



Orange County News

By: *Lila Ciecek*

(714) 544-2458

mciecek@aol.com

Summer is finally here after the long „June gloom”! It all started with the Fourth of July fireworks, which ushered in nice weather and summer fun. Summer is the time for vacations, travels, adventures, for a change of scenery. It should also be a time for relaxation and rest, time to recharge our spirit, mind and body for the remainder of the year. Happy summertime to everyone!

Life at the Pope John Paul II Polish Center in Yorba Linda is slowing down during the summer months. After a busy year of activities, the community is “catching its breath”, while enjoying current events and looking forward to future ones.

A warm welcome awaited our special guest from Poland: Professor Father Stanisław Urbański of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, who arrived for his annual summer visit at our Center. While trying to get some rest, Fr. Urbański will be assisting Fr. Noga and providing pastoral services to the Center’s Community. We wish him a happy stay and fruitful work in the God’s vineyard.

The 15th Annual Picnic (Ognisko) under the auspices of the PNA Group „Piast” will take place at Huntington Beach on Saturday, July 25th. Every year this popular event draws over a hundred people, who come to watch the beautiful California sunset, star studded night, a sparkling bonfire, and to enjoy music, singing, friendships and a fun filled day. Information: Marlena (714) 557-1930, Grzegorz (714)744-2775.

Under the chairmanship of Dariusz Światkowski, planning and preparations have already started for the annual „Dożynki”, which will take place on September 19 and 20. Volunteers from the Polish Center’s Community are gathering their ideas and “sharpening” their skills for this important annual event.

The Annual Polish-American Day will this year take place at the Polish Center in Yorba Linda on August 2nd. Sponsored by the PNA Orange County Centennial Lodge 3193 – it promises to be a day of fun, entertainment and good Polish food.

The Center’s Knights of Columbus are planning their annual Steak Fry on August 16th, and Commemoration of the Polish American Patriotic Anniversaries is planned for August 23rd – both events will be at the Polish Center in Yorba Linda. Please, put all these dates on your social calendar – everyone is welcome! □

How Poles cracked Nazi Enigma secret

A July 10 article by Laurence Peter on the BBC News website reports... A silk scarf bearing the image of a horse race was a suitably cryptic gift for a Polish mathematician to receive from a British code-breaker.

The Poles had got there first - that seemed to be the message.

Dillwyn “Dilly” Knox was delighted with the Polish copy of an Enigma - a top secret German military cipher machine.

But his meeting with code breakers in Poland in July 1939 - just weeks before Hitler invaded their country - had initially put him in a sour mood. He had been struggling to figure out the machine’s wiring - a key part of the complex jigsaw puzzle called Enigma.

Marian Rejewski, a talented Polish mathematician, had guessed correctly that the wiring connections between the machine’s keyboard and encoding mechanism were simply in alphabetical order.

Of course, there were numerous other problems to solve, but Rejewski had made a major breakthrough, by devising equations to match permutations in the machine’s settings.

Unsung heroes

For decades after the war the contributions of Rejewski and other Polish cipher experts to the Allied victory over Nazi Germany went unrecognised. But Bletchley Park, the nerve centre of Britain’s wartime code breaking operations, has just held its annual Polish Day - a celebration of the Polish achievements that laid the foundations for British success in cracking German codes.

The fictional film Enigma, made in 2000, had dismayed Poles by neglecting these achievements and portraying a Pole as a traitor.

It has taken a long time to establish the historical facts, but the picture is much clearer now, in the run-up to the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II.

“This event is tremendous – we’re very pleased that the British remember the Poles,” said Derek Celiński, a Polish army veteran who survived the Nazi destruction of Warsaw.

One of the lessons the British learned from the Polish experience was the importance of engaging the country’s best mathematicians in the code-breaking project.

While British code-breakers were undoubtedly bright - Knox was a translator of ancient Greek poetry - they were not necessarily mathematicians.

Polish historian Eugenia Maresch says that Alastair Denniston, the first director of Bletchley Park, was inspired by his meeting with the cryptologists at Pyry, the small Polish decoding centre in the woods outside Warsaw. There the Poles divulged their methods and Enigma secrets to British and French intelligence.

The Poles were already deciphering Enigma messages in 1933, Mrs Maresch explained, whereas the British did not seriously turn their attention to Enigma until the Spanish Civil War in 1936, when the Axis powers’ aggression started threatening British interests in the Mediterranean.

Polish expertise

Rejewski was the brightest of three top Polish mathematicians who were recruited for code-breaking, Bletchley Park historian Frank Carter says. The other two were Henryk Żygalski and Jerzy Rożycki.

They had graduated from a University of Poznań cryptology course, set up by Polish officer Maksymilian Ciężki, who had been trained by the Germans before Poland became independent in 1918.

Although Żygalski and Rejewski were smuggled out of fascist Spain by British agents during the war the veil of secrecy meant they were not allowed to join the Bletchley Park team, Mr. Carter explained.

German changes to the Enigma machines during the war meant much greater resources were required to crack them, and that was where the inventiveness of Alan Turing and the other British code-breakers was key.

The Enigma configurations changed daily - and the “key for the day” could be any one of about 364,000 million possible settings.

“Many Enigma keys were never found,” Mr. Carter told the BBC.

“Probably less than 25% of the naval codes were broken, but it was still a significant success.

BBC article about Enigma to page 14

Mystery of message in a bottle found at Auschwitz solved

Warsaw (AFP) The following May 9, 2009 article by Stanisław Waszak appeared on Yahoo.com... Sixty-five years ago Waclaw Sobczak hid a message in a bottle between the bricks of a wall in a building of the Nazi German Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, a last sign of life as he prepared to die.

