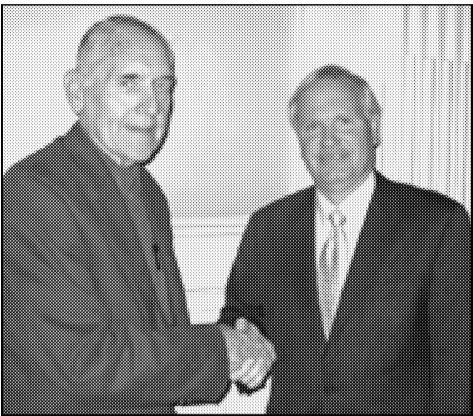



POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS
**It's all about kicking
Christ out of Christmas**

Contact: **Frank Milewski** –
(718) 263-2700 – ext. 105



L. - Frank and Tony

“Tony Avella’s a politician with courage, determination and perseverance. Too bad there’s so few like him around.”

Those are the sentiments of Frank Milewski (left), who heads the Downstate N.Y. Division of the Polish American Congress and its Anti-Bigotry Committee, as he congratulates Council Member Tony Avella outside the Council Chambers in New York’s City Hall.

Both had just stepped out of the Chambers after testifying at a committee hearing where Mr. Avella presented a resolution that requests New York City public schools use Nativity Scenes to properly depict the Christian aspects of the Christmas season.

Although the City’s Department of Education lets the schools display symbols like the Jewish Menorah and Islam’s Star and Crescent during the holiday season, it prohibits the Nativity Scene for Christians.

The Department currently limits Christians to the use of a Christmas tree as their religious symbol. Avella insists Christians should be allowed to decide what kind of symbol is the appropriate one for them rather than the Department deciding for them.

For Avella, the issues are “fairness” and “discrimination.”

Mr. Avella has been asking his colleagues in the City Council to vote in favor of his resolution as far back as 2007. From his initial introduction of the matter, he continues to receive the support of Bill Donohue’s Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Polish American Congress, among others.

All three organizations testified at the City Council on behalf of New York City’s Catholic community. The committee also heard testimony from the

Michigan-based Thomas More Law Center.

The idea of substituting one symbol for another is nothing new, according to Milewski.

His Polish American Congress has many members who grew up in Poland after the Russian Soviets and the Communists took over the country in World War II.

“They tell me how the Catholic bishop, St. Nicholas, was to them what Santa Claus is to American kids. But because St. Nicholas was too much of a Catholic symbol for the Communists to swallow, they created a Marxist character they decided to name “Grandpa Frost” as a substitute.

“That’s why they like what Tony Avella’s doing,” said Milewski.

With last year a presidential election year, his organization conducted an intensive voter registration drive and thought 2009 would be an off-year for any repeat. “But this Christmas issue has attracted so much attention in our community, we’ll do another drive so we can get as many of our people registered by the time the City Council primary comes up,” he said. □

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Our Polish Comrades

By: **Terry Copp**

<http://www.legionmagazine.com/en/index.php/author/terry_copp/>

Canadians have a particularly close relationship with the Polish Armoured Division that fought as part of the 1st Canadian Army throughout much of WW II. Many Polish veterans, unwilling to return to their country while it was under Soviet control, settled in Canada and this strengthened the connection.

The Polish Armed Div. was formed out of elements of the army that escaped from Poland and reassembled in France during the winter of 1939-40. Polish troops, serving under French command, fought in Norway and in the Battle of France.

When Paris was declared an open city and rumours of an imminent surrender reached the Polish commander, General Władysław Sikorski, all units were ordered to try to escape to Britain. Gen. Stanisław Maczek’s 10th Mechanical Cavalry Brigade, which became the core of the Polish Armed Div., lost three quarters of its tanks in battle with the Germans before disengaging and withdrawing toward the coast. Maczek donned a disguise and reached Scotland via North Africa.

Polish soldiers arriving in England in the aftermath of the Dunkirk evacuation in 1940 were quickly dispatched to Scotland where they became a colourful and welcome part of the wartime scene. A large number of officers, but relatively few other ranks, made it to Britain so plans to recruit Poles from North America were implemented. Units remained under strength until Poles released from Soviet prisoner of war camps were allowed to form a Polish corps to fight in Italy or join their comrades in Scotland.

