a public place, on the land donated by Toronto's municipal government, despite the objections of many foreign governments' embassies in Canada.*

*In addition to the Katyń Monument, the Canadian Polish community commemorated the victims of the Smolensk crash of the Polish delegation with Polish President Lech Kaczyński traveling to Katyń on April 10, 2010.*



the gaps in the train car, he watched the relocation of his companions deep into the Katyń forest, where mass murders of Polish prisoners of war were carried out. The professor was saved by chance, as one of his fellow prisoners unwittingly revealed his true personal information. Swianiewicz was taken for investigation straight from the moving train, loaded with Polish officers and going to the Katyń forest. He was then moved to a prison in Smolensk, then to the NKVD's internal prison in Lubianka and finally, to the Butyr prison in Moscow. Charged with espionage, he was sentenced to eight years in the gulag. He was released in 1942 after the firm intervention of the Polish government, which realized that Swianiewicz was the first officer they had found, from among the six thousand, who had been imprisoned in Kozelsk. However, he could not return to Poland because he knew the truth about Katyń. He was a professor at American and English universities. After the war, he worked in London and taught at many universities, including *Saint Mary's University* in Halifax. All the time he considered it his duty to remember Katyń. When he retired, he wrote the book *In the Shadow of Katyn* (*W cieniu Katynia*). It was reprinted several times in the West and in domestic underground publications.

He died in London, but his ashes were transported to Halifax, where he was laid to rest in the *Gate of Heaven Cemetery* beside his previously deceased wife Olympia.

When the guns of World War II fell silent, Poland found itself in the communist Soviet-Russian sphere of influence. The soldiers and officers of the Polish Armed Forces in the West found this enslavement of the homeland especially painful.

“The shock of disbelief and despair shook the ranks of the Polish army. No one could simply believe that our former allies had betrayed us so shamefully. Soldiers and commanders faced the dilemma of returning to a Poland ruled by the Soviet Communists, or remaining in the West,” - writes **Bolesław Wiliam Makowski (1924-2012)**, former soldier of General Władysław Anders' 2nd Corps, Knight of the Order of Virtuti Militari, in his book: *Postwar Winds - Memoirs of a Polish Veteran in Canada*, ( *Powojenne wiatry – wspomnienia polskiego weterana w Kanadzie*, Fakty Publishing, Toronto 2008). He continues: “Some of them, aware of the absurdity of such a decision, returned to the native country, succumbing to the requests of their wives, mothers... family. We now know that many of them, in taking this step, signed a death sentence for themselves. Those who remained on the western side of the ‘Iron Curtain’ were transported to the UK for so-called “adaptation to civilian life.” Before making it to Canada, the author of these words was

*The only surviving witness to the Katyń massacre, Stanisław Swianiewicz, author of the often-cited book “In the Shadow of Katyn,” was commemorated with a plaque at St. Karol Boromeusz Church in Warsaw’s Powązki cemetery.*



*Boleslaw Wiliam Makowski served in the 12th Heavy Artillery Regiment of the 2nd Corps of the Polish Armed Forces with which he passed the entire war campaign.*

deported to Siberia by the occupying Soviet authorities. He was then taken with his siblings to a labour camp in Uzbekistan. In 1942, he joined the 2nd Polish Corps and fought with them through their entire military campaign. As a scout for the observation team of the 2nd battery of the No.10 PAC and as part of the 5th Kresowa Infantry Division (5 Kresowa Dywizja Piechoty), he took part (among other missions) in the attack on the “Phantom”(“Widmo”), during the assault on Monte Cassino. This was one of the mountain ridges that the Germans most fiercely defended. For his merit during the Adriatic campaign, he was first awarded the Cross of Valour and then the Order of Virtuti Militari on January 20, 1945. In Canada, he graduated from the University of Montreal with a Master’s Degree in social sciences, after completing a period of compulsory farm work. He specialized in geography, among other subjects. From 1959 to 1986, he was director of the Geography Department for secondary schools in the province of Ontario. He is the author of several books, including *The Polish People in Canada - A Visual History*.

He died in St. Catharines, Ontario and was buried in the local *Victoria Lawn Cemetery*.

Also, laid to rest there, is another soldier of the 5th Kresowa Infantry Division with the 2nd Polish Corps – and a Knight of the Order of Virtuti Militari - **Bronisław Michał Baliński (1919-2006)**.

When the Polish military in the West was being dismantled, Canada was simultaneously facing a very serious problem of finding manpower for farms in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Quebec. The existing workers were German prisoners of war, who began to return to Europe in accordance with the Geneva Convention. Therefore, to replace them, the Canadian government decided to bring in several thousand Polish soldiers, who had served in the Allied forces during the war and decided to remain in the West. The implementation of this plan was also strongly insisted upon by Great Britain, on whose territory lived many Polish citizens and whose government had decided to get rid of the Poles as soon as possible. The recent Polish allies, who had shed their blood on all fronts, most often heard: “Go home! We don’t want you here!” - when they were asking about any kind of work.

On July 25, 1946, Canada’s acting Prime Minister L. St. Laurent presented a proposal in the House of Commons to accept four thousand demobilized Polish soldiers from Italy and Britain. The conditions were as follows: they are to be unmarried, they must agree to work in agriculture, they are to be paid \$45 a month plus receive housing and sustenance; each soldier must provide a written consent to work on a farm for two years.



Whoever fulfills all the terms of the contract, will be granted permanent residence in Canada. The contract could only be terminated with the written approval of the Canadian Ministry of Labour.

Based on this decision, the first group of Polish soldiers residing in Italy, left the port of Naples on November 1, 1946, after a very detailed medical exam, on the ship *Sea Robin* with 1,691 Polish soldiers aboard. They reached the port of Halifax on November 12, 1946. The second group left Naples aboard the *Sea Sniper* on November 12, and 1185 people arrived in Canada on November 23. In the third wave, this time from Britain, 1,651 Polish veterans arrived on June 29, 1947, aboard the *Acquitania*. A total of 4,527 people.

Among those who participated in the first voyage to Canada was Józef Bauer, who wrote the following in *Memoirs of Polish Immigrants in Canada* (Pamiętniki imigrantów polskich w Kanadzie, Canadian-Polish Research Institute, Toronto 1975) - original text:

“After a two-week voyage, we arrived at the port of Halifax on 12. 11. 1946. As we began to disembark from the ship, which took a long time, someone let out a rumour that the Canadian police and customs guards were doing a search because they did not want former soldiers to bring souvenirs to Canada, in the form of firearms or other explosives. I had a bag and a suitcase, which I had tied together with string so that it would carry better. After waiting in a line for half an hour, I asked my companion to keep an eye on my bag and suitcase, while I returned to the ship to use the toilet. When I opened the door, at first I thought I went into the wrong room, perhaps to the armoury. There were grenades all over the floor, revolvers of all sorts, German Schmeissers, Tommy-Guns, even explosives they call sausages, or 808s, in our country.(...)”

After other formalities were taken care of, we were put on a train that was waiting especially for this purpose, and we started our long journey at night. On the train, we were read out the destinations, that is to say, which province each person was going to. I was assigned to the province of Ontario.” Immediately after arrival, the Polish soldiers were deployed and distributed to farms: in Ontario 2013 persons, in Alberta 753, in Manitoba 539, in Quebec 586, in Saskatchewan 440 and in the coastal provinces 251 persons. In practice, it often looked as if the farmer stood before a line of slave soldiers, in order to choose a worker for himself. This was no different from the slave trade, which has not been practiced in the civilized world for a long time”.

Let us hear from Polish veteran Bolesław Wiliam Makowski once again : “Scattered across Canada, the Poles very soon realized that they were now

*The first group of Polish soldiers left the port of Naples on November 1, 1946 on board the ship Sea Robin (including Bolesław Makowski in the top photo) and arrived in Halifax on November 12, 1946.*



*An account in the weekly newspaper "Czas" published in Winnipeg about the reception of Polish veterans of the 2nd Corps, including former Siberian, Henryk Kozubski.*

at the mercy of greedy and often ruthless farmers. Most veterans worked on large dairy farms, while the rest were employed on pig and bull farms. I ended up on a dairy farm. Our working day began at five, sometimes four in the morning and lasted until nine in the evening, with half-hour breaks for breakfast, lunch and an hour for dinner. A Polish worker was paid \$40 a month for his work, while a Canadian worker received a minimum of \$75. Not surprisingly, there were conflicts between Polish workers and their Canadian employers."

Sometimes there were even bloody fights on the farms, resulting in several Poles and farmers being severely beaten. Polish soldiers received the worst treatment on German farms. This was because after German prisoners of war had left the farms, they were replaced by soldiers who had fought against the Germans during the war.

However, there were also situations in which Poles were treated as the victors of World War II deserved: they were treated well, honestly, humanely, and sometimes even very warmly, like family members.

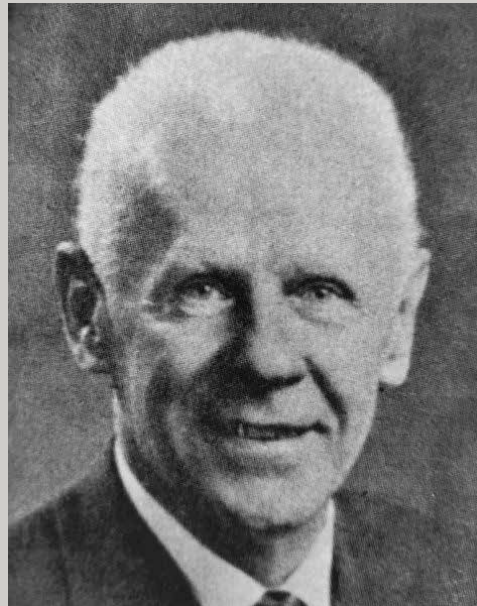
The Polish community received the Polish soldiers with great enthusiasm. The best evidence of this is found among reports published in the weekly Time (Czas) newspaper, out of Winnipeg. In issue 46 of November 20, 1946, the following was announced on the front page with a large headline: "Winnipeg proudly welcomes Polish soldiers. Thousands of hosts greeted them at the train station."

The reporter writes further:

"The day of November 15 this year will long remain in the memory of the entire Polish community of Winnipeg. Long before the arrival of the Polish soldiers, which was announced for 12:30 noon - huge crowds of Polish people from Winnipeg and the surrounding area began to gather in front of the C.P.R. railroad station. Soon, the entire square in front of the railroad station and the lower and upper halls of the station itself were filled with a crowd of about 1,500 people. (...) After a solemn and extremely cordial welcome, our soldiers, numbering 350, departed for Fort Osborne, where at 3 o'clock in the afternoon their welcome was renewed in the great recreation hall. In the evening, a grand reception was held for the Polish soldiers, organized by the Society of St. John Cantius (Towarzystwo Św. Jana Kantego), the "Falcon" Association (Stowarzyszenie „Sokół”) and the Association of Polish Defenders of the Homeland (Stowarzyszenie Polskich Obrońców Ojczyzny). (...)

On Saturday, November 16 this year, Polish soldiers were invited to a Banquet arranged by the Polish Working Women's Club.

On Sunday, November 17, at 9 a.m., ceremonial services were held in both Polish Roman Catholic churches. Churches held solemn services



(...) The rest of Sunday was spent by our soldiers in the Polish homes, where they were received and hosted warmly by individual families.”

One of the former soldiers who arrived in Winnipeg at the time was born in Volyn (Wołyń). He was first persecuted by the Ukrainians and later imprisoned by the Soviets and deported to Siberia. His name was **Henryk Kozubski (1922-2014)**. In his writings he noted: “All I knew about Winnipeg was that it was somewhere in the middle of Canada (...) We arrived at the CPR station. The first person I met was Peter Polański’s sister-in-law. When I told her my name, she exclaimed that my parents had been at her wedding. Then the saying came to mind: “It’s a small world”. The next day, the Polish soldiers spread out over the surrounding farms. They began to fulfill their two-year contracts.

Henryk Kozubski further recalls: “I got to a farm in Petersfield, about 50 miles north of Winnipeg. The farmer, an Italian, had six German prisoners working on the farm. We replaced them. I worked on that farm until February 1947. I wrote a complaint to the deputy minister of agriculture about the poor living conditions on the farm. An inspector came, confirmed the conditions described and promised that we would get another assignment. When the farmer found out who had written the complaint, he fired me on the spot.” In time, Kozubski became employed by *Vulcan Iron and Engineering*, where he worked for twenty-eight years. However, from the moment he joined the The Polish Combatants’ Association in Great Britain (Stowarzyszenia Polskich Kombatantów, SPK), he always remained true to the motto: God, Honour, Homeland. No wonder then, that while living in Winnipeg, he was actively involved in this veteran organization. For many years he worked as a volunteer for the SPK, in Branch 13, serving as president for several terms.

He died in Winnipeg and is laid to rest at the Polish Holy Spirit Cemetery. Along with Henryk Kozubski, **Captain Józef Kaczmarek (1915 -1988)** “**Rolicz**” disembarked from the *Sea Robin* in Halifax harbor. He was a participant in the Warsaw Uprising, in the “Radosław” Grouping, which was the strongest and most elite grouping of the Home Army. It included relatively well-armed Kedyw units of the Home Army Headquarters, who were seasoned in skirmishes with the Germans. This included the famous scout battalions “Zośka” and “Parasol.” He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari for his role in the heaviest combat, which took place in Warsaw’s Old Town. After the surrender of Warsaw, he was sent to a prisoner of war camp in Bavaria. Liberated by the Americans, he then joined General Anders’ 2nd Corps in Italy and sailed to Canada with its soldiers. Admittedly, he did not celebrate the solemn welcoming in Winnipeg, because he and 400 other former soldiers were sent by train

*The ship “Sea Robin” brought to the shores of Canada, among others, Capt. Józef Kaczmarek, nickname “Rolicz”, a participant in the Warsaw Uprising in the “Radosław” Grouping - which was the strongest and most elite grouping of the Home Army.*



to Lethbridge, Alberta. After completing his contract, he rallied former Polish soldiers around him and he officially began his activities in the Polish Combatants' Association (SPK) in Edmonton on May 4, 1947. Capt. Józef Kaczmarek was elected its first president. In February 1948 he became vice-president and official representative of the SPK of former soldiers working on farms in western Canada. He died suddenly in Toronto on March 10, 1988, during the Canadian Polish Congress Convention. He is laid to rest at *Holy Cross* Cemetery in Edmonton.

The former soldiers of General Władysław Anders' 2nd Corps, who came to Canada, were the forerunners of the great Polish postwar wave of immigrants. In 1947, the first groups of so-called "dipis", who were people classified as *Displaced Persons* (DPs), left Europe and headed for the shores of Canada. These were nomads deprived of their homeland, residing in Europe as forced labourers, concentration camp prisoners, prisoners of war and former participants in the Warsaw Uprising.... By 1952, in less than five years, as many as 165,697 people had arrived there, including 36,127 Poles. A large part of this immigration 'tsunami' worked on farms, but not only, since many settled in cities where jobs were easier to come by.

The first Polish woman with a DP document to arrive in Canada and settle in Edmonton was **Eugenia Kuźmińska (1925-1975)**, according to the local Edmonton Bulletin of November 21, 1947. After being liberated from captivity in April 1945, she was sent to a *Displaced Person* camp in Germany. She later stayed in various Displaced Person camps, including Rosenheim, Kempten, Altenstadt, Schongau and Kaserne Munich. One day, she went with friends to a gypsy fortune teller. She was told that she would swim across a large "body of water." A few days later, she noticed a poster in the camp offering free transportation to settle in Canada. Eugenia took advantage of the opportunity. On November 6, 1947, she arrived in Halifax aboard the *US Navy ship General MB Stewart* and five days later - in Edmonton. She settled and worked at St. Joseph's Hospital, which was being run by nuns.

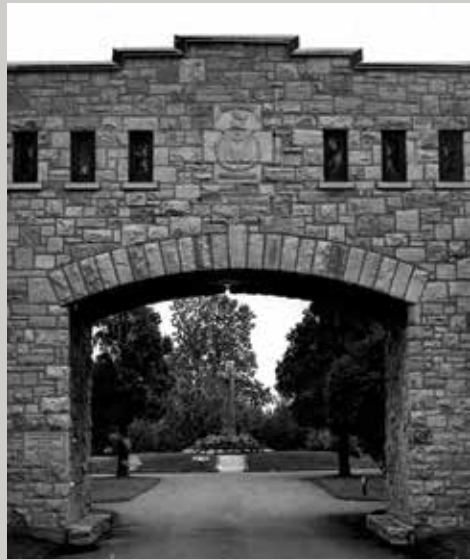
Eugenia Kuźmińska (Jean Semaniuk) died in Edmonton and was buried in the local *Holy Cross* Cemetery.

After the Warsaw Uprising, **Zofia Zadora- Paszkowska (1920-2021)** and her husband **Maciej Zadora-Paszkowski (1910-1993)** ended up in prisoner-of-war camps, just like thousands of other participants in this patriotic uprising. After liberation, they joined General Anders' 2nd Corps together. They did not want to return to the communist-ruled Homeland, even though it was dear to them. As so-called DPs, they

*Eugenia Kuźmińska, a Displaced Persons (DP), was the first Polish woman with a DP document who came to Canada and settled in Edmonton. She was followed by others who settled in this city, including the Zadora-Paszkowski couple.*







left first for England and later to Argentina. Eventually, they settled in Canada. They died in Edmonton and are laid to rest in *Northern Lights* Cemetery. During the funeral, their coffins were sprinkled with handfuls of earth from Poland and Argentina.

Poles, who were soldiers of the Allied Forces, nowadays rest in many Canadian war veteran cemeteries. The largest number of Polish graves can be found at the *Field of Honour* cemetery in Pointe Claire (Quebec). This “Field of Glory” contains the graves of soldiers from the September campaigns in Norway, France and Libya. In this cemetery, also rest soldiers of the 1st Armoured Division, sailors, aviators, paratroopers, “Silent-Unseens” (Cichociemni) - elite paratroopers who parachuted into occupied Poland, soldiers of the Home Army and the Holy Cross (Swietokrzyska) Brigade. Furthermore, there are participants of the Warsaw Uprising, women - soldiers, women liaison- officers, female cipher-clerks and female nurses. There are also soldiers who survived Soviet gulags, German concentration camps and prisoner-of-war camps. The officers laid to rest in this cemetery, include:

**Col. Antoni Buckiewicz (1887-1954)**; during the Polish-Bolshevik War he commanded the 11th Intelligence Squadron and later was chief of aviation of the 5th Army. In 1922, he was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari. During World War II, he served as a pilot in the Royal Air Force.

**Col. Michał Rybikowski (1900-1991)**; of the Polish intelligence service in Germany. Later, he was commander of the 5th Carpathian Rifle Battalion of the II Corps. Awarded twice with the Order of Virtuti Militari.

**Lt. Col. Olgierd Dunin-Borkowski (1903-1980)**; participant in the Third Silesian Uprising, prisoner of many German camps during World War II. Decorated twice with the Cross of Valour.

**Lt. Col. Janusz Kapuściński (1898-1998)**; officer of the 1st Greater Poland Uhlán Regiment (1 Pułk Ułanów Wielkopolskich), representative of Poland in equestrian competitions. Awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.

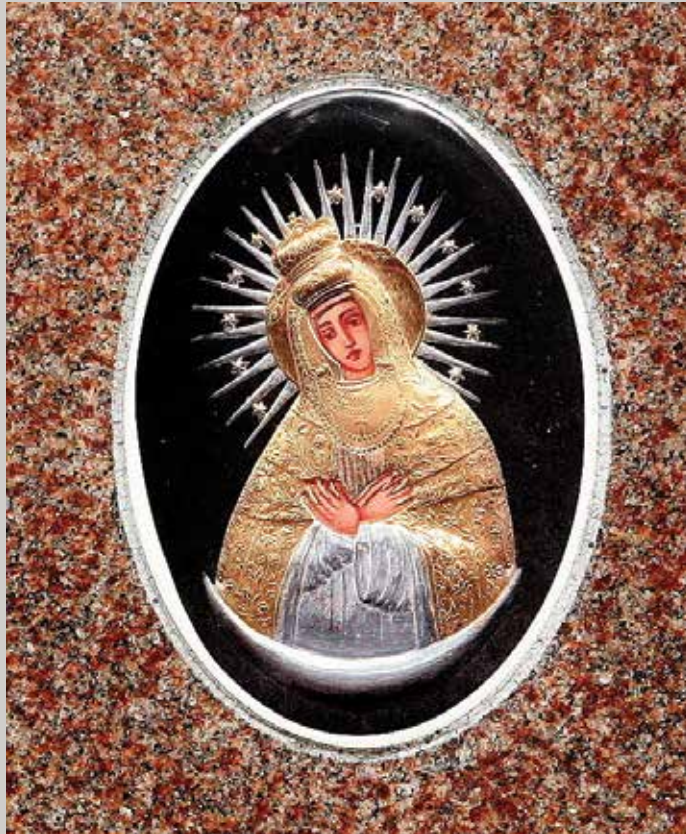
**Lt. Col. Jan Bernard Wola-Romanowski (1898-1956)**; staff officer of the Kresowa Cavalry Brigade (Kresowa Brygada Kawalerii) in Brody, participant in the Warsaw Uprising, commander of assault troops in central Warsaw. Awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour.

An invaluable source of historical information on Polish wartime and postwar emigration is the Polish cemetery section of the Catholic cemetery in Saint-Sauveur, Quebec.

Ewa Iłowska, in her book-guide *Polish Graves at the cemetery in Saint-*

*The Field of Honour war cemetery in Pointe Claire, Quebec, where there are the most graves of Polish veterans in Canada.*





Bolshevik war. In 1940, he joined the PSZ in France. After the Battle of Dunkirk he was evacuated to Great Britain, where he served under British command. Awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari. He rests with his wife **Wacława Elżbieta Karaszewicz (1899-1971)** who was a lieutenant of the Home Army and a participant in the Warsaw Uprising.

**Lt. Antoni Belina-Brzozowski (1914-1995)**; graduate of the Cavalry Cadet Reserve School. In 1938, he was appointed to the Krechowce Uhlan Regiment (Pułk Ułanów Krechowieckich) in Augustów. He participated in the September campaign. In 1939-1943 he belonged to the Union of Armed Struggle (Związek Walki Zbrojnej – later, Home Army) and took part in the underground fight against the Nazi occupiers. He was appointed to the rank of lieutenant. Arrested in 1943, he survived the last years of the war in the concentration camps in Auschwitz and Mauthausen. He rests with his wife **Irena (Renia) Belina-Brzozowska (1921-2009)**, a nurse during the Warsaw Uprising.

**Seweryn Buckiewicz (1910-2002)**; a pilot in fighter-reconnaissance Squadron 318. Awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari.

**Zofia Czengery (1917-1994)**; from 1939, she belonged to the underground organization "Odwet" ("Retaliation"), which in time became part of the Home Army. Arrested by the Gestapo, she was sentenced to death. After the verdict had been changed, she was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, where she remained from 1942 to 1945.

**Ryszard Jakimowicz (1919-2010)**; in 1939 he reached France via Romania, Hungary and Greece. There he joined the Polish army. He then made his way to England, where he served as a navigator pilot in the RAF. In 1945, he married Halina Wodzyńska (1922-2002), a volunteer active in the Women's Auxiliary Air Service (Pomocniczej Lotniczej Służbie Kobiet - members were popularly known as "wawki", after the British prototype of the PLSK - *Women's Auxiliary Air Force*).

**Magdalena Kielczewska (1928-1988)**; while being a member of the Gray (Scout) Ranks (Szare Szeregi), she took an active part in many sabotage operations. During the Warsaw Uprising, she was a nurse and a liaison officer.

**Maria Liebich ((1893-1987)**; was a member to the Union of Armed Struggle, later the Home Army. She participated in the Warsaw Uprising (alias Janina Krauze) as a liaison officer and nurse. She was also a prisoner of war at the camp in Oberlangen, near Magdeburg.

Many Polish veterans rest in the cemeteries in Ottawa, Winnipeg, Toronto, Regina... in the so-called "Veterans' Sections". An example of this is the St. Andrew's Cemetery in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Here, dozens of Poles have found a resting place among Canadian soldiers, in four,

*The Polish section in Saint-Sauver is an invaluable source of direct historical information about Polish wartime and post-war emigration.*



large and separate plots.

The Graves of Polish veterans can also be found at *Holy Cross* Catholic Cemetery in Toronto. Here, dozens of former soldiers, who served in the Polish Armed Forces, have been buried in two *Veterans Burial Sections*.

Similarly to the *Field of Honour* cemetery in Pointe Claire, all tombstones are set level with the ground, and on November 11, the Canadian flag is always lowered to half-mast as a sign of mourning. Also on this day, the main *Armistice Day* ceremony, or Veterans Day is held - in Canada also called *Remembrance Day*. The date coincides with Independence Day in Poland. The ceremony takes place in Ottawa's Confederation Square, which is also the location of the tall *National Memorial* monument commemorating all Canadians killed in the two world wars and in the 1950-53 Korean War.

Among those laid to rest at *Holy Cross* Cemetery in Toronto are:

**Lt. Col. Stanisław Bolesław Mieczysław Król (1913-1987)**; a graduate of the 8th Promotion of the Cadet Aviation School (VIII Promocja Szkoły Podchorążych Lotnictwa - 1934 r.). He served first in the 21st Line Squadron (21 Eskadra Liniowa) and then in the 26th Companion Squadron (26 Eskadra Towarzysząca). After the defeat of Poland, he made his way to Great Britain. He was an observer pilot in the No. 301 Polish Bomber Squadron "Land of Pomerania" and in the No. 138 RAF Special Duties Squadron. On November 7, 1941, he made a flight to Poland with an airdrop of three parachute-jumpers and supplies. On the way back, due to strong headwinds and icy conditions, it was not possible to hide the landing gear. Moreover, the lack of fuel forced the crew to make an emergency landing in Sweden near Ystad, where the crew was arrested. Upon release, Col. Król returned to Britain and became commander of the 1586th (Polish Special Duties) Flight. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari.

**Major pilot Ignacy Giedgowd (1897- 1974)**; drafted into the Czarist army, he joined the Polish Army in 1918. After a pilot course he had taken in France, he was assigned to the 10th Aviation (Intelligence) Squadron (10 Eskadra Lotnicza – Wywiadowcza), then to the 2nd Aviation Regiment in Cracow (2 Pułk Lotniczy, Kraków). In August 1923, he won in the 2nd National Circular Flight (II Krajowy Lot Okrężny). He transferred to the 1st Aviation Regiment in Warsaw (1 Pułk Lotniczy, Warszawa), where he served as commander of the training squadron from May 21, 1925. After the September campaign, he made his way to France and there became commander of a training squadron at the Lyon-Bron base. After some time, he was evacuated to England, where he served in the RAF until the end of the war. He was awarded the

*Graves of Polish veterans in the Canadian veterans section of the Thunder Bay cemetery.*



Order of Virtuti Militari.

**Lt. Longin Korwin-Pawłowski (1909-1983)**; participant in the September Campaign in the 1st Legion Infantry Division - Operational Group "Wyszków" (1 Dywizja Piechoty Legionów - Grupa Operacyjna Wyszków). Later, a soldier in the 5th Borderland (Kresowa) Infantry Division of the 2nd Polish Corps in Italy. Awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari.

**Marian Bronisław Zaleski (1904-1977)**; cavalryman, participant in the 1920 Polish-Bolshevik war. In the September campaign, he was a non-commissioned officer of the 6th Mounted Rifle Regiment (6 Pułk Strzelców Konnych) and served in the 1st Krechowice Uhlan Regiment (1 Pułk Ułanów Krechowieckich). He was a soldier of the The Polish II Corps (Drugi Korpus Wojska Polskiego) in Italy and also a participant in the storming of Monte Cassino.

After demobilization, he emigrated to Canada and settled in Toronto; awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and twice the Cross of Valour.

Most Polish soldiers and officers found their final resting place at *Park Lawn* Catholic Cemetery in Toronto. Among others, the following lay buried there:

**Col. Zdzisław M. Lubicz-Szydłowski (1900 -1973)**; an officer with the academic title "Doctor of Philosophy in Physical Sciences". In 1918, he participated in the defense of Lviv during the Polish-Ukrainian War, and in 1920 he fought in the Polish-Bolshevik War. After the outbreak of World War II, he was an officer in the 12th Infantry Division (12 Dywizja Piechoty), during the September campaign. He made his way West and joined the Polish Army in France. He took part in the French campaign with the rank of major, as commander of the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Greater Poland Grenadier Regiment (2 Pułku Grenadierów Wielkopolskich). In 1942, he made his way to Great Britain, becoming an officer in the Polish Armed Forces. In March 1943, with the rank of lieutenant colonel, he became commander of the 1st battalion of the 1st Independent Parachute Brigade (I Batalion - 1 Samodzielnej Brygady Spadochronowej). At that time, on behalf of the commander of the 1st SBS, he took charge of the Parachute Cadet School in Scotland.

In the fall of 1943, Col. Szydłowski was assigned to General Stanisław Maczek's 1st Armoured Division (1 Dywizja Pancerna). Between 1944-45 he participated, as a battalion commander, in every battle in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. One of the toughest was the battle for Axel in the Netherlands, which began on Saturday, September 16, 1944 and ended with the liberation of the city on Tuesday, September 19, 1944. Following the victory, the Axel Council named Col. Zdzisław Szydłowski an honorary citizen of the city.

*Dozens of former soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces were buried at the Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Toronto, in the two Veterans Burial Sections.*



*Col. Zdzisław Mateusz Lubicz-Szydłowski, an officer of General Stanisław Maczek's 1st Armoured Division, resting in Toronto's Park Lawn Cemetery, was honoured with a monument and a plaque bearing his likeness in the Dutch town of Axel.*

The nomination document included the following words: "This honorary citizenship, is a symbol of the lasting gratitude and undying friendship, that the municipal authorities and the citizens of the city of Axel have for those sons of the Polish nation who, without sparing their own blood, restored freedom and independence to the Netherlands and to our city." Her Majesty Queen Juliana decorated Colonel Szydłowski with the Order of Oranje-Nassau, by the Royal Decree of August 16, 1949. Szydłowski Square (*Szydłowskiplein*) in the centre of Axel City was named in the Colonel's honour. A monument was erected in the square, along with a bas-relief depicting the colonel's likeness.

The Colonel's wife Anna (née Ścibor-Rylska) is laid to rest in Axel, at the local cemetery. She died in a road accident in 1946, while leaving for the West to reunite with her husband.

Col. Lubicz-Szydłowski was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour six times.

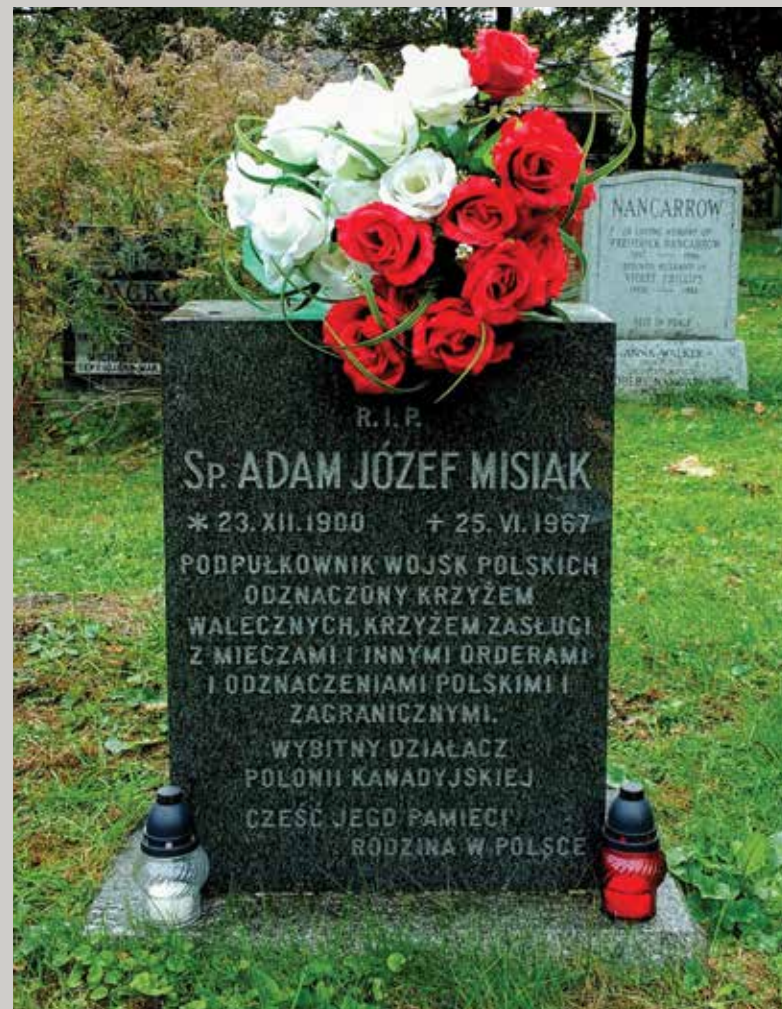
He died in Toronto and is buried in one of the oldest parts of *Park Lawn Cemetery*.

**Col. Bohdan Jan Ejbich (1916-2013)**; At the outbreak of war, he happened to be in the oldest student age-group at the Aviation Cadet School, with a technical specialization. He crossed the Romanian border in September 1939 and was arrested in Romanian Corabia on the Danube River. Then, he got to Marseilles and to the Polish Air Force in France, through Lebanon. After the defeat of Poland, he served as a resident pilot at RAF air bases in Britain, training air personnel at Castle Kennedy and Mona.

In 1943 he was assigned to the No. 304 (Land of Silesia) Polish Bomber Squadron (no. 304 Dywizjon Bombowy "Ziemi Śląskiej) as an operational pilot. After 44 flights, he completed combat operations with the rank of captain. He was commissioned to higher technical studies, where he graduated in electrical engineering at the University of London.

In 1952, he and his wife **Lt. Anna née Ujejska (1921-2019)** emigrated to Canada. She was a former WAAF officer and a daughter of the commander of the Polish Air Force in the UK, Gen. Stanisław Ujejski. He was a long-time activist and a member of many Polish organizations, including: chairman of Wing 430 "Warsaw" of the Polish Airmen's Association (Skrzydła 430 „Warszawa” Stowarzyszenia Lotników Polskich), president of SPK, Branch 20 (Koła 20) in Toronto, president of KPK - Toronto District and president of the Polish Millenium Fund (Fudusz Wieczysty Milenium).

Author of more than a dozen books of memoirs, mostly about aviators serving in Polish squadrons during World War II, in the UK.



Awarded the Cross of Valour three times.

**Lt. Col. Jan Dempniak (1913-1998)**; graduated from the Officer Cadet School in 1935, with the rank of second lieutenant. During the 1939 September campaign, he fought at Drohobych and Sambor. He made his way to France, where he was assigned to the 3rd Silesian Grenadier Regiment (3 Pułku Grenadierów Śląskich). After the defeat of France on June 22, he was taken prisoner by the Germans in St. Die. After three months, he managed to escape. He traveled through Spain and Portugal and in April 1941, arrived in Britain. There, he was assigned to “General Duch’s Grouping” that was going to Canada to recruit volunteers for the Polish Army. He stayed in Canada from July 1941 to May 1942 and served as deputy company commander. Upon his return, he had completed a course at the Military College (Wyższa Szkoła Wojenna) in Scotland and was assigned to the The 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division (3 Dywizja Strzelców Karpackich) in Iraq.

He went through the entire Italian campaign with the rank of information officer and then division operations officer. After demobilization, he emigrated to Canada in 1948 and settled in Toronto. Awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.

**Lt. Col. Jan Jaźwiński (1905 -1985)**; participant in the struggle for Polish independence in the Polish-Bolshevik war, an engineer, a sapper and a paratrooper. Lt. Col. Jaźwiński was an officer of The Second Intelligence Department of the Polish General Military Staff (Oddział II Sztabu – Wywiad - Generalnego Wojska Polskiego), of the Polish Armed Forces in the West and of the Commander-in-Chief’s Staff. He was also an organizer of air drops for the “Silent Unseen” (Cichociemni) and of supplies for the Home Army. During World War II, in Great Britain, he made efforts to establish air communications with occupied Poland. He became a pioneer and role model in regards to airdrops into the country. From January to September 1, 1944, he was commander of the Main Transfer Base - Base No. 11, British code-name “Dawn” (Główna Baza Przerzutowa – Baza nr. 11, kryptonim „Jutrzenka”) in Latiano, 20 km from Campo Casale near Brindisi (Italy), from where planes of 1586 (Polish Special Duties) Squadron (also no. 148 Squadron RAF) took off for Poland. By July 31, 1944, 340 planes had taken off (179 Polish and 161 British); 178 crews (104 Polish and 74 British) had completed their missions. During the Warsaw Uprising, in the period from August 1 to 22, 1944, 146 aircraft had taken off (59 Polish, 87 British and South African); 69 missions had been completed (33 Polish and 36 British and South African). A total of 486 aircraft (238 Polish and 248 British and South African) took off from “Dawn” (“Jutrzenka”), 247 crews (137

*Graves of highly-distinguished Polish officers at the Park Lawn Cemetery in Toronto: Lt. Col. Jan Jaźwiński and Lt. Col. Adam Józef Misiak.*



*Col. Bohdan Jan Ejbich, former operational pilot in the 304 Bomb Squadron "Silesian Land", is laid to rest with his wife Lt. Anna née Ujejska at Park Lawn Cemetery in Toronto. In the archival photo: Anna and Bohdan Ejbich (centre) with the crew of one of the bombers.*

Polish and 110 British and South African) completed their missions, 32 aircraft were lost (7 Polish and 25 British and South African).

After a conflict with Gen. Stanisław Tatar, Lt. Col. Jaźwiński asked the Commander-in-Chief to dismiss him from his position as base commander. He transferred to General Władysław Anders' 2nd Polish Corps and was assigned to the British Sapper Training Centre.

Awarded the Cross of Valour.

Lt. Col. Jan Jaźwiński died in Los Angeles (USA) and is buried at *Park Lawn Cemetery* in Toronto.

**Lt. Col. Adam Józef Misiak (1900-1967)**, (Polish) National Party activist, participant in the 1920 war. He belonged to the Camp of Greater Poland (Obóz Wielkiej Polski – OWP) and the National Party (SN), on whose behalf he organized election committees for city councils and parliament. In 1934-39 he published "*Leszczyńska*" newspaper *Gazeta Leszczyńska* and since 1936, also the *Western National Daily* (Zachodni Dziennik Narodowy).

In September 1939 he took part in the Battle of the Bzura. He then made his way to the Middle East, where he joined the then-forming Polish units. He fought as a battery commander with the Polish Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade in Tobruk (Samodzielna Brygada Strzelców Karpackich) and in the Libyan Desert. In 1943, he was transferred to the General Board of the Polish Red Cross (PCK) in London. After the end of hostilities, he was appointed to head the PCK mission in West Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, with the rank of a lieutenant colonel. After the termination of the institution (PCK), he directed the work of the Relief Society for Poles (Towarzystwa Pomocy Polakom) until 1948. In 1951, he settled in Toronto. He was a well-known activist in the Polish- Canadian community, awarded with the Cross of Valour.

Lt. Col. Adam Józef Misiak died in Toronto of a heart attack.

**Lt. Col. Jerzy Michał Łucki (1898 - 1985)**; soldier of the 1st and 6th Legions' Infantry Regiment (no. 1 & no. 6 Pułk Piechoty Legionów), bobsledder, Olympic athlete from Sankt Moritz in 1928. He was a versatile athlete and one of the top putters for the "Pogoń Lwów" professional sports club. He was a bronze medalist at the Polish championships in 1923 and 1927 in the shot put and also in the hammer throw in 1923. In 1937, he was transferred from the infantry officer corps to the armoured weapons officer corps. In the same year, he became the organizer and commander of the 12th Armoured Battalion in Łuck (12 Batalion Pancerny). During September 1-3, 1939, he mobilized the 21st light tank battalion (21 Batalion Czołgów Lekkich) and took command of it. On September 18, 1939, in Kutyna, he crossed the border into Romania, at





the head of the battalion. On October 4, 1939, in Târgoviște, he handed over the battalion's equipment and armaments. In the spring of 1945, he took command of the 5th Armoured Regiment (5 pułk pancerny). He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari. He rests in a common grave, with his brother **Capt. Jerzy Łucki (1916- 1995)**, who served in the No. 305 Polish Bomber Squadron as a deck gunner during the Battle of Britain.

**Maj. Kasprzak Marian (1913 -1998)**; graduated from the School of Artillery Cadets (Szkoła Podchorążych Artylerii). After the September campaign, he made his way to France. Following the surrender of France, he went to England - through Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar. He was assigned to the 2nd Motor Artillery Regiment (2 Pułk Artylerii Motorowej) of the Polish 1st Armoured Division (1 Dywizja Pancerna). He commanded the division during the campaigns in Normandy, Belgium and Germany. He was wounded three times in combat actions. In 1945, he was transferred to the 1st Anti-Tank Artillery Regiment (1 Pułk Artylerii Przeciwpancernej) and, at the same time, appointed the military administrator of the town of Maczków, in Germany, by order of the division commander. After demobilization, he emigrated to Canada and settled in Toronto. He served as president of the Association of Soldiers of the 1st Polish Armoured Division in Canada (Stowarzyszenie Żołnierzy 1 Polskiej Dywizji Pancerniej w Kanadzie).

He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour twice.

At *Park Lawn* Cemetery in Toronto, there is also a family grave of Polish officers who were not given the opportunity to return to their free Homeland after the end of World War II. It is a testimony to the extraordinary sacrifice and patriotism of our compatriots in the fight for a free and independent Poland. Here, in a common family grave lie: **Maj. Roman Józef Aleksander Proszek (1911 – 1985)**, his wife **Zofia Hanna (1918-2010)**, and **Capt. Pilot Eligiusz Stanisław “Elek” Zaleski (1909-1978)** with his wife **Izydora Janina, née Bednarczyk (1908-1988)**.