“I put the bottle in the wall,” Sobczak, 84, who survived Auschwitz but still bears the ID number -- 145664 -- the Nazis tattooed on his forearm, told AFP via telephone from his home in Wrabczyn, western Poland.

“It was an attempt to leave a trace of our existence as we thought we were going to die,” said Sobczak, sent to Auschwitz in 1943 as a slave labourer.

The note in the bottle written September 20, 1944 included Sobczak’s name and Auschwitz ID number along with those of five other fellow Poles and one Frenchman, all Auschwitz slaves at the time aged 18 to 20.

It was found in April by chance by workers demolishing a wall in what is now a school, but was part of the death camp during World War II.

Since, it has emerged that three of the men on the list are still alive.

“We were taught how to be masons by engineers and master masons, primarily French Jews,” said Karol Czekalski, 83, another of the Poles named on the list, which was formally handed over to the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum in southern Poland, this month.

“From the spring of 1944 some of the apprentices were deemed ready to work,” he added. “They joined the ‘Luftschutzbunkerbau’ responsible for building anti-air raid bunkers.”

“We were used for various jobs: plastering, laying tiles... Finally we were chosen to construct this building. It took 8 or 15 days. I vaguely remember some faces. I am certain there was a Frenchman among us,” Sobczak recalled, but admitted he cannot remember who came up with idea to write the message.

“Someone found a bottle. I put it in the wall,” he said.

The Frenchman on the list was Albert Veissid, now a sprightly 84 and living at Allauch in southeastern France.

“It’s incredible. I remember everything from the camp, from A to Z. As I speak to you now, I can see the images before my eyes,” he told AFP after the bottle surfaced.

“But this bottle business is an enigma. The biggest surprise of my life,” said the former fairground worker, who was arrested by collaborationist French authorities in 1943 and deported to Poland the following year.

Veissid said that while it was a mystery to him how his name appeared on the list, he remembered meeting the six Poles in question while working as a builder at the camp.

“It’s true I did them some favours. There was food supplied upstairs and they used to steal tubs of marmalade, which I would hide downstairs,” he said.

“Maybe they wrote my name in the bottle as a way of thanking me.”

After news of the bottle’s discovery spread, a Swedish woman identified the man who wrote the list -- Bronisław Jankowiak, Auschwitz ID number 121213 -- as her father.

Told about the discovery of the bottled message by relatives in Poland, Irene Jankowiak, 49, said she was stunned.

“I recognised the handwriting. It must be my father’s handwriting,” Jankowiak told AFP by telephone from her home in Uppsala, north of Stockholm.

“We have compared it to other things he has written, we have old letters and things that he wrote in 1945 in a diary so I’m 100 percent sure actually,” she said after

New Publishing Company to Translate Polish WW II Books

By: *Betsy Cepielik*

Aquila Polonica is a new company specializing in publishing in English, the Polish WW II experience – a part of WW II that is virtually unknown in the West. Aquila Polonica means “Polish Eagle” in Latin. Its trademark is registered in 31 countries, and is based in the U.S. and England. They have acquired thirty books as a base for their catalogue.

The first book, “The Mermaid and the Messerschmitt” will be available in September – the 70th Anniversary of the start of WW II Amazon \$19.77 and in book stores \$29.95.) It will also be featured by three book clubs – Book –of–the –Month Club, the Military Book Club, and the History Book Club. The warrior mermaid is the symbol of the city of Warsaw. The Messerschmitt is one of the types of German fighter planes. The original edition was published in 1942 in New York City - shortly after America entered the war.

The author, Rulka Langer (1906 – 1993) was born in Warsaw. She graduated from Vassar College in 1928 and returned to Warsaw, where she worked at the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency. In 1930, she married Olgierd Langer. In 1940 she fled Poland with her two young children, and joined her husband who was a member of the Polish Diplomatic Corps, stationed in the U.S. She wrote her book as an effort to explain to Americans the devastation of WW II. Rulka describes the destruction and the horrors of women and children trying to survive. In her story, the reader will walk in her footsteps.

The rights to the book were obtained after many internet searches from her son George Langer. More than 100 photos, maps, and other materials have been added to this new edition. The original had no illustrations.

As we await the publishing of this book, more information can be obtained from Aquila Polonica at 10850Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Los Angeles, California 90024. Most of their announcements are made through email. They are dedicated to “publishing in English, with firsthand accounts, memoirs, poetry, literature, photographs, artworks, and historical studies.” Their second book will be “The Ice Road.” □

seeing photos of the list in published in the local media.

Born in 1926 in Poznań, Bronisław Jankowiak, a Catholic Pole who was sent to the camp in 1943, fled to Sweden in 1945 where he worked in a factory for typewriters and calculators in Aatvidaberg, in southern Sweden, and died in 1997.

“I think it made him suffer, he wanted to forget it. We asked our parents to write, to leave testimony, but they never wanted to,” Irene’s sister Margareta told AFP.

Nazi Germany systematically killed more than one million people, mostly European Jews, at the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp located in the then Nazi-occupied southern Polish town of Oswiecim between 1940 and 1945.

Among the camp’s other victims were tens of thousands of non-Jewish Poles, Soviet prisoners of war, gypsies, and anti-Nazi resistance fighters from across Europe.

Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated by Soviet troops on January 27, 1945, three months before Nazi Germany was finally defeated by the Allies.

The infamous site was part of German dictator Adolf Hitler’s plan of genocide against European Jews, six million of whom perished at the hands of the Nazis during World War II. □