While the Polish army regrouped and trained, veterans of the Polish air force and navy who reached Britain were plunged into the conflict. Polish squadrons played a distinguished role in the Battle of Britain and Poles made up 12 per cent of the effective strength of Fighter Command during the critical month of September 1940. Polish destroyers, sent to join the British fleet at the outbreak of the war, assisted in the Dunkirk evacuation and carried out escort work as part of the Royal Navy’s 5th Destroyer Flotilla.

The Polish Armed Div. reached its authorized strength in 1944, but it was evident it would enter battle without enough reinforcements available to replace casualties.

The division was organized along standard British lines with armoured and infantry brigades, each of three battalions, together with reconnaissance, artillery and anti-tank regiments, plus a motorized infantry battalion; 14,000 men and 240 tanks.

The Polish Armed Div. arrived in France on the last day of July, which was also the first day of the 1944 Warsaw uprising. The Polish Home Army seized control of the city on the assumption that the Soviet Army, whose spearheads were just a few miles away, would maintain pressure and force a general German retreat. It quickly became evident that Stalin was quite prepared to let the Germans destroy Warsaw and the anti-communist home army. On Aug. 3, the guns of the Red Army fell silent. Appeals from Churchill to intervene or at least allow Allied aircraft to deliver supplies to the besieged city-using Soviet controlled airfields-were denied with Stalin insisting that “the Soviet government does not wish to associate itself either directly or indirectly with the adventure in Warsaw.”

The British press and the BBC carried regular bulletins from Warsaw as well as commentary on the situation. For the men of the Polish Armed Div. The constant question was: “What news of Warsaw?”

First Canadian Army was told that the Polish Armd. Div. would come under

Elżbieta Zawacka †

*Messenger for Poland’s resistance
forces during World War II dies at 99*



Warsaw, Poland - Elżbieta Zawacka, who crisscrossed Nazi-occupied Europe to carry messages between Poland’s exiled government and its resistance forces during World War II, died Saturday. She was 99.

Zawacka died in her hometown of Toruń after a long illness, her assistant Izabela Kuczyńska told the PAP agency.

During the war, Zawacka was member of the resistance Home Army and repeatedly risked her life crossing the borders of Nazi-occupied Poland on false documents to carry reports about the Nazi atrocities and the resistance to Poland’s government-in-exile in London.

On one such trip, in early 1943, she traveled though Germany, France and Spain to Gibraltar, where she was airlifted to London.

In September of the same year, she was the first and only woman to be dropped by parachute into Poland, bringing orders and instructions for the Home Army. She also fought in the ill-fated Warsaw Uprising against the Germans.

In 1951, the newly-imposed communist authorities falsely accused Zawacka of espionage and treason. Tortured by the secret security forces, she was given a 10-year prison term, but was released in 1955.

For her bravery, President Lech Kaczyński promoted Zawacka to the rank of General in 2006.

She had a degree in mathematics and was a professor at the Institute of Pedagogy at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.

Zawacka was single and had no children. Funeral arrangements were not immediately available. †

command in time for Operation Totalize, set for Aug. 8, 1944. The Poles had just arrived in Normandy and so there was little time to get acquainted. Lieutenant-General Guy Simonds met Maczek and his staff officers for the first time on Aug. 4 and had one more brief discussion with them before Totalize began. The Poles used British liaison officers to improve communications, but Simonds quickly learned that the Poles could not be controlled in the same way a British or Canadian division could be.

There was more than a language barrier at work. The Canadian historian and armoured theorist Roman Jaramowycz argues that Maczek was “a modern tank officer” who found Simonds’ operational plans too restrictive. On the eve of Totalize, Maczek protested that the frontage of less than a 1,000 yards allowed no room for manoeuvre and would give German anti-tank guns concentrated fields of fire. Simonds refused to alter his plans, insisting that the armour could only function in the open country south of Caen in a set-piece battle with full air and artillery support.

Maczek’s fears were realized on the afternoon of Aug. 8 when his leading armoured regiment lost 26 tanks in a few

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