**Maj. Roman Aleksander Proszek (1911-1985)**; after two years of study at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics at the Jagiellonian University of Cracow, he enters the School of Artillery Cadets (Szkoła Podchorążych Artylerii) in Toruń. Upon completion, he is assigned to the 22nd Light Artillery Regiment (22 Pułk Artylerii Lekkiej) in Przemyśl. In 1936, he is appointed lieutenant and completes a tactical and technical course for armoured weapons officers in Modlin, after which he is assigned to the 5th Armoured Battalion (5 Batalion Pancerny) in Cracow.

*Capt. Eligiusz Stanisław Lubicz-Zaleski was a pilot of the 301 Bomb Squadron “Pomeranian Land” – a bombing and transport squadron of the Polish Air Force in Great Britain. Since April 1943, he served in the Polish Special Duties Squadron in the British 138th RAF Division and later in the separated 1586th Special Duties Squadron.*



In the September 1939 campaign, he fought as commander of the technical-and-supplies platoon of the 51st Armoured Division (51 Dywizja Pancerna). After the end of combat operations, he made his way to Hungary and further - to France - where he served during the French campaign in the 1st Tank Regiment of the 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade (1 Pułk Czołgów & 10 Brygada Kawalerii Pancernej). In June 1940, he went to Great Britain and from July, served in the 1st Tank Battalion and the 65th Tank Battalion (1 Batalion Czołgów & 65 Batalion Czołgów). In 1942, when the armoured units were organized into the 1st Armoured Division (1 Dywizja Pancerna), under the command of General Stanisław Maczek, Roman Proszek was assigned to the 1st Armoured Regiment (1 Pułk Pancerny). On January 1, 1943, he was promoted to the rank of captain of armoured weapons. In August 1944, when the Polish 1st Armoured Division (Polska 1 Dywizja Pancerna) was redeployed to France, he entered the zone of combat with the Germans, which led through Normandy, Falaise, Chambois, Belgium, the Netherlands and up to Northern Germany. He held the position of first deputy regimental commander from November 1944 to June 1947.

In 1948, Roman Aleksander Proszek emigrated to Canada. On October 25, 1950, he married **Sgt. Zofia Hanna, née Siemaszko (1918-2010)**. She was a soldier in the Home Army and a participant in the Warsaw Uprising, who was freed from a prisoner-of-war camp in Oberlangen and Wilhelmshafen in Germany, by the 1st Armoured Division, in 1945 .

Maj. Proszek was one of the founders of the Association of Soldiers of the 1st Armoured Division in Canada (Stowarzyszenie Żołnierzy 1 Dywizji Pancernej w Kanadzie), holding the position of president until his death. He was also active in the Polish Army Veterans' Association, the Polish Combatants' Association, in the Fellowship of the 1st and 2nd Armoured Regiments and in the Royal Canadian Legion (Stowarzyszeniu Weteranów Armii Polskiej, Stowarzyszeniu Polskich Kombatantów, Kole Koleżeńskim 1 i 2 Pułku Pancernego). He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.

Maj. Roman Aleksander Proszek died suddenly in 1985 in Cambridge, Ontario.

Raised in a patriotic spirit, his daughter Iwona Proszek-Mooney visited her father's battle sites several times along the 1st Armoured Division's combat route from Arranches to the Belgian border, which also included the cemetery in Urville- Langannerie. By doing so, Iwona Proszek-Mooney was paying tribute not only to her father and the 1st Armoured Division, but also to the women of the AK (Home Army). These were women like her mother, who first fought and later were

*Maj. Roman Aleksander Proszek, an officer in Gen. Stanisław Maczek's 1st Armoured Division with an assignment to the 1st Armoured Regiment. He fought in a campaign leading through Normandy, Falaise, Chambois, Belgium, the Netherlands - all the way to northern Germany.*



imprisoned in German camps.  
 In a touching poem called *Come with me*, she wrote:  
*I will take one more walk along the road of my memories.  
 Come with me ...  
 One more time, I'll go to the woods, where the birds are singing today,  
 And yesterday the tanks were heading for battle.  
 One more time, I'll walk through the clearings, where lots of poppies are  
 blooming,  
 thanks to the blood of Polish soldiers, when they fought for freedom - their  
 own and others'.  
 Come with me ...  
 One more time, I want to walk that road that leads from Arramanches  
 Through Falaise, Chambois, Mont Ormel, Breda,  
 through valleys and hills - to the gates of Oberlangen, to Wilhelmshafen camp,  
 to the Home Army - in captivity.  
 Come with me ...  
 Once again let the cold winds soothe the hot sparks of emotion  
 When we stand at the graves of our friends.  
 Today, we are united by the memories of those years -  
 already so far away, yet close to our hearts.  
 Come with me ...  
 We will stroll along the paths of our memories,  
 to respectfully thank those who are still with us  
 and bid farewell to those who sleep an eternal slumber.  
 Come with me.... one more time.*

Here, in the family grave, also rests **Capt. Eligiusz Stanisław Lubicz-Zaleski (1909-1978)** and his wife **Izydora Janina “Janka”, née Bednarczyk (1908-1988)**.

Eligiusz Zaleski, “Elek” to his colleagues, was a graduate of the Air Force Cadet School in Dęblin, popularly known as the “School of Eaglets.” After the September campaign of 1939, he reached England via Hungary and France, where he was assigned to the No. 301 Polish Bomber “Land of Pomerania” bombing-and-transport squadron, a part of the Polish Air Force in Great Britain. From April 1943, he served in the Polish Special Duties Squadron in the British No. 138 RAF Division and then in the detached 1586th Special Duties Squadron.

The squadron was tasked with transporting people and military equipment for the resistance movement in occupied countries, including Poland. Secret night missions to Poland were carried out, first from England over the North Sea and Denmark and then over Sweden, after German anti-aircraft defenses in Denmark were reinforced. They lasted up to 16 hours.

*The family grave of the Proszeks and the Zaleskis at Park Lawn Cemetery in Toronto. The officers were commemorated in Poland. From left: an obelisk in Ciecclin at the site of the airdrop field that was the target of two secret special missions of Squadron 301. A monument in memory of Maj. Roman Proszek and Rot. Marian Jurecki in Stróże, funded by the Struggle and Martyrdom Memory Protection Council.*



Later, they took off from Campo Cassale airfield near Brindisi, Italy. The missions consisted of parachute drops for specially trained Polish officers - the so-called “cichociemni” (“silent-unseen”), as well as weapons, radios and currency for the Home Army.

In November 1944, after it became the 301st Bomb Squadron again, Eligiusz Zaleski was promoted to captain and transferred to Laurinburg Air Force Base in Maxton, North Carolina (USA), where he trained American pilots on Douglas C47 aircraft for several months.

In 1946, the captain’s wife, Izydora Janina and son Andrzej, escaped from Poland with the help of the Polish underground by making their way through the Czech Republic. First, they went to a camp for displaced persons in Linz, Austria, run by the Red Cross and then to Belgium. Here, she was reunited with her husband, who took them to England. In 1948, after demobilization, the entire Zaleski family went to Argentina and then Canada in 1958. They purchased land near Barry’s Bay (Ontario) on Kamanisseg Lake and named the property “Wigry.”

For his participation in clandestine missions with Squadron 301, Capt. Lubicz-Zaleski was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour three times.

In 2005, an obelisk was unveiled in the village of Ciechlin (near Warsaw) commemorating an airdrop field in the area which was code-named “Candlestick” („Lichtarz 423”). It was the target of two special, secret missions of Squadron 301: one from England and the other from Italy. This was how the local residents honoured the aircrews who took part in these extremely dangerous actions, including Capt. Zaleski.

Many Knights of the Order of Virtuti Militari have found their final resting place the at *Park Lawn Cemetery* in Toronto, including:

**Capt. Alexander Waroczewski (1908 - 1993)**; soldier of the 4th Battalion, 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division, General Władysław Anders’ 2nd Polish Corps in Italy. Also, a well-known social activist, former president of the Canadian Polish Congress (Kongresu Polonii Kanadyjskiej), Toronto District. Recipient of the Order of Virtuti Militari.

**Ensign. Władysław Juszcuk (1919-2006)**; while an active member of the Riflemen’s Association (Związek Strzelecki), he was arrested and imprisoned by the Soviets in 1940. Later, he was deported and imprisoned in a Siberian gulag. He then joined the 2nd Polish Corps and served in the 3rd Carpathian Anti-Tank Artillery Regiment (3 Karpacki Pułk Artylerii Przeciwpancernej), which was part of the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division. He took part in the capture of Monte Cassino and the liberation of Ancona and Bologna. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari.

**Ensign. Officer Edward Majerski (1918-1993)** also finished his

*The final resting place of Sgr. Władysław Yushchuk of the 2nd Corps at Park Lawn Cemetery in Toronto and of Maj. Michał Wolnik head of the gendarmerie of the 1st Polish Armoured Division of World War II, at the cemetery in Vilnius.*



*Knight of the Order of  
Virtuti Militari Major  
Stanisław Tarazewicz is  
laid to rest at Beechwood  
Cemetery in Ottawa.*

service in the Second World War as an ensign of the Polish Army. After the September 1939 campaign, he served in the Polish Independent Highland Brigade (Samodzielna Brygada Strzelców Podhalańskich) in France and fought at Narvik. In England, he was assigned to the 1st Polish Armoured Division, with which he fought for the rest of the war. Awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour twice.

**Lt. Czesław Błaszyk (1921-2000)**; in September 1939, he crossed the Hungarian border with his younger brother **Tadeusz Błaszyk (1925-1979)** and five friends; they got to France, where he joined the 24th Uhlan Regiment (24 Pułk Ułanów) stationed in Mondragon. After the fall of France, the regiment was evacuated to Liverpool, England and then to Glasgow, Scotland. Together with Gen. Stanisław Maczek's 1st Armoured Brigade, he participated in the battles of Falaise, Chambois and the Battle of Mont Ormel (Hill 262), known as the defense of the "Mace" (obrona "Maczugi"). He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour twice for the courage shown during the battle.

Polish soldiers and officers also rest in individual graves within Canadian cemeteries from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Most often, the tombstones bear only the first name, surname and the date of birth and death. Sometimes, with a short message: *Born in Poland*. Sometimes, an inscription that indicates participation in combat during World War II. Such a tombstone can be found in the new cemetery in Vilnius, Ontario. A flat, brass plaque on the burial site informs: **Michał Wolnik (1907-2001)**; *Major - head of the gendarmerie of the 1st Polish Armoured Division in World War II*.

At the nearby cemetery in Barry's Bay, rests **Lt. Col. Kazimierz Józef Szrajter (1919- 2012)**, a pilot of the Polish Air Force in Britain assigned to the No. 301 Polish Bomber Squadron "Land of Pomerania. From the time the squadron was transformed into No. 1586 (Polish Special Duties Flight) until August 5, 1944, Lt. Col. Szrajter had completed 100 combat flights, including 45 flights with airdrops for the resistance movement; 16 of them - to Poland. On the night of July 25/26, 1944, Kazimierz Szrajter took part in Operation Bridge III („Most III”), delivering couriers to Poland and taking parts of a V2 missile, previously captured by the Home Army, to Italy. Demobilized in early 1949, he began working as a civilian pilot for the *Lancashire Aircraft Corporation* and during the Berlin blockade, made about 150 flights with supplies for the city. Later, he worked for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for several years - flying with airdrops for anti-communist organizations in Eastern Europe. In Canada, he worked as a pilot for Maritime Central Airways and later



for Nordair. He was the first in the company to pilot a Boeing 737 and was the first civilian pilot to land a passenger plane beyond the Arctic Circle. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.

Lt. Col. Józef Szrajter died in Barry's Bay (Ontario) and is laid to rest in the local cemetery.

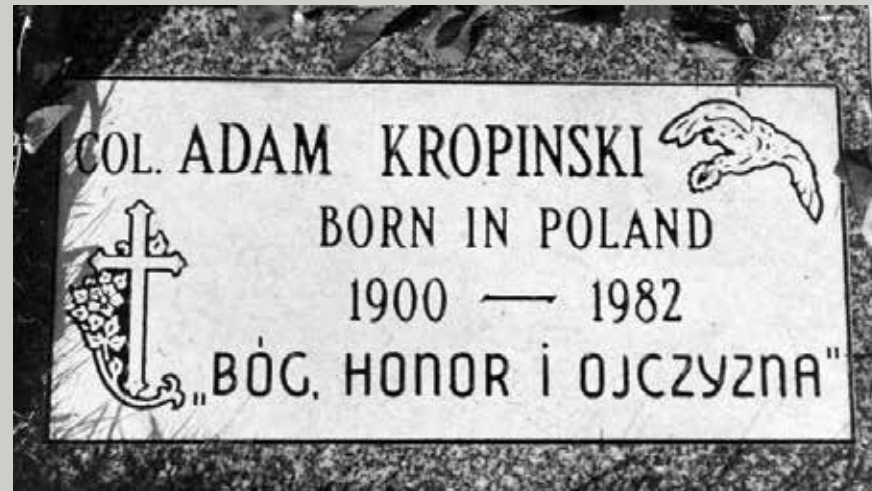
At the *Beechwood* Cemetery in Ottawa, is the grave of **Maj. Stanisław Tarazewicz (1922-2013)**. It is decorated with the Virtuti Militari Cross carved in black granite, as a sign that this officer once received Poland's highest wartime decoration for heroism during combat. Before he was included among the Knights of this honourable order, he was arrested by Lithuanian authorities in 1939 and served time in an internment camp. After a successful escape, he joined the Home Army. Unfortunately, he was arrested, this time by the Soviets and sent to a labour camp as far away as Arkhangelsk. Here he learned from a Russian prisoner that a Polish army was being formed in Russia out of "gulagers" (Soviet camp prisoners), like him. He hastily left the camp together with four colleagues and, after many adventures and arrests, enlisted in General Władysław Anders' Polish Armed Forces in the East. In Iraq, he graduated from sapper cadet school with an assignment to the 10th Battalion in the 2nd Polish Corps (10. Batalionu w 2. Korpusie Polskim), where he remained until the end of World War II. In the historic battle for Monte Cassino, Stanisław had demonstrated exceptional courage and dedication, for which he was awarded the Cross of the Order of Virtuti Militari. After demobilization, in 1955, he and his family emigrated to Canada.

**Maj. pilot Jan Ząbik (1914 -2001)**, also lived, worked and died in Ottawa. He began his military career in the 52nd Kresowa (Borderland) Rifleman Infantry Regiment (52 Pułk Piechoty Strzelców Kresowych) but moved to aviation with an assignment in the 6th Aviation Regiment (6 Pułk Lotniczy) in Lviv. In 1939, while attempting to cross the Hungarian border, he was arrested by the Soviets and deported to Siberia. In 1941, under the Sikorski-Mayski treaty, he was released from exile. Through Murmansk, he reached England. After retraining, he was assigned to the No. 305 Polish Bomber Squadron "Ziemia Wielkopolska" (Greater Poland). As a navigator, he took part in bombing flights over France and Germany (he was wounded several times) and later, flew with transports to Norway, Egypt, Iran and India.

A Knight of the Order of Virtuti Militari, he was awarded the Cross of Valour twice.

His grave is located at the *Capital Memorial Gardens* Cemetery in Ottawa. At the military cemetery in Drayton Valley (Alberta), rests **Col. Pilot**

*Lt. Col. Kazimierz Benz, commander of the 307 Night Fighter Squadron "Lviv's Owls", is commemorated in the village of Nieżywiec in Poland, where he was born. The grave of Maj. Marian Kasprzak at Park Lawn Cemetery in Toronto.*



*Pilots of Polish bomber squadrons: Col. Marcei Ostrowski was a deck gunner of the 301 Bomb Squadron "Pomeranian Land" and Lt. Col. Adam Bolesław Kropiński, was a pilot of the 300 Bomb Squadron "Mazovian Land."*

**Kazimierz Benz (1899 - 1957)**, a participant in the battles of Flanders and Champagne (1916-1918) in the ranks of the 2nd Guard Regiment (2 Pułk Gwardii). In the Polish-Bolshevik war, he was a soldier of the 1st Light Cavalry Regiment (1. Pułk Szwoleżerów). During the Second Republic, he was an organizer and commander of the following: 124 Fighter Squadron and 142 Companion Squadron (124 Eskadra Myśliwska i 142 Eskadra Towarzysząca) - and in Great Britain, the 307th Night Fighter Squadron "Lviv's Owls" (307 Dywizjon Myśliwski Nocny "Lwowskich Puchaczy"). Awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.

In Poland, in the village of Nieżywiec, located in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province, Brodnica County, where the colonel was born, the residents have funded a monument commemorating the commander of the Squadron "Lwowskich Puchaczy" (Lviv's Owls).

**Col. Zygmunt Michał Ludwik Dzwonkowski (1889 -1987)**; an engineer and also a legionary, who fought in the entire campaign of the 2nd Brigade, the Polish Legions (II Brygada Legionów Polskich), as part of the Legion Command. On March 8, 1924, he fought a duel in the Wawer forest with editor Adolf Nowaczyński. The reason was an article published in *National Thought* (Myśl Narodowa), in which the playwright and comedian, known for his sharp pen and malicious epithets, accused *hauptmann von Dzwonkowski* of serving the Germans. After firing missed shots, the duelists shook hands in agreement. During the 1939 September campaign, he served as a volunteer officer of the artillery. He made his way to Romania and later to the Middle East, where he was a close associate of General Władysław Anders. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour twice.

In Canada, he settled first in Toronto and later in Hamilton (Ontario), where he died and was buried in *Holy Sepulchre* Cemetery in Burlington. On the other hand, **Maj. Józef Klink (1888-1958)** was another legionary who spent his post-war years in Calgary (Alberta). He fought in rifle units from early August 1914 and later joined the Polish Legions. He served at the Enlistment Inspectorate in Grodzisk, then in the administration of the Polish Auxiliary Corps (Polski Korpus Posiłkowy). In 1918, he took part in the defense of Lviv during the Polish-Ukrainian War and also during the 1920 Polish-Bolshevik War.

In the period of the Second Polish Republic, being a native of Lviv, he was an extremely active social activist. This included: his involvement in the commemoration of the 1918 defense of Lviv; activism in the Society for the Historical Study of the Defense of Lviv and the Southeastern Provinces (Towarzystwo Badania Historii Obrony Lwowa i Województw



Południowo-Wschodnich) and in the Association of Defenders of Lviv (Związek Obrońców Lwowa). In 1938 he became a member of the Society for Guarding the Graves of Polish Heroes in the City of Lviv.

After the outbreak of World War II, during the September campaign, he was commander of the Second Battalion of National Defense (II Batalion Obrony Narodowej) in Lviv, commanded by Lt. Col. Alfred Greffner. During the German occupation, he was arrested and imprisoned, first in the Montelupich Prison in Cracow and later in the German concentration camp Auschwitz. He was a Knight of the Order of Virtuti Militari.

Maj. Józef Klink died in Calgary and was buried in *Burnsland Cemetery*. **Lt. Stanisław Oczkowski (1917-1988)** settled in Calgary and was associated with this city for many years as a member of the Polish Combatants' Association Branch No. 18 (Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów Koła Nr 18). He was a geophysics engineer, alumnus of the AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków (Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza w Krakowie), soldier of the Sapper Company in the Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade of the 2nd Corps, defender of Tobruk and a participant in the assault on Monte Cassino. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari. After demobilization, he immigrated to Canada and settled in Calgary. Here, as the head geophysicist of an oil company, he contributed to the development of the oil industry in Canada.

Lt. Stanisław Oczkowski died in Saskatoon (Saskatchewan) and is buried in that city's *Woodlawn Cemetery*.

In 1942, Lt. **Col. Adam Bolesław Kropiński (1900 -1982)** was a pilot in the No. 300 "Land of Masovia" Bomber Squadron. During the Polish-Soviet War, he fought in battles from Latvia in the north, to Kiev in the south, as well as in the Battle of Warsaw. In 1926, he was sent to a pilot training course with the 3rd Aviation Regiment (3 Pułk Lotniczy) in Poznań. He was part a team representing Poland at the international touring plane competitions in Sofia, Bulgaria, and he participated in many international air shows. During World War II, Kropiński was assigned to the RAF Ingham base, as a pilot. While serving in this unit, he performed 22 night combat missions, piloting a Wellington III and IV. These included bombing raids in Bremen, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt am Main, as well as dropping water mines around German naval bases in Western Europe (these flights were code-named "Gardening"). He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour three times. Lt. Col. Adam Bolesław Kropiński died in Vancouver (British Columbia) and was buried in *Mountain View Cemetery*.

**Cmdr. Eugeniusz Józef Stanisław Pławski, alias "Żeńka" (1895**

*Cmdr. Tadeusz Gorazdowski, commander of the four destroyers flying the Polish flag during World War II. Among other Polish commanders, he was distinguished by the fact that none of his ships sank, and he never lost a single crew member.*

*In an archived photo: Gen. Władysław Sikorski presents decorations to sailors during a visit to the "Piorun" in 1941.*





*Lt. Cmdr. Lucjan Marian Rabenda began his service in the Polish Navy, serving on the ORP "Piorun" and from September 2 to October 10, 1945 he served as deputy commander of the "Piorun".*

-1972) settled in Vancouver on the shores of the Pacific - since the "old sea dog" is always drawn again to the waters of the ocean. He graduated from the Naval Aviation School in Sevastopol and also from the school of underwater swimming - *Ecole de Navigation Sous-Marine*, in Toulon. Thus, he was not only a naval officer aboard submarines and destroyers but also a military pilot. From 1914 to 1918 he served in the Russian Tsarist Navy and then in the Polish Navy until 1948. He took part in the First and Second World Wars. During his service, he commanded a number of naval units, a submarine division and the 1st destroyer squadron. He ended his career as head of the Naval Inspectorate.

He died in Vancouver and was buried at *The Gardens of Gethsemani Cemetery* in Surrey, British Columbia.

On June 16, 2004, the ashes of Cmdr. Pławski were brought to Poland by his son, Jerzy and were laid to rest with great honours at the *Naval Cemetery* in Gdynia-Oksywie.

In turn, **Capt. Tadeusz Gorazdowski (1907-1968)** settled in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island - an island "rocked by the waves of the Atlantic", as the Canadians put it. He was the commander of four destroyers flying the Polish flag during World War II. On July 25, 1944, he became commander of the destroyer ORP „Piorun” (“Lightning”), which took part in three victorious operations during the last year of the war. None of his ships sank, and he never lost a single crew member. On Prince Edward Island, he took a job with the *Canadian Coast Guard Service* and worked as commander of the icebreaker “Wolfe”.

He died in Charlottetown and is buried in the local *People's Roman Catholic Cemetery*.

In 1945, **Lt. Cmdr. Lucjan Marian Rabenda (1906-1978)** was the second-in-command to Cmdr. Gorazdowski for several months, aboard the destroyer ORP „Piorun”. After graduating from the Naval Cadet School in Toruń, he was promoted to second lieutenant in the navy. He took an application course aboard the ORP „Bałtyk” (“Baltic”) and also in the Marine Air Squadron in Puck. After the outbreak of war, he evacuated with a company of candidates from Gdynia to Bydgoszcz, then to Pińsk and Horodyszcz - while serving with the rank of captain in the Naval Cadet School. He participated in the Battle of Kock in General Franciszek Kleeberg's Operational Group “Polesie” . While suffering from shrapnel wounds to the head, he commanded a company in the battles near Wola Gułowska.

From October 6, 1939 to April 1, 1945, he was a German prisoner-of-war in “oflags”: X A Sandbostel-Itzehoe, X C Lübeck and VI B Dössel. After his liberation, he arrived in the United Kingdom and began service



*Zygmunt Popławski of the 301 Bomb Squadron "Pomeranian Land", who was the only one of his bomber's crew to survive the crash. He was wounded and promoted by General Władysław Sikorski to the rank of an officer.*

in the Polish Navy aboard the ORP "Piorun". From September 2 to October 10, 1945, he served as deputy commander of this ship. After demobilization, he emigrated to Canada. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari.

Lt. Cmdr. Lucjan Marian Rabenda died in Beamsville (Ontario) and is buried in *Osborn Cemetery*.

After the end of hostilities, the legendary **Cmdr. Witold Zajączkowski (1892-1977)** settled in Toronto. During the inter-war period, from February 25, 1927 to 1939, he was commander of the River Flotilla of the Polish Navy (Flotylla Rzeczna Marynarki Wojennej). The flotilla, which also had an air force, operated in the so-called Pińsk Sea - in the Pripyat River basin, with its main rivers: Pripyat, Pina, and Strumień. From 1941 to 1942, he recruited volunteers for the navy as head of the Navy Recruiting Mission in Windsor, Canada. From January 1944, he was commander of the Naval Command "South" (Komendy Morskiej „Południe”). In February 1965, Commander-in-Chief, Gen. Władysław Anders appointed him Rear Admiral, but Commander Zajączkowski refused to accept the promotion. He was awarded the Officer's Cross of the French Legion of Honour.

Cmdr. Witold Zajączkowski died in Toronto and is buried in *Mount Pleasant Cemetery*.

**Col. Marcelli Ostrowski (1920-2020)** was a pilot who volunteered to join the Polish Air Force while living with his family in Brazil. He is laid to rest at Assumption Catholic Cemetery in Mississauga, Ontario. During World War II, he was a Wellington aircraft gunner for the No. 301 Polish Bomber Squadron "Land of Pomerania". Between 1942 and 1943, he flew 30 operational combat flights with an air raid flight-time of more than 200 hours. After graduating from the School of Infantry Cadets and Motorized Cavalry (Szkoła Podchorążych Piechoty i Kawalerii Zmotoryzowanej), he was promoted in September 1943 to second air force lieutenant and later, to the rank of lieutenant. After his officer's promotion, he was appointed adjutant to Major Komar in the *Bomber Pool*. Beginning in January 1945, he began training on a twin-engine Oxford bomber, earning a pilot's certificate. After demobilization in 1947, he returned to Brazil, then settled permanently in Canada in 1955. He was an active member of the Polish Pilots' Association (Stowarzyszenia Lotników Polskich) in Toronto and also an Honorary Member and long-time Chairman of the General Council of the Polish Combatants' Association in Canada. Honoured with the Cross of the Order of War - Virtuti Militari and with the Cross of Valour three times. **Lt. Col. Zygmunt Popławski (1912- 2009)** served in the same division.



*There are Polish graves in many Canadian veterans' cemeteries, as in Ottawa (top photo) or in Pointe Claire, Quebec.*

In 1933, as a volunteer, he was accepted into the 5th Air Force Regiment (5 Pułk Lotniczy) in Lida. After the 1939 September campaign, he reached the Polish Air Force in Great Britain via Latvia and Sweden. In 1940, he became the pilot of the *Fairey Battle*, as part of the initial staff of the 301st Polish Bomb Squadron "Pomeranian Land" and was incorporated into the 1st RAF Bomber Group. He made his first combat flight bombing German invasion barges stationed in the port of Boulogne, France. During the takeoff for the next operation and while tasked with the bombing of Bremen, one of the engine propellers broke off and the plane crashed (Stanisław Pietruszka and Czesław Tęgowski were killed and Zygmunt Popławski, Henryk Sawlewicz, Feliks Florczak and Mieczysław Grzymiski were wounded). He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour three times.

Lt. Col. Zygmunt Popławski died in Dartmouth (Nova Scotia) and was buried in *Saint Peter's Church Cemetery*.

On the other hand, **Czesław Reng (1913-2008)** - a knight of the Order of Virtuti Militari, senior sergeant in the Polish Air Force in Great Britain and deck radio operator of the No. 305 Polish Bomber Squadron "Ziemia Wielkopolska" - died in Lindsay (Ontario). He was buried in *Minden Cemetery* in Minden (Ontario).

Coming from the same Squadron 305, bombardier **Tadeusz Szadkowski (1914-1979)**, immigrated to Canada after demobilization and settled in Winona (Ontario). He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari. He died in Hamilton and rests in *Queen's Lawn Cemetery* in Grimsby (Ontario).

**Kazimierz Kusy (1922-2008)** was buried in Kitchener at Woodland Cemetery. He was a soldier of General Władysław Anders' 2nd Polish Corps, senior rifleman for the 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Company of the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division and a participant in the Battle of Monte Cassino. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari.

All Polish soldiers and officers who rest in Canadian soil, among other places, had been shamefully betrayed by their allies: British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. At the Yalta Conference (February 4 -11, 1945), during a meeting between the leaders of the anti-Hitler coalition (the so-called "Big Three") and the leader of Soviet Russia Joseph Stalin, they were deprived of the opportunity to return to the free and sovereign Poland they had fought for. Posthumously, they were bid farewell with only the words:

*Soldier, sleep in a dark grave,  
may you dream of Poland.*

# In Memory of Those Who Have Passed Away

† COL. CZAJKOWSKI C.	† PASIERBEK J.	† MACUCAJED. K.
† COL. KLOSOWICZ F.	† TRACZUK W.	† GRABOWSKI S.
† M.JR. ABEL V.	† BOGACKI B.	† CHELCHOWSKI B.
† M.JR. KOTZ T. D.F.C.	† MATIAS M.	† PIOTROWICZ W.
† CHPL. PLUTA F.	† PUKLICZ T.	† LITOBORSKI F.
† CHPL. LIPKA J.	† SIERECHEM P.P.	† ZDONKIEWICZ T.
† CHPL. MALAK E.	† JANIK R.	† BANDROWSKI W.
† CHPL. SANCZENKO P.	† TEPER K.J.	† WISNIEWSKI J.
† CHPL. KAMINSKI M.S.	† BOGACKI F.	† LIDZBARSKI B.
† CPT. JEDRZEJOWSKI T.	† OBIERSKI J.	† PAWLowski P.
† CPT. KRASZEWSKI J.	† TOBOLA B.	† ADAMOWICZ J.
† CPT. WIECKOWSKI A.	† WOLCZYK M.	† MATIAS W.
† DR. CHRZAK J.	† GNIDEK T.	† FERENC W.
† DR. STOLFA J.A.	† KASZOWSKI R.	† GORSKI A.
† LT. MELECH B.	† ZARUCKI E.	† SZUL S.
† LT. GRAMATYKA M.	† OCHNIK M.	† SZYMANSKI W.
† LT. CRZYWACZ K.	† TOMKOWIAK L.	† MADRY J.
† LT. CZAJKOWSKI W.J.	† RZECZYCKI J.	† BURCZYK S.
† JEDRZEJOWSKA H.	† BEDNAREK J.	† ANDRONOWICZ A.
† TABACZEK M.	† KOCEMBA A.	† KURCWAŁD E.
† JEDRZEJOWSKA E.	† JACH W.	† CRZYWNOWICZ A.
† CZAJKOWSKA J.C.	† FIJAK M.	† HULANICKI T.
† ARENT Z.J.	† HARDYKO A.	† PIETRZKIEWICZ P.
† DRUZYNSKI L.	† KONICKI J.	† PIETRZKIEWICZ S.
† KAPTUR A.	† WOLOWNIK J.	† JEZ R.
† PRZEWIEGA W.	† SAWICKI W.	† SUBOCZ J.
† KOWALSKI A.S.	† TRYBUS P.	† ALASKIEWICZ W.
† TURZYNSKI W.J.	† OKO J.	† TRACZYNSKI M.
† DELANGOWSKI Z.	† POZNAR W.	† UL WL.
† URBANOWICZ J.	† TOMASIA T.	† CHELCHOWSKI BR.
† ODROSZ P.	† PUPINSKI J.	† KIEZIK K.
† BABINSKI B.	† BERA J.	† DEVEN K.
† KLOC A.	† TRACZ M.	† ZABDROWSKI K.
† CHODZINSKI B.	† WOJKOWSKI A.	† BUJNOWSKI H.
† LUCZYNSKI J.	† BLIN B.	† STANKOWSKI J.
† MACH A.	† BUBEL S.	† BAJRON J.
† OSTROWSKI S.	† BERNAT B.	† SZPYT M.
† WALENTOWICZ Z.	† TERPIN B.	† FIEDOREC W.
† SKIBINSKI M.	† KUCY M.	† GONCZARUK T.
† MITORAJ K.	† KASZOWSKI J.	† LAPKOWSKI D.
† CHWIECKO W.	† TALKOWSKI L.	† MISIOR P.
† KONIAR M.	† ODECKI J.	† FIGURSKI K.
† W. KRZYZOSIAR	† DABROWSKI J.	† BENTKOWSKI J.
† AUGUSTYNOWICZ S.	† KRETOWICZ B.	
† CHODASCHODASEWICZ Z.	† BRZOZOWSKI H.	





**E**dward Soltys and Benedict Heydenkorn wrote in their book *To Remain Fighting: Cultural Analysis of the Polish Combatants' Association in Canada* (Trwanie w walce: kulturowa analiza Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantow w Kanadzie, Published by the Canadian Polish Research Institute, Toronto 1992): “The Polish Combatants’ Association is an extension of “Army Self-Help”, which dates back to August 25, 1945. On that date, the organizing committee held its first meeting. However, the “Army Self-Help” group’s official establishment date is October 23, 1945. Its first General Assembly was held in May 1946.

At that time, the name was changed to the Polish Combatants’ Association (SPK) with the addition of ‘Army Self-Help’, which faded away over time.” It was also at this time that the Polish soldiers of Gen. Władysław Anders’2nd Polish Corps, who grouped in three camps: Falconara, Cesena and Porto Renanati, had formed the SPK Unit - “Mermaid” (Syrena). Within its framework, those who had qualified to relocate to Canada, set up a subdivision of SPK - Canada. On October 3, 1946, the organization’s governing authorities were elected in Falconara.

The demobilized soldiers, after taking up jobs, usually farm work, began making friends and setting up, more or less numerous branches of the Polish Combatants’ Association, from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts. And so, Branch No. 1 was established in Thunder Bay, No. 2 in London, No. 3 in Vancouver, No. 4 in Brantford; and also in Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto - wherever the Second World War veterans were. They were always faithful to the belief that the SPK is an umbrella organization of the Polish soldiers who fought for the freedom, sovereignty and independence of the Homeland in the formations of the Polish Army. They battled on all fronts: in the allied armies of the anti-Hitler coalition, in underground resistance organizations of the former Nazi concentration camps and in Stalinist gulags.

They recorded the words of a prayer in the Polish Combatants’ Association Invocation:

“ Holy, Mighty and Immortal God! Look mercifully upon us, Polish veterans, gathered here together. Grant us that, strengthened by the Holy Spirit with the gifts of: Reason, Knowledge and Wisdom, we will have only the welfare of our Homeland and the Polish cause in mind. O God, allow us all, united by a common soldier’s duty performed under the white-and-red insignia, to always serve You and Poland, as befits righteous Poles, whose calling is: ‘GOD, HONOUR, HOMELAND!’ Grant us, O God, that with our united efforts and our dedication to social work, we could serve our Compatriots abroad – bringing them brotherly aid and being for them the role models of harmony, unity and devotion to

*From page 118  
Monument erected by  
SPK, Branch 2 in London  
commemorating deceased  
SPK members.*

*SPK monument in  
Brantford.*

*The plaque funded by SPK,  
Branch 1 in Thunder Bay,  
commemorates members of  
the Branch who fought at  
Monte Cassino.*



the native cause. To you God, we commend our Polish youth.. We vow to care of them and cherish them, to teach them by our own example of how to serve You and Poland; how to love the Polish language, Polish traditions and customs, and how to be proud of the millennial glory of our national history. O God of the Polish Kings: of Bolesław Chrobry (Boleslav the Brave), Jagiełło (Jagiello), Batory and Sobieski! God of the Polish warriors and knights! God of the Polish Insurrection Fighters! God of the Polish soldiers - defenders of Warsaw and Lviv! God of the Soldiers from the battlefields of Narvik, Lagarde and Tobruk; from Monte Cassino, Falaise and Arnhem! God of sailors and airmen! God of the soldiers of the Home Army! God of the Polish soldiers who were not given the chance to fight and die under the banners of the crowned - eagle! Remember the Polish blood, shed on so many battlefields of the world. Hear our soldier's prayer, raised to You humbly by us – Polish veterans, that our work continues to serve the Republic of Poland. And may this happen through the intercession and aid of St. Mary, Queen of Poland, who defends the Bright Częstochowa (Monastery) and shines at the Gate of Dawn! Amen!”

While writing about the Polish soldiers' memorial sites in Canada, it is worth quoting from the above-mentioned book once more:

“In addition to cemeteries, the soldiers of the 2nd Corps left monuments in Italy. The 5th Borderland Infantry Division erected a large metal cross, visible from afar, commemorating the sacrifice made by the soldiers of this Division. The cross on Hill 575 was erected very quickly. Its dedication took place as early as June 13, 1944. Meanwhile, the unveiling of the monument to the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division on Hill 593, took place on July 18, 1945 (...). The tombstones included the names of all the soldiers of the Division who fell in the Italian Campaign.

Apart from these two large Division monuments, there are also commemorative plaques in Italy. One of them, funded by the SPK, is located at the Church of St. Stanislaus in Rome. It commemorates all the fallen soldiers of the 2nd Corps. Another one is located in Piedimonte and commemorates the capture of that town on May 25, 1944 by the 6th Armoured Regiment of the Children of Lviv (6 Pułk Pancerny Dzieci Lwowskich), as well as the regiment's fallen soldiers”.

Following the example of their predecessors, Polish soldiers affiliated with SPK chapters in Canada have continued to commemorate their brothers-in-arms and their fellow SPK members who have passed away. So that the memory of them will never be lost.

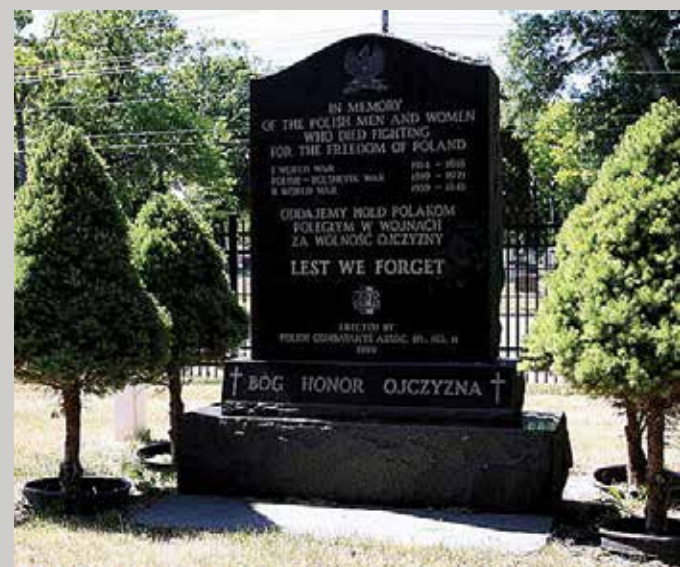
St. Peter's Cemetery in London, Ontario is the final resting place of the following soldiers, among others:

Knights of the Order of Virtuti Militari: **Włodzimierz Traczuk (1920-**

*A monument in Hamilton commemorates those who died defending their homeland during World War I and World War II.*

*The monument to the “Grey Ranks” (Scouts) in the Canadian Kashubia Region (“Polskie Kaszuby”, Ontario, Canada).*

*A monument in London (Ontario) and an urn containing the soil from Polish war cemeteries in Italy.*



2004); sergeant of the Polish Armed Forces, soldier with the 5th Border Infantry Division of the 2nd Polish Corps in Italy: **Michał Sroka (1919-1976)**; corporal of the 17th Lviv Rifle Battalion, 6th Lviv Infantry Brigade, 5th Border Infantry Division of the 2nd Polish Corps in Italy. Both of the above-mentioned were members of the Polish Combatants' Association in Canada.

On November 11, 1987, Branch No. 2 in London erected a monument, inscribed with these words: *To commemorate the heroism of Polish soldiers who fought during World War II at home and abroad.* The monument commemorates the deceased members of the SPK. Next to it there is an urn with soil from the Polish war cemeteries of Monte Cassino, Bologna and Loredo in Italy.

On September 12, 1993, thanks to SPK Branch No. 4 in Canada, a monument was unveiled at *St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery* in Brantford, Ontario. It was dedicated to the soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces who fought "for our freedom and yours." The inscription on the monument reads: *In memory of the heroic Polish soldiers who fought during World War II at home and abroad, 1939-1945.* The names of the military units, placed on either side of the monument, commemorate those who fought for an independent homeland, often far from its borders.

On August 15, 1998, in Hamilton, Ontario, a monument was unveiled to honour those who died defending their homeland during World Wars I and II. The stone obelisk is located at 8 St. Ann Street, in front of *St. Stanisław Kostka Church*. It was funded by Polish veterans; Post 163 of the Polish Army Veterans' Association, Post 315 of the Polish-Canadian Legion, Branch 23 of the Polish Combatants' Association and the Polish Airmen's Association. On the other hand, in 1999, at the Roman Catholic Cemetery of Our Lady of Mercy in Sarnia, Ontario, thanks to SPK Branch No. 11 in Canada, a granite Monument to the Polish Veterans was unveiled with a plaque commemorating the compatriots who fought in World War II.

In 1992, SPK Branch No. 24 in Sudbury (Ontario) founded the so-called Veterans' Obelisk at 210 Paris Street, to honour the compatriots who fought in World War II and were dedicated to their service - as the plaque reads: *For the welfare and freedom of Poland and Canada.*

One of the more impressive memorials was erected by SPK members in Canada, Branch No. 13 in Winnipeg, Manitoba at the *Holy Spirit Catholic Cemetery*. The members funded an obelisk, as the inscription reads: *"To the fallen comrades on land, sea and in the air in World War II, and to those who died on their way to the Homeland."*

On September 17, 2017, the Memorial to the Heroes of the Polish Combatants' Association was unveiled at the *Holy Cross Cemetery* in

*A monument to "Fallen comrades on land, sea and air in World War II and those who died on their way to the Homeland" in Winnipeg.*

*Monument to Polish Veterans in Sarnia. From left: the Veterans' Obelisk in Sudbury and a section of the memorial in Winnipeg.*

*From left: A plaque commemorating fallen Polish soldiers in Oshawa and a plaque dedicated to Polish veterans in Toronto.*



From left: A plaque commemorating the heroes of Gen. Stanislaw Maczek's 1st Armoured Division in Toronto and a plaque to the former soldiers of the 12th Uhlan Regiment of Podolia in Vilnius.

