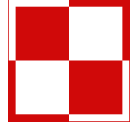


POLISH AIR FORCE COMMEMORATION 2018



In the presence of HRH The Duke of Kent KG

Marking the Centenary of Polish Independence and
the 70th Anniversary of the unveiling of
the Polish Air Force Memorial



British-built Bristol Fighter during the Polish-Soviet war of 1920

1st September 2018
12.00

58th Ceremony of Homage to Fallen Polish Airmen

History of the Polish Air Force Memorial



Unveiling of the Memorial

In the summer of 1945 a 'Committee for the Erection of the Polish Air Force Memorial' was created under the last Commander of the Polish Air Force in the West, Air Vice Marshal Mateusz Iżycki. Air Chief Marshal Sir Roderic Hill became its Honorary Chairman and the Committee included Polish veterans and the Station Commander, RAF Northolt. The famous Polish sculptor Mieczysław Lubelski was in London at the time, having recently been liberated from a German forced labour camp, and was engaged to design and plan the Memorial. A public appeal was launched in July 1946, strongly supported by Marshals of the RAF Lord Portal and Lord Trenchard who asked the British public to show their gratitude to Polish airmen who had flown in the Battle of Britain and the Battle of Europe.

The fund-raising was a huge success and Middlesex County Council donated the site for a peppercorn rent for 999 years. Ruislip and Northwood Urban District Council generously agreed to take on the future care of the monument. - a role continued today by the Borough of Hillingdon. Three and a half years after the war ended the Memorial was unveiled on 2 November 1948, All Soul's Day. The unveiling was performed by Chief of the Air Staff Sir Arthur Tedder in the presence of Marshal of the RAF Lord Portal, the President of the Polish Republic in Exile, August Zaleski, and some 3,000 guests.

ORDER OF CEREMONY

The Trumpeter sounds the Assembly

STAND

Parade

The Wilno Standard of the war-time Polish Air Force

The Standard of the Polish Airmen's Association UK

The Standards of the Polish Scouts and Guides

ATC Standards

The Standards of Polish Schools

ATC Cadets with wreaths

Polish Scouts and Guides

Members of 663 Squadron, Army Air Corps

Officer Cadets from the Polish Air Force Academy, Dęblin,

Introduction

SIT

Chairman of the Polish Air Force Memorial Committee,
Mr Richard Kornicki

Roll-call of the Fallen – Apel Poległych

Officer Cadets from the Polish Air Force Academy, Dęblin

Lotnicy Polscy!

Polish Airmen

Bohaterowie walk o Niepodległość

Heroes of the struggle for Freedom

Szanowni Zebrani!

And all people here present

In a moment of profound solemnity, we gather for this roll-call, our hearts joined in remembering the heroes of the Polish sky. We are come to honour their memory and to pay tribute to all the airmen who laid down their lives and their strength in the service of the Republic. We owe our deepest gratitude to those who, in a struggle high above the earth, did not spare their blood for Poland, the country that would not be overcome.

Stańcie do apelu!

Present yourselves for the Roll-Call

Polegli na Polu Chwały!

They fell on the Field of Honour

I call on you airmen, wanderers overwhelmed with the pain of Poland's defeat in September 1939, who carried in your hearts the craving for battle and, by different routes, found your opportunity in the Allied ranks where you could take revenge for the humiliation you had experienced. Take your places now.

Stańcie do apelu!

Present yourselves for the Roll-Call

Polegli na Polu Chwały!

They fell on the Field of Honour

I call on you, the heroes of the Battle of Britain. Defending this Island of the Last Hope, you won the admiration of the world for your deeds. Yours was the most successful Fighter squadron of any in the Battle, protecting London to the utmost. You hunted Hitler's marauders over the North Sea, in the Bay of Biscay, in the English Channel. You were heroes of the air-war above the sands of Africa. Far from your native land, you laid down your lives with thoughts of Poland. I call on you, the crews of the Bomber squadrons, making raids on distant enemy targets and supporting the air-bridge to our occupied country.

Stańcie do apelu!