Edmonton (Alberta), on the 78th anniversary of the Soviet aggression against Poland. It had been funded by the extremely resilient Canadian SPK Branch No. 6 in Edmonton. The ceremony at the cemetery was graced by the presence of representatives from political institutions, Polish organizations, youth organizations. This included Andrzej Ruta, president of the Board of Directors of the Polish Combatants' Association in Canada. The ceremony was hosted by Henry Lang, president of the SPK in Canada, Branch No. 6 in Edmonton.

List of Names of the Polish Combatants Association Br. No. 6 members who appear on the Monument of the Holy Cross Cemetery in Edmonton: **“Dedicated to the Members of the Polish Combatants’ Association Branch No.6, Edmonton”:**

- |                          |                   |                     |                 |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Panel 1</b>           |                   |                     |                 |
| Kulikowski, M.           | Markowski, E.     | Preclaw, J.         | Bednarski, J.A. |
| Kulikowski, W.           | Markuszewski, L.  | Prusko, J.          | Bentkowski, K.  |
| Kumor, S.                | Marzantowicz, J.  | Pundyk, T.          | Bera, A.        |
| Kuna, J.                 | Maslowski, S.     | Rabski, M.          | Bereznicki, E.  |
| Kunicki, J.              | Matuszewicz, J.   | Rakowski, W.        | Beško, S.       |
| Kupiński, A.             | Matuszek, J.      | Ratusz, J.M.        | Białowąs, A.    |
| Kurpisz, L.              | Mazurek, J.       | Rodkiewicz, C.M.    | Białowąs, B.    |
| Kurpisz, M.              | Michalkiewicz, W. | Romanko, A.         | Białowąs, S.    |
| Kustra, B.               | Michalski, J.     | Różnicki, A.        | Bielecki, J.    |
| Kustra, A.               | Michoński, A.     | Rudczyk, S.         | Bielinis, F.    |
| Kuźma, M.                | Mikiel, S.        | Rzeczycki, J.       | Bizanz, T.      |
| Lang, J.                 | Milkowski, E.     | Sachurak, J.        | Błażejowski, J. |
| Lechociński, L.          | Młodzianowski, J. | Sadowski, R.M.      | Błoński, J.     |
| Lechowicz, S.            | Możdżński, B.     | Sak, S.             | Bobowicz, L.    |
| Lemański, F.J.           | Mozlloniz, E.     | Samek, W.           | Bogowicz, K.    |
| Lenckowski, S.           | Mrowka, K.        | Sekuła, J.          | Borbulak, Z.    |
| Leskie (Leszczyński), E. | Muryń, S.         | Siewiertoka, J.     | Borowiecki, J.  |
| Lesniewicz, J.           | Muszyński, F.     | Sikorski, A.        | Borowiecki, W.  |
| Leszczyński, F.          | Muszyński, S.     | Siry, J.            | Fokszowicz, C.  |
| Leszczyński, K.          | Nalborski, A.     | Siwicz, P.          | Korol, K.       |
| Leszczyński, M.          | Niwiński, Z.      | Skiba, P.           | Broszkowska, W. |
| Lipka, F.J.              | Niżyński, J.      | Skibicki, M.        | Brzewowski, W.  |
| Lis, B.                  | Nockowski, M.     | Skrundz, W.         | Bujar, F.       |
| Łucki, J.                | Nowacki, M.       | Skrzekowski, W.     | Buksiński, W.   |
| Łabuda, S.               | Nowosiad, M.      | Skrzepij, Z.        | Burdzy, J.      |
| Łopata, B.               | Orlak, P.         | Sobczak, M.         | Bureń, M.       |
| Łaziuk, S.               | Pagacz, R.        | Sobierajski, K.     | Bursewicz, E.   |
| Łukasiewicz, W.          | Pawłowski, J.     | Sokołowski, C.      | Butkiewicz, P.  |
| Łyszkiewicz, A.          | Pędzich, F.       | Sokoro, Z.          | Cenkner, J.J.   |
| Machaj, W.               | Piasecki, J.      | Salwarowski, P.     | Chaba, W.       |
| Maga, M.                 | Piktel, B.        | Sosnowski, T.       | Chałupa, M.     |
| Maj, W.                  | Picucha, J.       |                     | Chanowski, J.   |
| Makowski, S.             | Pirogowicz, S.    | <b>Panel 2</b>      | Chornik, J.     |
| Malinowski, G.           | Nebelski, Z.      | Abramczyk, B.       | Chrzanowski, J. |
| Malinowski, J.           | Obst, E.          | Adamowicz, W.       | Cierpka, B.     |
| Malinowski, M.           | Plachciński, J.   | Andruszkiewicz, E.  | Ćwiertnia, J.   |
| Mazio, J.                | Płotyczka, P.     | Andrzejewski, A.Sr. | Czarnecki, G.J. |
| Malak, E.KS.             | Polański, S.      | Augustyn, J.        | Czarnekl, J.    |
| Marciak, J.              | Półtorak, M.      | Bachman, J.         | Czuba, J.       |
| Marczak, B.              | Pomietlarz, J.    | Barczuk, R.         | Dąbrowski, B.   |
| Marek, K.                | Popławski, M.     | Bartkow, W.         | Dajczek, J.     |
|                          | Pradzyński, J.    | Bartoszewski, J.    | Dembowski, P.   |







# Generals in Civilian Clothes



*Top photo: Polish officers in Sulejówek on a visit to Marshal Józef Piłsudski. Bottom photo: Maj. Gen. Emil Karol Przedzymirski de Krukowicz (centre), accompanied by Polish generals.*

Of the 127 generals who were in the West in 1945 (4 with the rank of Lieutenant General, 22 with the rank of Major General, 97 with the rank of Brigadier General, 1 Vice Admiral and 2 Rear Admirals), only 20 decided to return to their native country. The rest remained in exile, mostly in Great Britain. Only four top commanders received modest pensions from the British authorities (including Gen. Władysław Anders and Gen. Stanisław Kopański). Fifteen were given one-time allowances of £1,000 and loans of £2,000 each, which had to be repaid.

So, most generals had to look for work by themselves, and most often it was manual labour. Some decided to go overseas. Fourteen of them came to Canada and settled in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Edmonton. This included former Commander-in-Chief General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, who purchased a farm in Arundel, Quebec. Others, in order to make the proverbial ends meet, preferred to work as labourers and be free, rather than be imprisoned, tortured and later, most likely, executed in Communist Poland. Two wartime generals rest outside Canada, although they died in Canada:

**Lt. Gen. Kazimierz Sosnkowski (1885-1969)**; Polish military commander and politician, Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces (1943- 1944). He died on October 11, 1969 in Arundel, Canada. The general's body was cremated at a facility located on Mont Royal in Montreal. Initially, in accordance with the last will of the deceased, the urn with his ashes was kept in the St. Stanislaus Church in Paris. This was because the general wished to rest as close to Poland as possible and return to it when it regained its independence. A little later, Sosnkowski's remains were transferred to the tomb of the Polish Historical and Literary Society at Les Champeaux cemetery in Montmorency near Paris. On November 12, 1992, the urn containing his ashes was brought to Poland and rests in the basement of the cathedral Basilica of St. John the Baptist in Warsaw.

**Maj. Gen. Tadeusz Adam Kasprzycki (1891-1978)**; Major General of the Polish Army, Minister of Military Affairs in 1935-1939. After his death in Montreal, the general's ashes were transported to London.

The following two men, promoted in more contemporary times, were laid to rest in Poland:

**Brig. Gen. Michał Mieczysław Wojciech Gutowski (1910-2006)**; an Olympian, cavalryman and officer in Gen. Stanisław Maczek's 1st Armoured Division. In 1999, he was promoted to the rank of retired brigadier general by Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski. He returned to Poland in 2000, where he died in Warsaw. He was buried at the *Powązki Military Cemetery* (Cmentarz Wojskowy na Powązkach).

**Brig. Gen. Tadeusz Władysław Sawicz (1914-2011)**; a pilot; the



last living Polish participant in the Battle of Britain and the last living soldier of the Pursuit Brigade, (Brygada Pościgowa) which defended Warsaw during the September campaign. He was promoted to the rank of brigadier general by the order of Polish President Lech Kaczyński on May 3, 2006. He died in Toronto.

**Laid to rest in Ottawa are:**

**Brig. Gen. Wilhelm Orlik-Rückemann (1894 -1986)**; his studies in Lviv, at the local polytechnic, in the faculty of road and bridge construction, were interrupted by the First World War. In August 1914, he joined the Polish Legions. After the oath crisis of 1917, he was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian Army. On November 4, 1918, he transferred to the Polish Army. During the Polish-Ukrainian War in 1919, he had been taken prisoner but was released after an alliance was signed between Piłsudski and Petilura. During the Polish-Bolshevik War, he distinguished himself as a capable commander. In 1932, he had taken command of the 9th Infantry Division (9 Dywizja Piechoty) and six years later, was transferred to the position of deputy commander of the Border Protection Corps (KOP) in eastern Poland. The following year he took command of this group. After the USSR's aggression against Poland, having repulsed the Red Army's first attacks, Rückemann decided to break through with his troops towards Warsaw and to the units of General Franciszek Kleeberg's Independent Operational Group Polesie (Samodzielna Grupa Operacyjna „Polesie”). Despite the fact that his grouping at the time numbered about 9,000 men, had only two artillery batteries and insignificant reserves of ammunition and food, they still took up arms against the Red Army. On the night of September 27-28, after an attack on Szack, the village was captured, and the Soviet 52nd Rifle Division defending it suffered heavy losses. On October 1, 1939, KOP units were attacked by the Soviet 45th Rifle Division. After a day-long defense, Gen. Rückemann ordered the unit to be disbanded. In order to avoid being taken prisoner, he made his way to Lithuania and further - to Sweden. From there, with the help of the Polish consulate, he reached Great Britain. Until the end of the war, Orlik-Rückemann held various staff positions, including at the General Inspectorate of the Polish Resettlement Corps in Great Britain (Polski Korpus Przysposobienia i Rozmieszczenia w Wielkiej Brytanii), from 1945 to 1947.

After the war, Gen. Wilhelm Orlik-Rückemann settled in London and in 1972 he moved to join his family in Canada. Among other awards, he was decorated with the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times. On September 19, 2017, a stone obelisk dedicated to the general's memory was unveiled in Lubań with a plaque: “In tribute to the last commander of the Border Protection Corps, on the occasion of

*Gen. Brig. Wilhelm Orlik-Rückemann.*

*Decorated, among other honours, with the Order of Virtuti Militari and four times with the Cross of Valour. He died in Ottawa and was buried in Notre-Dame Cemetery.*

*On September 19, 2017, a stone obelisk was unveiled in Lubań dedicated to the General of Generals.*



presenting the banner and also of naming the Border Guard Specialized Training Centre in Lubań after Brig. Gen. Wilhelm Orlik-Rückemann.” He died in Ottawa and was buried at *Notre-Dame* Cemetery.

**Maj. Gen. Stefan Sznuk (1896-1986)**; studied at the Faculty of Chemistry of the Warsaw University of Technology (Politechnika Warszawska). During World War I, he served in the Russian army. On November 20, 1918, he joined the Polish Army and was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant. He was assigned to the so-called 1st Aviation Battalion (1 Batalion Lotniczy) and went through Advanced Aviation Courses for officers at the newly established Military Aviation School (Lotnicza Akademia Wojskowa). In November 1919, he became an observer pilot in the 12th Intelligence Squadron (2 Eskadra Wywiadowcza). He participated in the Polish-Russian war. From November 1936, he was commander of the Air Force Cadet School in Dęblin and afterwards, at the Aviation Training Centre No. 1 (Centrum Wyszkozenia Lotnictwa 1) in that same city. In mid-June 1939, he was appointed commander of the Aviation School Group (Grupa Szkół Lotniczych). In the September campaign, he commanded aviation and anti-aircraft defense in the “Cracow” Army (Armia Kraków). After the defeat, he got to France and further on to Great Britain through Romania, where he served as Chief of Staff of the Inspector of the Polish Air Force (Inspektor Polskich Sił Powietrznych), during the Battle of Britain. From 1940 to 1942, in Canada, he was head of the Polish Military and Air Force Mission in Windsor. After the Mission was shut down, he returned to London but not for long. From August 1945, he was the Polish military and air attaché in Ottawa. Due to the fact that the government on the Vistula River (Polish communist government), did not recognize the government-in-exile of the Republic of Poland, his position was terminated. He once again returned to Britain, and after demobilization in August 1947, he had already immigrated permanently to Canada.

In Ottawa, he joined the Canadian government services and worked for the *Department of National Defense*. He received the rank of *Brigadier General* in the *Royal Canadian Air Force*. He was active in the Polish Canadian community and maintained close social relations with the government elite, including Lester Pearson, Prime Minister of Canada. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari, the Cross of Valour twice and also Canada’s highest civilian honour: the *Order of Canada*. He died in Ottawa and was buried in *Notre-Dame* Cemetery.

**Maj. Gen. pilot Dr. Józef Ludwik Zając (1891-1963)**; studied at the Faculty of Philosophy in Cracow’s Jagiellonian University. In 1915, he completed his doctoral studies, receiving a degree as Doctor of Philosophy. In 1914, he joined the Polish Legions, initially serving in the

*Maj. Gen. Stefan Sznuk. Decorated, among other honours, with the Order of Virtuti Militari, twice with the Cross of Valour and the highest civilian decoration in Canada, the Order of Canada. He died in Ottawa and was buried in Notre-Dame Cemetery.*



*Maj. Gen. Pilot Dr. Józef  
Ludwik Zajac  
Decorated with the Order  
of Virtuti Militari, among  
other awards.  
Died in Ottawa and was  
buried at Notre-Dame  
Cemetery.*

3rd Infantry Regiment (3 Pułk Piechoty) as a platoon, company, battalion and regimental commander. He served in the Carpathian, Bessarabian and Volhynian campaigns and was wounded twice. On March 15, 1918, he moved with General Józef Haller's Second Brigade to Ukraine, and afterwards, he served as commander of the 15th Rifle Regiment (15 pułk strzelców) in the Second Polish Corps. On May 11, 1918, during the battle of Kaniów, he was taken prisoner by the Germans. He escaped and made his way to France. Upon his return home, he was sent to the front of the ongoing Polish-Bolshevik war. During the September campaign, he was Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force and Air Defense, then became commander of the Polish Air Force in France. After the fall of France and upon reaching Great Britain, he was appointed Deputy Commander of the I Corps in Scotland (I Korpus w Szkocji). A year later, he took command of the Polish Army in the Middle East. Subsequently, he was deputy commander of the Polish Army in the East and then commander of the Polish I Armoured-Mechanized Corps in Scotland (I Korpus Pancerno-Motorowy w Szkocji).

After demobilization in 1948, he settled in Edinburgh, Scotland, where he began studying psychology and art history. He received a Doctor of Philosophy degree in psychology for the second time in 1951. In 1957, he moved to Canada.

He was a lecturer at British, American and Canadian universities. He was also a recognized connoisseur of fine arts and collector of artwork - having donated 108 paintings and 1,765 prints to the Silesian Museum in Katowice (Muzeum Śląskie w Katowicach).

He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari, among other honours.

He died in Ottawa and was buried in *Notre-Dame* Cemetery.

**Laid to rest in Toronto are:**

**Lt. Gen. Stanisław Jastrzębiec Bobrowski (1896 - 1990);** he was born in Okocim into the noble Jastrzębiec-Bobrowski family. In Vienna, he graduated from high school and passed his University admission exam. Afterwards, he was conscripted into the Austrian army, specifically the 57th "Tarnów" infantry regiment (57 pułk piechoty). After training as a cadet corporal, he took command of a platoon on the Italian front in Tyrol. He was taken prisoner while fighting in the Kras mountains. There, he enlisted in the then-forming Polish Army and was assigned to the *Servicio di Avvicinamento*, or intelligence service. Later, he joined Haller's army in France. With them, he returned to Poland in April 1919 and was immediately sent to the Eastern Front. He took part in the offensive on Kiev, where he was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari for his valour. In 1923, he began working in The Second Department of Polish General Staff (Oddział II Sztabu Generalnego Wojska Polskiego),



or intelligence, in Warsaw. After training, he became head of intelligence in the West and then deputy head of counter-intelligence for the entire Army. During the May coup, he was promoted to head of The Second Department of Polish General Staff (also called “Dwójka”).

During the September campaign, as part of the 27th Division (27 dywizja), he participated in the Battle of the Bzura, where he demonstrated not only his leadership skills but also his level head and the ability to make instant decisions. When he was taken prisoner in a German oflag (prison camp for officers), he organized secret lectures for officers of the Higher War College. After his liberation from the camp, he began serving as a liaison officer with the 9th US Army.

After the war ended, he decided to immigrate to Canada. He settled in Toronto, where he supported himself with his own application - writing office and ... beekeeping. Still, he remained politically active as he corresponded with the Canadian Prime Minister and successive US presidents. He was an honorary admiral of the US Navy and a Knight of Malta. He was actively involved in Polish-American organizations; his home hosted General Władysław Anders, among others. “Father always loved nature, music and people. He always respected human dignity. He was very modest and did not seek recognition or honour for himself,” recalls his daughter Krystyna.

Gen. Brig. Jastrzębiec-Bobrowski was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari twice (gold and silver crosses), as well as the Order of the White Eagle (Order Orła Białego) and the Order of Polonia Restituta (Order Odrodzenia Polski). He died in 1990 in Toronto and was buried at *Holy Cross Cemetery*.

**Brig. Gen. George Grobicki (1891 - 1972)**; cavalry officer of the Austro-Hungarian army, soldier of the Foreign Legion in 1906-1907. In 1908, as a Serbian partisan in Macedonia, he fought against the Turks. In Austria, he was a student in the Cavalry Officers’ School at the Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt. After graduating, he became a career cavalry officer in the Austrian army. Bri. Gen. Grobicki was a participant in the struggle for Polish independence in World War I and he also took part in the war against the Bolsheviks, as a so-called “zagończyk” (member of an armed partisan unit). After graduating from the Training Course at the Military College in Warsaw and receiving an academic diploma as a General Staff officer, he was assigned to the General Inspectorate of Cavalry (Generalny Inspektorat Kawalerii) in Warsaw. In the September campaign, he became commander of the Kresowa (Borderland) Cavalry Brigade (Kresowa Brygada Kawalerii). From September 27, 1939 to August 25, 1941, he was in Soviet captivity. After release, he was accepted into the Polish Armed Forces and appointed deputy commander of

*Lt. Gen. Stanisław Jastrzębiec Bobrowski. Decorated, among other honours, with the Order of Virtuti Militari twice (gold and Silver) and the Order of the White Eagle. He died in Toronto and was buried at Holy Cross Cemetery.*

*Brig. Gen. Jerzy Grobicki Decorated, among other honours: twice with the Order of Virtuti Militari (gold and silver crosses) and four times with the Order of the White Eagle. Silver) and the Cross of Valour four times. He died in Toronto and was buried in the veterans’ quarters in the cemetery of the Holy Cross.*



the 5th Infantry Division. In 1942, he became an officer of the Polish Army Command in the Middle East (Dowództwa Wojska Polskiego na Środkowym Wschodzie), then commander of the 6th Lviv Rifle Brigade (6 Lwowskiej Brygady Strzelców) and liaison officer to the commander of the 2nd Polish Corps attached to the French Corps. In March 1945, he was assigned to the command of military units in the Middle East. Later he was a military attaché to the government of Chiang Kai-shek. Until 1947, he was the commander of Camp Quassasin in Egypt, and afterwards, he immigrated to Canada. He was decorated with the Order of Virtuti Militari twice (gold and silver crosses) and four times with the Cross of Valour, among other honours. Brig. Gen. Jerzy Grobicki died in Toronto and was buried in the veterans' quarters at *Holy Cross Cemetery* in Toronto.

**Maj. Gen. Mieczysław Norwid-Neugebauer (1884 - 1954)**; graduate of the Mechanics Faculty at the Lviv Polytechnic Institute. In 1914-1917, he was an officer in the Polish Legions, commander of the 6th infantry regiment (6 Pułk Piechoty) of the Polish Legions, and temporarily of the Legions' 3rd Brigade (III Brygada Legionów). He was a participant in World War I and the 1920 Polish-Bolshevik war. Since Poland had regained independence in November 1918, he served in various command positions in the Polish Army, which included his service as the 2nd Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Army and the Chief Quartermaster. In December 1925, he was appointed First Deputy Chief of Army Administration. He was the Army Inspector in Lviv, Toruń and Warsaw. During 1930-32, he held the office of Minister of Public Works (Ministra Robót Publicznych) in the administrations of Walery Sławek and Aleksander Prystor. On September 3, 1939, he was appointed Head of the Polish Military Mission in London and he remained in this function until January 1940. From 1942 to 1947, he was Head of Administration of the Polish Armed Forces. He was decorated with the Order of Virtuti Militari and with the Cross of Valour nine times, among other things.

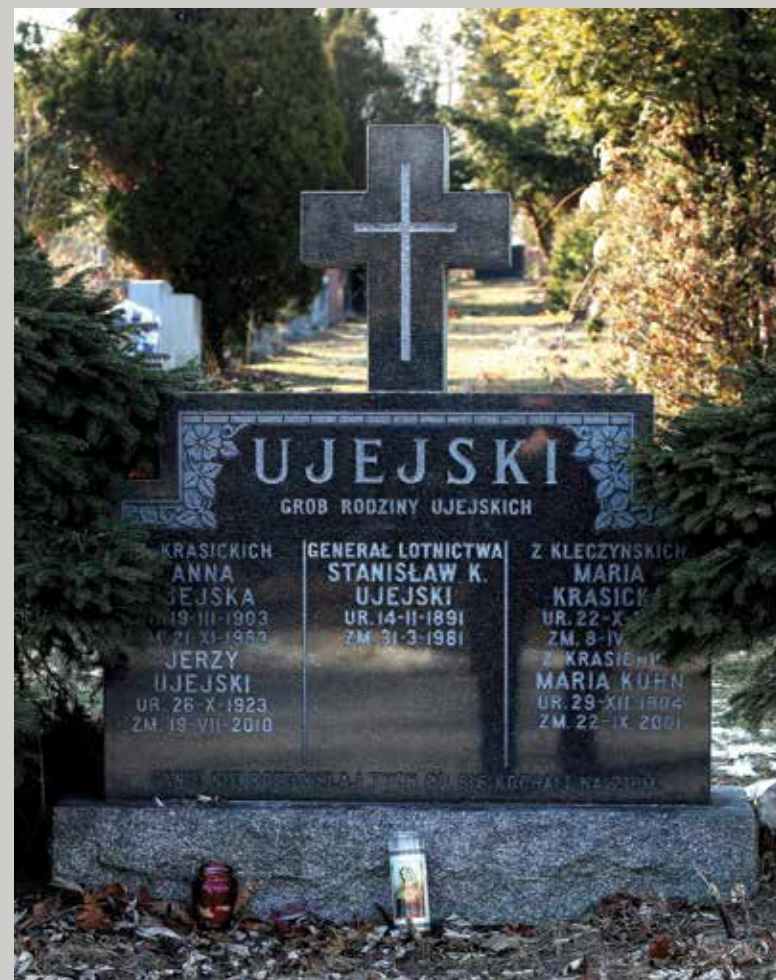
He died in Toronto and was buried at *Pine Hill Cemetery* in Scarborough, Ontario.

**Maj. Gen. Emil Karol Przedzimirski de Krukowicz (1886 -1957)**; Studied at the Military Technical Academy in Mödling. During World War I, he was wounded in fighting at Busk, near Lviv. Between 1915-1916, he was a lecturer and then commander of a training company at the Artillery Cadet School in Traiskirchen near Vienna. On November 10, 1918, he volunteered for service in the Polish Army. During the Polish-Russian War in 1920, he took command of the 16th Field Artillery Regiment (16 pułk artylerii polowej), which was being formed in Grudziądz. Later, he commanded a regiment in the north-eastern

*Maj. Gen. Mieczysław Norwid-Neugebauer. Decorated, among others, with the Order of Virtuti Militari and nine times with the Cross of Valour. He died in Toronto and was buried at Pine Hill Cemetery in Scarborough.*

*Maj. Gen. Emil Karol Przedzimirski de Krukowicz. Awarded, among other honours, the Order of Virtuti Militari. He died suddenly of a heart attack in Toronto and was buried in the Holy Cross cemetery. On August 23, 2006, the Minister of Defense named the 16th Pomeranian Artillery Regiment in Braniewo after him.*





*Brig. Gen. Stanisław Ujejski. Awarded, among other honours, with the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta and the Order of Commander with Star of the Order of the Bath. He died in Toronto and was laid to rest in a family grave at Park Lawn Cemetery. On August 28, 2014, the urn containing the ashes of Gen. Stanisław Ujejski was deposited in the columbarium of the Polish Army Field Cathedral in Warsaw. The ceremony took place during the solemn celebration of the Polish Aviation Day, with honorary assistance from the Representative Company and the Air Force Representative Band. Archived photo: Inspector General of the Polish Air Force Gen. Stanisław Ujejski hands over the banner to the commander of the 300th Bomb Squadron.*

Front. He was awarded the Silver Cross of the Military Order of Virtuti Militari for fighting for Horodec in Polesie. In 1935 the City of Horodec granted him honorary citizenship. During the German invasion of 1939, the “Modlin” Army under his command fought a three-day battle at Mława (September 1-3, 1939), facing the German 3rd Army of Gen. Georg von Kuchler. After some bloody battles, the “Army of Gen. Przedzimirski” (as it was called) was formed from the remaining units of the “Modlin” Army and the “Wyszków” Operational Group and then attempted to break through to Romania. Unfortunately, when the Polish units were encircled by overwhelming enemy forces in the area of Krasnoblód and Terespol, Gen. Przedzimirski came to the conclusion that, due to the disastrous location and lack of ammunition and food, breaking through to the southeast had no chance of success. He did not sign a capitulation agreement until September 26, 1939, in the forest near Góreck Kościelny, allowing the troops to destroy their equipment. Gen. Przedzimirski shared the fate of his soldiers - he was taken into German captivity. After liberation by the Americans, he went to Nice, where he served as a representative to the Polish military authorities in London, representing the 18 brigadier generals residing there.

In 1949, he moved to Canada with his wife, where his daughter Małgorzata had previously settled with her husband, Engineer Tadeusz Świderski. After a year's stay in Montreal, he settled in Toronto.

He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari, among other honours. Brig. Gen. Emil Karol Przedzimirski de Krukowicz died suddenly of a heart attack in Toronto and was buried at *Holy Cross Cemetery*.

On August 23, 2006, the Minister of Defense named the 16th Pomeranian Artillery Regiment (16. Pomorski Pułk Artylerii) in Braniewo after him.

**Brig. Gen. Stanisław Ujejski (1891 -1981)**; studied at the Technical University in Bern, Switzerland. During World War I, he was appointed to the Austrian “Landwehr”. He was listed in military records as “Stanislaus Ritter von Ujejski.” In April 1918, he became a student at the Air Force School and later served in the balloon corps. On November 8, 1918, he joined the Polish Army and received the rank of a lieutenant. In 1926, he took part in the disarmament conference in Geneva as an aviation expert. He was assigned to the 2nd Aviation Regiment (2 Pułk Lotniczy). At the Military College, he was a lecturer in aviation tactics. On January 3, 1929, he was transferred to the Aviation Officers’ Training Centre in Dęblin - as a commander. In April 1933 he was appointed commander of the 3rd Aviation Group (3 Grupa Lotnicza) in Cracow, then transferred to the position of commander of the 1st Aviation Group (1 Grupa Lotnicza) in Warsaw. In 1937, he became chief of the Air Staff – part of the General Staff. After the defeat of Poland, he made his way



*Brig. Gen. Aleksander Hrynkiewicz. Decorated, among other things, with the Order of Virtuti Militari and three times with the Cross of Valour. He died in Montreal and was buried in the Mount Royal cemetery.*

through Romania to France, where he served as the deputy commander of the Polish Air Force (PSP). Later, in Great Britain, he was Inspector General of the PSP. After demobilization, he moved to Canada and settled with his family in Toronto. Among other honours, he was awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (Order Odrodzenia Polski) and the Order of Commander-with-a-Star of the Order of the Bath (Order Komandor z Gwiazdą Orderu Łaźni). He died in Toronto and was laid to rest in a family grave at *Park Lawn Cemetery*. On August 28, 2014, the urn with the ashes of Gen. Stanisław Ujejski was placed in the columbarium of the Polish Army Field Cathedral in Warsaw. This was done during the solemn celebration of the Polish Aviation Day with an honorary assistance from the Representative Company and the Air Force Representative Orchestra.

**Laid to rest in Montreal are:**

**Brig. Gen. Aleksander Hrynkiewicz (1896 -1981)**; the last adjutant of Marshal Józef Piłsudski. He had been a member of the Riflemen's Association since 1912 and served in the Polish Army from 1918. He was an officer in Józef Piłsudski's 1st Cavalry Regiment and took part in the Polish-Bolshevik war in the ranks of this regiment, commanding a platoon. In 1928 he was promoted to the rank of rotary officer in the cavalry officers' corps. On March 21, 1935, he was transferred to the Cabinet of the Minister of Military Affairs as adjutant to Marshal Józef Piłsudski and remained in this position until his death. He was present at the Belvedere on May 12, 8:45 p.m. -when Poland's informal leader died. In his diary, he described the last moments of the Marshal's life:

"Some signs of his thoughts and his will are conveyed by the faint movement of his hands, which were always so active and busy during his life and his illness. A grave silence floods the room, broken only by the Commander's laboured breathing and a faint, muffled swish of air squeezing through his windpipe. As if with a breath of spring breeze, life flew away on its wings at a final gesture made by the Commander's hand. The minutes drag on one after another... as long as the past decades laden with history..."

In 1939, Brig. Gen. Hrynkiewicz served as deputy commander of Józef Piłsudski's 1st Cavalry Regiment. After the September defeat, he did not surrender and did not leave Poland but took up the underground fight against the Germans in the ranks of the Home Army. From 1941 he was the commander of District V Mokotów of the AK (Home Army), with the aliases: "Przegonia", "Marek", "Wioślarz", "Wizytator". He took an active part in the fighting during the Warsaw Uprising. After the fall of the uprising, he was in German captivity. After the war he returned to Poland and revealed his identity (as an ex- Home Army member) Consequently,



he was sent to work in the Reclaimed Territories. After being subjected to a lot of harassment by the Communist security militia, he decided to escape and arrived in Canada in the 1960s. He settled first in Toronto and later in Montreal. He was decorated with the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour three times, among other honours.

Bri. Gen. Aleksander Hryniewicz died in Montreal and was buried in *Mount Royal Cemetery*.

**At St. Adele cemetery rests:**

**Maj. Gen. Waclaw Teofil Stachiewicz (1894 -1973);** studied geology in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Lviv. In 1912, he joined the Union of Active Struggle (*Związek Walki Czynnej*) and the Riflemen's Association, where he graduated from the non-commissioned officer school and the lower officer school. After the outbreak of World War I, he joined the Polish Legions. In March 1917, he graduated from the General Staff Officers' Course at the Inspectorate of the Polish Armed Forces (*Inspektorat Polskich Sił Zbrojnych*) in Warsaw. As early as August, he was drafted into the Austrian Army with the rank of a sergeant and was sent to the Italian front. He deserted and made his way to Warsaw, where he held positions of high responsibility in the reborn Polish Army, including: chief of Branch I and deputy chief of staff of the Warsaw General District Command (*Dowództwo Okręgu Generalnego Warszawa*); liaison officer of the Supreme Command of the Polish Armed Forces (*Naczelne Dowództwo Wojska Polskiego*) at the Third Corps (*III Korpus Polski*) Command of the Polish Army in France, and head of a division in Department I of the Ministry of Military Affairs (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wojskowych*). During the Soviet offensive in May 1920, he became chief of Branch I and then of the second general headquarters of Gen. Sosnkowski's Reserve Army Staff, where he also served as an operations officer. On January 26, 1935, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General by the Polish President Ignacy Mościcki, at the request of the Minister of Military Affairs - Józef Piłsudski. This was the last general nomination signed by the Marshal. Appointed Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Army, he became one of the closest associates of the new Inspector General of the Armed Forces, Maj. Gen. Edward Śmigły-Rydz. In this position, he worked tirelessly on the reconstruction and modernization of the army. He also supervised the creation of the new mobilization plan "W", coordinated work on the plan for war with Russia (plan "East") and - from March 4, 1939 - also the war with Germany (plan "West"). At the outbreak of war, he took over as Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Śmigły-Rydz. He crossed the Romanian border, where he was held prisoner in Stanic-

*Maj. Gen. Waclaw Teofil Stachiewicz. Awarded, among other honours, the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times.*

*He died in Montreal of a heart attack and rests in a cemetery in St. Adele, Quebec.*

*In 2004, the General became the patron saint of the Operational Duty Service of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland.*

*Archive photo on page 146: General on the right accompanied by Marshal Józef Piłsudski.*

*Archival photo at top: Audience with Polish President Ignacy Mościcki.*

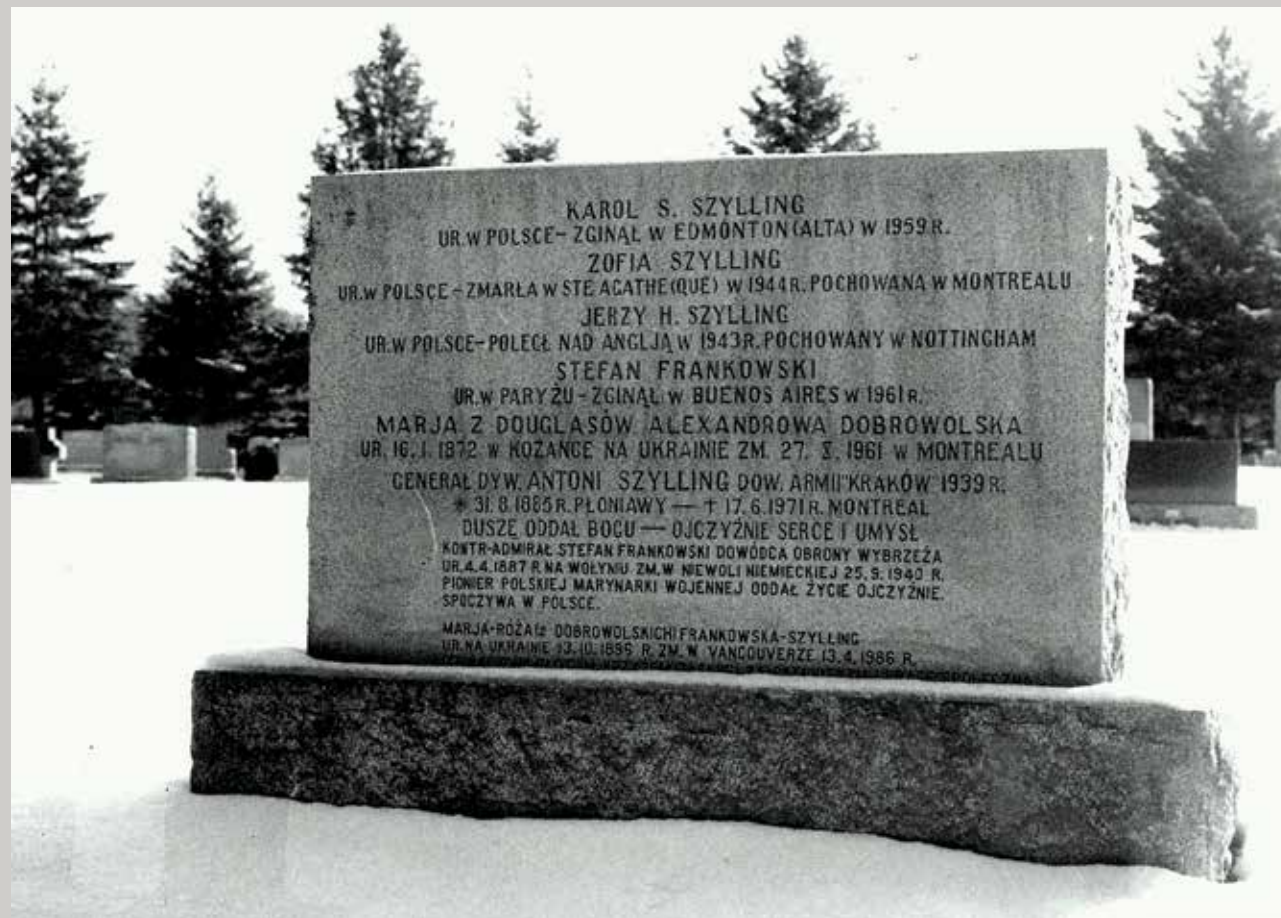


Prahova near Ploeszti. However, he escaped and made his way through Bucharest to Yugoslavia and then on to Algiers. From there, he got to London, where he stayed until the end of the war without any assignment. In December 1948, he moved to Canada. He settled in Montreal with his wife and children, who had been staying there for several years. He died in Montreal of a heart attack. "The Polish immigrant community has lost in the person of General Stachiewicz a righteous and wonderful soldier, who remained faithful to the ideas of Józef Piłsudski, until his death. The community has lost a great Pole who served the Homeland with all his heart." - wrote Franciszek Bratek-Kozłowski in his memoirs; *Life with Bayonet and Lance, Memoirs and Reflections. (Życie z bagnietem i lancetem, wspomnienia – refleksje)*, Canadian Polish Research Institute, Toronto 1989). He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times. Brig. Gen. Waław Teofil Stachiewicz rests in the cemetery at St. Adele, Quebec. In 2004, the general became the patron of the Duty Operational Service (Dyżurna Służba Operacyjna) of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland.

**At Saint-Sauveur rests:**

**Maj. Gen. Antoni Szylling (1884-1971);** took an active part in the secret militant organizations "Proletariat" and PPS (Polish Socialist Party). He was conscripted into the Russian army in the depths of Russia, where he stayed for 2 years. From 1909 to 1912, he completed the Industrial and Agricultural Courses at the University of Agriculture (Wyższa Szkoła Rolnicza) in Warsaw. On January 27, 1919, he was accepted into the Polish Army and commanded the 44th Infantry Regiment in the Polish-Bolshevik war. On January 1, 1926, he was promoted from a reserve officer to a professional officer, with the rank of a colonel. He was then transferred to the 23rd Infantry Division (23 Dywizja Piechoty) in Katowice, as commander of the division. Meanwhile, from January 3 to June 24, 1927, he was a Third Grade student at the Military College Centre in Warsaw. On May 25, 1937, he was appointed to the rank of General for the general Inspector of the Armed Forces. In the September campaign, he commanded the "Cracow" Army, which, although surrounded several times by enemy forces, reached as far as the Lublin region. At Tomaszów, the Polish troops fought their last battle. Gen. Szylling was taken prisoner by the Germans and stayed in POW camp VII A Murnau until April 30, 1945. Freed by the Americans, he went first to France, then to Great Britain and Canada. Among other honours, he was twice awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari (gold and silver crosses) and three times the Cross of Valour. Maj. Gen. Antoni Szylling died in Montreal and was buried at the cemetery in Saint-Sauveur, Quebec.

*Maj. Gen. Antoni Szylling. Decorated, among other honours, twice with the Order of Virtuti Militari (Gold and Silver) and the Cross of Valour three times. He died in Montreal and was buried at the cemetery in Saint-Sauveur in the province of Quebec.*





**Lt. Gen. Michał Tadeusz Karaszewicz-Tokarzewski (1893 - 1964)**; his name has been symbolically memorialized by an inscription upon the tombstone of a grave, in which the following others are laid to rest:

The general's wife **Antonina Karaszewicz-Tokarzewska (1899 - 1976)**, a well-known social activist dedicated to the care and assistance of veterans and combatants of World War I and World War II; one of the founders of the Association of Polish War Refugees (Stowarzyszenie Polskich Uchodźców Wojennych) and the Committee for Aid to Polish Children (Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom Polskim), in Montreal. The general's daughter **Irena Petrusiewiczowa (1919 - 2006)**, a volunteer at the Polish Library in Montreal, among other things. **Stanisław Petrusiewicz (1912 - 2005)**, Irena's husband, an engineer who came to Ottawa during the war, where he worked in a factory producing the landing gears for bomber planes. He was one of the founders of the Association of Polish Engineers in Canada (Stowarzyszenie Polskich Inżynierów w Kanadzie). After the war, he settled in Montreal, where he worked at Wajax Co. Ltd, successively as project engineer, project chief, chief engineer, and vice president.

Michał Tadeusz Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz studied law in Lviv and later medicine at the Jagiellonian University of Kraków. He had been in the Polish Legions since 1914, and in 1919 he became famous for his daring action in liberating Lviv. He also fought heroically during the Polish-Bolshevik war. From 1922 to 1924, he pursued higher military studies in France. He took part in the September campaign as commander of the Pomerania Army (Armia Pomorze) and then of the Operational Group (Grupa Operacyjna) within the Army of Poznań. Having broken through to Warsaw, he was appointed commander of the Warsaw Army. After the Germans entered the capital, he set up an underground military organization called the Service for Poland's Victory (Służba Zwycięstwu Polski) and contributed to the creation of the Polish Underground State (his aliases: Doktor, Stawski, Stolarski, Torwid). In 1940, he left for Lviv to take command of the Eastern area of Poland that was under Soviet occupation. Arrested and imprisoned by the NKVD (Soviet Secret Militia), he was sentenced to five years in prison and transported to a gulag (Soviet forced - labour penal camp), near Arkhangelsk.

In 1943 he joined the Polish Army, being formed under the command of General Anders. Promoted to Major General, he became Deputy Commander of the Polish Army in the East. After demobilization, he remained in exile and settled in London, where he was promoted to Lieutenant General in 1964. He was a member of the National Council (Rada Narodowa), an advisory body to the President of Poland. He was also a Freemason, a Theosophist, and a clergyman of the Liberal Catholic

*Lt. Gen. Michał Tadeusz Karaszewicz-Tokarzewski. He held the highest Polish and foreign military decorations, including: Order of the White Eagle, twice the Order of Virtuti Militari (gold and silver cross), The Cross of Valour five times. He died in 1964 in Casablanca (Morocco). He was buried in Brompton Cemetery in London. In 1992, the general's ashes, rested in the Powązki Military Cemetery in Warsaw. The general's symbolic grave is in the cemetery in Saint-Sauveur, Quebec.*



Church. He held the highest Polish and foreign military decorations, including the Order of the White Eagle, the Order of Virtuti Militari twice (second and fifth class), Polonia Restituta (third and fourth class), the Cross of Independence with Swords (Krzyż Niepodległości z Mieczami), and five times the Cross of Valour. Stanisław Petruszewicz died in 1964 in Casablanca (Morocco). He was buried in Brompton Cemetery in London. In 1992 the general's ashes, like those of other commanders of the Polish Underground in Warsaw.

**Laid to rest in Edmonton is:**

**Brig. Gen. Romuald Wolikowski (1891 – 1992);** after graduating from a cadet school, he was accepted to the military school in Moscow. During World War I, he fought on the Western Front. In 1917, he joined the Polish I Corps in Russia (I Korpus Polski w Rosji), from which he was sent to the Imperial Nikolaev Military Academy, as an observing student. A year later, after the corps was disbanded, he made his way to Ufa and then on to Buguruslan and Novonikolayevsk. There, together with Walerian Czuma, he organized Polish military formations. At that time, he served as chief of staff of the 5th Polish Rifle Division (5 Dywizja Strzelców Polskich). From Russia, he went to the United States via Japan and Hawaii. In April 1919, together with Haller's Army, he returned to Poland where he was accepted into the Polish Army, with the rank of lieutenant colonel and appointed commander of the 17th Infantry Brigade (XVII Brygada Piechoty). He then served as chief of staff of the Poleska Group (Grupa Poleska) and the 5th Army (5 Armia). At the time, he was Gen. Władysław Sikorski's closest associate.

In the September campaign, he commanded formations of the "Poznań" Army (Armia Poznań). On September 18, 1939, he evacuated to Romania and then to France and England, with the consent of Gen. Sikorski. In August 1941, after the conclusion of the Sikorski-Mayski treaty and the establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR, he left for Moscow - where he took up the post of attaché and head of the Polish Military Mission. From September 1942, he supervised officer courses under the authority of the Polish Army in the East. From April 1944 to 1946, he remained at the disposal of the Minister of National Defense and later, of the Chief of the General Staff in London.

He was decorated with the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times, among other honours.

After demobilization, he settled in Edmonton. He died in St. Joseph's Hospital and was buried at the Catholic Cemetery in St. Albert, Alberta.

*Brig. Gen. Romuald Wolikowski.*

*He was decorated, among other honours, with the Order of Virtuti Militari and four times with the Cross of Valour.*

*He died in Edmonton and was buried in the Catholic cemetery in St. Albert, Province of Alberta.*

*Archive photo: The staff of the 5th Army, on the left Gen. Władysław Sikorski, on the right the chief of Staff, Lt. Col. Romuald Wolikowski.*



Chapter 8

Colonel Bajan's  
Pilot List



On November 28, 2021, a ceremony was held in wintry conditions on the grounds of the John Paul II Polish Cultural Centre (Polskie Centrum Kultury im. Jana Pawła II) in Mississauga, Ontario, to unveil the “Spiral of Victory” - monument commemorating the heroes of the Polish Air Force who fought during World War II.

*The Polish Air Force* (Polskie Siły Powietrzne) had about 17,000 personnel divided into 15 squadrons of different aviation categories (bomber, fighter, reconnaissance). In terms of size, it was the third largest Allied air force on the Western Front. In addition to combat units, the Poles had a complete training system, which included: a Ground Training Centre (Centrum Wyszkozenia Ziemnego), 25th Beginner Pilot School (25 Szkoła Pilotażu Początkowego), 16th Basic Pilot School (16 Szkoła Pilotażu Podstawowego), Polish Fighter School (Polska Szkoła Myśliwska), bomber crew training centre, and the Air Force College (Wyższa Szkoła Lotnicza). Four Polish squadrons fought in the Battle of Britain, which lasted from July 10 to October 31, 1940. Those were: two bomb squadrons – No. 300 Polish Bomber Squadron “Land of Masovia” and No. 301 Polish Bomber Squadron “Pomeranian Land”; two fighter squadrons - No. 302 (City of Poznań) Polish Fighter Squadron RAF (302 Dywizjon Myśliwski “Poznański”), and No. 303 “Kościuszko” Polish Fighter Squadron (303 Dywizja Myśliwska im. Tadeusza Kościuszki), as well as 81 Polish pilots in British squadrons. It was a total of 144 Polish pilots whose conduct made their names famous all over the world.

During the air battles, the Germans lost 1,733 aircraft and about 650 were damaged, representing 52 percent of the Luftwaffe. Human losses were 2,500 killed and taken prisoner and 1,000 wounded airmen. The British lost 915 aircraft and about 450 were damaged. The death toll was 544 pilots and 500 were wounded. The battle ended on October 31, 1940 with German defeat.

The greatest glory went to the Polish 03 Squadron, which made its debut in the battle of August 31, 1940 with the excellent combat feat of shooting down 6 enemy planes, while incurring no losses. In total, the squadron shot down 126 German aircraft – this was the most from among all the fighter squadrons that took part in the fighting.

The words of then British Prime Minister Winston Churchill went down in history when he recalled the participation of Poles in the Battle of Britain. He said: “Never in the field of human conflict, was so much owed by so many to so few.” In the Battle of Britain alone, Polish aviators shot down a total of more than 200 aircraft, according to the so-called “Bajan List”. “The Bajan List” - is a list of Polish World War II pilots based on a collection of documents compiled by the Historical Commission

*From page 156  
The “Victory Spiral”  
monument erected on the  
grounds of the John Paul II  
Polish Cultural Centre in  
Mississauga commemorates  
the heroes of the Polish Air  
Force who fought during  
World War II. The project  
was designed by artists Ania  
and Wojtek Biczysko.*

*The Polish Air Force (Polish  
PAF) had about 17,000  
personnel divided into 15  
squadrons of different air  
categories.  
In photos: The plaque on  
the “Spiral of Victory”  
monument; the logo of the  
303rd T. Kościuszko Fighter  
Squadron and the aircraft  
of the Polish 302 Poznań  
Squadron in combat action.*





*Pilots from the 303 Squadron are ranked highest on the so-called "Bajan List", which was created by Colonel and Certified Pilot Jerzy Bajan (pictured left); including the legendary Stanisław Skalski (pictured right) in the first position.*

of the Polish Air Force in the West (Komisję Historyczną Polskich Sił Powietrznych na Zachodzie), entitled *Polish Fighter Pilots' Achievements during the Second World War*. The commission that compiled the list of Polish aerial victories was headed by a liaison officer, attached to *HQ Fighter Command* of the Royal Air Force, **Col. Jerzy Bajan (1901-1967)**. He was an outstanding Polish sports and military aviator who was the winner of the 1934 Challenge competition; hence the colloquial name of the list - the "Bajan List." It is the only official listing of the victories of Polish fighter pilots (albeit, not entirely correct in many respects, according to the present-day expertise of aviation historians). The list was created by following the British process: there is a section about enemy aircrafts shot down for sure, most likely shot down and damaged. The pilots' scores are the sum of total and partial aerial victories (for example, in case a pilot shot down a plane jointly with two others, he was credited with 1/3 of the victory. The list opens with the legendary commander of 303 Squadron, **Gen. pilot Stanisław Skalski (1915-2004)**, who shot down 18 (&11/12ths) enemy aircraft, by the end of the war. After the war, several pilots on Bajan's list settled in Canada. They died here and joined the "Heavenly Squadron" of the most outstanding fighter pilots. In 13th place on the list (9 enemy planes shot down, 1 probable, and 1 damaged) is **Col. Jan Paweł Falkowski (1912 – 2001)**. At the age of two he went with his parents and brother Stefan to Siberia, where his father was to organize repatriation transports of Poles from Manchuria. The Falkowskis settled in Petropavlovsk on the Ishim River. After the death of their parents, who died of typhoid fever, the two orphans were taken care of by their aunt Wanda, with whom they returned to their hometown of Vilnius and to the „Świła” estate. Thanks to her efforts, the brothers graduated from a private middle school and entered university. Jan, however, did not want to become an engineer, like his brother and in 1934 entered the Air Force Cadet School in Dęblin. Upon completion, already a second lieutenant, he was assigned to the III/4th Fighter Squadron (III Dywizjon Myśliwski) in Toruń. In 1939, he got to France through Romania, Yugoslavia and Italy, from where he went to Great Britain. After training on a *Hurricane* aircraft, he was assigned to the RAF's 32nd Fighter Squadron. He was then sent to the No. 315 (City of Dęblin) Polish Fighter Squadron (315 Dywizjon Myśliwski "Dębliński"), where he began his streak of victories in combat flights. In just a few days - August 14, 19 and 21, 1941- he shot down three German Messerschmidt Bf 109s and the following month two more. After a brief tour of duty with the No. 316 "City of Warsaw" Polish Fighter Squadron (316 Dywizjon Myśliwski "Warszawski"), he was transferred to the



legendary 303 Squadron. On July 3, 1943, he became commander of this unit, replacing Capt. Zygmunt Bienkowski and raising his statistics of enemy planes shot down. In August and September, he shot down altogether two Fw 190 for sure and then probably another one. After demobilization in 1947, he settled in Canada. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour three times. He authored the autobiographical book *With the Wind in His Face*. (Z wiatrem w twarz.) Col. Jan Pawel Falkowski died in Peterborough (Ontario) and his ashes rest in the local *Little Lake Cemetery*. It is worth mentioning that Jan's younger brother, **Stefan Falkowski (1911 -1993)**, a civil engineer, was deported with his family from Vilnius to a Soviet labour camp beyond the Urals. In time, he managed to join General Anders' 2nd Polish Corps and served the entire military campaign with them, including the fighting for Monte Cassino. After demobilization in 1948, he left for Argentina and then settled in Canada in 1954. He lived in Toronto and worked in his profession, being very active in Polish organizations, including the SPK. He died in Toronto and is buried in Havelock (Ontario) cemetery.

The 50th position on the "Bajan List" (4 and 1/3 enemy planes shot down and 3 probable) is held by **Col. Tadeusz Koc (Kotz) (1913-2008)**. After graduating from high school in 1934, he was accepted into the Air Force and graduated from the Air Force Officer Cadet School in Dęblin. In 1939, he fought in the September campaign in the 161st Fighter Squadron, scoring his first victory in air combat. On September 2, while piloting a PZL P.11, he shot down a Messerschmitt. On September 16, 1939, he shot down a Soviet R-5 reconnaissance plane. His first combat flights in the United Kingdom were with No. 245 Squadron RAF. As a squadron leader in No. 308 "City of Kraków" Polish Fighter Squadron RAF, he was shot down over northern France on February 3, 1943 but saved himself by parachuting. He returned to England by land, crossing occupied France, then Spain and reaching Gibraltar. After returning to Britain in July 1943, he was assigned to the 303rd Tadeusz Kościuszko Warsaw Fighter Squadron, which he commanded from November 20, 1943 to September 25, 1944. Later, he was a liaison officer for the Polish Air Force in the 12th and 13th Fighter Groups of the RAF, among his other positions. He completed 190 combat flights. After he was demobilized in 1948, with the rank of a major, he changed his name to Kotz and moved to Africa with his wife. In 1956, he emigrated to Canada and settled in Collingwood (Ontario). He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times. Author of the book *Blue Skies and Real Bullets*. (Błękitne niebo i prawdziwe kule.) He died in Collingwood (Ontario) and was laid to rest at the local *St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery*.

*Col. Jan Pawel Falkowski was ranked 13th on the "Bajan List" (9 planes shot down, 1 probable and 1 damaged).*



In position 51 (4 and 1/3 enemies shot down) is **Lt. Kazimierz Sztramko (1915-1995)**. In 1936, he completed a glider course in Ustjanowa, and on September 15, he began a basic pilot training course in the Training Squadron of the 1st Aviation Regiment in Warsaw (1 Pułk Lotnictwa Myśliwskiego „Warszawa”). In September 1939, he fought with the 113th Fighter Squadron (113 Eskadra Myśliwska), which was part of the Pursuit Brigade (Brygada Pościgowa), defending Warsaw. He made 22 combat flights and fought 12 air battles. However, official victories were not credited to him. He reached Marseilles on October 30, 1939, through Bucharest and Beirut. In France, he flew Bloch 151 and Bloch 152 aircraft belonging to Squadron GC II/10. On July 17, 1940, after the surrender of France, he reached the United Kingdom via Algiers, Casablanca, and Gibraltar. He was assigned to the No. 317 “City of Wilno” Polish Fighter Squadron (317 Dywizjon Myśliwski „Wileński”). On August 18, 1942, while covering the landing at Dieppe, he shot down a German He 111, together with two other pilots of 303 Squadron. In March 1943, he volunteered to go to Africa and ended up in the first grouping of the *Polish Fighting Team*, as part of the No. 145 Fighter Squadron of the Royal Air Force, known as the Skalski’s Circus in North Africa. During combat, he shot down three aircrafts (on April 22: 1 Me 109 and 1 Mc 202; on May 6: 1 Me 109). From July 23, 1943, he was an instructor in the 58th OTU (*Operational Training Unit*) and later was assigned to the No. 308 “City of Kraków” Polish Fighter Squadron RAF (308 Dywizjon Myśliwski “Krakowski”). In total, he made 116 combat flights in 226 hours and 130 operational flights in 171 hours and 15 minutes. After demobilization, he settled in Canada. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times. Lt. Kazimierz Sztramko died in Hamilton (Ontario) and is buried in *Holy Sepulchre* Cemetery in Burlington.

**Capt. Władysław Różycki (1907-1970)**; ranked 55th on the “Bajan List” (4 enemy planes shot down, 2 damaged). After graduating from pilot school at the Air Force NCO Training Centre (Centrum Wyszukolenia Podoficerów Lotnictwa), he was accepted to the Air Force NCO School in Bydgoszcz (Szkoly Podoficerów Lotnictwa w Bydgoszczu), then transferred to the Air Force Officer Cadet School in Dęblin. In 1938, he was assigned to the 141 Fighter Squadron (141 Eskadra Myśliwska) of the 4th Aviation Regiment (4 Pułk Lotniczy) in Toruń. After September 1939, he made his way through Romania and France to England. He was assigned to the No. 238 Fighter Squadron RAF (238. Dywizjon Myśliwski RAF), with which he took an active part in the Battle of Britain from July 1 to October 31, 1940. On November 20, 1940, he was transferred to

*The 50th position on the “Bajan List” (4 and 1/3 enemies shot down and 3 probable) is occupied by Colonel Tadeusz Koc (Kotz).*

*The 51st position (4 and 1/3 enemy planes shot down) is occupied by Lt. Kazimierz Sztramko, a pilot from the group known as “Skalski’s Circus”.*



*Capt. Władysław Różycki is ranked 55th on the "Bajan List" (4 planes shot down, 2 damaged), while the outstanding fighter and test pilot Col. Janusz Żurakowski (with 3 enemies shot down, 1 probable and 1 damaged plane), is ranked 75th.*

the No. 306 "Toruń" Polish Fighter Squadron (306 Dywizjon Myśliwski "Toruński") and on April 23, 1942, to the 307th Night Fighter Squadron "Lviv Owls." Demobilized in August 1946, he emigrated to Canada. He was awarded the Order of Viruti Militari and the Cross of Valour three times. Capt. Władysław Różycki died in Toronto and is buried in *Park Lawn Cemetery*.

**Col. Janusz Żurakowski (1914-2004)**; with 3 downed, 1 probable, and 1 damaged aircraft to his credit, ranks 75th on the pilot list. In 1935, he graduated from the Air Force Reserve Cadet School and two years later from the Air Force Officer Cadet School in Dęblin. After his promotion, he was assigned to the 161st Fighter Squadron of the 6th Aviation Regiment (161 Eskadra Myśliwska 6 Pułku Lotniczego) in Lviv. He took part in the September campaign, then made his way to Great Britain and served in the Royal Air Force. From August 1940, he flew in the 234 Squadron of the RAF (234 Dywizjon RAF).

Janusz Żurakowski, who took an active part in the Battle of Britain, in his book *Not Only About Flying* (Nie tylko o lantaniu, Polish Publishing Fund in Canada, Toronto 2002), describes the shooting down of the first enemy plane as follows: "The critical day for British aviation was August 15. On that day, Goering sent 1,800 German planes to England, including more than 500 bombers surrounded by a swarm of fighters. A fierce air battle began, in which the British lost 183 aircrafts (+ 53 probably), with a loss of only 34 of their own machines.

On this day, I experienced my first air battle and my first victory. Our squadron 234 was taken by surprise in "Middle Wallop". German planes came in low and the radar gave us no warning. A large grouping of Messerschmitts had already begun bombing the airfield. In a panic, we were scrambling to the planes. The takeoff was rushed and with no formation; we each took off as soon as we were ready.

...I reach the plane and take off. Bombs are falling on the airport, but fortunately, with little effect. I enter a climb at full power and look for the enemy. At an altitude of about ten thousand feet, I encounter a defensive circle, consisting of ME 110s (7 to 9 aircraft)...

The two-seater ME 110 had a fixed armament in front and a gunner with two mobile guns in the rear. My opponents had not yet managed to close the circle, so I attacked the last plane from behind. I must have shot the gunner and severely damaged the plane, because the pilot, nose-diving to the ground, left his defensive formation and made a low pass while heading south. I rushed after him and attacked twice. The Messerschmitt's fuselage looked as if cut with an axe, but the plane was flying on. At that moment, a second Spitfire approached and attacked the same plane; I recognized



*The Janusz Żurakowski Park in Barry's Bay is dedicated to the legendary pilot. There is a monument to the pilot and a model of the supersonic CF-105 Avro Arrow aircraft, Canada's most famous aircraft, tested by Janusz Żurakowski.*

that it belonged to Squadron 609, by the letters on the fuselage. As we were flying over the Channel, we saw that a ship had opened fire toward the Messerschmitt. Since we were within the firing range, we had to move away, but as soon as the ship stopped firing, we attacked again. The propeller on one of the enemy's engines stopped spinning, then the plane hit the ground on the Isle of Wight, and so ended our chase. We returned with the second Spitfire. At one point, my companion took off his oxygen mask and I recognized, by his long nose, that he was Piotr Ostaszewski of Squadron 609." From June 5 to December 28, 1942, he commanded the No. 316 "City of Warsaw" Polish Fighter Squadron. In 1943, he was promoted to captain and assigned to be a deputy wing commander at Northolt. In later years, he became an experimental pilot. He used to test-fly most types of RAF fighters and also British and American Navy aircraft. Known for his acrobatic piloting skills, he developed and performed new maneuvers - including the *Zurabathic Carthwheel* and *Falling Leaf*, previously considered impossible in the eyes of experts. His demonstrations at Farnborough have become legendary. He also broke the flight speed record for completing the London-Copenhagen-London route. He piloted nearly a hundred new aircraft designs; among them was Britain's first combat aircraft, the *De Havilland Vampire*. In 1947, after retiring from military aviation, he was employed by *Gloster Aircraft Co.* as a test pilot. In 1952, Janusz Żurakowski emigrated with his family to Canada, where he became an experimental pilot at *Avro Aircraft Limited* in Malton, Ontario. In 1958, he became chief pilot of the *Avro Arrow*. He pioneered the testing of Canada's first *CF-100 Canuck* interceptor fighter, which was considered one of the most modern in the 1950s. Aboard it, he became the first aviator in Canada to break the speed-of-sound barrier and reach a speed of 1,000 miles per hour. In March 1958, he began testing the *CF-105 Arrow* interceptor fighter. In the unanimous opinion of experts, it was the best supersonic fighter aircraft of the time, equipped with state-of-the-art navigation, communications equipment and electronic propulsion control. In February 1959, a decision was made to halt the CF-105 Arrow construction program - a decision which remains poorly explained to this day. 13,000 *Avro* and *Orenda Engines* employees were laid off from their jobs. Tens of thousands of construction drawings and plans for the aircraft were destroyed. Not a single component survived for museum purposes. The aircraft had a chance to change the state of fighter aviation equipment in NATO countries during the Cold War - but it ceased to exist, and Żurakowski left his job. After research on the *Avro Arrow* aircraft had been discontinued, Żurakowski decided to "break away" from experimental piloting. He had retired and built a

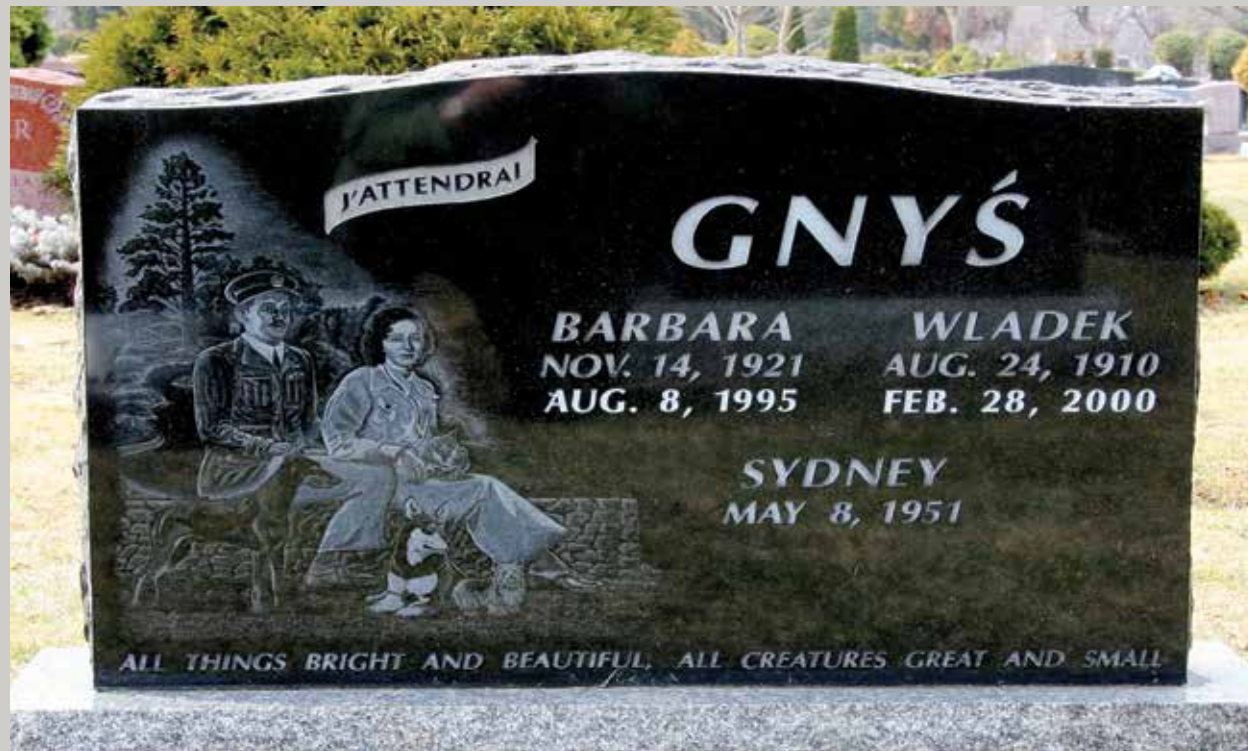


resort called “Kartuzy Lodge” near Barry’s Bay (Ontario). He managed it, together with his family, for 40 years. For his wartime merits, he was awarded the Virtuti Militari Cross and the Cross of Valour three times, as well as the No. 2 Honorary Badge of the Experimental Test Pilots’ Club (Honorowa Odznaka Nr 2 Klubu Pilotów Doświadczalnych) in Poland. In Canada, he was repeatedly recognized and awarded for his contributions to Canadian aviation. This included: in 1973 he became a member of *Canada’s Aviation Hall of Fame*; in 1996 the Canadian Mint minted a \$20 silver coin with the image of this outstanding Polish pilot; in 2000 a new building of the Military Flight Test Centre in Cold Lake, Alberta, was named the *Janusz Żurkowski Building*, and on July 26, 2003 in Barry’s Bay, Ontario, a park named after Janusz Żurkowski was ceremoniously opened. In Janusz Żurkowski Park, there is a monument dedicated to him and a model of the *CF-105 Avro Arrow* supersonic aircraft, Canada’s most famous aircraft, which Janusz Żurkowski had tested.

He was elected as an Honorary Member of the International Society of Experimental Pilots in Los Angeles, which placed his name on the list of the most outstanding aviators of all time. Janusz Żurkowski died in Barry’s Bay, Ontario and rests with his wife in the local *St. Hedwig’s* Roman Catholic Cemetery.

Ranked 85th (3 planes shot down for sure and 1 damaged) was **Colonel Władysław Gnyś (1910 - 2000)**; in 1931 he enlisted in the army and was assigned to the 4th Aviation Regiment (4 Pułk Lotniczy) in Toruń. He then graduated from the Non-Commissioned Officer Cadet School in Bydgoszcz. After attaining he rank of second lieutenant, he was assigned to the 121st Fighter Squadron of the Polish Air Force (121. Eskadra Myśliwska) in Cracow. On September 1, 1939, shortly after the start of German aggression, Gnyś took off from a field airfield in Balice, with the commander of the 3rd Fighter Squadron (3 Dywizja Myśliwska), Capt. Mieczysław Medwecki. During take-off, the planes were surprised by German Junkers Ju 87 bombers coming back after the bombing of Krakow. Unfortunately, the first confrontation ended tragically. Capt. Medwecki was shot down and his machine caught fire. The pilot was killed. Gnyś, on the other hand, managed to escape and hide in the clouds. However, he did not give up the attack and after spotting several heavier and less maneuverable Dornier Do 17 bombers, he began firing. After a short battle, he managed to shoot down two German aircraft. However, this fact is disputed by some historians, who are quite skeptical of the Polish aviator’s victory, suggesting that anti-aircraft artillery may have played a significant role in the destruction of the planes. According

*In Canada, Col. Janusz Żurkowski has been recognized and awarded many times for his contributions to Canadian aviation, including a \$20 silver coin with his likeness on it. He rests with his wife Anna in Barry’s Bay cemetery.*



to some theories, Gnyś supposedly scored a hit on one of the machines, which caused the Dornier to change its trajectory and collide with another German bomber. Regardless of the actual course of events, Gnyś played a huge part in the destruction of two of the enemy aircraft. There is also no doubt that it was during this battle with the Polish pilot that the Luftwaffe lost the first of their machines which were to be destroyed during the September campaign. This is how Władysław Gnyś officially became an Allied pilot and scored the first victory in World War II. He later made his way to the West, where he served in the Polish Air Force, taking part in the French campaign and then the Battle of Britain, among other things. In August 1940, the British assigned Gnyś to No. 302 (City of Poznań) Polish Fighter Squadron RAF. In the following months, he alternated between flying and serving in the ground command post of No. 302 Squadron and then of No. 303 Squadron. Then he resumed exclusively flying - commanding a squadron in 316 and also No. 309 Polish Fighter-Reconnaissance Squadron (316 & 309 Dywizjon Ziemi Czerwieskiej). From August 25, 1944, he commanded 317 Fighter Squadron "Vilnius". The next day after his promotion, he was shot down and taken prisoner while flying over France. A few days later, he escaped with the help of French partisans. After the arrival of Allied troops, he was taken to a hospital in Swindon, England. After his hospitalization, in January 1945, he entered the Air Force College in Weston-super-Mare. He had graduated in September and went to the RAF Fighter Air Command. He stayed there until the dissolution of the Polish Air Force. In 1947, he decided to emigrate and settled permanently in Canada.

Toward the end of his life, he came into contact with Frank Neubert, the Ju 87 pilot who attacked the Polish planes on September 1, 1939 and shot down Capt. pilot Mieczysław Medwecki. They had maintained a friendly correspondence with each other for twelve years. They met in 1989, around the 50th anniversary of the battle over Balice.

In 1996, during a visit to Poland, Col. Władysław Gnyś received honorary citizenship from the city of Olkusz and participated in a ceremony to name an elementary school in Żurada after himself. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour three times. He died in Beamsville (Ontario) and was buried in *Osborn Cemetery*.

The 108th place (2 and ½ enemy planes shot down) by **Maj. Marian Trzebiński (1913- 2002)**; he graduated from the IX Promotion of the Air Cadet School in Dęblin. In 1936, he was assigned to 133 Fighter Squadron (133 Eskadra Myśliwska), as part of the 3rd Aviation Regiment in Poznań. In 1937, he was transferred to the 6th Aviation Regiment in Lviv. In the September campaign of 1939, he was a second lieutenant

*Col. Władysław Gnyś was ranked 85th on the "Bajan List" (3 planes shot down for sure and 1 damaged). He rests in the cemetery in Beamsville.*



*Position 108 (2 and 1/2 enemies shot down) is occupied by Maj. Marian Trzebiński of the 317th Fighter Squadron "Vilnius" (pictured in the centre, wearing a coat).*

*Pictured from left: Capt. Bronisław Mach, who shot down 2 German aircraft and damaged 1, placed at 156 and Lt. Władysław Majchrzyk at 194 (1 and 1/2 enemies shot down, 1 probable and 1 damaged).*

pilot of the 161 Fighter Squadron (161 Eskadra Myśliwska), 3rd Fighter Division as part of the "Łódź" Army air force. As a major of the Polish Air Force in Great Britain, he was assigned to the No. 317 "Vilnius" Fighter Squadron. From December 29, 1942 to September 16, 1943, he was commander of the No. 316 "Warsaw" Fighter Squadron. From January 3, 1945 until the end of the war, he commanded the No. 317 "Vilnius" Fighter Squadron. After demobilization, he emigrated to Canada. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times. Maj. Marian Trzebiński died in Barrie (Ontario) and is buried in the *Saint Mary's* Catholic Cemetery.

**Capt. Bronisław Mach (1918-2009)** shot down 2 German planes and damaged 1. He is in 156th place on the pilot list. In 1939, he graduated from the 14th Promotion of the Air Cadet School. In 1940, after the September campaign, he arrived in Britain via Romania, Lebanon and France. He was a pilot of the No. 303 Tadeusz Kościuszko Fighter Squadron and then the No. 308 "Kraków" Fighter Squadron (until January 1943). Then, he was delegated to the Officers' Aviation School. Upon completion, he returned to the No. 308 Fighter Squadron, where he flew until June 1944. During operational recess, he was a pilot instructor and a flight controller on the staff of the 84th Fighter Group (84 Grupa Myśliwska). In December 1944, he returned to the No. 308 Fighter Squadron and then flew as a squadron commander in the No. 317 "Vilnius" Fighter Squadron. He was assigned, again, to No. 303 Squadron, where he flew until June 1946. After demobilization, he emigrated to Canada and settled in Swan River (Manitoba). He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour three times. Capt. Bronisław Mach died in Swan River and was buried in *Birchwood* Cemetery.

In 194th position (1 and 1/2 enemy planes shot down, 1 probable and 1 damaged) is **Lt. Władysław Majchrzyk (1914-2001)**; in 1928, he was admitted to the Aviation NCO School for Minors (Szkoła Podoficerów Lotnictwa dla Małoletnich) in Bydgoszcz, from which he graduated in 1934 as an aircraft mechanic, with basic pilot training. He was assigned to the Polish 123rd Fighter Squadron (123 Eskadra Myśliwska) in the 2nd Aviation Regiment, in Cracow. On September 1, 1939, he completed his first war assignment - he took off on an RWD- 8 to Bielsko and delivered 5,000 rounds of ammunition to the 23rd Observation Squadron (23 Eskadra Obserwacyjna) equipped with RWD-14 "Heron" planes. A day later, after fighting in the Chrzanów area, he and cadet B. Własnowolski reported the downing of a Ju 87. In the UK, he was assigned to the No. 308 "Kraków" Fighter Squadron. On June 28, 1941, in a flight over





France (during Operation Circus 26, whose target was the Commines power plant), he probably shot down one Me 109F in the Hazebrouck area, on his way back. In early 1943, he volunteered to go to Africa as part of the Polish Fighting Team, commanded by Capt. Stanisław Skalski. During combat he damaged a Bf 109 and shot down a Macchi Mc 202. In March 1944, he was transferred to the 411 RSU (Repair and Technical Rescue Unit - Oddział Napraw i Ratownictwa Technicznego), to fly Mustang aircraft after renovation. He returned to the No. 308 Fighter Squadron on July 3, 1944, where he remained until its disbanding (January 13, 1947). After demobilization in 1948, he emigrated to Canada. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari and the Cross of Valour four times. Lt. Władysław Majchrzyk died in Hamilton, Ontario and is buried in *Holy Sepulchre Cemetery* in Burlington, Ontario.

Position 341 on the "Bajan List" (5/6 enemy planes shot down, 1 probably and 1 damaged) is held by **Maj. Alexander Rokitnicki (1919-2009)** "Rocky"; a pilot from No. 303 Squadron. After demobilization, he emigrated to Canada in 1949. Initially, he settled in the province of Alberta; later he moved to Toronto. He worked at *Connaught Research Laboratories*, where he contributed to the discovery of the rabies vaccine called ERA (the letter R in this name is Rokitnicki). Being an accomplished pilot, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Cadets as a flying instructor in the 1960s. For more than three decades, he shared his passion for flying with Canadian cadets. He also pioneered the gliding program in the Air Cadet movement. He inspired many young men and women to take up a career in the RCAF (commercial flying). He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari.

Maj. Alexander Rokitnicki died in Toronto and was buried in *Holy Cross Cemetery*.

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According to the "Bajan List," which contains 447 rankings, Polish World War II aviators shot down 922 enemy aircraft for sure, 188 probable and damaged 25.

*Maj. Aleksander Rokitnicki "Rocky", of Squadron 303, occupies position 341 on the "Bajan List" (5/6 enemy planes shot down, 1 probable and 1 damaged).*

*Col. Zdzisław Krasnodębski "King," the founder and first commander of 303 Fighter Squadron – is at position 364 (113 enemy planes shot down). He lived and died in Toronto, the ashes of the colonel and his wife Wanda were transported to Poland, where a ceremonial funeral was held at the Powązki Military Cemetery in Warsaw.*



# Exiled to Siberia for Being Polish





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*In 2000, local Siberians and the Canadian Polish Congress funded an obelisk with a plaque commemorating the millions of Poles who perished in Soviet camps. This was the 60th anniversary of the mass deportation of Polish citizens from the Eastern Territories of the Second Polish Republic to Central Asia and the Siberian taiga, by Soviet authorities.*

*The Polish Golgotha began with a deportation in cattle cars deep into the Soviet Union. Later, many exiles managed to reach the budding Polish Army in the Middle East. Families with young children, such as the Chodkiewicz family, were transported to Polish camps farther away in Africa. Pictured in Masindi (1944); from left: Eliza, Wanda, Leonard with son Olgierd and Emanuel. Standing behind their parents are: Wilhelm and Janina, with Emma in front.*

*Wilhelm Chodkiewicz's 80th birthday. In the foreground: Janina, Emma; behind them stands the birthday celebrant Wilhelm, with Olgierd and Emanuel.*



The origin of exiles who were sent to Siberia is linked to the Red Army's aggression against Poland. On September 17, 1939, the Eastern territories of the Republic of Poland, popularly known as the Kresy (Borderlands), became part of the Soviet Union. For the Poles living there, this meant facing a new ruling power that sought to denationalize and Russify Polish citizens, by any means. This was accompanied by terror and arrests. The elimination of those who, in spite of everything, refused to forget that they were Polish, was an important part of the Sovietization of the seized lands. For the residents of Eastern Poland, the period of Soviet occupation is associated primarily with mass deportations deep into the Soviet Union. This brutal form of collective repression by the Bolshevik occupiers affected hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens and was intended to destroy traces of Polish statehood in the seized territories.

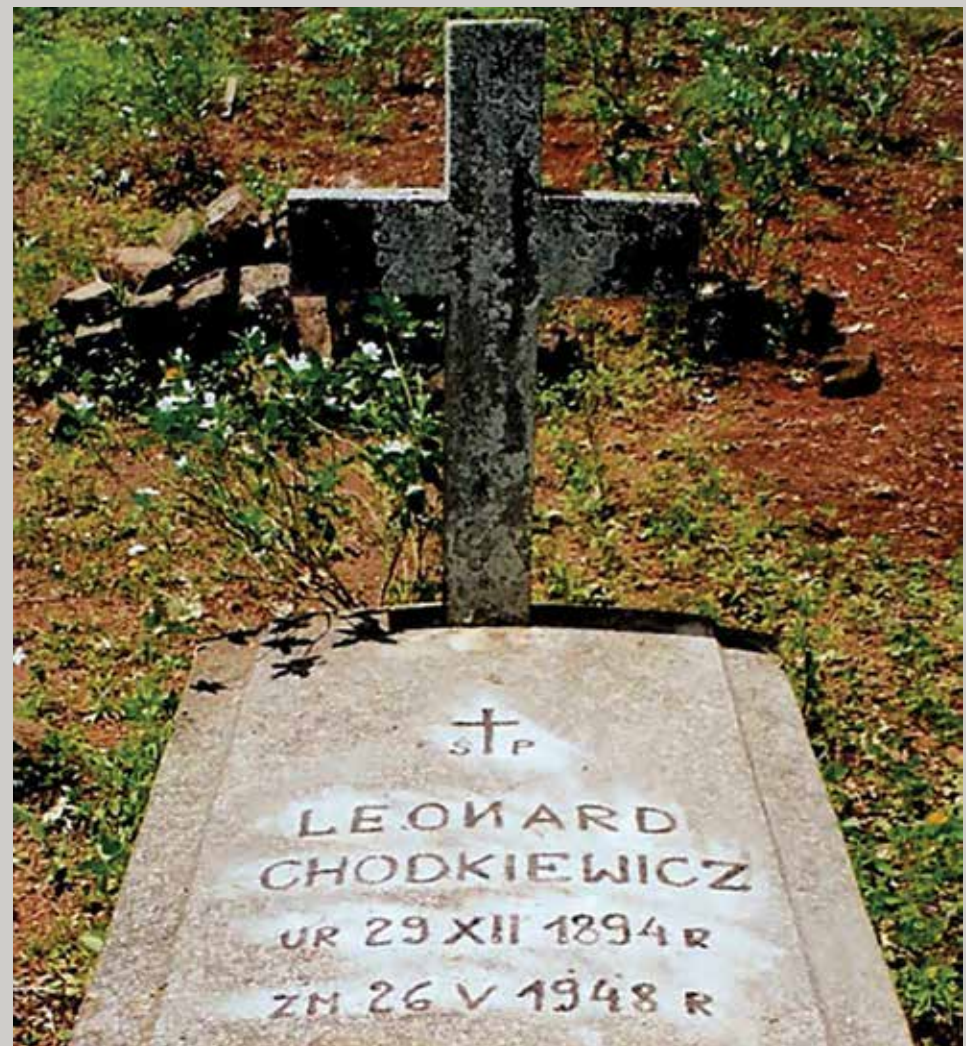
The first mass deportation to Siberia began on February 10, 1940. Some 140,000 Polish citizens were transported deep into the Soviet Union. Many simply died on the way, thousands did not return to their land. Among the deportees were mainly the families of military officers, civil servants, forestry workers, and railroad workers from the eastern areas of pre-war Poland.

The second deportation began on April 13, 1940; it involved government officials, policemen, teachers, political activists, and representatives of the landowners. It is estimated that some 61,000 people were deported at the time. The fates of the relatives of the arrested officers were particularly tragic. The third deportation operation of June 29, 1940 mainly involved the so-called "runners" (*bieżeńcy*), or fugitives from the German occupation, two-thirds of whom were Jews. Many victims of this deportation were members of the intelligentsia, including doctors and scientists; the number of deportees was about 80,000.