Present yourselves for the Roll-Call

Polegli na Polu Chwały!

They fell on the Field of Honour

I turn to you, brother airmen, murdered in Hitler's concentration and prisoner of war camps, in the Soviet labour camps, and in the Gulag: your tragic fate prevented you from continuing the struggle. I call you all: your hearts were devoted to Poland till the last moment of your lives. I call on all airmen in technical and logistics units, who gave your lives whilst keeping the aircrew flying on all fronts in the Second World War.

Stańcie do apelu!

Present yourselves for the roll-call

Chwała bohaterom!

Praise to the heroes

Finally, I turn to you, their Descendants. Remember the blood and the lives offered by Polish airmen on the altar of our homeland: they have met beyond measure those momentous words on our Standard – *Love demands Sacrifice*. Their heroic deeds are stamped in history as an example for all generations. Let them be the testimony of vows faithfully fulfilled.

Chwała bohaterom!

Praise to the Heroes

Cześć ich pamięci

Hail to their Memory

Prayers for the Fallen in Polish

STAND

Ks Stefan Wyleżek,

Rector of the Polish Catholic Mission in England & Wales

Śpij Kolego *is sounded (Sleep Friend – Polish Last Post)*
Standards and Banners are dipped.

Short silence

Wreath Laying

Please sit

National, Civic & Official Wreaths

- 1 HRH The Duke of Kent KG
- 2 HE Arkady Rzegocki
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland
- 3 Cllr John Morgan
The Worshipful Mayor of the London Borough of Hillingdon
- 4 Cllr Tejinder Dhani
The Worshipful Mayor of the London Borough of Ealing
- 5 Cllr Mercy Umeh
The Worshipful Mayor of the London Borough Hammersmith and Fulham
- 6 Cllr Tony Roberts
The Worshipful Mayor of the Borough of Newark
- 7 gen bryg Mirosław Jemielniak
Inspector General, Polish Air Force
- 8 Air Vice Marshal John Stringer
(Representing the Chief of the Air Staff)
- 9 Col. Jiří Niedoba
Defence Attaché, Czech Republic
- 10 Col. Lee Wingfield
Air Attaché, United States of America
- 11 Capt Buško & Officer Cadets
Polish Air Force Academy, Dęblin
- 12 Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton GCB
Patron, Polish Air Force Memorial Committee
- 13 Gp Capt Mike Carver ADC
Station Commander, RAF Northolt
- 14 Mr Artur Bildziuk
Chairman, Polish Airmen's Association UK
- 15 Mrs Deborah Burns
Battle of Britain Fighter Association
- 16 Air Cdre Charles Clarke OBE
Chairman, Bomber Command Association
- 17 Druhna. hm T. Ciecierska
Druh. hm M Nalewajko
Polish Scouting Association

Squadron Wreaths

Laid by veterans or descendants of each Polish Squadron

Bomber Squadrons

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|--|
| 17 | 300 Land of Mazovia | WO Jan Black-Stangryciuk – rear gunner |
| 18 | 301 Land of Pomerania | John Burmicz |
| 19 | 304 Land of Silesia | WO Julian Michalski - Navigator |
| 20 | 305 Land of Grtr Poland | Kathleen Talbot & Harry Kesterton |
| 21 | Special Duties Flight | Mark Michalkiewicz |

Fighter Squadrons

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 22 | 302 City of Poznań | Sophie Brampton & Bernard Nawarski |
| 23 | 303 Kościuszko | Antoni Burdziejow |
| 24 | 306 City of Toruń | Lt Wanda Szuwalska - WAAF |
| 25 | 307 Lwów Eagle Owls | Michael Parrott & Andrzej Michalski |
| 26 | 308 City of Kraków | John Kaye |
| 27 | 309 Land of Czerwien | Stefan Pietrzak Youngs |
| 28 | 315 City of Dęblin | Maj Marian Jankiewicz - pilot |
| 29 | 316 City of Warsaw | Stefan Gabszewicz |
| 30 | 317 City of Wilno | Andrew Brzezina & Danuta Hughes |
| 31 | 318 City of Gdańsk | Josephine Sieroslawska |
| 32 | Polish Fighting Team | Mrs Dunmill-Malinowska |