The fourth and final deportation began on June 20, 1941 - on the eve of the outbreak of the German-Soviet conflict. The action targeted people associated with previously deported population groups. A total of 90,000 people were deported, including more than 22,000 from so-called Western Belarus. The deportees were transported to Krasnoyarsk Krai, Altai Krai, Novosibirsk region, and to Kazakhstan. They ended up in Siberia, mostly in the Arkhangelsk, Sverdlovsk and Novosibirsk regions, and in the republics of: Komi, Mari, Yakutsk and Altai Krai. It is believed that during less-than-two years of Soviet rule in the lands taken from Poland, more than one million people were persecuted in various ways - ranging from executions, imprisonment, camps, exile, to semi-forced labour; this meant one in ten citizens who lived or happened to be in the territory of the Polish Republic. No fewer than 30,000 people were executed while the mortality rate in the gulags and among deportees is estimated at 8-10 percent, meaning that 90-100,000 people probably died. Many of them, especially children and the

Kochany dopy tatusi.  
 T pierszych starach mego listu podrozam i dowiedzi  
 ze my uciekamy z polski i znowu. Czego i  
 tatusia zyczymy wspanialego najkuzego od Pana  
 Boga. Kochany tatusi jak to bylo dla nas  
 radzie gdysmy dostali aoni tatusia z taw-tade  
 ze namiechony qruas. To bylo 21 II 1942 roku  
 na mamusia wsiemny. To tego ceamy my nie  
 wesci niewiadomym tatusiu. Co wofny my tyje  
 lwinny ot cisci Jadzzi, ze tatusi jest w Stanabo  
 ou prauy Buhalterom. It po wojnie nie niety  
 sallymy. Kochany tatusi my z Eliza zyczymy  
 nie radem z mamusia. ze 25.06.04 od mamo  
 ze w ducetom d... ze tamnym roku zmy  
 byl wielki pd. My nemeli co jesi, a tages  
 i wazyy... To 21.12.42 przypchato  
 i powiedziatoby wazyy polasy rdali  
 wazek dazeci to ducet-donka. Mamusia nie  
 zapudatow napawo. ze oni powiedzieli ze jesi  
 le mamusia nieada to oni niezym nie  
 bzda pomai. Mamusia w koncu zgodanta  
 ze z nami do ducet-donku przypchato ducet  
 polatek. z ducet-donku mamusia moze  
 nar wuzat... tatusi... mamusia  
 prauy dajz, ze jzok tyke na 3 dazeci una

Mamusia pisala podane itly gawali pozost  
 na uscip... tatusi... dazeci... dazeci...  
 na nazy to mamusia nas radzosi do domu  
 Nam jest tatusi... mamusia... mamusia...  
 ze mamusia... mamusia... mamusia...  
 na. Ona byla u nas 9 razy tyke a to  
 zy nima celam kochany tatusi prosy napi-  
 zec o swaim zdrowiu i jak tatusi czy i co tam  
 sluchal dobrego. Po unch nie nima dobrego.  
 Kochany tatusi prosy mamusia czy tatusia  
 jez wrypsali i wzeszema. Kochany tatusi  
 my chelmy bardzo robacyle tatusia  
 jez z tatusi meindzielismy. Kochany  
 mammy bardzo tatusia przyfchac do  
 nas. Nas w ducet-donku karmy zli  
 czsto chleba nie bywa. ze w domu  
 tez chleba nima. Katym k...  
 swy list. Prosz nie gniyat ze ze tak  
 mato ja napisatam. It drugim...  
 napisy wazyy... mamusia... mamusia...  
 mdene... tatusi... mamusia...  
 jak napisal... mamusia... mamusia...  
 Haja E. P. Tatusi... mamusia...  
 Tatusi... mamusia... mamusia...  
 ch... mamusia... mamusia...  
 byscul... mamusia... mamusia...



elderly, could not endure the harsh conditions of transport in cattle cars, so they died during the journey. Those who managed to survive were placed in labour camps- kolkhozes and sovkhozes, upon arrival. The deportees faced slave labour, poverty, disease, almost unimaginable starvation and death. Not surprisingly, the thoughts of the Siberians focused mainly on how to survive another day. After a treaty was signed on July 30, 1941 between Poland (signatory: Władysław Sikorski) and the USSR (signatory: Ivan Majski), which restored diplomatic relations between the two countries, those deported Poles who managed to survive were granted the so-called “amnesty”. 12-year-old daughter Janina wrote this letter to her beloved father:

Dearest Daddy,

First of all I wish to inform you that we are all alive and healthy, and wish you all the best from God. Dearest daddy-- what a great joy it was when we received your letter. It is hard to describe our joy in words. It was in June on Mommy's Name Day\* Until then we knew nothing about you daddy. Until the break of the War\*\* we received letters from auntie Jadzia telling us that you were working as an accountant and then we had no news about you. Dearest daddy, Eliza\*\*\* and I are not with our Mommy - but away in the orphanage. Last year was a year of great hunger. We had nothing to eat as was the case with all Polish people. The NKVD arrived in our place and told everyone to give up their children to orphanage. Mommy did not agree in the beginning but they said that in that case she will get no help. In the end mommy agreed and many Polish children were also sent with us to the orphanage. Mommy can take us back any time but they will not give any bread rations for us but only for three children. Mommy wrote to them asking for the bread rations to be given to all children and if they do then she will take us back home. She visited us only two times because she has to work. Dearest daddy please write us about your health and about your life and what is the good news. ---because here there is nothing good. Dearest daddy please let us know if you were released from prison. Dearest daddy we want so much to see you. We did not see you now for two years. Dearest daddy please come and visit us. Here in the orphanage, they feed us not too badly, but often there is no bread. I will end my letter now. Please do not be angry that I wrote so little. I will write more in the next letter. We kiss you countless times now--please write back as soon as possible

– bye bye  
 your daughters –  
 Eliza and Janina.

This letter was written by Janina Chodkiewicz, then 12-year-old, a few days after June 23, 1942 to father Leonard.

Leonard Chodkiewicz (1894 - 1948) is buried in Masindi, Uganda in the cemetery adjacent to the former Polish church.

\* Mother's Name Day June 23, 1942  
 \*\*during the German -Soviet War after June 21, 1941  
 \*\*\* Eliza age 14 - an older sister  
 This letter was written by Janina Chodkiewicz, then 12-year-old, a few days after June 23, 1942 to father Leonard who was then with the Anders Army in Guzar, Uzbekistan. It was written from Dziel Dom literal translation Children's House-but really an orphanage) located in Buras, Kazakhstan which was located about 30 kilometres from Dolon, situated on the river Irtys, about a hundred kilometres from the city of Semipalatinsk-Kazakhstan (now renamed as Semey). Dolon was a place of exile from May 1, 1940 to June 1942 to Mother Wanda, sister Emma, Brothers Emanuel, and Wilhelm. NKVD, no help in the letter -meant deny the bread rations, for two, which meant that only sister Emma age 10, and brothers Emanuel age 9 and Wilhelm age 5 would get the bread rations which, when available was 200 grams per day for a child.



Here are the recollections of Mrs. Janina Muszyńska née Chodkiewicz, a Siberian survivor who was a well-known and highly respected social activist in the Polish-Canadian community in Edmonton : “Before the war we lived in Prozoroki (Dziszna County, Vilnius District). My father, **Leonard Chodkiewicz (1894-1948)**, was a second lieutenant in the infantry reserve of the Polish Army. My mother, **Wanda Chodkiewicz (1907-2007), née Biesiekierska**, was a homemaker. I had two sisters (Eliza, Emma) and two brothers (Emanuel, Wilhelm). We lived in a township building, as my father was the First Secretary General of the local township. On the morning of September 17, the Bolsheviks were already in Prozoroki, located just across the border with the Soviet Union. Everyone realized that Poland had lost its independence. My father was systematically interrogated and on April 5, 1940, he did not return home.

On April 13, 1940, in the second mass deportation to Siberia, we were exiled (without our father) from the family home. The arresting NKVD, accompanied by local men, allowed us to take food and basic personal belongings, including a sewing machine. We, children, were told that we were going to meet our father, which was a great comfort to us. We were being taken east - in cattle cars. On May 1, we arrived in Pavlodar, Kazakhstan. The city was decorated with red flags, portraits of Stalin and Lenin; even the orchestra played Soviet hymns to the revolutionary leaders. Our family was transported by truck to the village of Dołoń on the Irtysh River. We stayed with the Kaminski family, descendants of deportees of the January Uprising. The NKVD forced Mom to give up two of her five children to an orphanage. Mom decided to give up her two eldest daughters, Eliza (age 11) and Janina (age 10). She feared that if she gave up her little sons, she might never see them again. Mom was taken away to work hard in the far-away quarries, so 9-year-old Emma had to take care of Emuś and Wiluś, who were younger than herself, completely on her own. Mother came to visit the children in Dołoń once a month, and visited Eliza and me only once, when I was seriously ill.

In June of 1942, we received a letter from my father, who had already reached the Anders Army - being formed in Guzar (Uzbekistan). This was after the so-called amnesty for all Polish exiles. Based on documents approved by the NKVD, we were allowed to leave the village of Dołoń and go to Turkmenistan, as a military family. From Ashgabat, through the Elbrus Mountains, we arrived in Tehran, Persia by truck.

It was not until we met my father in Tehran in September 1942, that we learned in-part about his fate. He had spent many months imprisoned near Mińsk, in Belarus. He received a sentence of 8 years of hard labour in the Naryan-Mar gulag at the mouth of the Pechora River on the Arctic Ocean. Released from the gulag only in February 1942, with his remaining strength,

*Wanda Chodkiewicz, wife of Leonard Chodkiewicz died in Edmonton and is buried in Holy Cross Cemetery. three of the Chodkiewicz family members, who survived the Siberian exile, have already passed away - Eliza, Emma and Olgierd (Alex).*



he reached the Polish Army being formed in Guzar. There, he managed to find out that we were alive and living in Kazakhstan. Immediately, he wrote us a letter, which we read over countless times with tears in our eyes. To this day, I keep it as a precious memento. In August 1942, my father sailed with the army from the port of Krasnovodsk, across the Caspian Sea, to Pahlavi in Persia. After a medical examination, at the age of 47, he was given the status of “unsuitable for military service due to health conditions” and as a civilian had been sent to Tehran, where he joined us.

From the port of Ahvaz in Persia - via Karachi in India - the whole family sailed by ship to Mombasa in Kenya. From there, we traveled by train to Nairobi. Then, on January 13, 1943, by truck to the Polish settlement of Masindi in Uganda (one of 22 such settlements in Africa). Our settlement numbered about 4,500 people - mostly women and children. After our experiences in the Soviet Union, Africa was a haven of joy for us. I joined the Scouts and completed high school in 1947 - you could say that life went on as usual. Our greatest joy was the birth of our brother Olgierd in 1944; the saddest experience – was the death of our beloved father in 1948.

Leonard Chodkiewicz was buried in the Polish cemetery at the church in Masindi, built by Polish exiles. To this day, the church serves the local population. In Africa, we dreamed all the time of returning to a free Poland. Unfortunately, our allies’ political dealings forced us to leave Uganda.

In 1949 Eliza, Emma, and I arrived in Halifax from Mombasa, aboard the ship *General Black*. Then, we went to Edmonton, via Montreal, by train. After working off a year-long contract as a housekeeper, I completed a course in nursing. My mother and her three sons (my brothers) joined us in 1950. In 1955, I married **Stanislaw Muszyński (1923- 2014)**, a senior sailor aboard the Polish Navy cruiser “*Dragon*”. Having raised three children (Maria, Wanda, Antoni), I spent 30 years working as a translator (Polish, English) for the *Immigration Canada and Refugee Board* and also for the Alberta Provincial Court.”

Stanislaw Muszyński is also a Siberian (Polish survivor of exile in Siberia). On February 10, 1940, during a very harsh winter, he and his entire family were deported to the Arkhangelsk region, to the settlement of Rżawka. There, he and his father were forced to do backbreaking hard labour as loggers in the woods. Under the Sikorski-Majski Agreement, Stanislaw Muszyński managed to join General Anders’ Army, which was just beginning to form. Then, he reached England through Iran and Palestine. In Liverpool, he joined the Polish Navy. At the naval school in Plymouth he had received training and afterwards, was assigned to the crew of the cruiser ORP *Dragon*. On July 8, 1944, during the Battle of Normandy, the ORP *Dragon* was torpedoed by the Germans. The survivors (Muszyński among them) were transferred to the twin cruiser ORP *Conrad*, where he served until the end of the war.

*Brothers: Stanislaw Muszynski served in the Polish Navy on Cruisers “Dragon” and “Conrad”. Boleslaw Muszynski served as an Instrumentation Technician in the RAF.*

*At Holy Cross Cemetery in Edmonton rests the Muszynski family of former Siberians: Franciszek Muszynski - a soldier of the 2nd Corps, (1900 -1997) with his wife Zofia Muszyńska (1909-1985) and son Stanislaw Muszyński (1923 -2014), who served in the Navy during World War II.*



He settled in Canada after demobilization and graduation from a technical school in London, with the qualification of an electrical technician.

All remaining members of the Chodkiewicz and Muszyński families are buried at *Holy Cross Cemetery*, Edmonton: **Wanda Chodkiewicz (1907 - 2007) nee Biesiekierska, Stanisław Muszyński (1923 - 2014), Franciszek Muszyński (1900 - 1997)** and wife **Zofia Muszynska (1909 - 1985), Olgierd (Alex) Chodkiewicz (1944 - 2019), Eliza Davies (1928 - 1980) nee Chodkiewicz, primo voto Herman, Emma Sawicka (1931 - 2020) nee Chodkiewicz, Kazimierz Sawicki (1927 - 2004), Andrzej Sawicki (1956 - 2002), Tadeusz Muszyński (1929 - 1999).**

**Bolesław Muszyński (1926 - 1990)** is buried at *St. Joachim Cemetery*, Edmonton.

On the other hand, **Veronica Markowska née Klucznik (1925-2013)**, was the daughter of a forest ranger living in the village of Veroniki (Grodno County). Her whole world fell apart on February 10, 1940. This is how she recalled that day:

“Three of them came to arrest us: two uniformed men and one civilian. The civilian was hiding his face behind a collar, but we quickly recognized him - it was none other than my sister Nadzieja’s (Hope’s) godfather! He was a Pole and a communist, even before the war, who joined the Russians immediately after they came. Allegedly, he told the NKVD that he would go to everyone’s home to make arrests, except the Kluczniks’. Yet, he was the one they sent to arrest us. My sister’s godfather allowed us to take everything we could with us. He quietly shook Mom’s hand and promised to help, but even if he tried, our fate was sealed...”

The entire family was deported by the Soviets to the Sverdlovsk area, beyond the Urals. They settled in a small hut consisting of two rooms; one of them was occupied by a family with seven children while they occupied the other one - full of bed bugs that prevented them from sleeping at night.

“Just two days after their arrival, Mom and Dad went to work in the forest, where they were sawing logs. I went along with them, although I didn’t have to work yet at the time, not until a little later. But, I wanted to help, so that the quota would be met (if I remember correctly - 6 cubic meters of sawed, trimmed, and stacked wood), since this determined whether we would get bread and also how much of it. I used to pluck branches from felled trees and carry them to one place to burn them later. This was hard work for me, but my parents and other Poles laboured even harder. On top of that was the frigid cold and constant malnourishment, as the supplies we brought with us quickly ran out. That’s when my parents started selling off, or exchanging, everything they could for food.” Due to these these inhumane living conditions in a cruel land, first her sister and then her father passed away to a “better world”. Veronika and her mother stayed in exile for more

*The former Siberian, Weronika Markowska née Klucznik, rests in a common grave, with her husband Stanislaw Markowski, at Beechmount Cemetery in Edmonton.*



*Siberian couple Wanda Szwender née Godawa and her husband Capt. Władysław Szwender, former soldier of the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division of the 2nd Corps - are buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in Edmonton.*

than six years due to the lack of passports and the prospects of leaving Soviet Russia. It wasn't until 1946 that these two Siberian women got on the list of those leaving for Poland. They traveled to their homeland for three weeks, in similar cattle cars they had been deported in, but this time with joy and hope for a better tomorrow. They reached Oleśnica in Lower Silesia, with some adventures along-the-way. Here, at a scouts' party, Veronika met her future husband **Stanisław Markowski (1923-2019)**. He was also a native of the former Eastern Borderlands (Kresy), from Śniatyń-Zaluch and also was on the NKVD list for deportation deep into Russia. However, in December 1942 he was caught by the Germans in a street roundup and then sent to work in a Sudetenland mine, in the occupied Czech Republic. In 1962, the young couple (the Markowskis) emigrated to Canada and settled in Edmonton, where Stanisław's mother had lived. Weronika and Stanisław Markowski died in Edmonton (Alberta) and are buried in the local *Beechmount* Cemetery.

"February 10, 1940 was a horrible day that I will not forget until I die," - so begins another memoir, this time, by **Wanda Szwender née Godawa (1926-2018)**. She was the eldest of four siblings and lived in the settlement of Batorówka in the Horoczów County. Her father, Antoni Godawa, was an army settler. Wanda's entire family and the families of other army settlers were loaded into cattle cars at Halychany station and deported deep into Russia. After three weeks of a nightmarish journey, the train stopped at Kotlas station in the Arkhangelsk district.

"There daddy worked in the forest, pulling trees out onto the riverbank, and we the children were picking various berries and mushrooms in the woods, in autumn (...) On October 14, 1941 we left the hamlet (Rus. "posiolok") aboard a small boat and arrived in Kotlas. There, we met lots of hungry, ragged Polish families, as we waited for the freight train that would take us all south. It was a nightmare of a journey in overcrowded train cars, as we were plagued by hunger, cold and lice. At the end of October, we arrived in Tashkent, from there we went to Kagan, and then to the "Engels" kolkhoz in the Kamasha region. At the kolkhoz, we lived in a clay hut without a door or window. It was very cold, so we lit fires using some stalks, but the smoke was so dense that we couldn't sleep or breathe. At the kolkhoz, we were sent to get cotton. Our stay there did not last long and we were soon transported to another kolkhoz near Tashkent. The kolkhoz was called Perwyj Maj (May 1st). Daddy went to work in the stable (Rus. "koniusznia"); my mother, sister and I picked cotton. For our work, we received some flour, from which my mother made lepioszki (flatbread). That is where we were at Christmas. That Christmas was lousy, as winter was severe and we were constantly freezing. There was a shortage of fuel, warm clothing, and hunger was growing. Life at the kolkhoz deteriorated day by day. To survive, we were forced to look for frozen carrots, turnips, and potatoes in the nearby fields. A typhoid epidemic broke out. (...) One of the most beautiful days since our displacement was





*The Bereznicki family: Mikolaj and Karolina (centre), Walter (left), Joseph (right), Ahwaz, 1943.*

*The Bereznicki and Leszczynski families, Edmonton, 1957.*

*The Bereznicki family is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in Edmonton. Joseph Bereznicki passed from this life on July 25th, 2023, the same day his great-granddaughter, Ewa Bereznicki Moloo, had her first birthday.*

Easter, on April 5, 1942. Crowds were praying, sobbing, thanking God for the miracle of salvation and for the Easter table placed in the square, prepared for us by the army. After more than two years of suffering and mistreatment, it was all like a fairy tale”.

Wanda, just like many other Siberian (Polish) women, after years of wandering through India, England and so forth, finally found her haven in Edmonton, Alberta. Here, she married another Siberian survivor: **Capt. Władysław Szwender (1924- 2022)**. He was a former soldier in the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division of the 2nd Corps, who had arrived in Canada two years earlier. Wanda and Capt. Wladyslaw Szwender died in Edmonton and are laid to rest in *Holy Cross Cemetery*.

**Life Story of Joseph Stanley Bereznicki (1932 –2023):**

I was born in 1932, in the village of Studzianka in the Stanislawowski “Voivodeship” (province) in southeastern pre-1939 Poland (now Ukraine) where my father Mikolaj Bereznicki (thirty-two years old at the time) held the office of “Soltys” (village elder). Along with my mother Karolina, (twenty-seven years old) and my one-year older brother Wladyslaw (Wladek) we lived an untroubled, peaceful and prosperous life. My parents owned several acres of land and employed a maid and a farmhand; life was good.

On February 10th, 1940, with the temperature hovering around minus 35 degrees Celsius, at three o’clock in the morning there was a loud banging at our door. Several uniformed men entered the house. “You must leave the house” ordered the leader (NKVD officer). My father instinctively knew what was happening, “we were being deported to Siberia”. The soldiers ordered him to harness the horses to a sleigh. Under the guidance of my mother, we packed everything on the sleigh that she considered essential, and we were on the way. As we moved down the road, we saw twenty or thirty sleighs, all like ours, heading toward the railway station. We were to be loaded into cattle wagons made of rough boards with finger wide gaps that permitted a hellish frost to pierce the inside. We were being herded away, the exact destination unknown. Supplies or rations during the journey were very meager. We were given bread and firewood. We collected the snow and melted it for water. The hole in the floor was our bathroom and the wooden stove was our heat source. Our beds consisted of bare wooden boards without even straw. Many who did not have the warm clothes or blankets did not survive. My memories of the ordeal are rather vague but one of my vivid recollections was being awoken from sleep with my hair completely frozen and attached to my pillow. My mother took tender care with a knife to separate my head from the ice. After three weeks’ travel, we arrived in Arkhangelsk. It was now the end of February or early March. We were loaded onto sleighs. The journey to the prisoners of war camp “Kamionka”, through the forest, took about six hours. This is where we, together with the Leszczynski family (Mikolaj, Paulina and their three sons) were destined to spend our time in total cold,



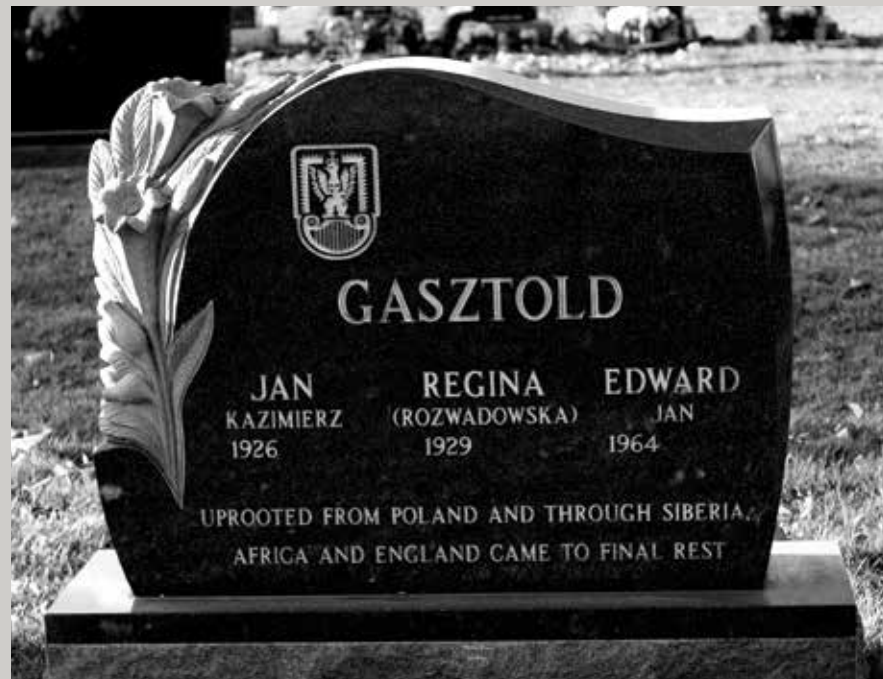
*A plaque inside the Polish church in St. Catharines commemorating the Polish officers brutally murdered at Katyn and also those exiles who died of starvation and disease "on cruel land."*

misery and hunger until February of 1942. As bad as the conditions were, we were fortunate. My father was not forced to work in taiga cutting trees, as many others were forced to in the most brutal conditions. Because he knew metal work, he was assigned to repair sleighs, springs, as well as shoe the horses. My mother was assigned to look after boiling the water which served the compound. We children were expected to go to school during the morning and in the afternoon were expected to work—doing whatever tasks were assigned. On June 22nd, 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union. Stalin now faced a grave danger and needed all the help he could muster. Thus, the so called “amnesty” was announced allowing Poles to leave the prison camps and join the army now being organized by General Wladyslaw Anders in Uzbekistan. My father jumped at the chance and we left on a long journey to Kermine (“Karmana” now called Navoi) about 150 kilometres northwest from the capital Samarkand. The journey took a few weeks as we were often bumped from the train to allow the army trains to pass. After a few weeks in Kermine we took a perilous trip across the Caspian Sea from the port of Krasnovodsk (Tukmenbashi) Turkmenistan to the port of Pahlevi, Persia (Bandar Anzali in Iran). The journey took place in the most appalling sanitary conditions. Many died from dysentery, typhoid, and other such illnesses. From Pahlevi, after being “de-liced” and fed properly for the first time in two years, we were transported by truck to Tehran. After a stay of some eighteen months, we were destined to the Polish transit camp near Karachi, India (now Pakistan). Most Poles passing through this camp were directed to some twenty camps in east and south Africa. We were fortunate enough to go to Valivade, Kolhapur in India.

In 1948, after the partition of India and its regaining of independence, the decision was made to shut the camp. The remaining Polish residents who refused to return to the now-Communist Poland were directed to some of the Polish camps in East Africa. We were on our way to Mombasa, Kenya. Most were then directed to Koja, Uganda, to one of the remaining camps. My father somehow befriended the captain of our ship, the General Stewart, and found out that the ship would be traveling further. After a few weeks of layover and maintenance in Mombasa, it would be on its way to Genoa, Italy and then on to Halifax, Canada. With the help of the captain and the Red Cross, my father managed to make contact with a former Polish neighbour now living in Alberta, who agreed to sponsor our family to Canada.

In the summer of 1955, I met the love of my life, Christine (Kryisia) Strobel. By Christmas we were engaged and on November 10th, 1956 we were married at the Holy Rosary parish in Edmonton. My brother, Walter, met his wife, Janina during her visit to Canada – they married soon after.

In Edmonton, I felt the need to give back to the community. That is why I took on projects with many Polish organizations. I am proudest of my service as president of the Canadian-Polish Congress in the 1990’s. In 1995, we were



fortunate to see a large project came to fruition – the 100-year Celebration of Polish Settlement in Alberta.”

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Thousands of Polish exiles, such as the Chodkiewicz and Szwender families, escaped from Soviet gulags thanks to the Polish Army in the East, which was being formed in the USSR. However, not all volunteers made it to the units being formed, as their attempts were being blocked by the Soviets. Documents confirming Polish citizenship had been confiscated by the NKVD and Poles were forced to accept Soviet documents. Those who had succeeded, formed the 2nd Polish Corps. Today they rest in various Canadian cemeteries. These include, for example, **Jan Modzelewski (1913-1999)**. He was a Siberian (survivor). After the amnesty in 1941, he joined the 13th infantry regiment (13 pułk piechoty) of the Polish Army in the Soviet Union under Gen. Nikodem Sulik, which later became part of the 5th Border Infantry Division in Gen. Wladyslaw Anders’ 2nd Polish Corps. With them, he fought through the entire military campaign, including the battle of Monte Cassino.

Jan Modzelewski died in Montreal and is buried in the cemetery at *Saint-Souver*, in Quebec. **Jan Kazimierz Gasztold (1926-2022)**; a Siberian (survivor) and a graduate of the Young Soldiers’ (Szkoła Junacka) Cadet School in Palestine and also the Young Soldiers’ Mechanical and Aviation School. After passing his exams, he was repairing military aircraft in Heliopolis, Egypt. In Canada, he was a well-known Polish activist, including in the SPK; he was also the former president of the Association of Polish Airmen - “Warsaw” Wing. He died in Toronto and is laid to rest at *Assumption Catholic Cemetery* in Mississauga, Ontario.

**Franciszek Aleksander Myszkowski (1902-1965)** was born November 4, 1902 in Bakalarzewo-Swwalki, Poland. He was deported by the Soviets to Siberia with his wife and two children in 1940 among all other Polish people. He served under General Anders in the battle of Monte Cassino. He received a Monte Cassino medal and another medal consisting of a brown cross with crossed swords. He was still in the army stationed in Manchester England. Finally in 1948 he was united with his wife and children who had lived in East Africa Tanganyika (Tanzania) during the war.

**Wife Helena Myszkowska (1908-1974)** was born December 16, 1908 in Warsaw, Poland. They couldn’t return back to their homeland. Having relatives in Canada, decided to immigrate, and came to Canada February 9, 1949.

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...Today, despite the fact that so much time has passed since the first deportation of our countrymen to Siberia, the following words remain extremely relevant: *If I forget them, then O God in Heaven, forget about me* - This is a quote from Adam Mickiewicz’s *Dziady* (Forefathers’ Eve), which has been and is repeatedly invoked in connection with the Soviet persecution and murder of Poles living in the Eastern Polish Republic.

*The Siberian, Jan Modzelewski, died in Montreal and is buried in St. Souver Cemetery in Quebec. While Jan Kazimierz Gasztold, who died in Toronto, is buried in Assumption Catholic Cemetery in Mississauga.*

*Franciszek Aleksander Myszkowski passed away age 62 on March 8, 1965. Helena passed away on June 20, 1974, age 65. They are both buried in St. Ann Roman Catholic Cemetery in Barrhead, Alberta Canada.*

# With Diplomatic Passports





On July 5, 1945, Canada followed the United States and Great Britain by recognizing the communist government in Poland, which was called the “Provisional Government of National Unity” (Tymczasowy Rząd Jedności Narodowej), while also withdrawing support for the London government. Consequently, the diplomats working at the Polish consulates in Montreal (established in 1919), Winnipeg (1920) and at the Polish Embassy in Ottawa (1933), were stripped of their posts and diplomatic immunity. However, they remained in Canada; they never accepted the occupation of the Motherland and worked very tirelessly for a free Poland, until the end of their days.

Katarzyna Szrodt, author of *History of the Second Polish Republic's Consulate in Montreal in 1919-1945*, (Historii Konsulatu Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej w Montrealu w latach 1919-1945, MSZ, 2012), wrote:

“The diplomatic post in Montreal is headed by Consul General Dr. Tadeusz Brzeziński, the Polish Consulate in Winnipeg - by Consul Dr. Juliusz Szygowski, the Consulate General in Ottawa - by Consul General Wiktor Podoski. Regardless of the challenges and failures of Polish diplomacy during the war time, Polish consulates had to measure up and function efficiently. Belief in an imminent victory, determination and extraordinary diligence, allowed the Polish diplomats to mobilize the Polish community and create a strong financial and spiritual base in Canada for the occupied Poland.

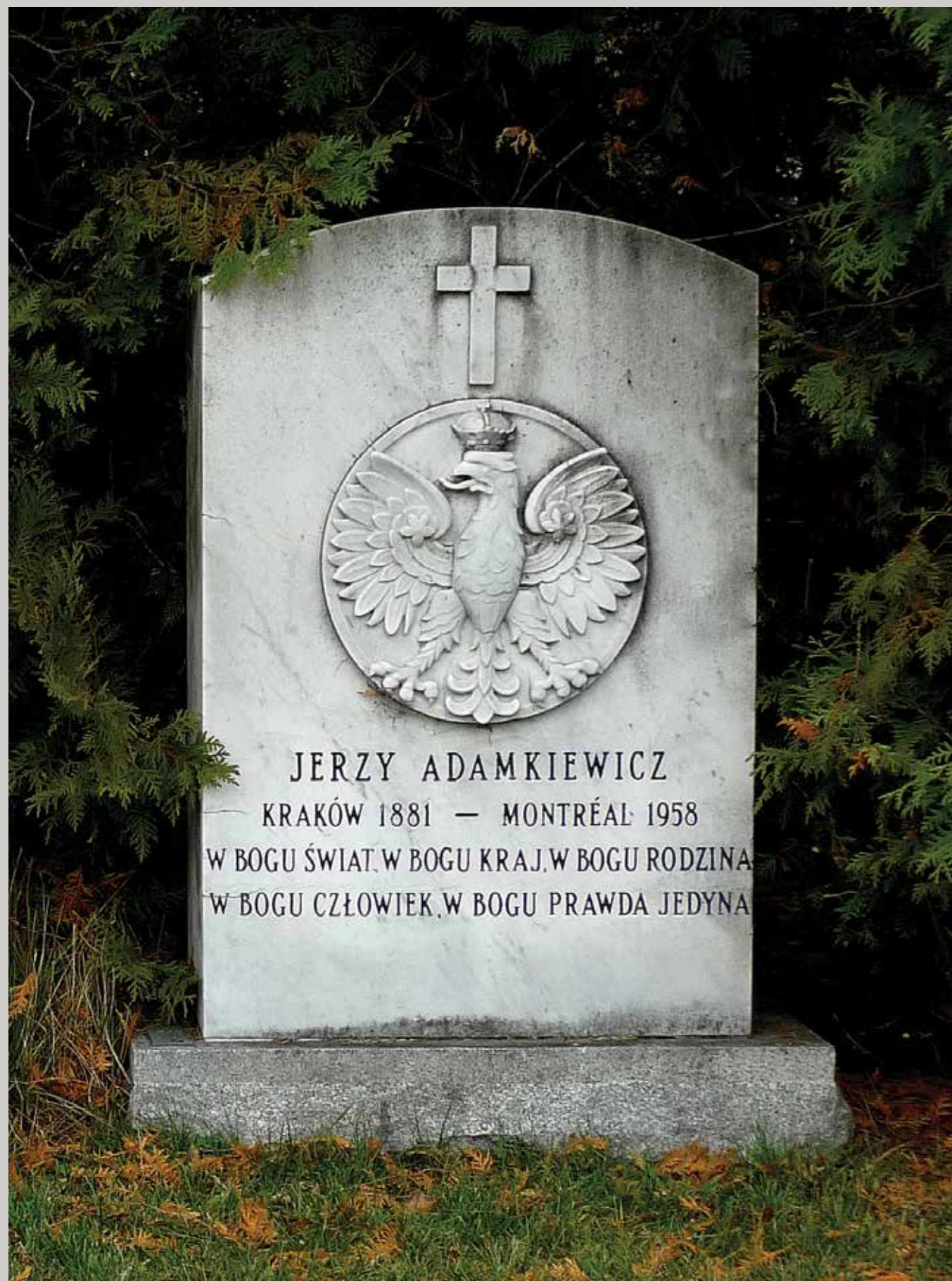
At the 11th Convention of Poles in Canada (XI zjazd Polaków w Kanadzie), held in Hamilton on September 1944, Consul General Dr. Tadeusz Brzeziński congratulated Polish Canadians on the unity they demonstrated - in the organizations which worked together for a Polish society suffering from the aftermath of war. As a great friend of Polonia, Brzeziński compared Polish organizations to a mighty tree, deeply rooted in the great mass of Polish society in Canada.”

Today, at the cemetery in Saint-Sauveur, in the so-called ‘Polish Alley’ and in the *Notre-Dame* Cemetery in Ottawa, rest those who did not return to their enslaved homeland. They chose freedom and became a part of the Polish community in Canada.”

**Tadeusz Brzeziński (1896 – 1990)** was Consul General in Montreal from 1938 to 1945. A graduate of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences at the University of Lviv, in 1921 he was employed in the Polish diplomatic service. He served at posts in Essen (1921-1922), Lille (1928-1931), Leipzig (1931-1935), and Kharkov (1936-1937). In 1938, he was sent to a diplomatic post in Canada as Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Montreal. After World War II, he remained in Canada where was active in the Canadian Polish Congress as the president, from 1952

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The grave of Tadeusz Brzeziński's family. He was Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Montreal from 1938 to 1945. He died in Montreal and is buried with his wife Leonia and son Adam in the Saint-Sauveur cemetery.

Archive photo: Polish consular post in 1920-1945 in Winnipeg.



*The grave of the first Consul General in Ottawa - Jerzy Adamkiewicz, in the Saint-Sauveur cemetery.*

to 1962. Until retirement, he worked for the Ministry of Culture in the province of Quebec, helping to organize French-language cultural centres in small towns.

He was the father of Zbigniew Brzeziński, an American political scientist and former national security advisor to US President Jimmy Carter.

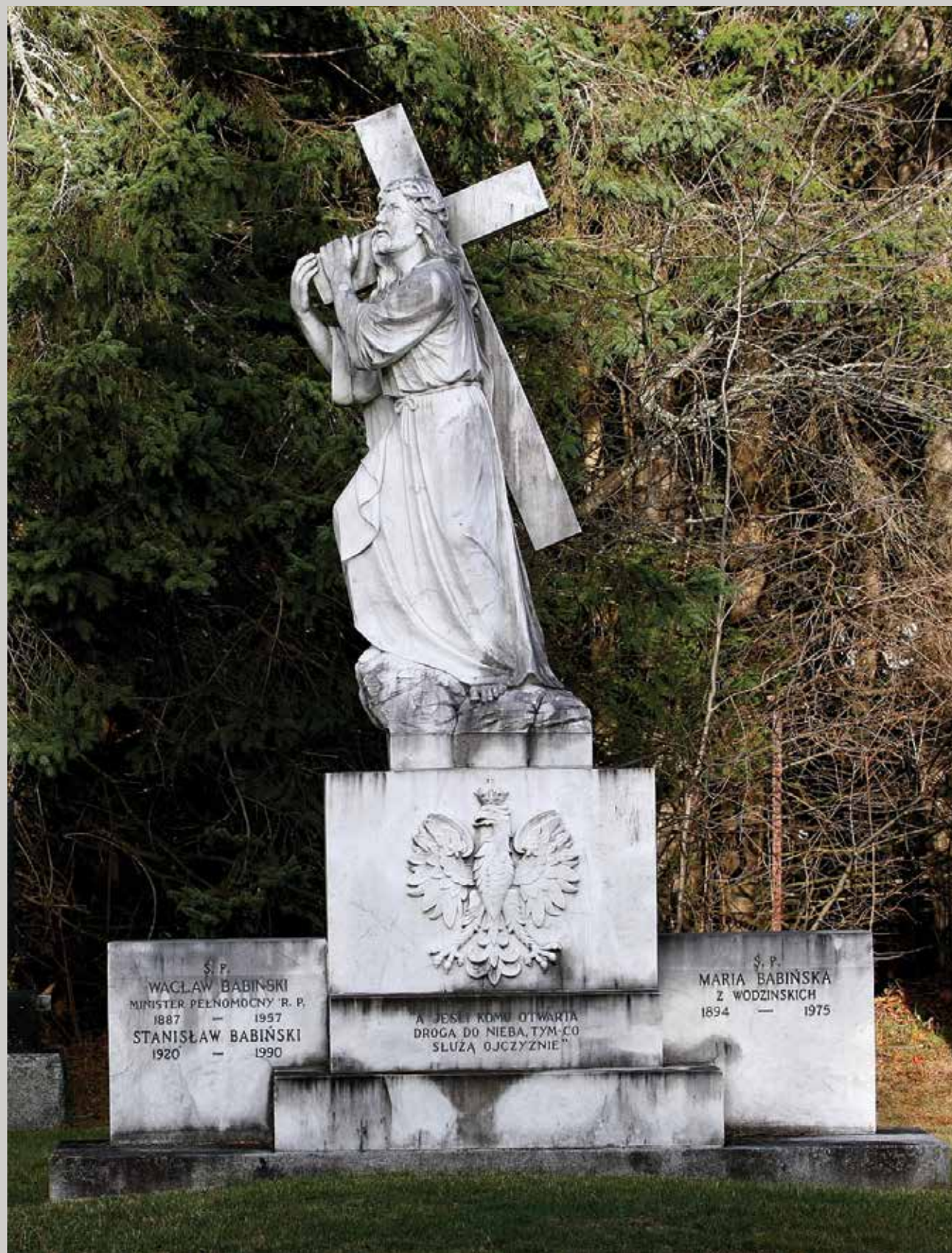
He died in Montreal and rests with his wife **Leonia (1896-1985), née Roman and son Adam (1929-1954)** in the *Saint-Sauveur* Cemetery.

When the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established a new (the third one) Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Ottawa in 1933 (later turned into a diplomatic mission), its first-appointed Consul General was **Jerzy Adamkiewicz (1881-1958)**, who had previously studied law at the consular faculty in Vienna. From 1920, he held the office of Consul General in Leipzig, London, Jerusalem, and from 1933 to 1936 - in Ottawa. After the outbreak of World War II, he worked for the Polish government in London. He returned to Canada in 1946 and for two years he was a professor of history and political sciences at St. Mary's University in Halifax; then from 1948 to 1952, he taught at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. The last years of his life were associated with the University of Montreal, where he worked as a professor at the Center for Slavic Studies. He died in Montreal and is laid to rest in the Saint-Sauveur cemetery. His white marble tombstone is decorated with a cross, the emblem of Poland, and is inscribed with the words reflecting certain values which the deceased had always been faithful to: *In God the world, in God the country, in God the family, in God the man, in God the only truth.*

After Jerzy Adamkiewicz, **Jan Pawlica (1888 -1957)** was appointed Consul General. He began his diplomatic service in 1919, serving as Vice Consul in Prague. In 1933, he became Consul General in Winnipeg and after three years was posted to Ottawa, where he served in that capacity until the outbreak of World War II.

In 1939, Jan Pawlica was replaced by **Wiktor Józef Podoski (1895 - 1960)**, who went down in the history of Polish diplomacy as the first envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland in Canada. He studied at the engineering faculty of the Royal Technical College and at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, as well as at the School of Economics and Political Science in London.

From 1922, he worked as an assistant military attaché at the Polish Military Mission in the Polish Embassy in London, then at the Political Department of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. From 1929 to 1931 he was secretary of the Polish diplomatic mission in Washington.



*Tombstone monument on Dr. Waclaw Babiński's family grave in Saint-Sauveur. He was Minister Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary Envoy of the Republic of Poland in Ottawa.*

Shortly before the outbreak of World War II, Podoski was appointed Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Ottawa. From 1939, he had managed the post for three years. On March 27, 1942, he was appointed the first-ever envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland in Canada (now the position of ambassador).

From 1944 to 45 he was head of the American Department of the Polish Foreign Ministry (MSZ) in London. After returning to Canada, he settled in Ottawa. For more than a dozen years he was an employee of the Canadian government in the social security department. Having excellent connections in the government, he played an important role in preparing the ground for Polish mass emigration after World War II. He died in Ottawa and rests in a family grave at Notre-Dame Cemetery. It is ironic that a man who was so involved in the life of the Polish-Canadian community, particularly concerned with the study of the Polish language, and who founded a Polish school in Ottawa, has such an extremely modest inscription in English on his small tombstone:

*In loving memory of Victor Podoski, Ap. 2, 1895 - July 31, 1960, First Minister of Poland to Canada.*

From November 1, 1944 to July 5, 1945, **Dr. Waclaw Babiński (1887 - 1957)** served as Minister Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary Envoy of the Republic of Poland in Ottawa. He held a doctorate in economics from the Faculty of Social Sciences at Ludwig and Maximilian University in Munich. In 1919, he began his diplomatic service at the headquarters of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1929, he was appointed extraordinary envoy and minister plenipotentiary in Belgrade (1929 - 1931), then in The Hague (1931-1944).

After World War II, he remained in exile in Canada. He was a member of the Polish Independence League (Liga Niepodległości Polski) and a representative of the National Unity Executive Council (Egzekutywa Zjednoczenia Narodowego). Regardless of his diplomatic service, he was a well-known and respected scholar. In 1947, he was appointed professor of social sciences at the University of Ottawa, and from 1948 to 1957 he taught philology, literature and history at the Center for Slavic Studies at the University of Montreal.

He died in Montreal on July 22, 1957. "The death of Minister Plenipotentiary Dr. Waclaw Babiński occurred a few hours after the surgery due to a heart attack, at the Hotel Dieu hospital in Montreal," - wrote Franciszek Bratek-Kozłowski in his book *Life with a Bayonet and a Lance, Memories and Reflections* (Życie z bagnetem i lancetem, wspomnienia – refleksje, Canadian Polish Research Institute, Toronto 1989). The news



*Wiktor Józef Podoski, the first Extraordinary Envoy and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland in Canada, rests in a family grave at Notre-Dame Cemetery in Ottawa.*

of Minister Babiński's death, the last envoy of the Republic of Poland in Canada, spread with lightning speed through Montreal. The funeral took place on July 26, 1957 at the Church of Our Lady of Czestochowa. A solemn funeral mass was officiated by Father F. Baldyga and assisted by numerous Polish priests. Every last seat in the church was filled. Among those present were: General Kazimierz Sosnkowski - a friend of the deceased, representatives of the Congress, representatives of the Polish societies in Montreal, scientists, politicians, and numerous acquaintances. Prime Minister Duplessis was represented by Senator Olivier Renaud; the military district commander was represented by two staff officers; the ailing cardinal was represented by Canon Drouin. The Canadian Press sent its reporters and photographers.

After the funeral service, Ambassador Tadeusz Romer spoke beside the coffin, draped with the national banner, in front of the church. He bid farewell to his deceased colleague from the diplomatic service. The funeral cortege was formed with the banners of Polish organizations at the head, preceded by a group of scouts carrying the awards of the deceased, with the coffin escorted by delegates of various organizations, and followed by a funeral procession of several hundred people.

From there, the body of the deceased was transported to the village of Saint-Sauveur, located 45 miles from Montreal.

He rests together with his wife **Maria (née Wodzińska) (1894 -1975)** and brother **Stanisław Babiński (1920-1990)** in the Saint-Sauveur cemetery.

The other common grave of the Babiński family is located in the *Old Powązki* Cemetery in Warsaw.

In 1942-1945 the secretary of the Polish embassy in Ottawa was **Adam Żurowski (1908 -1962)**, who began his service in diplomacy after graduating from the University of Grenoble. He first worked at the consulates in Lyon and Lille - and later at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw. During the war he was interned in Switzerland; however, he made it to London. From there, he was posted to Canada to work at the Polish embassy, where he took care of the Wawel treasures, among other things. He died in Ottawa and rests in a family grave in *Notre-Dame* Cemetery.

In 1920, the Polish General Consulate for Western Canada was established in Winnipeg, with its first consul Walerian Bukowiecki-Olszewski. Between 1944 and 1945, the tenth and last consul general was **Dr. Adam Synowiecki (1901-1970)**, a lawyer by training. After the





*Dr. Sylwester Gruszka began his diplomatic service in Trieste, later continuing in Zagreb, Detroit, New York, Cologne, Paris, and Sydney, Australia where he died. After his death, his wife, Maria Gruszka moved the ashes of the deceased to the cemetery in Saint-Sauveur, where they rest together in one grave.*

*Beside him rests Stanisław Kara, a professional officer with the rank of colonel, who was Consul General in Lille, then in Paris, and Berlin.*

war, he remained in Canada. He lived with his wife Wanda in Winnipeg. Their modest grave is marked by a slab of red granite with an inscription in Polish: *Grant them eternal rest, O Lord* - and is located in the old *St. Mary's* Catholic Cemetery in Winnipeg.

Polish diplomats who did not work at posts in Canada also found places of eternal rest in the Saint-Sauveur cemetery. This is because their post-war lives were tied to this country through family connections.

**Dr. Sylwester Gruszka (1891-1956)**; received a doctorate in law and political science from the Jagiellonian University of Kraków. In 1922, he began his diplomatic service in Trieste and later continued it in Zagreb, Detroit, New York, Cologne, Paris... The last post he headed as a consul, from 1941 to 1945, was the consulate in Sydney, Australia, where he died. After his death, his wife, **Maria Gruszka (1901-1971)**, née Roman, sister of Leonia Brzeziński, moved the ashes of the deceased to the cemetery in Saint-Sauveur, where they rest now together in one grave.

**Stanisław Kara (1893 -1955)**; a professional officer with the rank of colonel; he was commander of the officers' school in Ostrów Mazowiecki. In 1931, he became Consul General in Lille, then in Paris and Berlin. Between 1944-1945 he served as military attaché to the Polish diplomatic mission in Rio de Janeiro. He died there. He was awarded the Order of *Virtuti Militari*.

At the cemetery, Colonel Kara was commemorated by his wife **Władysława Kara (1894 -1965)** with a tombstone modeled after the monument in London to General Władysław Sikorski. Also, commemorated are: daughters **Janina Kara Mitz (1917-1983)** and **Anna Kara Tarasiewicz (1923 -1983)**, along with Anna Kara's first husband **Romuald Sanders Świdorski (1914 -1979)**, who died in the United States.

**Tadeusz Romer (1894 -1978)**; studied agronomy and political science in Fribourg, Switzerland. In 1917, he was appointed secretary of the Polish National Committee (*Komitet Narodowy Polski*) in Paris, where he participated in the negotiations at the Versailles peace conference leading to Poland's independence. He later worked at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and served as Polish ambassador to Italy, Portugal, and Japan (1937-1941), where he helped to finance Polish-Jewish refugees and provide them with visas to Japan. He created the "Polish War Victims Relief Committee" and appointed his wife Zofia as its chairman. After the Polish embassy in that country was closed, he left for Shanghai, where, as Polish High Commissioner, he continued this humanitarian aid.

In 1942, he took up the post of Polish ambassador to Moscow, where he conducted negotiations with the Allies and with Stalin. In addition to his purely political tasks, Romer focused on humanitarian aid to Polish exiles



deported by the Soviets deep into Russia.

In his first appeal to his countrymen, he wrote the following with hope: “The Polish-Soviet agreement of 1941 entails a whole series of important consequences for Polish citizens residing in the Soviet Union. We owe to this agreement the release of many thousands among you, the creation of the Polish army - which is now staying in the Middle East - and the departure of numerous military families with that army... My greatest concern is the thought that there are still Polish settlements, especially in the far North, where our help could not reach at all, for various reasons... Their survival requires a great deal of patience, fortitude and resilience from all of us.

With a warm and heartfelt wish that we do not lack all these virtues, I end my proclamation with an exclamation: See you on your way to a free and happy Poland.”

After the disclosure of the Soviet massacre of Polish officers in Katyn and the severance of diplomatic relations with Russia, he was appointed High Commissioner of the Polish Republic to the Middle East. He was also immediately appointed in London as Foreign Minister of the Polish Government in Exile (1943-1944).

In 1948 he emigrated with his family to Canada, where he taught French literature and culture at McGill University for a dozen years. He was one of the most dedicated and respected activists in the Polish-Canadian community.

Tadeusz Romer died in Montreal and rests in a family grave with his wife **Zofia Romerowa (1897-1981), née Wańkowicz** and his cousins: **Jadwiga Dunin-Jundziłł (1873-1963)** and **Maria Hubisz (1904-2006)** in Saint-Sauveur.

*They will rest and rise* - proclaims the inscription on their tombstone.

Another Polish consul, who served Poland as a diplomat between the wars and who chose freedom in Canada, was Lieutenant **Dr. Jerzy Korwin-Piotrowski (1909-1978)**. After graduating from the Faculty of Law at the University of Warsaw, he earned a Doctorate in Law from the University of Lille. He worked in the diplomatic service: first in Minsk and later in Brussels. He spent the German occupation in France. After the war, already in Canada, he worked at the University of Montreal and was a consultant to the provincial government of Quebec.

He died in Montreal and is laid to rest in the veterans’ cemetery in Pointe Claire.

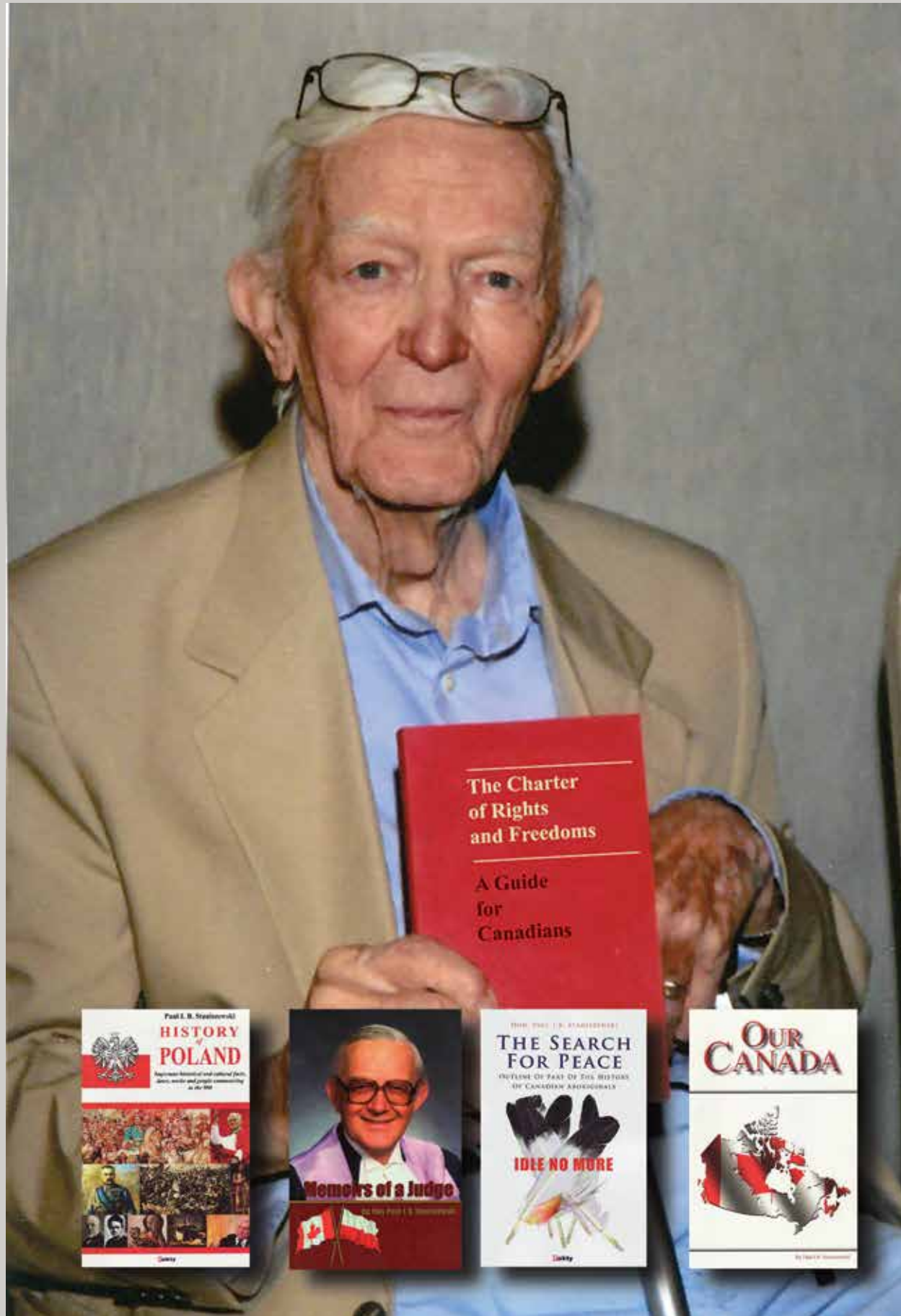
*Tadeusz Romer is laid to rest in the Saint-Sauveur cemetery. He was a prominent Polish diplomat, politician, ambassador of Poland to Japan, ambassador to Soviet Russia, foreign minister in Stanislaw Mikolajczyk’s government, and organizer of aid to Polish refugees of Jewish ancestry in Japan and Shanghai.*

*Adam Żurowski, who worked in the Polish consulates in Lyon and Lille and later served as secretary of the Polish diplomatic mission in Ottawa, is laid to rest at Notre-Dame Cemetery in Ottawa.*



## With Polish Ancestry

WIECZNE ODPOCZYWANIE  
RACZ IM DAĆ PANIE



*Hon. Paweł Ignacy Staniszewski; first Canadian judge of the Ontario Supreme Court, born in Montreal. Founder of the Staniszewski Foundation for top law students at the University of Windsor. A well-known philanthropist and social activist, awarded the title of Honourable. Author of five books. In recognition of his contributions and in memory of Paweł Staniszewski, one of the streets in Windsor was named "Staniszewski Street."*

It is estimated that there are more than 800,000 Poles living in Canada and about 1.2 million of those who declare Polish ancestry. So, there are Polish parishes (more than 30 Polish parishes in Ontario alone), churches, Polish schools, Polish homes, which are places of meetings and celebrations for local Poles, and hundreds of Polish organizations - including some 200 affiliated with the Canadian Polish Congress. There are Polish foundations and scientific institutes, including the world's best-known Polish Scientific Institute in Canada, which aims to "preserve Polish thought, scientific heritage and traditions abroad". There is a Faculty of Polish History at the University of Toronto, the St. Stanislaus and St. Casimir's Credit Union Bank with their numerous branches; there are folk bands, Polish stores, restaurants, travel agencies.... Polish scientists, engineers, doctors, and businessmen. Polish people involved in culture and the arts live here - and are highly regarded in the Canadian community. It happens that for their work and achievements, some of them are decorated with the highest civilian award in Canada - the *Order of Canada*. There are also politicians with Polish ancestry who sit on the parliamentary benches in the House of Commons, or the Senate, in the federal Parliament in Ottawa, or in the provincial parliaments - and are proud of their origins.

A Canadian judge of the Ontario Supreme Court, a Pole by descent, Paweł I.B. Staniszewski recalled in his book *Memoirs of a Judge* (Tribune Printing & Publishieng Inc., Tecumseh 2003): "In 1911 my parents became engaged and were married in 1912 in Swisłocz. A year later they had boarded a transatlantic ship, of the Hamburg-America line and arrived in Canada. They disembarked in Halifax and traveled by rail to Montreal. (...) When I turned six, I went to St. Anselm Catholic School (bilingual), located on the corner of Rouen Street and Bercy Street in Eastern Montreal. The school was run by nuns, Canadian women of French descent. They allowed French, Polish and English to be taught only in the first three grades. From grade four to eight, all lessons were in English only. Language and nationality were not an issue in Quebec at the time; since poverty united everyone." Both Paweł Staniszewski's parents and those of other new immigrants, worked very hard, barely making ends meet, but they still sent their children to school. They invested in education, since it was both a mother's and a father's dream to educate their children, so that their lives would be easier than those of their parents. Often they assumed that it was sufficient for the children to be brought up in a home with knowledge of the native language, faith, and attachment to Polish traditions and culture.

They realized that it was the assimilation into Canadian society that would



*Hon. Paweł Ignacy Staniszewski died in Tecumseh and is laid to rest in the family tomb at Heavenly Rest Cemetery in Windsor.*

*Archival photo: Prof. Dr. Henryk M. Wójcicki (1916-2006), a psychiatrist with his wife Zofia née Szablewska. He served in the 1st Armoured Division. In Wales, he ran the neuro-psychiatry department at the Polish Veterans' Hospital. In 1953, he emigrated to Canada, where he became the clinic director at a large psychiatric hospital in Northern Battleford, Saskatchewan. Later, at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, he was - first, an assistant professor - then, an associate professor, and later - a clinic professor. He was an extremely energetic Polish activist. Awarded the Order of Canada. Both spouses died in Edmonton.*

provide opportunities for most of their children. Few parents, however, expected to reap the fruits of this investment in the first generation of Canadian-born children and to be proud of their achievements. Certainly, few hoped that their sons would hold the highest positions in the country where they came to live and work - that they would be politicians proud of their ancestry.

**Hon. Donald (Don) Frank Mazankowski (1935-2020)**; a Canadian politician of Polish descent, born in Viking, Alberta. A long-time Conservative Party activist who was a member of the federal Parliament (MP) for 25 years. He served as a cabinet minister to Prime Ministers Joe Clark and Brian Mulroney. He was the Minister of Finance and in 1986 was appointed Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, a position he held until his retirement in 1993. He was the only Pole in the history of this country to hold such a high office. In 1992, Mazankowski was formally recognized and included in a small group of prominent Canadians who had been given the title of Honourable. He was twice awarded the Order of Canada (Officer in 2000 and Companion in 2013). He died in Sherwood Park and was buried in a *Cemetery in Vegreville* (Alberta); where he lived, where he won his first election and from where he traveled the world.

**Stanley (Stanisław) Haidasz (1923 - 2009)**; was the first MP of Polish descent, parliamentary secretary of various ministries in the Canadian government, the first Canadian of Polish descent appointed minister, and the first and only senator of Polish descent describing himself as “a son of Polish immigrants”. He was born in Toronto. He was a doctor - cardiologist by training and profession. From 1962 to 1974, he was representing the Liberal Party and was elected to the House of Commons six times as a federal MP. For two years (1972-1974) he served as the Minister of Multiculturalism. He served twice as a Canadian delegate to the UN General Assembly and three times as a parliamentary delegate to the North Atlantic Council. In 1978, he was appointed as a senator. He received *honorary doctorates from the University of Northland* in Montreal and the Catholic University of Lublin. He was awarded the Order of St. Gregory by Pope John Paul II in 1997. Stanley (Stanisław) Haidasz died in Toronto and is laid to rest in *Park Lawn Cemetery*.

**Hon. Paweł Ignacy Staniszewski (1925-2013)**; the first Polish-Canadian judge of the Ontario Supreme Court, born in Montreal. He graduated from Loyola College, the University of Toronto, and Osgoode Hall Law School. He practiced law in Toronto as a partner at Bagwell, Stevens & McFarlane and was a Liberal Party candidate in the federal election. In 1968, he was sworn in as a federal judge in Windsor. Later, he was appointed as a judge in the Ontario Supreme Court of Justice. He



was the founder of the Staniszewski Foundation for top law students at the University of Windsor. He was also a well-known philanthropist and community activist, who was distinguished with the title of *Honourable*. He was an author of five books. In recognition of his services and in memory of Paweł Staniszewski, one of the streets in Windsor was named “Staniszewski Street.”

Paweł Ignacy Staniszewski died in Tecumseh (Ontario) and is laid to rest in a family tomb at *Heavenly Rest Cemetery* in Windsor.

After joining World War II, Canada offered not only military but also humanitarian aid to the Allies, making a departure from its immigration policies. In 1940, the first transport of women and children from German-occupied countries was accepted, this also included Polish officers who were staying in London.

On July 12, 1940, the Polish transoceanic ship “Stefan Batory” docked in Halifax. Aboard the ship were the treasures of Wawel Castle (in Kraków), including the coronation sword of the Polish kings named “Szczerbiec”, the tapestries of King Sigismund Augustus, the papal bull, cups, regalia, goldware, antique weapons... In total, more than two hundred priceless objects had been stored in Ottawa and Quebec City, until 1959 - when they returned to Poland. Throughout the years, the most faithful guardian and conservator of these treasures was the custodian, **Arch Lt. Józef Krzywda-Polkowski (1888-1981)**. Together with Stanisław Świerzeleski, he took the most valuable relics of Polish culture out of Cracow - via Romania, France and Great Britain, thereby saving them from looting by the German invaders. Afterwards, he took outstanding care of them in Canada. Unfortunately, in 1946, by a decision of the London government, he was deprived of all his livelihood. Thus, out of necessity, he took on a wide variety of jobs: he was a stoker in a boiler room, a night watchman in a hotel, a farm labourer, an employee in a Polish store... No one appreciated, or wanted to appreciate, his contribution to saving the Polish national heritage. It was not until 1956, “in spite of his ideals and his allegiance to the Polish Republic,” that he was given Canadian citizenship and with it a small social security benefit granted by the Canadian government - his only source of income. This forgotten Polish patriot, was an extremely hardworking and dedicated guardian of the Wawel treasures. He has a very modest grave and a small tombstone with the inscription: POLISH ARMED FORCES.

Józef Krzywda - Polkowski died in Ottawa and was buried in the local *Notre Dame Cemetery* in a grave paid for by the city.

At the beginning of the war, more than 600 Polish engineers and technicians were brought to Canada, mainly from England and France.

*Stanley (Stanislaw) Haidasz; the first Canadian of Polish descent appointed minister and the first and only senator of Polish descent, describing himself as “a son of Polish immigrants”, born in Toronto. A cardiologist by training and profession. He died in Toronto and is laid to rest in Park Lawn Cemetery.*



*Arch Lt. Józef Krzywda-Polkowski, the most faithful guardian of the Wawel treasures, conservator and custodian, rests at Notre-Dame Cemetery in Ottawa, in a grave paid for by the city.*

They came with the so-called temporary visas (for the duration), to work in the arms industry. After the victorious end of the war, they were to return to their country. On June 15, 1941, as soon as they arrived in Ottawa, twenty Polish engineers held a meeting, which is considered the First General Meeting of the Association of Polish Engineers in Canada (Stowarzyszenia Inżynierów Polskich - SIP), in their chronicle. The group of Polish specialists grew quite quickly, as in May 1942, when the Second General Assembly was held, the Association had already counted 112 members: 40 of them arrived from the UK, 58 from France, 8 from Japan, and 6 from Brazil (today, SIP in Canada has eight branches: in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Kitchener, Edmonton, Oshawa, Mississauga, and Peterborough and has nearly 500 Polish engineers).

Polish engineers and technicians provided great services to the Canadian wartime industry - in spite of their initially harsh living conditions – all thanks to their good professional training and high qualifications. They were, as it was described - “a creative element valued by Canada”, which significantly raised the Canadian authorities’ opinion of the Poles.

On June 25, 1946, the achievements of Polish engineers and scholars brought to Canada for the war period were presented in the Senate. These included: the launching of 5 manufacturing branches that had been completely unknown in Canada, the organization of 6 manufacturing plants, and 35 patent applications, 8 of which were used in the Canadian industry.

One of the most prominent and active members of SIP ( Association of Polish Engineers), in its organizational stage, was **Eng. Mechanic Wojciech M. Fangor (1910-1980)**. He was a lieutenant in the Polish Army, who graduated from the Mechanical Faculty at the Lviv Polytechnic in 1937 and worked in the aerospace industry in Canada during the war, up until his retirement. He also taught at McGill University in Montreal. He was a member of the Corporation of Professional Engineers of Quebec.

He died in Montreal and is buried in the *Field of Honour* Cemetery in Pointe Claire.

In the same cemetery rests **Eng. Eugene Baranowski (1914- 1985)**, a cadet corporal who took part in the battles of Narvik. After the fall of France, he studied at the Polytechnic Institute of the University of Grenoble. He arrived in Canada in 1942 and worked for many years at a paper mill design company. He was a well-known social activist in the Montreal Polish community. Thanks to his involvement, a Nicolaus Copernicus statue (a replica of the one in Warsaw, sculpted by Thorvaldsen), was erected at the World Exhibition Expo ‘67 in Montreal, in 1966, as a gift from the Polish community for the City (it now stands



*Leonard Wiktor Ramczykowski and his wife Eleonora with their students, at the Squaw Bay Indian Reservation near Thunder Bay. In 1963, as a token of their appreciation and gratitude, the First Nations people named Leonard Ramczykowski Honorary Chief of the Ojibway tribe and named him Niganate (Guiding Light); Eleonora was named Kissung (Little Sun).*

at 1000 St. Jacques in Montreal). Eugene Baranowski was awarded the Order of Canada. He died in Montreal and is laid to rest at the *Field of Honour* Cemetery in Pointe Claire.

Out of this contracted group of Polish specialists, **Eng. Czesław Piotr Brzozowicz (1911-1997)** achieved the greatest fame in Canada. He began his professional career rather inauspiciously, not as a civil engineer but as a surveyor for the laying of a highway between Prince George and Prince Rupert in British Columbia. He later moved to Toronto and opened his own consulting firm, CP Brzozowicz Ltd. His first client was the Canadian Breweries Ltd. corporation, whose plans called for several reinforced concrete structures in Toronto, Waterloo, Windsor and Montreal, which was typical for those times. Brzozowicz used concrete structures reinforced with embedded steel bars. This was a relatively rare practice in Canada at the time, so it made the Polish engineer very popular. Among his many construction projects, the most important he consulted on are: the Toronto *CN Tower*, the world's first tower with a revolving restaurant overlooking Niagara Falls, the *Toronto-Dominion Centre*, and Toronto's first subway line.

He died of pneumonia in Toronto and is laid to rest in *York* Cemetery. After the end of the war, the group of Polish engineers was joined by former soldiers of Polish military formations in the West, who after demobilization, happened to be in Great Britain. Taking advantage of Polish schools and universities there, they had been preparing for civilian life, acquiring specific professions. To this end, professors from the Polish polytechnics formed the Council of Academic Technical Schools (Rada Akademickich Szkół Technicznych - RAST). Classes in engineering were taught, as part of the programme at the Polish Polytechnic established by the RAST, which made it possible for many Poles to graduate with an engineering degree. Initially, it was according to the standards of the Polish post-secondary studies; later those standards were changed to the English post-secondary education standards that were recognized in Great Britain. Four Polish faculties were then established at British universities: medicine (1941) in Edinburgh, architecture (1942) in Liverpool and law (1944) at Balliol College in Oxford. After the war, the Polish Polytechnic was replaced by a technical college for Poles - Polish University College (PUNO).

One of those former soldiers preparing for his 'A' levels in London was **Leonard Victor Ramczykowski (1905 -1988)**, a teacher by vocation, with versatile education. Before the outbreak of World War II, he had been studying Polish, German and Slavic philologies, as well as: philosophy, psychology, experimental psychology, art history, and Greek literature





*The grave of Eleonora and Leonard Ramczykowski at Saint Mary's Cemetery in Indian River, Prince Edward Island.*

and art, at the University of Poznań. After graduation, he began working as a teacher of foreign languages at the Tadeusz Hołowka Gymnasium in Stolpy. Along with with teaching there, he also studied the history of education, child psychology, experimental psychology, administrative problems of education, general teaching methods, and didactic methods of language teaching at the University of Vilnius. In 1931, Ramczykowski married his great love, **Eleonora Anna Piskorska (1914 -1999)**. Unfortunately, the war separated them for several years. Leonard was arrested by the Soviets and banished to the Siberian gulags; upon his release, he joined General Anders' army and participated in the Italian campaign. Eleonora, on the other hand, survived the war in Poland. They were finally reunited in London, where Leonard Ramczykowski was then working as a teacher at the Joseph Conrad Polish School. He later taught Polish, English, history and mathematics at the Stowell Park School for Girls. In 1952, however, the Ramczykowskis decided to leave Britain. In Liverpool, they boarded the ship "Samaria" and arrived in Canada, where they worked as teachers at the Squaw Bay Native Reservation near Thunder Bay, Ontario, until 1968. In 1963, the First Nations people, in recognition and gratitude, appointed Leonard Ramczykowski as an Honorary Chief of the Ojibway tribe and named him Niganate (Guiding Light); Eleonora was named Kissung (Little Sun). Upon retirement, the couple moved to Prince Edward Island.

They died in the Summerside settlement and are buried at *Saint Mary Roman Catholic Cemetery* in Indian River, Prince Edward Island.

Many Poles who had been taught by Leonard Ramczykowski went on to study at reputable English universities, after passing their final exams, but not only at the English ones, since the *Polish University College* was also very popular among Poles at the time. Graduating from an English university after arriving in Canada put the graduates at the head of long queues for jobs. They had diplomas, which was and still is extremely important in a country where the representative of the British monarchy is the Governor General. It also mattered that they had a very good command of English or French. An example of this is the highly respected Polish scientist **Dr. Jerzy Adam Dobrowolski (1931-2013)**, who defended his doctoral thesis at the University of London. This physicist, with a specialty in thin film optics, used the results of his work for the first time in the domain of fighting against money counterfeiters; he applied a print which could not be counterfeited to 50- and 100-dollar bills in Canada, to credit cards and various other documents. Throughout his career, he worked for the *National Research Council of Canada (NRC)*. He was the author of more than 190 articles, more than 30 patents and 8 review chapters in books.



*An obelisk commemorating Dr. Jerzy Adam Dobrowolski, a physicist with a specialty in thin film optics. He was the author of more than 190 papers, more than 30 patents, and 8 review chapters in books. He was awarded Canada's highest honour - the Order of Canada. He rests in Notre-Dame Cemetery in Ottawa. The obelisk is located in Beetchwood Cemetery.*

He received numerous awards and decorations, including Canada's highest honour, the *Order of Canada*.

He died in Ottawa and is laid to rest in *Notre-Dame* Cemetery, while an obelisk with a commemorative plaque dedicated to this scientist was unveiled at *Beetchwood* Cemetery in the Polish section.

**Henryk Słaby (1925 - 2009)** studied administration and commerce in Glasgow and later in London. He then worked in the Finance Department of the British Ministry of Industry. He qualified as a chartered accountant in Canada in 1955 and opened his own business. Among other things, he was a co-founder of the *Słaby and Ungar Fund for the Polish Language and Literature Program* at the University of Toronto. He was a great advocate of Polish culture and a friend of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. He was awarded the "Medal for Distinguished Service to the Catholic University of Lublin" („Medalem za Zasługi dla KUL”) and was honoured with the titles of Doctor Honoris Causa of the Catholic University of Lublin and *Protector Universitatis*.

Henryk Słaby died in Toronto and is laid to rest at *Park Lawn* Cemetery.

**Arch. Roman Stankiewicz (1911- 1984)** had taken part in the 1941 battle of Tobruk (he was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari) and later in fighting at Ancona and Gazala during the Italian campaign. He graduated in architecture from the Polish School of Architecture at the University of Liverpool, after demobilization in England. He arrived in Canada in 1955, where he became known as an extremely capable architect who designed airport-related buildings, including air-traffic control towers. He also designed the Polish church of St. Jacek Odrowąż in Ottawa.

Arch. Roman Stankiewicz died in Ottawa and is buried in *Notre-Dame* Cemetery.

**Prof. Dr. Wiktor (Victor) Szyryński (1913 - 2007)**; was a professor of psychiatry and psychology, a member of the Polish Resistance Movement, an officer in the Polish and Canadian armies, a Polish activist, and a scoutmaster. During the war, he served as an army medic in the Sanitary Battalion of the 6th Lviv Infantry Division in Africa and the Middle East. Also, he was a lecturer at the Faculty of Polish Philology at the Polish Institute in Beirut. He had also completed postgraduate studies at the University of London (in Poland, he graduated from the University of Warsaw). He received his doctorate in psychology from the University of Ottawa and later specialized in neurology and psychotherapy. He worked at the University of Ottawa as a professor of psycho-physiology and psychiatry. He has written more than 70 scientific articles in the fields of neurology, psychiatry, education and mental health. He gave more



*Arch. Roman Stankiewicz – he was decorated with the Order of Virtuti Militari and designed airport-related facilities in Canada, including control towers. He rests at Notre-Dame Cemetery in Ottawa.*

*Prof. Dr. Wiktor (Victor) Szyryński; professor of psychiatry and psychology, a member of the Polish Resistance Movement, an officer in the Polish and Canadian armies, a Polish activist and scoutmaster. He rests in a cemetery in Wilno.*

than 500 lectures in Canada and abroad. Despite his many professional responsibilities, he was a busy Polish activist and always most faithful to the Boy Scouts. Prof. Dr. Wiktor (Victor) Szyryński died in Ottawa and was laid to rest at the new cemetery in Wilno in the so-called *Canadian Kashubia* (Polskie Kaszuby).

Buried in the same necropolis was **Prof. Dr. Lt. Col. Władysław Jan Wrażej (1894 -1975)**; a graduate of the Lviv Polytechnic, professor of metal studies and metallurgy, a university lecturer and a scout instructor. He received the Order of Virtuti Militari during the Polish-Soviet War for his heroic defense of Lviv. After mobilization, just before September 1, 1939, he took part in guarding the evacuation of the Polish Treasury gold reserves to Great Britain. He continued his scientific and research work in London. In 1951, he emigrated with his family to Canada. He settled in Ottawa and worked in the department of the *Ministry of Mines and Technical Surveys* on the innovative use of uranium alloys. He authored many books, scientific publications and engineering patents. He and his family were extremely active in Polish organizations – this included the tireless organizing of scouting events in Ontario’s Kashubia. He died in Ottawa and is laid to rest at the new cemetery in Wilno in a family grave, where his wife Hermina (Rysia) née Booss (1897-1990) – a painter, son Władysław Janusz (1936-1983) - an anesthesiologist and researcher at the University of Ottawa, and grandson Michael (1962-1983) are also buried. The gravestone plaque bears this inscription in Polish: *The late Władysław Jan Wrażej, professor of Polish universities at home and abroad, colonel of the Polish Army, knight of the Virtuti Militari, scoutmaster, born March 23, 1894, died July 14, 1975. Immaculate Virgin Mary intercede for him.*

Also, resting in the Wilno cemetery is **Dr. Teodor Józef Blachut (1915-2004)**. He was a surveyor, a cartographer, and a creator of photogrammetric and cartographic instruments. He graduated from the Lviv Polytechnic and defended his doctoral thesis at the Federal Polytechnic University of Zurich (ETHZ). Detained in Switzerland from 1940 to 1945, he worked as an assistant at ETHZ and also taught at an academic camp for detained Polish soldiers in Switzerland. Since 1951, he was associated with Canada, where he headed the Photogrammetric Research Section of the *National Research Council of Canada*, until 1980. His scientific work revolved around surveying and photogrammetric instruments, as well as the designing of novel surveying and mapping systems based on new techniques. His publications and textbooks have been translated into several languages. He is the author of 7 Canadian patents and 8 US patents. In 1974, he received an honorary doctorate from the AGH



*Prof. Lt. Col. Władysław Jan Wrażej and his family, as well as Dr. Teodor Józef Blachut - a surveyor and cartographer, both found their final resting places at the Polish cemetery in Wilno.*

University of Science and Technology (AGH) in Cracow, Poland. He was the founder of the Fanni & Teodor Blachut Foundation (Fundacji Fanni & Teodor Blachut), established to provide financial assistance to photogrammetry students at the AGH (in Cracow).

Dr. Teodor Józef Blachut passed away in Ottawa; he and his wife rest in the new cemetery in Wilno.

On the other hand, **Prof. Paweł Wyczyński (1921- 2008)** studied at the University of Lille in France. His pen-name was „Paweł Wrzos”. He was a poet and a professor of French literature. In 1951, he emigrated to Canada, where he became a lecturer in French literature at the University of Ottawa. He earned his doctorate in 1957 and received the title of professor in 1964. In his academic work, he specialized in the study of Canadian French-language literature. He became particularly famous for his work on the life and poetry of Emil Nelligan (including a biography and the publication of all his work, jointly with R. Robidoux) and also for his studies of Laberge’s work. For seven years, he served on *The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, appointed by Prime Minister Lester Pearson, to study the introduction of two official languages (French and English) in Canada. He has taught at many universities, including in Brazil, France, England, Italy and Poland. He has received honorary doctorates (Laurentienne University in Sudbury, University of Guelph, Laval University, Catholic University in Lublin). He is the author, co-author and editor of more than 62 books and more than 100 critical and literary articles. He has published two volumes of poems in Polish: *In the Sunny Darkroom (W słonecznej ciemni)* and *The Language of Roots (Mowa korzeni)*, as well as art in Polish.

He received numerous awards for his academic achievements, including Canada’s highest honour, the *Order of Canada*.

He died in Ottawa and is buried in *Beechwood* Catholic Cemetery.

Also, associated with French-language literature in Canada was **Alicja Poznańska-Parizeau (1930-1990)**; a Polish-Canadian journalist, writer, columnist and criminologist. She was one of the youngest participants in the Warsaw Uprising (awarded the Cross of Valour). After the war, she went to Paris, where she studied at the Sorbonne, earning degrees in literature, law, and political science. In 1955, she visited a Sorbonne colleague in Quebec, where she signed a short contract that turned into a lifelong stay. The following year, she married the economist and politician Jacques Parizeau, who for nearly forty years played one of the most important roles in the *Partie Quebecois*, a Quebec political party seeking the province’s separation from Canada. Although she was also a separatist, she is best known in Canada as a novelist and journalist:



she wrote for *Cité libre*, *La Presse*, *Châtelaine*, *Le Devoir*, *La Patrie* and *Maclean's*. At the University of Montreal, she taught criminology. In her books, she often returned to Polish themes and for one of her last novels, *Les lilas fleurissent à Varsovie* (Lilacs Bloom in Warsaw), she won first prize at the Association of French Language Writers competition in Paris. In 1987, she was decorated with the Order of Canada by the Governor General (representative of the British Crown in Canada), which was hailed as a “great scandal” in separatist Quebec.

She died in Outremont, Quebec province. She rests in the Parizeau family grave at the *Notre-Dame-Des-Neiges* Cemetery in Montreal.

In the same cemetery is the modest grave of the most prominent Polish landscape painter, portrait painter, writer, and publicist who lived in Montreal, **Rafał Malczewski (1892-1965)**, son of one of the most prominent Polish painters, Jacek Malczewski. He studied at the University of Vienna and at the Academy of Fine Arts (Akademia Sztuk Pięknych) in Cracow. He was a mountaineer and a great lover of Podhale and Zakopane. During World War II he traveled to Brazil and from there, in 1942, he reached Canada, where he managed to persuade the Canadian Pacific Railway authorities (CPR) to sponsor his travels across Canada in exchange for some of his paintings. The deal resulted in more than a hundred paintings of Canadian landscapes. Rafał Malczewski died in Montreal and is buried in the *Notre-Dame-Des-Neiges* cemetery.

**Bronisława (Bronka) Michałowska (1915-2015)**, a Polish-Canadian artist, also settled in Montreal, shortly after arriving in Canada in 1951. In 1936, she began her studies in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Stefan Batory University in Vilnius. She was a fourth-year student (in Tymon Niesiołowski’s studio) when World War II broke out. She continued the studies she had begun and her artistic work, in Great Britain. In 1945, she graduated from the University of London’s *Courtauld Institute of Fine Art*, earning a *Bachelor of Arts with Honours* in art history.

In Canada, her first works consisted mainly of oil paintings, gouaches, drawings, watercolors and, later, lino-cuts. Soon after arriving in Canada, she had bought a kiln and specialized in the art of artistic ceramics.

Bronka Michałowska died in Toronto and her ashes were laid to rest in the chapel at *Park Lawn* Cemetery. At the same cemetery, in a tabernacle, are urns with the ashes of a married couple: **Jadwiga Jurkszus-Tomaszewska (1918 -1996)** and **Adam Tomaszewski (1918-2002)**. Jadwiga Jurkszus-Tomaszewska was a Polish writer, reporter, and a literary critic. She graduated from a high school in Nowogródek (Navahrudak), then studied Polish philology at Stefan Batory University in Vilnius. Later, at clandestine classes at the University of Warsaw, she studied journalism.

*The grave of Prof. Paweł Wyczyński – poet and expert in French literature, awarded the Order of Canada, at Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa.*

*Also, associated with French-language literature in Canada was Alicja Poznańska- Parizeau, a Polish-Canadian writer, columnist and criminologist, awarded the Order of Canada. She rests in the Parizeau family grave in the Notre-Dame-Des-Neiges cemetery in Montreal.*



She cooperated with the underground press and was a liaison officer in the ranks of the Home Army, using the aliases Wiśka, Ada, and 909. She participated in the Warsaw Uprising. After its fall, she graduated from the *Université Libre de Bruxelles* in Belgium with a degree in journalism, earning a *Licence en Journalism*. In 1949, she moved to Canada, where she taught Polish literature at the University of Ottawa. Two years later, she defended her doctoral thesis at the University of Montreal. Then she moved to Toronto, where she worked for the Ministry of Immigration and Employment for twenty-five years. She has written and co-authored numerous reports and literary texts in the Polish press and five books, including *Chronicle of Fifty Years. The Cultural Life of Polish Emigration in Canada* (Kronika pięćdziesięciu lat. Życie kulturalne polskiej emigracji w Kanadzie). Her husband was **Adam Tomaszewski**, a Polish emigré writer, novelist, reporter, and a Polish emigré activist. Born in Kościan, Adam Tomaszewski had studied in Lviv and Warsaw and taken part in the Warsaw Uprising. Having been imprisoned by the Nazis in the Sandbostel and Westertimke prisoner-of-war camps, he ended up in the American occupation zone, from where he had emigrated to Canada in 1948. He then completed the Slavic philology studies at the University of Ottawa. In the 1950s, he was a member of the Dragon's Den („Smocza Jama”) Art Confraternity. In 1961-1964, he and his wife edited the *Literary Supplement "Current"* (Dodatek Literacki Prąd). Adam Tomaszewski was actively involved in immigrant activities, especially in publishing and editing. He was a co-founder of the *Polish Fund Publishing House in Canada* (Polski Fundusz Wydawniczy w Kanadzie). In 1976, he was editor of the "Polish Voice" in Toronto for one year. He was a member of the Association of *Polish Writers Abroad* (Związek Pisarzy Polskich na Obczyźnie) and, after his return to Poland, a member of the Poznań branch of the *Polish Writers' Association* (Stowarzyszenie Pisarzy Polskich). He wrote and published 11 books, including three memoirs about his hometown.

In 1997, he was awarded Honorary Citizenship by the City of Kościan. A few years later, a plaque was unveiled on the wall of the local library with a quote by the writer: "...this country is destined to stay with us to the end of times, a beautiful country, the Land of Kościan."

*The modest grave of Rafal Malczewski at the Notre-Dame-Des-Neiges cemetery in Montreal: Polish landscape painter, portrait painter, writer and publicist.*

# Without the Right to Return





After the end of World War II, many did not return to their Communist-enslaved homeland. This included not only soldiers and officers fighting in the West but also Polish scientists, people of culture and art, and all those who were scattered around the world by the turmoil of war and who did not accept the Soviet-imposed rule in Poland. They preferred to live outside the Homeland. On the other hand, those who had to live in the enslaved country were constantly looking for opportunities to escape from Poland. Some chose to illegally cross the so-called “green border”, while others hijacked planes or sailed across the Baltic Sea, escaping to Sweden, by taking advantage of the carelessness of the coast guard. Still others, dreamed of receiving a passport, which was a kind of government permit to leave the “People’s republic of Poland” and... stay abroad permanently. There were different ways to escape or to leave the “communist paradise”. Some, having to choose between long imprisonment or a one-way passport (for criticizing the communist authorities), agreed to leave without the right to return. The communist authorities offered some of them a return to the country by proposing lucrative jobs in state administration or universities; these were mainly well-known scientists. They firmly refused.