Artillery Observation

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----------------------------|
| 33 | 663 | 2 nd Lt Davidson |
|----|-----|-----------------------------|

Concluding Prayers

STAND

Fr. James Caulfield, Principal Catholic Chaplain to the RAF

Last Post is sounded

Standards and Banners dipped
Minute's silence

Reveille

National anthems

STAND

The National Anthem of Poland

The National Anthem of the United Kingdom

The Standards are marched off

Concluding remarks

SIT

The Drummer and Trumpeter march off, playing ‘White Roses’ before they leave the enclosure:

The buds of white roses are blooming again,
Come back, Jasiu, come back from your war.
Come back and kiss me, as in days gone by,
And I will give you those roses once more.

[Echo:]

But for Jasiu, nothing now is needed,
White roses are blooming in front of his eyes,
At the edge of the wood their petals will fall,
On the battlefield grave where cold he lies.

Please remain seated until the Royal party has left the enclosure

END OF CEREMONY

Personal wreaths

Anyone wishing to lay a personal wreath is invited to do so at the conclusion of the ceremony: please proceed from the right of the Monument and leave to the left.

Origins of the Polish Air Force

From the ruins of the First World War, Poland emerged again as an independent nation after 123 years of partition and occupation by Germany, Austria and Russia.

On 7th October 1918, with the downfall of the German and Austrian empires imminent, the Polish Regency Council formed in Warsaw declared the establishment of the independent Polish State. Immediately, improvised Polish military units formed in all parts of the country, unified under the command of Józef Piłsudski on 11th November (now celebrated as Independence Day in Poland).

Poles had been obliged to serve in the armed forces of the various occupying powers, but now they took the opportunity of seizing military material remaining in Poland. Kraków was liberated from the Austrians at the end of October. An attempt by Austrian airmen to escape by air was foiled and some 40 aircraft were captured and immediately repainted in Polish colours with a red Z on a white square. In Lwów, the Ukrainian minority, supported by the Austrians, forestalled the liberation by occupying all key points in the city. The entire Polish population, including women and children, rose against them; Polish airmen infiltrated the air base at dawn on 2nd November and took possession of hangars, workshops, stores and 25 aircraft. Red and white chequered squares were applied on the wings and fuselages as provisional national markings.

In Warsaw on 11th November Polish airmen demanded the surrender of the Mokotów airfield from the Germans, who abandoned it four days later leaving behind 130 aircraft, mainly dismantled or damaged, as well as 21 hangars, workshops, factory buildings and equipment. Work began at once on restoring the aircraft and on 20th November the first Polish military aircraft, a Rumpler C.I., piloted by Sub Lieutenant Stanisław Jakubowski, made a triumphal flight over Warsaw displaying provisional national markings of a white and red shield.

At the end of December 1918 the Polish population of Wielkopolska region rose and liberated Poznań from the Germans. The airfield of Ławica refused to surrender, and after failing to respond to an ultimatum on 6th January, was assaulted by the Poles and capitulated after 20 minutes. This brought 140 aircraft into Polish hands, as well as extensive facilities and 300 engine-less airframes. The aircraft formed four combat flights which immediately began supporting the Wielkopolan insurgents. Other aircraft and parts were despatched to Warsaw, to Kraków and to the Ukrainian front.

By the end of January the total number of captured aircraft approached 700 of which about 560 were overhauled and eventually made serviceable.

From this motley collection of many different types of aircraft, operating initially as single aircraft going into action in support of local insurgent units, Polish Military

Aviation was born. The first step in its organisation as a national force came on 14th November 1918 when the Aerial Navigation Section was formed in the Ministry of Military Affairs in Warsaw; and on 1st December the distinctive red and white chequerboard was adopted as the uniform national marking.