Many of our fellow countrymen paid with their lives for their so-called “betrayal” of the socialist homeland. Some successfully escaped to freedom in Canada .

**Tomir H. Bałut, M.Sc. (1927-2018)**; was a student at the Gdańsk University of Technology, (Politechnika Gdańska). He had permission to fly gliders and small civilian aircraft. In 1950, he and his brother Przemysław became famous for an extremely daring escape to Sweden in a school plane. A year later, already in Canada, he began working in the aviation industry in Montreal. He then moved to Toronto, where he graduated from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Toronto. After obtaining a Master’s Degree in the field of stress-strain analysis, he was a designer of water and steam turbines and worked at *Ontario Hydro*. Eventually, he became a nuclear-power plant specialist, authorized by the *Atomic Energy Control Board* to supervise a reactor. He was one of three Poles authorized to supervise the CANDU nuclear power plant as *Nuclear Shift Supervisor*, later changed to *Nuclear Superintendent*. He was employed in the construction and commissioning of a CANDU reactor in India for 3 years, and from 1977 until his retirement, he led a team specializing in calculations and stress analysis of mechanical structures in a nuclear power plant. He had taken the Boy Scout pledge in Poland in 1936 and remained faithful to it for the rest of his life.

Tomir H. Bałut died suddenly in Algonquin Park, Ontario. He is laid to rest in the new cemetery in Wilno.



*Photo 236  
The grave of Zbigniew Waruszyński at the Saint-Sauveur cemetery. He was a well-known Polish journalist and chronicler who was a prisoner in the Mauthausen, Melk and Ebensee concentration camps in Austria during World War II and also a staunch anti-communist columnist.*

*Tomir H. Bałut, M.Sc. and his brother Przemysław became famous for an extraordinarily daring escape from Poland on a school plane to Sweden. A year later he was already in Canada. He rests in a cemetery in Wilno.*





*The grave of world-renowned geographer and geomorphologist Prof. Bogdan Zaborski at Notre-Dame Cemetery in Ottawa.*

**Master Mariner Marian Rzucidło (1929 – 2020)** chose a different way of escaping communist Poland. A graduate of the Navigation Department at the Maritime University of Szczecin (Szkoła Morska w Szczecinie), he enlisted as a senior seaman on the m/s “Pstrowski”, in 1951. On August 19, 1952, after several voyages to Sweden with a cargo of coal - as he stood on the stern of the ship looking at the receding shore, he had to make a decision: jump into the water or not?

In his book *A Leap into the Sea*, (Skok w morze, Ottawa-Rzeszów 2008), he recalled this daring escape as follows: “After jumping from the stern into the Baltic Sea, at first I tried to fight the water vortex plunging me deeper and deeper, caused by the ship’s propeller. I realized that the end was probably coming (...). However, thrown by the opposite vortex to the surface of the sea, I regain consciousness and draw air greedily into my aching lungs. I gaze at the ship as it moves farther away. No one has noticed my escape. The ship soon disappears into the pouring rain, without slowing down. I immediately turn my head and slowly swim toward the Swedish shore. After an hour I reach the rocky shore.”

In 1953, he emigrated to Canada. For three years, he worked for Canadair, an aviation company producing Sabre 86 fighter jets. Later on, he enlisted as a Third Officer aboard the super tanker “Andro Venture”, sailing to Venezuela, Chile and Singapore.

In Canada, he obtained maritime diplomas ranging from deep-sea 2nd officer to Master Mariner (*Foreign going*). Starting in 1990, as a retiree, he had spent several years as captain of the passenger ship m/s “Senator”, sailing on the Ottawa River during the summer season between Chateau Laurier in Ottawa and Chateau Montebello in Quebec.

He died in Almayer and is laid to rest in *St. Redempteur* Cemetery in Hull, Quebec.

**Prof. Dr. Adam Podgórecki (1925-1998)**; a prominent Polish sociologist of law in the department of morality theory of the University of Warsaw. In 1972, he co-founded the Institute of Social Prevention and Rehabilitation at the UW (Instytut Profilaktyki Społecznej i Resocjalizacji UW). He was deprived of the right to teach for criticizing the communist authorities, so he decided to leave Poland in 1977. He taught at Oxford and Stanford, among other places. He then moved to Ottawa, where he was a professor of sociology and anthropology at Carleton University for several years. He is the author of more than 20 books and several hundred scientific publications. He was working on the theory of sociology, the methodology of social engineering, the sociology of law and morality, social pathology, and political science. He also published about 50 volumes of parables by the fictional Chinese sage Si-tien.

He died in Ottawa and rests in *Notre-Dame* Cemetery.



*Prof. Teodor Feliks Domaradzki was a professor of Polish and Slavic literature, author of numerous books, essays, monographs, articles, studies, and translations into French, English, and Italian of works by leading Polish poets and writers. He was decorated with the highest order in Canada - the Order of Canada. He rests in his family grave in the Polish section of the cemetery in Saint-Sauveur.*

**Prof. Dr. Bogdan Zaborski (1901-1985)**, a world-renowned geographer, geomorphologist, and professor at the University of Warsaw. During the war, he was an employee in the Ministry of Information and Documentation of the Polish Government in Exile in London. He firmly rejected the communist authorities' proposal that he return to Poland and take up the position of chair of the geography faculty at the University of Warsaw. He chose to emigrate and went to Canada. In Montreal, he lectured at McGill University, Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University) in Montreal, the University of Ottawa, Carleton University, and the University of Alberta in Edmonton. Along with seven Canadian scientists, he founded the Canadian Association of Geographers. He is the author of many books and publications, including *Atlas of the Landscapes and Settlements of Eastern Canada (Atlas krajobrazów i osadnictwa wschodniej Kanady)*. To honour the Polish professor, Concordia University in Montreal founded the Bogdan Zaborski Medal, which is presented annually to the best geography graduate. The University of Ottawa, meanwhile, founded the Zaborski-Castonguay Scholarship. Prof. Dr. Bogdan Zaborski died in Ottawa and was buried in *Notre-Dame* Cemetery.

Like Prof. Zaborski, another prominent Polish scholar, **Prof. Teodor Feliks Domaradzki (1910- 2001)**, refused to return to communist Poland, despite being tempted by numerous positions. During 1930-1936, he had studied at the Academy of Political Sciences (Akademia Nauk Politycznych) in Warsaw, and three years later, he received a Master's Degree in philosophy and history from the University of Warsaw. From 1941 to 1947, he was a Polish language lecturer at the State University of Rome and a professor of Slavic literature at the Gregorian University. He earned his doctorate in Slavic philology and Polish literature.

In 1948, he came to Canada and founded the Centre for Slavic Studies at the University of Montreal, where he was the director and professor of Polish and Slavic literature. Also, he created departments of Slavic studies at the Universities of Windsor and Ottawa. He is the author of numerous books, essays, monographs, articles, studies, and translations of works by leading Polish poets and writers into French, English and Italian.

Awarded Canada's highest order, the *Order of Canada*.

Prof. Teodor Feliks Domaradzki died in Montreal. He rests in a family grave in the Polish section of the Saint-Sauveur Cemetery.

**Prof. Adam Chrzanowski (1932-2020)**; a prominent Polish-Canadian specialist in engineering and mining geodesy. He was perceived as an ambassador of Polish science on the world stage. At the AGH University of Science and Technology, he obtained a Master of Mining Engineer Degree in mine surveying and a PhD degree in the discipline of geodesy



*Dr. Juliusz Horoszewicz, a doctor of medical sciences and microbiology, involved in cancer research, rests at the cemetery in Wilno.*

and cartography. In 1964, he went to Canada for a postdoctoral internship, where he worked on developing pioneering applications of lasers in precision engineering and mining surveying. He refused to return to communist-enslaved Poland. From 1964 to 1971, he was an associate professor at the University of New Brunswick (UNB) in Fredericton. The author and co-author of more than 220 publications, including 18 monographs, he died in Fredericton, New Brunswick and is buried in the local Catholic Cemetery.

**Marian Rokosz (1922-1995)** took a similar path to freedom. Being an officer in the Home Army, he was arrested in 1945 by the Department of Security (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa - „UB”) in Cracow, and then imprisoned in a detention centre, where he remained until 1947. After his release, he completed his medical studies at the Jagiellonian University, earning a medical degree. Painfully experienced with life in enslaved Poland, he dreamed of emigrating. In 1966, the opportunity came. He received a passport and went to Tunisia on a contract. In 1971 he was granted the right to settle in Canada.

He died in Montreal and rests in the Saint-Sauveur Cemetery.

On the other hand, **Dr. Juliusz Horoszewicz (1890-1962)** was a doctor of medicine and microbiology at the Medical Academy of Lodz (Łódź). In 1961 he went on a Rockefeller Foundation scholarship at Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo, New York, and chose... freedom. He was engaged in cancer research; his achievements include numerous scientific publications and patents. In time, he moved to Canada. He never returned to Poland, although, as the inscription on his tombstone says: *He always thought of Poland.*

He died in Barry's Bay and rests in the new cemetery in Wilno.

*Passerby, tell Poland that I was faithful to her until the end of my life - this is the inscription on the tombstone of **Zbigniew Waruszyński (1915-1968)**, a well-known Polish journalist and chronicler, who was a prisoner in the concentration camps at Mauthausen, Melk, and Ebensee in Austria, during World War II. He came to Canada in 1950 and settled in Montreal. He was a staunch anti-communist publicist and the author of many publications that are valuable chronicles of the life of the Polish community in Canada. After his death, his wife, **Maria Teresa Wójtowicz Waruszyńska (1926-1994)**, continued his chronicling work.*

On their tombstone, it reads:

*Earth – is a stain*

*On infinity and on the blue*

*And God will wipe it off with a finger*

*Or, He will pour life into it*

*As He poured life into the clay statue of Adam*



*Tamara Jaworska, one of the world's most prominent visual artists specializing in artistic weaving. She was awarded the Order of Canada and settled in Toronto after leaving Poland in 1969.*

They died in Montreal. They rest in a common grave in the Saint-Sauveur Cemetery.

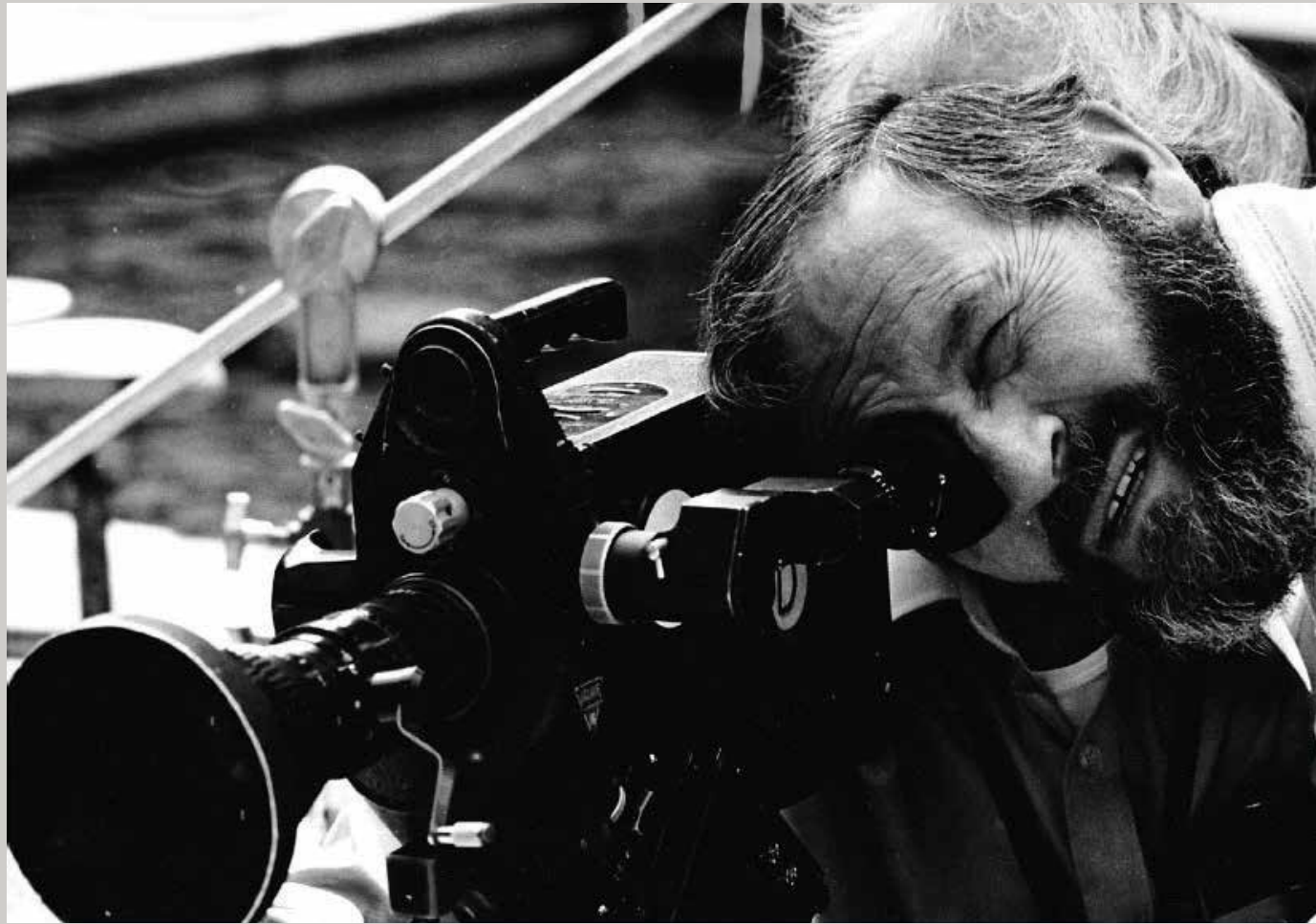
In 1968, after the so-called March political incidents, an anti-Jewish campaign began in Poland, which triggered a wave of forced emigration of Polish-Jewish citizens, including well-known cultural figures and scientists. According to various sources, between 13,000 and 20,000 people left Poland at that time. Jewish emigrants (and their non-Jewish spouses) had to sign an application to the Council of State of the Polish People's Republic, in which they renounced their Polish citizenship, in order to obtain permission to leave. Instead of Polish passports, they received so-called travel documents, which were valid only for leaving the country, with no right to return. During the mass emigration, the following people left Poland (among others): Aleksander Ford, Jan Kott, Leszek Kołakowski, Krzysztof Pomian, Witold Wirpsza, Stanisław Wygodzki...

**Tadeusz Jaworski (1926 – 2017)**, the prominent Polish documentary film director and his wife **Tamara Jaworska (1918 - 2015)**, one of the world's most outstanding artists, were forced to leave Poland and they emigrated to Canada:

**Tamara Jaworska**, is one of the world's most prominent artists specializing in artistic weaving. She had graduated from the *Academy of Fine Arts* (Akademia Sztuk Pięknych) in Lodz, and later was an assistant and a lecturer at the academy. In 1969, she and her husband immigrated to Canada.

Here, her tapestries were judged as the highest achievement in artistic weaving. They have been exhibited in the most diverse, prestigious galleries, including the National Pushkin Museum in Moscow, the National Museum in Warsaw (Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie), the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, the National Museum of Artistic Textile Art (Narodowy Muzeum Sztuki Tkaniny Artystycznej) in Lodz, the Museum of the Polish Home Army AK in Cracow (Muzeum Armii Krajowej w Krakowie), the Scottish Museum of Art in Galashiels and many others. The artist's works are both in museums around the world and in private collections. Tamara Jaworska has received numerous awards and honours. Several documentary films have been made about her. For her artistic achievements, she was awarded the *Order of Canada*, and in Poland she was awarded the *Gloria Artis* medal of cultural merit.

**Tadeusz Jaworski**, on the other hand, is a well-known director, producer, lecturer, Oscar nominee, graduate of the *National Film School in Lodz* (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Filmowa), and one of the most prominent documentary filmmakers in the world. Winner of many awards at



domestic and foreign festivals. For (the film) *Twilight of the Sorcerers* (Zmierzch czarowników), he was awarded by the United Nations for his outstanding contribution to “the work of bringing nations together”. In Poland, he directed, among others: *The Source* (Źródło), *A Place for School* (Miejsce na szkołę), *I Was a Kapo* (Byłem kapo), *Memory and Repentance* (Pamięć i skrucha), *The Secretary* (Sekretarz)...

In a biographical report included in the book *Portraits 1, Stanisław Stolarczyk Gallery* (*Portrety 1, Galeria Stanisława Stolarczyka*, Facy, Toronto 2015), he recalled: “The ominous words that had been hurled after the screening of my film ‘Secretary’ by one of the most hardened communists and criminals of the ‘people’s government’ back then, were implemented in 1968. In that year, after the March incidents at the University of Warsaw, the persecution and the so-called ‘cleansing’ began. This was also when it was ‘revealed’ to me that all of my films had turned out to be either anti-socialist, anti-Soviet, or promoting church art. It is true that my films had been noticed by the authorities of the Catholic Church in Poland and were greatly appreciated by the Polish Primate Cardinal Rev. Stefan Wyszyński. For six months, I was spat upon by the press. My films, which brought Poland so many successes and awards, once considered ‘masterpieces,’ overnight became an official pretext for ‘throwing me overboard’. At the time, I was not the only one this happened to. Although I received state awards for my work and was awarded the Order of Polonia Restituta, after my article *Two Faces of an Artist* (Dwa oblicza twórcy), published in *The Soldier of Freedom* (Żołnierz Wolności), I was removed from the set during the production of my first feature film *A Wooden Instrument Partita* (Partita na instrument drewniany). It can be summed up in a sentence like this: ‘Up on Mt. Olympus, I got the boot, and then I tumbled into the bushes.’ It was all done for the purely surreal reasons of the authorities at the time pursuing their fascist-racist policies.”

In Toronto, he was a lecturer at the *Master of Cinematography and Film Resident Humber College* and *Senior Tutor Film Studies, Stong College York University*. For many years, he was associated with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He was a member of the *Royal Canadian Academy*. His film *Selling out* was nominated for an Academy Award in the short documentary category. In total, he has made nearly 200 films. The Jaworski couple distinguished themselves in the Canadian culture. Despite receiving only a one-way ticket in Poland, they never renounced their Polish citizenship and were always proud of their origins. They died in Toronto, their ashes are in the *York Cemetery chapel* in Toronto.

*Tadeusz Jaworski, a well-known director, producer, lecturer, Oscar nominee, and a graduate of the National Film School in Lodz. He was one of the world's most prominent documentary filmmakers, and he was forced to leave Poland in 1968 because of his background. Pictured here with well-known Polish actor Zbigniew Cybulski.*

Chapter 13

Polish Heritage





There are various forms of social work to preserve Polish heritage in Canada and nurture what was left behind by those who built Polish churches, established organizations and schools. One of the best solutions, which should certainly be considered worth following, has been implemented by the Polish Socio-Cultural Foundation in Quebec (Polska Fundacja Społeczno-Kulturalna w Québecu) - based in Montreal. This foundation has the status of a charitable organization. Since its founding in 1979, it has brought together individuals and institutions whose concern is to support all forms of cultural, scientific, and social activity within the Polish community in Quebec. These individuals and institutions care about documenting the Polish legacy and promoting Polish traditions and culture. The Foundation was created to meet the need of active financial support for Polish organizations operating in the province of Quebec.

“The goal of the Foundation,” as its charter states, “is to raise funds and generate income to provide grants for the development and operation of statutory organizations officially involved in various forms of cultivating Polish legacy. The second important course of activity is improving the social and financial position of the Polish community. This is manifested in supporting the education of young people of Polish descent at the university level, through student scholarship awards, funded by individual donors. In order to encourage sponsors to make donations, the Foundation created a special burial place for them, known as the Quarters of Merit (Kwatera Zasłużonych), which is located at the *Notre-Dame-Des-Neiges* Cemetery in Montreal. The idea was born in 1988, when a former Auschwitz, Dachau, and Buchenwald prisoner **Bolesław Lewandowski (1899-1988)** died, after bequeathing nearly a hundred thousand dollars to the Polish Socio-Cultural Foundation in his will. Obviously, the Polish Foundation decided to provide its greatest benefactor with a dignified burial place and care for his grave, so that the memory of the man who donated his entire life’s savings to charity would not be lost. He was the first person laid to rest in the Quarters of Merit. Currently, more than a hundred benefactors of Polish origin rest in this unique Polish cemetery. Everyone laid to rest here, will forever have a tombstone with their name engraved on it; with flowers, candles, and communal prayers after the annual procession on All Souls’ Day. A great credit for this initiative goes to the former president of the Foundation, **Zbigniew Małecki (1922-2009)**. He had passed the competitive entry examination for the State Maritime School in Gdynia (Państwowa Szkoła Morska w Gdyni), and in 1939 he served his apprenticeship on the newest transatlantic ship - M/S “Chrobry”, during its maiden voyage to South American ports. The outbreak of war found him in Brazil. He reached Great Britain via a roundabout route, where he reported for military service, with an

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A monument with a beautiful mosaic of Our Lady of Czestochowa marks the burial place of Kazimierz Stańczykowski, Polish radio producer, founder of Canada’s first ethnic broadcasts and recipient of the Order of Canada. He rests in the Notre-Dame-Des-Neiges cemetery in Montreal.

Located at the Notre-Dame-Des-Neige cemetery in Montreal: the quarters of merit for the Polish Socio-Cultural Foundation in Montreal and the grave of its long-time president, the well-known journalist Zbigniew Malecki, who crossed the Swiss border in 1940 with the 2nd Infantry Rifle Division and was interned (archival photo).



*Wanda Maria Stachiewicz, who founded the Polish Library in Montreal and was its long-time director (today the Wanda Stachiewicz Polish Library), rests next to her husband Gen. Stachiewicz, at the cemetery in St. Adele, Quebec.*

assignment to the 2nd Infantry Rifle Division (2 Dywizja Strzelców Pieszych – French: 2e Division d’Infanterie Polonaise -) in France. After fierce battles in Maiche and St-Hippolyte with General Guderian’s German armoured division, the (Polish) division crossed the Swiss border on the night of June 20-21, 1940 and was detained in Switzerland. There, after passing the Polish and Swiss matriculation exams in 1943, he graduated from the University of Freiburg (humanities - history of philosophy, art history, and history; simultaneously graduating from journalism studies). Zbigniew Małcki was, among other things, a co-editor of: *Literary Diary* (Pamiętnik Literacki), *Culture* (Kultura), *News* (Wiadomości), *Fighting Poland* (Polska Walcząca), *The Siren* (Syrena), *Polish Journal* (Dziennik Polski), and *Soldier’s Journal* (Dziennik Żołnierza). Since 1951, he had worked in Canada, in Montreal, at the *Canadian Marconi* telecommunications company. He was very active in the life of the Polish-Canadian community. For many years he was a regular contributor to Polish newspapers, including: *Newspaper* (Gazeta), *Polish Alliance* (Związkowiec) and *Polonia Bulletin* (Biuletyn Polonijny). He died in Montreal and is laid to rest in the *Notre-Dame-Des-Neige* Cemetery. The Polish Socio-Cultural Foundation in Quebec annually subsidizes Polish schools, the Scouts, the education of Polish students, and the Polish Library at the *Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences* (Polski Instytut Naukowy) in Montreal. The library contains more than 45,000 books and was founded by **Wanda Maria Stachiewicz (1895 - 1995)**, a graduate of Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv and of the Paris Sorbonne, where she majored in the history of civilization. The wife of General Wacław Stachiewicz (see: “Ch. 7, Generals in Civilian Clothes – Pilgrims of Liberty”), she made her way to England during World War II. From there, she arrived in Canada with the first British transport of children and women, in 1940. In Montreal, she got a position at the *International Labour Office* (Biuro Ligi Narodów). Despite her gainful employment, she took an active part in the social activities of Polish institutions. She co-founded the *Association of Polish War Refugees* (Stowarzyszenie Polskich Uchodźców Wojennych) and organized a series of lectures on Polish culture at McGill University. In recognition of her contributions, in 1984, the *General Assembly of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada* (Polski Instytut Naukowy w Kanadzie) named the library she had founded and directed for a long time: the *Wanda Stachiewicz Polish Library* (Biblioteka Polska im. Wandy Stachiewicz). Wanda Maria Stachiewicz died in Montreal. She is laid to rest next to her husband, in the cemetery in St. Adele, Quebec. The other extremely important Polish foundation in Canada, created to support Polish artists in exile, was the *Władysław and Nella Turzański Foundation* (Fundacja Władysława i Nelli Turzańskich).





Operating from 1988 to 2015, the foundation had been awarding writers, musicians, fine artists, and scientists with the internationally-prestigious *Władysław and Nelli Turzański Foundation Award* (Nagroda Fundacji Władysława i Nelli Turzańskich). It was founded by **Capt. Władysław Grzymała-Turzański (1905 -1986)** and **Nelli Turzańska-Szyborska (1917-2012)**. Władysław Grzymała-Turzański participated in the 1920 war as a fifteen-year-old boy, fighting in the assault company of the 29th Kaniowski Rifle Regiment (29 Pułk Strzelców Kaniowskich). Nineteen years later, after the Soviet army invaded the territory of the Republic, he was sent to a gulag, which he left after two years of suffering. He then joined the Polish Army being formed in Russia. Then, after leaving Russia with the army of General Anders, he took part in the Italian campaign. Awarded the Cross of Valour for the Battle of Monte Cassino, he ended the war with the rank of artillery lieutenant. He arrived in Canada in 1948 with a group of several hundred soldiers. He was co-founder of the Polish Combatants' Association in Canada and co-founder of the veterans' assistance and loan fund. His wife, Nelli Turzańska (née Barańska), was involved in scouting from an early age, and just before the war took a job at the Ujazdowski Military Hospital (Wojskowy Szpital Ujazdowski) in Warsaw. In November 1939 she joined the Union of Armed Struggle, later transformed into the Home Army. During the Warsaw Uprising, she fought in the "Horn" grouping (battalion "Dzik"), in one of the most difficult areas of insurgent Warsaw - in the Old Town, from where she made her way to the City Centre through the sewers. After the fall of the Uprising, she left Warsaw, and after the end of World War II she settled in Lodz and took a job at the School Inspectorate. At the same time, she began studying at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Lodz. From 1951 she was active in the underground organization *Polish Homeland Front* (Polski Front Ojczyźniany), and in February 1952 she was arrested and sentenced to eight years in prison. She was incarcerated in Cracow's Montelupich prison, then in Grudziądz, and Fordon. Released after 3.5 years, she decided to leave Poland. This was accomplished in May 1958, thanks to a marriage per procura (by proxy) with Canadian citizen Stanisław Krysiak. After her husband's death in 1973, she remarried Władysław Grzymała-Turzański, widowed in 1986. In 1994, her third husband became Zbigniew Szyborski. The Turzański Foundation awarded a total of twenty-one main prizes and ten honourable mentions to so-called Young Talents. After the end of its activities, the remaining funds (in accordance with the will of the Foundation's creators) were used to establish a scholarship fund for Polish Studies PhD students at the University of Toronto. The founders of the

*Capt. Władysław Grzymała-Turzański and Nelli Turzańska-Szyborska were buried at Park Lawn Cemetery in Toronto. They were the founders of the Polish émigré foundation created to support Polish creators and artists in exile, known as the "Władysław and Nelli Turzański Foundation".*

*In the same cemetery rests Polish doctor Zdzisław Kryński, who organized charitable aid to Poland and Poles in the East.*



*The grave of the married couple, Earl Walter Bieniewski and Countess Mary Bieniewski, can be found in Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Toronto. They were known in Toronto for their generous donations to cultural causes - with a generous donation to the Millennium Fund of Christian Poland.*

*At Holy Cross Cemetery in Edmonton rests Scoutmaster Antoni Andrzejewski, who served in the 1st Regiment of the 21st Highland Rifle Division (1 Pułk 21 Góralskiej Dywizji Strzelców). He was a courier through the Tatra Mountains to Slovakia, a prisoner of the Auschwitz concentration camp, and one of the creators of the "Kopernik" Scouting Station in Canada - where an obelisk with a plaque commemorating his contributions was unveiled.*

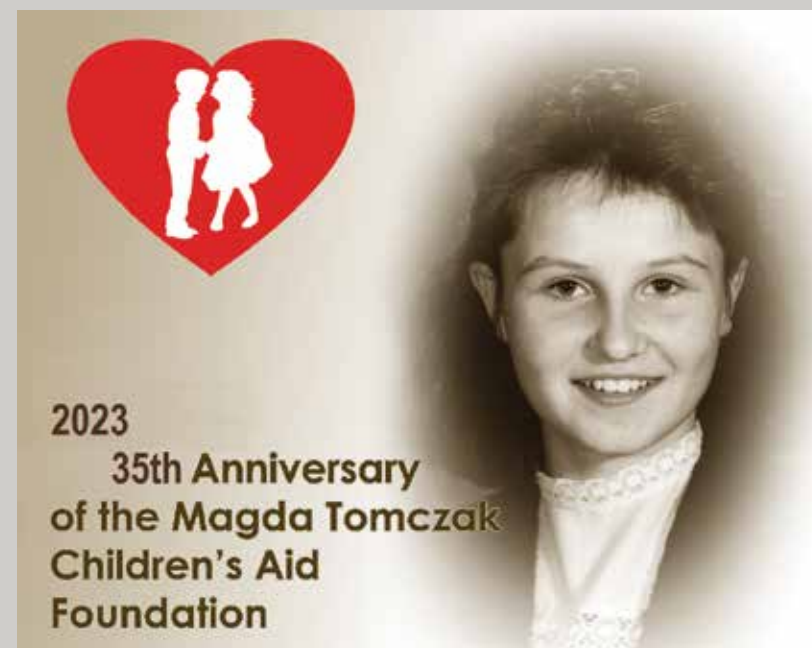
foundation died in Toronto and rest in *Park Lawn*.

**Earl Walter Bieniewski (1897-1978)** and his wife, **Countess Mary Bieniewska (1894-1986)** contributed generously to the Millennium Fund of Christian Poland (Fundusz Milenium Polski Chrześcijańskiej). Mr. and Mrs. Bieniewski were known in Toronto for their generous donations to cultural causes, including the *Art Gallery of Ontario* and the *Royal Ontario Museum*, among others. After her husband's death, Mary (née Marie Hime – a native of Canada), decided to honour his memory. The Fund's former vice-president, Mieczysław Szczeciński, thanks to whom I was able to find the grave of Mr. and Mrs. Bieniewski, once said in an interview with the "Trade Unionist": "We received the donation only because Mrs. Bieniewska's husband was Polish, and because she wanted to honour his memory in this way. Or perhaps, she even hoped that, thanks to her generous donation, someone would mention her husband as a Pole, and her as the person who had loved him; it is like an echo from beyond the grave. We will try to make sure that every year someone visits their grave and leaves flowers or lights a symbolic candle..."

Mr. and Mrs. Bieniewski donated \$290,000 to the Fund. They died in Toronto and are buried in *Mount Pleasant Cemetery*.

For many years **Rudolf Karol Kogler (1919-1998)** was associated with the Adam Mickiewicz Foundation in Toronto, which supports Polish education and important Polish Diaspora initiatives. He had a good job in Toronto that others could only dream of (as a demographer he was engaged in statistical research of the population in the province of Ontario). He devoted every free moment to social work and was active in Polish-American organizations (veterans, the Canadian Polish Congress, and the Polish Scouting, and Guiding Association). He was president and director of the Canadian-Polish Research Institute (Kanadyjsko-Polski Instytut Badawczy). He acquired his dutifulness and inner discipline from scouting and from school in Wadowice, where he was a classmate and personal friend of Karol Wojtyła – the later Pope (and more recently Saint) John Paul II. He took part in the 1939 campaign. He was interned in Hungary, then he escaped to Syria, where he joined the Polish Army and fought at Tobruk and Monte Cassino. After demobilization, he studied at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, where he earned a master's degree in economics and experimental psychology. In 1952, he came to Canada. He authored and co-authored many books documenting the history of the Polish- Canadian community, including *The Polish Community in Canada, Half a Century of Canadian Polish Congress, Poles in Toronto*.

He died in Toronto and is laid to rest at *Holy Cross Cemetery*.



**The Magda Tomczak Children's Aid Foundation** has been operating in Edmonton for 36 years, which was established as a result of a tragic crime whose victim was 14-year-old Magda Tomczak (1973-1987). Born in Lodz, Poland, the St. Rose Junior High School student was brutally murdered in her own home on October 27, 1987. Magda was an exemplary student, musically talented, and was a Guide in the Polish Scouting Association (ZHP pgk) - the Młody Bór Corps in Edmonton, Alberta. In the future, she wanted to become a pediatrician and care for the quality of life of children. After her tragic death, Magda's father, Janusz Tomczak, together with a group of doctors and the Polish community, decided to preserve the girl's memory. This is how the Magda Tomczak Children's Aid Foundation was established, which continues to operate today under the leadership of Mr. J. Tomczak. From November 1987 to the present, the Foundation has provided over two million dollars to help children. Thanks to these funds, it provided humanitarian aid and helped hundreds of unfortunate children and young people with serious health problems such as brain surgery, heart transplants, hip replacements, lymphoblastic leukemia, and skin grafts after burns. The Foundation also supports families of sick children, orphanages and other charitable and humanitarian organizations, hospitals, organizations and groups of doctors and nurses going on missions to Africa or South America.

One of the Foundation's greatest successes was bringing from Poland in 1992 a boy with epilepsy, David Luck, who suffered from epilepsy attacks up to a hundred times a day. The brain surgery was performed by a team of outstanding doctors from the University Hospital in Edmonton.

The boy's life was saved thanks to funds from the foundation, the Polish community and residents of Edmonton. The collected funds were used to cover the flight, costs of David's stay and treatment in the hospital, and the arrival of the boy's mother. After a few years, David returned to Edmonton for a post-operative check-up. The merits of this organization also include sending medical aid to Poland and bringing seven doctors from Poland for training at the University Hospital. Thanks to the knowledge and specialist skills acquired by doctors, hundreds of additional children were saved. The Foundation's success is enormous and is often shown and broadcast on social media during various medical aid campaigns.

At the school Magda attended, St. Rose Junior High School, the Magda Tomczak Humanitarian Award has been presented for 35 years to a student(s) providing humanitarian aid to people in need.

Magda "The flame that was blown out but did not extinguish" passed into eternity and her body was buried in the *Holy Cross* Cemetery in Edmonton, in the Polish section, opposite the monument of "Polish Veterans, Branch No. 6" and the monument of the "Centenary of Polish Scouting" and the figure of St. Stanisław Kostka.

*The photograph of 14-year-old Magda Tomczak, brutally murdered at her family home on October 24, 1987.*

*The resting place of fourteen-year-old Magda Tomczak at Holy Cross Cemetery in Edmonton. In the wake of the tragic crime, the Magda Tomczak Children's Aid Foundation was established after her death.*



**Zdzisław Kryński (1922 -2020)**, a physician who lived and practiced in Toronto, also rushed to help the sick in Poland. He held fundraisers to buy medical equipment for hospitals in Poland, as well as for clothing collection. He arranged container shipments. He conducted innumerable campaigns directly related to charitable aid for Poland and Poles in the East. He chaired the Charity Committee (Komisja Charytatywna) and the Polish Relief Committee (Komitet Pomocy Polsce) of the Toronto District of the KPK. He was the founder and president of the Polish-Canadian Health Professional Association (Polsko-Kanadyjskie Stowarzyszenie Zawodów Medycznych). He died in Toronto and is buried in *Park Lawn Cemetery*. In the same cemetery, not far from the grave of the Polish doctor, rests **Stefan Tyrz (1918-1997)**, who was awarded the honorary medal and diploma of Righteous Among the Nations for the helping and safekeeping of Jews during World War II, along with his entire family (Anna - mother, Sebastian - father, Michał and Stefan - sons, Apolonia - daughter-in-law, Michał's wife). This is the highest Israeli civilian honour bestowed on non-Jews, awarded by *Yad Vashem* - the Institute for Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance in Jerusalem. The Tyrz family lived in the village of Futory in the Zborów district of the Tarnopol province in the Eastern Borderlands of the Polish Republic, and together they ran a farm. Things were not easy for them, and they were barely making ends meet. Not only was their plot of land small and meager but Apolonia and Michał's three young children were also dependent on them. However, when the trials of life came and they had to help their Jewish acquaintances, they decided to hide them; even though they were well aware that they faced death by firing squad for harboring any Jewish people. They chose to take the risk in the name of a long-standing friendship. During the liquidation of the Zborów ghetto, they helped the Kronisch family (Leon and Szyfra Kronisch, Miriam Kunofsky née Kronisch, Lucy Margules née Kronisch, and their cousins: Lena Adler, Rachela, Ira Gerber, Irving Gerber, and ten-year-old Zysio Berger) to get to the "Aryan side" and from April 1943 to September 1944 they hid them in a specially constructed dugout. The hideout was located about fifteen minutes away from their home. Every day, the Tyrz family provided these hidden people with food, wrapped in newspaper - the reading of which was one of the ways they spent their time in hiding. Ira Gerber and Zysio Berger could not bear such a life of constant fear and uncertainty of tomorrow, so one day they left their hiding place. Unfortunately, the outcome of this youthful carelessness was tragic. They fell into the hands of the Nazis, who executed them. The fugitives did not reveal where and by whom they had been previously hidden, so that all the other seven family members luckily survived the German occupation, thanks to the Polish family. After the war, the Kronisch family emigrated to the United States. In 1962, thanks to their help, Stefan and Apolonia - along with their families - moved to Canada and

*Stefan Tyrz, one of the "Righteous Among the Nations" - rests at Park Lawn Cemetery in Toronto. In the archival photo: Stefan and Anna Tyrz with their children and Anna's brother Kazimierz Józwini before leaving for Canada.*



settled in Toronto.

In 1992, a ceremony honouring the Tyrzcz family with the title “Righteous Among the Nations” was held at the Israeli consulate in Toronto. It was attended by those who survived and those who helped to save them.

Stefan Tyrzcz - as reported in *The Canadian Jewish News* (September 17, 1992) spoke about what motivated them to help the Kronisch family. He stated: “We were good friends. We understood the risks, but that didn’t stop us from helping.” Stefan Tyrzcz died in Toronto.

**Maria Adamowska-Panaro (1902-1989)** of Winnipeg received the title of “International Mother” for her work and selfless assistance to immigrants. She arrived in Canada with her parents and siblings in 1911. Here, she completed elementary school and St. John’s Technical High School and later studied accounting and administration. She began her professional work as a stenographer in a law firm. She then became a manager of various departments for labour and commercial companies in the Winnipeg area. She also held the position of a secretary at the Polish Consulate in Winnipeg from 1920 to 1925. After thirty-six years of employment at the law firm *Arenovitch and Leisic*, she retired, devoting all her free time to others and to social work. She was appointed director of the *International Centre*. During that time, Maria Panaro was also very active in the *Catholic Women’s League* organization, the Polish Canadian Women’s Federation (*Federacja Polek w Kanadzie*) and the Canadian Polish Congress (*Kongres Polonii Kanadyjskiej*), in the Manitoba District. In 1973, she became a member of the *Copernican Committee* (*Komitet Kopernikowski*) in the province of Manitoba. In my book *Where Our Feet Are... Reports from Canada* (*Gdzie stopy nasze... Reportaże z Kanady*, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Arax”, Białystok 1991) I recorded a meeting with Maria Panaro in Winnipeg: “She was involved in all sorts of work, organizing many Polish community events. However, only one of the events stuck in her memory the most - the joining of Polish and Canadian lands on Copernicus Hill. ‘This is my greatest experience.’ - recalls Ms. Maria. ‘Because, imagine - here I am holding an urn with the soil from the Homeland (if you ever write about this please write Homeland [Polish: „Ojczyzna”] with a capital “O”, please do me this favour), as if it were the greatest treasure, so that I might momentarily blend it with the soil from the country of my upbringing and my entire life...’ Maria Panaro paused. She swallowed, as if she were confiding her innermost, deeply-hidden secret. She adjusted her hair, turning her face away to hide the emotions. ‘Soil from Poland and Canada.’ - she sighed. ‘For me, this is not only a symbol of connection between the two countries but above all, an act of reconciliation. Yes, reconciliation between the frenzied, romantic longing for your native country and the Canadian reality offering no way back...’ Tears began to gather in the corners of her eyes. I turned off the tape recorder.” One of the autumn Bulletins of the Canadian Polish Congress



*Maria Adamowska-Panaro, who was awarded the Order of Canada for her community service and selfless assistance to immigrants in Canada, is laid to rest at St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery in Winnipeg. In 1973 she was part of the Copernicus Committee (Komitet Kopernikowski), thanks to which one of the hills in the province of Manitoba was named Copernicus Hill.*



Board of Directors (1990) reported that Maria Panaro -Adamowska died at the age of 87, on June 14, 1989, at the Szarytki Hospital in Edmonton. The short, printed obituary reads as follows:

*“May she rest in peace on the good Canadian soil, and may she dream of the Polish land which she has never forgotten.”*

In 1983, for her work, she received the *Order of Canada* - the highest award in the “Land of the Maple Leaf”. She died in Edmonton during a national meeting of the Polish-Canadian Women’s Federation. She is laid to rest at *St. Mary’s* Catholic Cemetery in Winnipeg.

On March 8, 2018, at the Church of Our Lady Queen of Poland the Edmonton-based Polish community bid farewell to **Maria Carlton (1939-2018)**, a person endlessly devoted to the Polish cause. A Polish scholar from the Jagiellonian University of Cracow, she worked for several years as a proofreader and editor at the Poznan Publishing House (Wydawnictwo Poznańskie). At the same time, she conducted scientific research related to the life and literary work of Maria Konopnicka, which resulted in its publishing in the 14th volume of the Literary Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences Publishing House (Wydawnictwo Instytutu Badań Literackich Polskiej Akademii Nauk). Incidentally, she managed to track down the first literary debut of the famous Polish poet to five years earlier than previously known. She considered this to be the true and perhaps even the greatest achievement of her Polish studies career. In 1984, while already living in Edmonton, she started her own typesetting firm called *Multilingual on Whyte*. She worked on typesetting of foreign-language texts, including those in all Slavic languages. On the other hand, during 1987-93, she co-authored and edited several Polish-language books, including an over five-hundred page history of the Edmonton Boy Scouts that had taken her more than two years to complete. The first of these books, written exclusively by her, was a collection of essays entitled *Polish-Canadian Society (Edmonton) 1927- 1987* (Towarzystwo Polsko-Kanadyjskie (Edmonton) 1927- 1987). For many years, she was the editor-in-chief of Edmonton’s biweekly Polish newspaper *Behind-the-Scenes of Polonia* (Kulisy Polonii). She was the sister of the widely respected journalist and founder of this magazine, **Józef Lenik (1945-2022)**, whose arrival to Canada from Germany she sponsored. Maria Carlton died in Edmonton and rests in *Our Lady of Peace* cemetery. In connection with Maria Carlton and her work, the history of the Polish Scouting Association abroad was also being “written” by Polish instructors through their daily educational work at the Canadian Kashubia, where scout camps are annually organized in the hostels. Many of these extremely distinguished instructors have passed away to stand on “eternal guard” and they rest at the new cemetery in Wilno, Ontario. Among them are some scouting couples: **Kazimierz Zbigniew Stohandel (1917-1997): Scoutmaster - Major of the Polish Army** and Scoutmaster **Zofia Balewander**

*The columnist Maria Carlton, rests in Our Lady of Peace Cemetery in Edmonton. She was a well-known activist in the Polish community and a person endlessly devoted to the Polish cause. Whereas, a distinguished Scouting couple, Hm. Kazimierz Zbigniew Stohandel and Zofia Balewander Stohandel, rest at the cemetery in Wilno.*



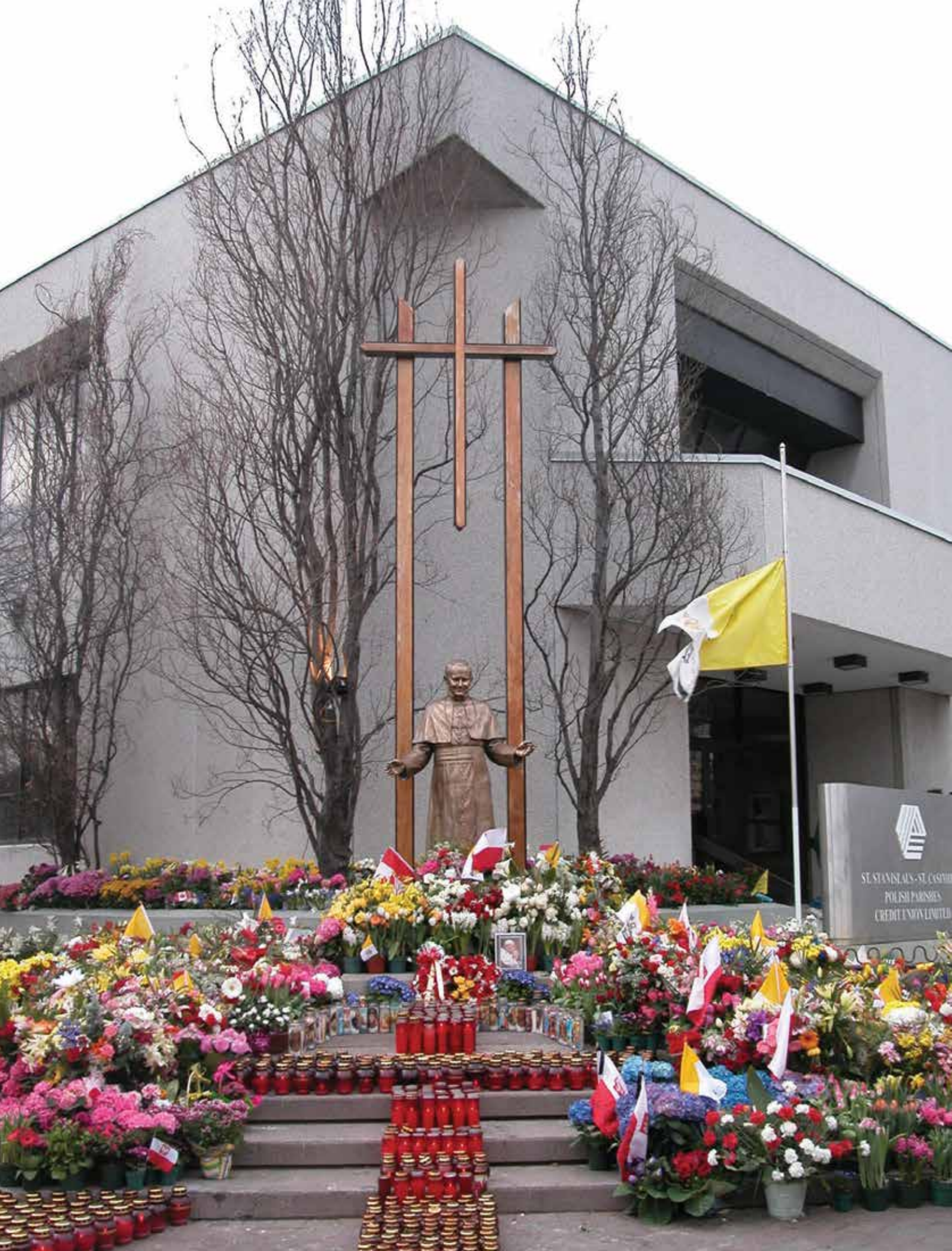
**Stohandel (1925-2019). Zofia Halek nee. Krawczyk (1924-1993) and Stanisław Kazimierz Halek (1921-2001)**, with the phrase and their life credo:

*“All that is ours, we will give to Poland”*, inscribed upon their tombstone.

Scoutmaster **Bolesław Bahyrycz (1910-1985)**, **Bolesław Hładki (1914-1971)** - Lieutenant, Scoutmaster, Knight of the Order of Virtuti Militari: *Died while doing scouting duty in Kashubia* and **Genowefa Kosińska nee Boratyńska (1907 - 1975)**, according to the inscription: *Born 2/ II/1907 in Zawiercie; died 15/VIII/1975 Toronto. “Mother” of the Paris scout team of the President and Commander-in-Chief.* Canada’s Kashubia is a wonderful enclave of Polishness and not only in Canada, for there is no other such oasis in the world where the fifth and sixth generation of settlers outside the borders (of Poland) still speak Polish. Great credit for this goes to **Wanda Paszkiewicz Niedojadło (1935-2022)**, a Polish language teacher in Poland and Canada, who taught the descendants of the Kashubian settlers their native language for many years in schools in Wilno, Barry’s Bay and Cambermere. She rests in a common grave at the new cemetery in Wilno, with her husband **Eugeniusz Niedojadło (1927- 2010)**. He was a *junak (a young hero and work volunteer) and an alumnus of the Polish Army in the Middle East.* There is a saying that once you have been an Uhlan, even if you get off your horse, your legs will never straighten out again. **Kazimierz Stańczykowski (1927-1981)** was such a Polish “Uhlen” in Canada. He was a Polish radio producer and a founder of Canada’s first ethnic broadcasts. A participant in the Warsaw Uprising, he was a particularly well-known and respected radio producer in the journalistic community. As a member of various committees in the radio and television industry, he had never forgotten that he was Polish. He proudly emphasized his ancestry, including on the radio programs that he created: Montreal’s CHLP station, the multilingual radio station - CFMB, and Winnipeg’s second ethnic station – CKJS. He was a well-known collector of objects and materials related to Polish identity. In 1968-71, when he was chairman of the Quebec *Ethnic Folk Arts Council*, president of the *Canadian Citizenship Federation* and vice-chairman of the *Montreal Citizenship Council*, as a soccer enthusiast, he established the Polish Football Club (Polski Klub Piłki Nożnej). Since he had been connected with Warsaw from birth, he named the team “Polonia” (this is the name of the Polish capital’s club founded in 1911). A winner of many awards and honours, he received an honorary doctorate from Concordia University in Montreal. He was awarded the Order of Canada. Unfortunately, his impressive career was interrupted in 1981 by a tragic car accident in Rawdon, Quebec, when Kazimierz Stańczykowski tragically died. In 1986, he was posthumously inducted into the *CAB Broadcasting Hall of Fame*. Kazimierz Stańczykowski rests in the *Notre-Dame-Des-Neiges Cemetery* in Montreal.

*Many extremely distinguished instructors have passed away to stand on “eternal guard” and rest at the new cemetery in Wilno, Ontario. The words of the Scouting anthem: “All that is ours we will give to Poland” became their goal for life in Canada.*

# The Spiritual Guardians of the Polish Diaspora







The first Polish priests who came to Canada belonged to the Resurrectionist order (Zakon Zmartwychwstańców). Rev. Edward Glowacki had arrived in Berlin (now Kitchener, Ontario) to a German-speaking parish before 1860. A year later, on January 6, 1861, a Silesian, Rev. Francis Breitkopf, became a parish priest.

Subsequent priests were associated with the Polish parish established in 1875 and the construction of a church dedicated to St. Stanisław Kostka in Wilno. These priests were: Franciszek Specht, Aleksander Michnowski, Tomasz Korbutowicz and Władysław Dembski - they had left Kashubia after completing their pastoral service. In 1892, this (oldest) Polish parish in Canada was taken over by **Rev. Bronisław Jankowski (1867-1928)**. He went down in the history of Kashubian settlement in Ontario not only as a parish priest who expanded the church but also as a social activist who spearheaded the campaign to bring in new settlers from all three partitions (Austrian, Prussian and Russian partitions of Poland). After his death, Rev. Jankowski was laid to rest among his parishioners in the old Wilno cemetery. The grave of this minister is found under a tall metal cross, with an inscription: *Here rests the late Rev. Msgr. Bronisław Jankowski, born January 14, 1867, died January 19, 1928. Asking passerby for a Hail Mary.*

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The monument erected in honour of our Great Compatriot Pope John Paul II, now a Saint, was unveiled in 1984 on the occasion of the Pope's pastoral pilgrimage to Canada. It is located in a small plaza by the Credit Union of St. Stanislaus and St. Casimir, on Roncesvalles Av. in Toronto.

The grave of Rev. Bronisław Jankowski, parish priest of the Polish Church of St. Stanislaus Kostka, a social activist, rests among his parishioners in the old cemetery in Wilno. Rev. Jan Rafał Grzondziel, chaplain of Gen. Władysław Anders' 2nd Corps, found his eternal resting place at the new cemetery in Wilno, after years of wandering.

After the Stanisław Kostka church burned down and a new church dedicated to "Our Lady of Częstochowa" was built in 1937, the following parish priests were already laid to rest at a new cemetery in Wilno, and their tombstones also bear the following inscriptions:

**Rev. Edward Wilowski (1900-1961):** *O, Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who take refuge in thee.*

**Rev. Zygmunt Lewandowski (1911-1973):** *He walked with God.*

**Rev. Stanislaus Kądziołka (1914-1986):** *"Thou art a priest forever" according to the order of Melchizedek, Psalms 109:4.*

The chaplain of Gen. Władysław Anders' Second Corps, **Rev. Jan Rafał Grzondziel (1912-1998)**, also found his eternal resting place in this cemetery, after years of wandering. This former Franciscan (religious name Ignatius), arrived in Canada in the early 1950s. Enchanted by the landscape and the people - descendants of Polish pioneers from Kashubia - he found an oasis of peace and quiet among them. He built the chapel of Our Lady of the Angels (Kaplica Matki Boskiej Anielskiej), the *Cathedral under the pines*, (Katedra pod sosnami), established a Catholic Youth Centre (Katolicki Ośrodek Młodzieżowy) with a ski lift, and later a post office where he became the first postmaster.



Fr. Grzondziel had also introduced the name Kaszuby on the official maps of Canada.

Father Jan Rafał Grzondziel died on December 22, 1998. On his stone tombstone, there is a meaningful inscription:

*Priest Rafal Jan Grzondziel: Colonel of the Polish Army, scoutmaster. Born 19.X.1912 Panewnik - Katowice. Poland, Died 22.XII. 1998 Kaszuby, Ontario. Canada. Chaplain of the WP, ZHP and SPK.*

Listed underneath are the decorations Rev. Grzondziel was decorated with, during his priestly service.

In 1999, a granite obelisk dedicated to the memory of this priest, considered very deserving of recognition by the Polish community, was unveiled in Canadian Kashubia, with a plaque proclaiming:

*Chaplain of the Second Polish Army Corps and the Polish Scouting Association, decorated with the Virtuti Militari Cross, the Order of Polonia Restituta, the Monte Cassino Cross and many others.*

*Creator of the centre in Canadian Kashubia, builder of the Cathedral under the Pines. Scoutmaster and guardian of the first scout camps in Kashubia. Friend of the local Kashubians.*

The merits of this great patriot were also appreciated in Poland. By a decision of the Katowice City Council, through resolution XVII/361/11 of December 21, 2011, the two adjoining squares located in Katowice at the intersection of Panewnicka, Franciszkańska and Zielonogórska Streets, in front of the Katowice-Ligota railroad station, were named: *Reverend Rafał Grzondziela Square* (Plac Księdza Rafała Grzondziela).

Not only parishioners found a final resting place at the Polish cemetery in Barry's Bay but also Kashubian priests of St. Hedwig's parish, including: **Rev. Aloysius Rekowski (1921 -2001)**, **Rev. Ambrose Pick (1928 -2017)**, **Rev. Antoni Słomiński (1896 -1927)**, **Rev. Ambrose Majka (1909-1978)**, and **Rev. Msgr. Piotr Biernacki (1883-1958)**, founder of the Polish parish in Barry's Bay.

Rev. Piotr Biernacki was born into a family of local Kashubians. He was raised according to a principle of the Pomeranian settlers: "Only the folk that cherish their mother tongue live." He completed an elementary school in Wilno. Later, he entered the seminary in Detroit. After being ordained a priest, he returned to where he was born, namely Barry's Bay. In 1910, one Sunday, he crossed the doorstep of the wooden sanctuary in Wilno dedicated to St. Stanisław Kostka; the day went down in history. It was recorded not only in the annals of the area but also in those of the entire Polish-Canadian community. For in that very church, erected by the first Polish settlers, a cleric was ordained a priest, who not so long

*The following parish priests of the Polish parish in Wilno dedicated to Our Lady of Czestochowa rest at the new cemetery in Wilno: Rev. Edward Wilowski, Rev. Zygmunt Lewandowski, Rev. Stanisław Kądziołka, Rev. Paweł Jolkowski, parish priest of St. Casimir's parish, is laid to rest in the Kashubian cemetery in Round Lake Centre.*



ago had been an altar boy there. How proud his fellow countrymen were when the well-known Pietrek (Pete) became the first Polish priest born in Canada.

Father Piotr began his pastoral work at Pembroke Cathedral, then was appointed to the Polish mission in Barry's Bay. After a short time, he found that the wooden chapel at the intersection of Siberia and Kartuzy Roads was too small to accommodate all the parishioners. So, he decided to build a new church within the settlement. This was a huge undertaking, given that the Polish community here was barely making ends meet and that poverty rather than affluence was more common in their households. Father Biernacki, however, had a gift for persuasion. Dutiful, caring and at the same time jovial, he inspired trust. Parishioners opened not only their hearts to him but also their wallets, nearly giving away their last cents.

In 1915, the mission became a Polish parish of the Roman Catholic Church under the name of St. Jadwiga, with Rev. Piotr Biernacki as its parish priest.

In 1920, this clergyman and great social activist opened a cinema, where the best and latest films began showing twice a week. In time, the energetic priest realized another of his ideas: he created a home for nuns who were caring for the local children and contributing to the building of a hospital.

Father Piotr Biernacki died on December 31, 1958 in Barry's Bay - where he was born, had lived, and worked. He was buried in the cemetery he himself established and consecrated.

On the other hand, **Father Paul Jolkowski (1898 -1940)** is laid to rest at the Kashubian cemetery in Round Lake Centre. He became pastor of the local parish in 1928 and two years later erected a brick church there dedicated to St. Casimir. After his death, he was buried in the cemetery he established beside the church.

*Here rests the late Rev. Paul J. Jolkowski, born on January 11th, 1898, died on June 29th, 1940. He asks for a Hail Mary.*

With the settlement of Poles in the virgin prairie areas of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, those faithful to the Catholic Church desired to pray in their native language. Knowing the spiritual needs of these Polish pioneers, the presiding Father Superior of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, sent two Polish monks to Western Canada - both had completed theological studies in Ottawa. They were brothers Jan and Wojciech Kulawy.

The first of them, **Fr. Albert (Wojciech) Kulawy OMI**, arrived in Winnipeg on May 6, 1898. While already presiding as a parish priest for

*The priests of St. Hedwig's parish found their resting places at the Polish cemetery in Barry's Bay: Rev. Piotr Biernacki (pictured), Rev. Aloysius Rekowski, Rev. Ambrose Pick, Rev. Antoni Słomiński, Rev. Ambrose Majka.*



*The quarters of the oblate fathers of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate at Holy Spirit Cemetery in Winnipeg.*

*Dozens of priests from the Oblate order are buried in the so-called Oblate quarters - located at the entrance to the cemetery. This includes Fr. Anthony Sylla, who received Canada's highest award, the Order of Canada, for his work.*

all Slavs, during his first year, he visited many places in Manitoba and Alberta where Poles had previously settled. He built the Church of the Holy Spirit in Winnipeg (Parafia Ducha Świętego w Winnipeg), founded the first Polish newspaper in Canada, *Canadian Voice (Głos kanadyjski)* in 1904, and the Catholic Newspaper (*Gazeta katolicka*) in 1908.

His younger brother, Fr. Jan Wilhelm Kulawy OMI, arrived a year later, and soon he reached the Rocky Mountains and British Columbia. On the other hand, the third of the Kulawy brothers, Fr. Paweł OMI, graduated from Hünfeld and began his pastoral service in the province of Alberta in 1903. All three, disregarding hardships and distances, reached Polish settlements on horseback or on foot. They held services in the settlers' native language and encouraged the construction of Polish churches.

Unfortunately, due to poor health, brothers Fr. Wojciech (Albert) and Fr. John Wilhelm Kulawy OMI, had left Canada and they were later joined by their youngest brother - Fr. Paweł (Paul). They all returned to Poland. In 1941, Jan and Paweł both died in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, while the eldest, Wojciech, died in 1942, in Tuczępy near Kielce.

O. Paweł Kulawy OMI, before he had settled in Round Hill in the province of Alberta, went down in people's memory as a great apostle to his countrymen. For 18 years he had been visiting Polish farmers and bringing the Good News.

In 1915, Fr. Paweł (Paul) moved to Edmonton. After a church dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary had been erected in this city in 1913, it became the centre of settlement in Alberta. Four years later, Fr. Paul was joined by Fr. Antoni (Anthony) Sylla OMI, who had stayed in Banff, since arriving on Canadian soil in 1909. Over the course of several years, together they built more than a dozen chapels and churches, expanded many others, converted numerous makeshift places-of-worship into churches, and established new Polish parishes. According to historians, that was the most prosperous period for Polish missions in Canada: "The settlers had already become wealthier, as the years of hard work and sacrifices were beginning to bear fruit. New churches could be built, replacing makeshift chapels. Each of the fathers served a number of missions. Fr. Sylla visited Round Hill, Skaro, and Wodstock every month. Every two months, he would visit Opal, Waugh and Krakow. Fr. Kulawy commuted to Rabbit Hills, Kopernick, Mundare, Chipma, Palin Lake, and Pegis."

**Fr. Anthony Sylla (1881- 1978)** received Canada's highest honour for his work, the *Order of Canada*. Fr. Sylla and other Oblate fathers who worked among the Poles living mainly in Western Canada, are laid to rest at *Holy Ghost Cemetery* in Winnipeg.



Several dozen priests of the Oblate order are buried in the so-called Oblate quarters, which is located at the entrance to the cemetery. These priests include: **Fr. Stanisław Baderski OMI (1895 -1979)**, **Fr. Jan Bednarz OMI (1898 -1992)**, **Fr. Antoni Hylla OMI (1913 -1989)**, **Fr. Jerzy Kania OMI (1911-1974)**, **Fr. Ryszard Kosian OMI (1885 -1962)**, **Fr. Feliks Kwiatkowski OMI (1906 -1996)**, **Fr. Piotr Miczko OMI (1909 -1971)**, **Fr. Albert Pilikowski OMI (1916 -1962)**, **Fr. Stanisław Puchniak OMI (1901 - 1989)**, **Fr. Antoni Rabięga OMI (1911 -1999)**, **Fr. Stanisław Wachowicz OMI (1902 -1977)**.

The site is marked by a series of modest white gravestones with crosses, bearing the name of the deceased, the date of birth and death, and the symbol of membership in the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate - OMI (Oblati Mariae Immaculatae in Latin).

“The founders of our Province had one main goal: to serve the Polish immigrants in the best possible way, having as a role model the first generations of Oblates who had been working among Polish settlers since the end of the 19th century. Those settlers originated from areas neighboring the former (Polish) Republic” - wrote Father Janusz Błazęjak OMI in his book *Half a Century of the Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Canada 1956-2006*, (Pół wieku Prowincji Wniebowzięcia NMP w Kanadzie 1956-2006, OMI, Toronto 2006).

...” The beginnings of the pioneering work by priests and brothers from the Oblate congregation, were almost heroic - due to both modest financial resources and great distances. The pastoral service of our predecessors could truly be considered the authentic ‘evangelization of the poor’. - according to the charisma that guides the entire Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. (...) It is impossible to recall here the names of all the fathers who contributed to the founding of our province. One of them, however, remains to this day a great authority and a role model worthy of imitation, namely, Fr. Michael Smith OMI – a co-founder and the first Priest Provincial.”

**Fr. Michael Smith OMI (1911- 2002)** was born near Edmonton. After ordination, he had worked in Western Canada and was later sent to St. Stanisław Parish in Toronto, where he created one of the largest Polish youth organizations. With the end of World War II, thousands of Polish immigrants began arriving in Ontario’s capital - penniless and looking for help. Fr. Smith, along with **Fr. Stanisław Puchniak OMI (1901-1989)** founded a relief and loan fund, which in time grew into the largest Polish bank in the world: Credit Union of St. Stanislaus and St. Casimir. In 1956, he became the first Father Superior of the Polish Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the 1970s, noticing the aging

*Fourteen Oblate priests rest in the Oblate Fathers’ quarters at Assumption Cemetery in Mississauga, including: Fr. Michael Smith, one of the founders of the Polish Credit Union in Toronto, recipient of the Order of Canada, Fr. Stanisław Bąk OMI, who led the construction of St. Maxilian Kolbe Polish Church and the John Paul II Cultural Center in Mississauga.*



of the Polish community in Toronto, he fulfilled his vision and built the Polish senior citizens' home named "Copernicus Lodge". He received the Order of Canada for his services to the Polish community. Fr. Michał Smith OMI died on October 26, 2002 and was buried at Assumption Cemetery in Mississauga, where fourteen Oblate priests are buried. These include: **Fr. Richard Kosian OMI (1932 -2017), Fr. Anthony Bagsik OMI (1914 -1989), Fr. Teofil Szendzielarz OMI (1933 -1997), Fr. Edmund Rogusiak OMI (1906 -1997), Fr. Edward Świątek OMI (1931 -2004), Fr. Stanisław Kowal OMI (1953 -2 008), Fr. Stanisław Bąk OMI (1937 - 1995)** - who as a parish priest of St. Maximilian Kolbe parish in Mississauga led to the construction of the largest Polish church in Canada as well as the John Paul II Cultural Center.

In St. Albert near Edmonton in the province of Alberta, there is another cemetery of the oblate order, where Polish Oblate brothers, who were monks without priestly ordination, are buried. Here rests the first Polish oblate who came to Canada in 1896, **Brother Antoni Kowalczyk OMI (1866 -1947), Servant of God**. Preparations for his beatification process began as early as in the 1960s. In 2013, Pope Francis signed a decree on his heroic virtues.

Brother Kowalczyk was born in 1866 in Dzierżanów near Krotoszyn as the sixth of twelve children. At the age of 20 and with an apprentice's license as a blacksmith, Anthony set out into the world in search of work. In Germany, he had been perfecting his skills. There, he became acquainted with the religious congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. After taking his religious vows in the Netherlands, he was sent to the missions in Canada.

A year later, at the mission in Lac La Biche, exactly on July 15, 1897, a tragic accident occurred while he was working in a sawmill. A machine crushed his hand up to the elbow. By the time they reached the hospital, the situation had become hopeless and the arm had to be amputated. Instead of anesthesia, it was a standard practice at the time to strap the patient to the operating table. Brother Antoni found this unnecessary. He knelt down, said three Ave Maria prayers, then lay down, took the missionary cross in his left hand and; gazing at Christ, was ready for the procedure.

One day, after recuperation, while recovering and gaining strength, Brother Antoni made a miraculous discovery. He found that "everything God wants is grace". He realized with amazement how much he had changed internally. He had lost his arm but not only did he never complain about it, but he would point to his mutilated forearm and repeat: "This is a great grace for me." Sometimes, he would explain further to some very

*Fourteen Oblate priests rest in the Oblate Fathers' quarters at Assumption Cemetery in Mississauga, including: Fr. Michael Smith, one of the founders of the Polish Credit Union in Toronto, recipient of the Order of Canada, Fr. Stanisław Bąk OMI, who led the construction of St. Maximilian Kolbe Polish Church and the John Paul II Cultural Center in Mississauga.*



*At the Oblate cemetery in St. Albert, Alberta, rests Brother Anthony Kowalczyk OMI, who died with a reputation of holiness and for whom the process of beatification as a Servant of God has begun. In Edmonton there is a monument to the Servant of God - Brother Kowalczyk, chiseled by Polish-born sculptor Danek Mozdzenski.*

trustworthy people: that with the loss of his arm, all the difficulties of adaptation in a new country, the agonizing longing for the homeland and the temptation to return, disappeared. He was convinced that without the accident, it would have been harder for him to accept the grace of salvation. He also received a new understanding of God's will and the grace of holy providence.

Throughout his life, he also remained a man devoted to the Blessed Mother - "Brother Ave Maria" and a "Good Brother Pole", as he was commonly referred to.

"The special personality trait that brought Brother Antoni closer to people, gained him affection, trust, and was conducive to forging bonds - was his human kindness and solidarity with the poor. His virtues were amplified by the fact that Brother Antoni had been handicapped for 50 years. He had lost his right hand in the accident and it was replaced with a primitive prosthesis. He also acquired rheumatism in his left hand quite early, and having gone through such ordeals in his life, he still performed a wide range of work at his missionary post. Outside of his hours of strict duties, he tirelessly devoted himself to the service of the poor, or undertook activities aimed at alleviating their plight" - wrote Fr. Leonard Głowacki OMI in his book *He Told Me to Go*, (*Kazał mi iść*, Missionaries Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Poznan 1999). And he wrote further: "Everyone who came into contact with Brother Antoni immediately noticed that his attitude was derived from a spirit of faith and that he drew strength from trusting prayers which proved very effective in the daily life of the faithful. Hence, they turned to Good Brother Pole with the most diverse troubles and considered it normal that what he would not be able to do by ordinary means, he would remedy through prayer. So, the tales of Brother Antoni's "little miracles" were spreading across the Canadian prairies and settlements.

Brother Antoni Kowalczyk died in 1947 with a reputation of holiness and was buried in the Oblate cemetery in St. Albert. His grave is decked with flowers and votive offerings, as well as cards left by the faithful with written requests for the favour of the Blessed Virgin Mary through the intercession of the Servant of God.

At the so-called Albert Hill, rests **Brother Michał Dabrowski OMI (1901-1989)**, who came to the Apostolic Vicariate of Mackenzie in Canada in 1933. For more than fifty years, he had worked at various places in the vast diocese beyond the Arctic Circle, including many years as helmsman aboard a mission ship on the Mackenzie River, making deliveries to the mission at Fort Providence. He made trips to Norman Wells, Coppermine, Inuvik, and Taktuyaktuk on the Arctic Ocean



– while delivering food, fuel, and children to school. He tied his life to the North of Canada. He stayed and worked in conditions which included both harsh winters of several months and correspondingly short summers – when the joy of the sun is always overshadowed by clouds of angry mosquitoes and black flies. To survive the winters and not die of starvation, he often had to hunt caribou with the Natives.

Here is one of his accounts: “I set out from Aklavik to hunt caribou. It was cold. I arrived at Canoe Lake. I tied the dogs to some low bushes and brewed some tea. I set the sled with the skids facing up, then put a small bear skin on the snow and jumped into the sleeping bag. I didn’t sleep a wink all night because of the cold. I was shivering as if I had a fever. In the morning, I warmed up a bit and continued on my way. I drove about 15 miles up a hill called Fish Hole where I paused, meditating. On the other side were high mountains marking the Yukon border.... The caribou herds hadn’t shown up. Only Fr. Biname hunted down a single animal. And when we were caught in a snowstorm, he quenched his thirst with the blood of the animal, stripped off its skin, and then wrapped himself in it for the night, so he somehow survived until morning...

(...) The next day the Native man spotted a herd of caribou, about 150 head. It was necessary to encircle them like in war. We laid out a whole strategic plan. The Native took the best position, as he is an experienced shooter. We slaughtered 25 animals. Returning, each of us took a few; we left the rest for the next day (...) Traveling in winter by a dog sled without a load is easy. However, the return journey, for instance, with a load of 340 kilograms, is a challenge because the road sometimes is steep. When you lose control of the sled, it can break and kill several dogs on the harness. Only then do the problems begin.”

In 1986, Brother Michał left the Far North due to a serious illness and settled in a retirement home in St. Albert, where he died in 1989 at the age of 88.

Here, after hard work in the Far North of Canada, the following missionaries (among others) have eternal rest:

**Brother Stanisław Szczepaniak OMI (1905-1955)**, who from 1936, for 25 years worked primarily as a carpenter and joiner on various construction sites; among his most impressive missionary works are: the building of a hospital in Fort Smith and a Catholic school in Yellowknife.

**Brother Ludwik Jurczyk OMI (1907-1979)**, who worked at Fort Rae, Fort Resolution, and Fort Chipewyan.

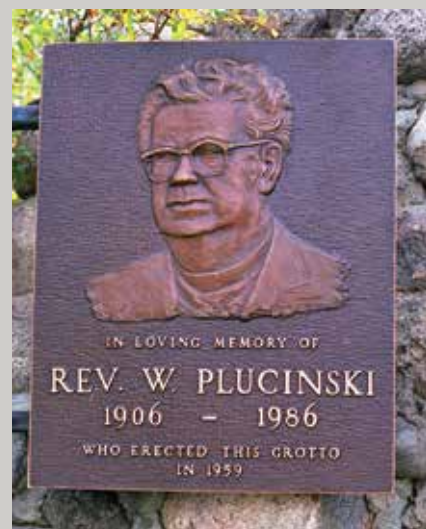
**Brother Ignacy Dorabiala OMI (1902-1993)**

**Brother Joseph Cichocki OMI (1907-1963)**

In 1921, Fr. Pawel Kulawy OMI, returned from his mission in Canada

*In the cemetery on the so-called Albert Hill in St. Albert rest a dozen brothers of Polish origin, including, among others: Brother Michal Dabrowski OMI (pictured in 1987 at the grave of Brother Kowalczyk), Brother Ludwik Jurczyk OMI.*





to Poland. Recalling his pastoral service, he said that none of the fathers under his charge would have been allowed to lead a life like his own - in such poverty and rough conditions.

Although time had been passing, the lives of priests in many Polish parishes, mainly those in prairie settlements, changed little. The best evidence of this is the memoir written by **Rev. Waclaw Pluciński (1906-1986): *Dreams, Nightmares, Reality*** (Marzenia, Koszmary, Rzeczywistość, Buchanan Printers, Winnipeg, 1983), who was a parish priest of St. Elizabeth Parish in Polonia for many years.

“My first impression upon arrival at the parish of St. Elizabeth, in Polonia - a deep disappointment. The church and rectory are not fenced off, so cows graze all around and mark their presence with dung. All trees, once so beautiful, have been cut down. The rectory is empty, without heating or water.

The priest used to live above the sacristy - in the attic, heated by a coal- and -wood stove located in the basement.

- What did you come here for, stupid Wacek, I ask myself. (...) Let's be honest. No priest wanted to take up the post in Polonia. I will stay but under the following conditions and wishes: restoration of the church - painting, construction of a Marian shrine (I brought the painting), restoration of the rectory - installation of water and heating, construction of the Grotto of Our Lady, fencing the property, and planting trees....

People scratched their heads and said: what is he.... having ideas again. But soon everyone got to work, bringing stones from the fields to build the grotto so that a lot was done, later that year. We also organized Church, Hall, and youth Committees - the latter later became one of the best in the diocese. Even a choir for four voices had been formed, as well as a Polish language school and Ladies Auxiliaries.”

Father Waclaw Pluciński arrived here in 1956. He came as a priest but in the memories of the residents, he remains an outstanding social worker. It was thanks to him that, after the initial arrangements with the parishioners, 8 acres of land were purchased next to the church for use as a recreation area. Picnics were held there, bringing additional income to the parish, and 10 acres of land was purchased next to the cemetery, which was fenced in. An entrance gate and parking lot were also made. In addition to the church, the parish hall was renovated and enlarged; various cultural events were often held there. A grotto - a shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary - was also built.... The little-known Catholic mission in Polonia became one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

“Father Wacek” - as he is referred to in the settlement - was a humble

*In the Cemetery of the Holy Spirit Rev. Waclaw Pluciński found eternal rest. For many years he had a ministry in Polonia, Manitoba, where he was immortalized with a commemorative plaque.*



*The graves of Polish priests are located at St. Peter's Cemetery in the quarters for deceased diocesan priests and the Congregation of St. Michael the Archangel in London.*

man, never refusing to help. As a romantic and a poet, he would initiate most activities. His vigour and his ideas had been known throughout the diocese. However, he never emphasized his merits or anticipated praise. In 1974, the former Dachau concentration camp prisoner Rev. Wacław Pluciński, left the parish due to poor health; however, not without regret. He had retired and then he moved to Winnipeg, where he died twelve years later and was buried in Holy Spirit Cemetery. The black tombstone bears the inscription:

*Rev. Wacław Pluciński*

Underneath, the date of birth and death:

*27.X.1906, 1.II.1986*

And below in Latin and Polish:

*To be with Christ*

And in English

*Give him eternal Rest, O Lord.*

Fr. Pluciński's tombstone is decorated with a picture of Our Lady of Częstochowa and an engraving of the Grotto of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Polonia – which was his handiwork.

Did Polish priests face similar problems on a daily basis, while taking over the Polish parish in Skaro, Alberta in 1958? Certainly, although they could count on the help of other Polish priests. Today, they all rest in the local cemetery:

**Rev. Ignacy Lenckowski (1910-1973).** As the inscription says: *A priest forever.*

**Rev. Adam Przysiężniak (1935-1995),**

**Rev. Czesław Kochan (1929-1996) - 42 years of priestly service.**

Polish priests: Franciscans, Jesuits, Redemptorists, Saletinians, Resurrectionists, Oblates, Michaelites, those from the Society of Christ, are all ministering not only in Polish parishes but also in English- and -French-speaking ones - from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They are laid to rest in cemeteries among their religious brothers, like the Polish Michaelites in London, Ontario, for example. Here, at St. Peter's Cemetery, in the section for deceased diocesan priests and the Congregation of St. Michael the Archangel (*CSMA, Latin: Congregatio Sancti Michaelis Archangeli*), one can find the graves of Polish priests bearing only a brief inscription: name, date of birth and death, and the date of priestly ordination:

**Rev. Franciszek Malicki**

*Born January 30.1918*

*Ordained May 21.1950*

*Died December 17.1998.*



Nearby, there is a gray stone obelisk:

**Rev. B. Slawinski C.S.M.A.**

*Born May 18. 1882*

*Ordained June 1. 1912*

*Died April 4, 1971.*

On the other hand, Polish Franciscans rest in the *Cote des Neiges* cemetery in Montreal. They have gravesites in the Socio-Cultural Foundation (Polska Fundacja Społeczno-Kulturalna) Quarters or are buried in common graves - like the pastors of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish, founded in 1915, which still serves Polish immigrants in Montreal. Three parish priests rest in one of the tombs in this cemetery:

**Fr. Bernard Kaźmierczyk (1896-1955)**, who was a parish priest of Our Lady of Czestochowa parish from 1930 to 1939.

**Fr. Frederick Baldyga (1909-1964)**, parish priest from 1955-1964.

**Fr. Ryszard Gruza (1920-1968)**, parish priest from 1966-1968.

A staircase with the following sentence inscribed in Polish leads to the tomb:

*God sees*

*Time is flying*

*Death is chasing*

*Eternity awaits.*

\*\*\*

Reading this inscription and other, similar ones, it is hard to resist the impression that, as expressed by Saint John Paul II: *All of us, from birth to death, each of us is in the peculiar condition of a pilgrim, a passer-by, for whom time flies. For a man is like the breath of wind, his days pass away like a shadow – just as the author of Psalms similarly confessed before God (Psalm 144:4).*

And death is chasing...

*At the Cote des Neiges cemetery in Montreal rest the Polish Franciscans who follow the message of "Peace and Goodness". This includes, among others, the following pastors from the parish of Our Lady of Czestochowa: Fr. Bernard Kaźmierczyk (tombstone relief), Fr. Frederick Baldyga, Fr. Ryszard Gruza.*

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## NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### **Stanisław Stolarczyk**

Reporter, writer, documentarian of Polish Heritage in Canada.

After receiving his Master's Degree from the Faculty of Geology at the University of Warsaw, he completed Tourism Studies at the Institute of Tourism (Instytut Turystyki) and Journalism Studies with the Association of *Polish Journalists in Warsaw* (Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy Polskich w Warszawie).

In Poland, he was a full-time contributor to the national tourism - sightseeing monthly magazine *Roadway* (Gościniec); he also worked with Polish Television, and wrote the tourist guides: Central Roztocze Region, Podlachia-near-the Bug River (Roztocze Środkowe, Nadbużańskie Podlasie).

He has been in Canada since 1983. While living in Ottawa, he worked as a journalist for the *Polish Committee for the Reception of John Paul II in Canada* (Polonijny Komitet Przyjęcia Jana Pawła II w Kanadzie). This resulted in the extensive study: *John Paul II's Meeting with the Polish-Canadian Community* (Spotkanie Jana Pawła II z Polonią kanadyjską).

He received a grant from The Royal Canadian Geographical Society; for his documentary work on Polish geographical names: *The Polish Geographical Names in Canada*.

After returning to Poland in 1990, he created the Polonia Service Press news agency. As a reporter, he searched for bank deposits hidden by the Germans in 1945 in the Sudetenland (a series of reports in the series *Gold of Wrocław* (Złoto Wrocławia) and became associated with the *Evening Express* (Express Wieczorny). He came to Canada again as a foreign correspondent for this newspaper.

For 20 years, he was Editor-in-Chief of the Polish weekly *Związkowiec*. He is currently head of the Fakty publishing house, which specializes in non-fiction and memoir publishing, and also Editor-in-Chief of *Fakty-Czas* magazine in Toronto.

### **Author of the following books:**

*Where Our Feet Step* (1991), *Gdzie stopy nasze* (1991),

*Hobbies of John Paul II - Mountains, Skiing, Kayaking* (bestseller in 1991 in Poland), *Hobby Jana Pawła II - góry, narty, kajaki* (bestseller in 1991 in Poland),

*Dancing on the Volcano* (1991, co-authored with Anna Sukmanowska), *Tańcząc na wulkanie* (1991, współautor: Anna Sukmanowska),

*The Pope that we do not Know* (1994 - 1 edition, 2005 - 2nd and 3rd editions), *Papież, jakiego nie znamy* (1994 - 1 wydanie, 2005 - II i III wydanie),

*A Pass to Paradise. Canadian Notes* (1994), *Przepustka do rajów. Notes kanadyjski* (1994),

*When I Remember Kaszuby. Canadian Notes* (2000), *Gdy wspominam Kaszuby. Notes kanadyjski* (2000),

*Letters to Heaven* (2006 - in Polish, 2007 - in English), *Listy do Nieba* (2006 - po polsku, 2007 - po angielsku),

*Kaszuby - my Canadian Poland* (2010), *Kaszuby - nasza Polska kanadyjska* (2010),

*Portraits 1 - Stanisław Stolarczyk Gallery* (2015), *Portrety 1 - Galeria Stanisława Stolarczyka* (2015),

*The Source of Returns* (2020), *Źródło powrotów* (2020).

### **Publisher and co-author of three albums about Saint John Paul II:**

*Papa, we remember You* (Polish, English, French, Italian), 2012

*Papa, we are with You* (Polish, English), 2013

*Papa, we are listening to You* (Polish, English), 2014

Documentarian of Polish traces in Canada including the disappearing Polish cemeteries and churches in the provinces of: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec.

Author of the photographic exhibitions: Report on Polish cemeteries in Canada (Ottawa, Montreal, Warsaw, Lublin).

In 1980, awarded by the Board of Directors of the Association of Polish Journalists for the best publication of the year and in 2021, winner of the International Literary Competition at the Polish Media Forum.



**This book documents the final resting places of Polish officers - including 13 generals, Knights of the War Cross of Virtuti Militari, Siberians, diplomats, priests, scientists, people of culture, and people of art. These people dreamed of returning to a free Poland, yet they died in Canada and were laid to rest on friendly Canadian soil.**

**It contains 210 biographical sketches of Poles, with more than 300 photos, and was created as part of**

## **the LIGHT OF REMEMBRANCE project**

We wish to carry on the memory of our predecessors.

We want them to be remembered during various Polish celebrations, so that candles will be lit upon their often neglected and abandoned graves, while the Light of Remembrance remains lit in our hearts.

Consequently, we hope that they will be taken care of, on a permanent basis by the Polish youth, as the most valuable testimonies of the Polish independence exodus, Polish heritage; and the culture of Poland, Canada, and the Polish Diaspora.