As Poland re-emerged from Partition and the ruins of the 1st World War, its borders were in continuous dispute until 1920. There was prolonged fighting against Ukrainian forces in the South East and Bolsheviks to the East. Polish air units were immediately in action supporting Lwów which was under siege by Ukrainians. Wilno surrendered to Bolshevik troops but was re-captured in April 1919 by Polish forces with support from Warsaw-based aircraft.

An autonomous Polish army had been formed in France in July 1917 under General Haller, to which Poles flocked from all over the world. In the early summer of 1919 Haller's army arrived in Poland with seven fully-equipped combat *escadrilles* totalling 101 aircraft. While this was a considerable boost to Polish Military Aviation, as the aircraft were partly manned by Frenchmen its operational use on the eastern front was limited by political considerations. It was not until September 1919 that Haller Aviation was formally handed over to the Polish Government.

The attrition rate of the many restored aircraft was frightening and additional aircraft were ordered urgently from France (including captured German aircraft) and from Britain. Some 500 aircraft should have been delivered but communist agitators in Italian and British docks prevented the handling of aircraft (and other armament) for Poland; unloading of Polish cargoes in the Free City of Gdańsk was sabotaged by Germans; and there was interference with supplies in transit by rail.

In response to a Ukrainian proposal, Polish and Ukrainian forces advanced into Russia in April 1920 with a view to supporting a Ukrainian uprising and establishing an independent state between Poland and Bolshevik Russia. Although they reached Kiev in only twelve days, the uprising never happened and there was a rapid Polish retreat in the face of a strong Russian counter-attack in the north and mounted Cossacks in the south. Retreating in chaotic conditions there was great loss of equipment and by 25th July the 20 Polish squadrons had only 31 aircraft between them.

In the first half of August the Russians advanced through Poland as far as the gates of Warsaw. Lenin wanted a Communist revolution throughout Europe and only the Polish forces stood in the way – including peasant partisans armed with scythes. The Battle of Warsaw began on 14th August. Under Piłsudki's leadership, Polish forces managed to split the Russian army, outflank the central section and attack them from the rear. Newly arrived Bristol fighters were put to immediate use and some 80 serviceable aircraft played havoc among fleeing Russian divisions. The battle is known in Poland as 'The Miracle on the Vistula' and to some Western historians as 'the 18th decisive battle of the world' for preventing the imposition of communism across Europe.

Meanwhile Lwów was threatened by the Cossack army. As the weak and exhausted Polish troops in this sector could not be reinforced, a squadron of four flights - including American volunteers forming the Kościuszko flight - were given the order to 'stop Budyenny's cavalry'. With an average of 16 serviceable aircraft they flew 190 sorties in three days of ground attack until the Cossacks were driven off.

Hostilities ended with a cease-fire in October 1920, but it was not until 1922 that the borders of the Polish state were finally determined – until the next German and Russian partition of Poland in 1939.



Polish airmen with a British-supplied Bristol Fighter, 1920

The Polish Air Force Memorial Committee thanks the following for supporting this event:

*RAF Northolt
The London Borough of Hillingdon
The Polish Air Force Academy, Dęblin
Middlesex Wing ATC
Greater Manchester Wing ATC
The National Marching Band of the ATC
The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight
The Polish Scouting Association
The Metropolitan Police (West Area)
St John Ambulance Brigade
The Gaelic Athletic Association*

*The Trumpeter and Drummer from the RAF Central Band
play by permission of the Air Force Board of the Defence Council*



NOTES:

Lavatories will be found at the Social Cub at the McGovern Park, 100 yards up the road from the Memorial

Sunday 2nd September 2018, 12.00

Mass will be offered for fallen Polish Airmen at the Garrison Church of St Andrew Bobola, Leyfield Place, Hammersmith; all are welcome.

Wreath-laying - Veterans or descendants wishing to be added to the squadron wreath-laying roster should contact the Chairman: richardkornicki@gmail.com

Polish Air Force Museum – to visit the PAF Museum at RAF Northolt or discuss depositing memorabilia please contact: richardkornicki@gmail.com

Next year's Commemoration will take place on Saturday 7th Sept 2019 at 12.00