

## My father

My father died in 1969 when I was 11, we lived in Fife, Scotland. He was working as a Coal Miner then, he had worked in the coal mines in Poland as a very young man and since coming over to Scotland after the war.

When he was alive he never spoke much to anyone about his time during the war, or his life back in Poland, he had kept in contact by letter, with his family but up until 1968 he had never been back to his home to Katowice.

During the summer 1968 he managed to take all of us back to Poland, a holiday of which, I have many fond memories, however sadly, one year later he died. Tragically we never had any more contact with our Polish Relations, which is still something I personally find hard to come to terms with. For the last thirty odd year I have had a yearning to find out more about him, and to contact our Polish family and as I'm not getting any younger and my own children were asking about their grad father, I decided to start my search.

I first tried to contact the M.O.D. records department, Not really expecting to get very far. This day changed my life. The telephone call I made is very clear in my mind. When I got through I spoke to the lady in charge who ask for some very basic details, my fathers name and date of birth. She put the phone down, I heard her footsteps clip clapping across the floor and what sounded like the a massive filling cabinet drawer opening, then closing, clip clop back to the phone, she said yes, there was a file on my father, she was happy to send me a copy but said it would be best if my mother applied for these records. I was overjoyed.

They sent us a copy of his War Record which informed me that he had been conscripted into the German Army when Germany invaded Poland, I do not have any great details except what I am about to tell you, which is also on a record I subsequently received from an army records department in Germany.

Translation of German document information.

He was in The Grenadier Regiment 15 (Motorised) 3rd Company, I believe part of the 29th Tank Infantry Division

I believe that he had been in Africa, and as the German army was pushed out of Africa my father ended up eventually in Italy, I dread to think what he had been through, but from this account on his German records, enough was enough.

The Infantryman Kempik had at the 21,12.43 orders to get food, rations for his section. He delivered the rations at about 9.15pm. after that Kempik (K) got the order to go back to his trench and to hold fort. Instead of filling this order, K was lying down to sleep in an empty bunker/shelter. Here he was found by a platoon messenger at the 22.12.43 at 2.00am. This person gave K the order to go to his trench immediately. At the next control at

5.00am. K was still sleeping in his bunker. Kempik got for the 3rd. time the order to go to his trench. He left the bunker and went in the direction of his trench. Since that point of time Kempik was never seen. Because of the testimony of a witness one assumes, that Kempik is deserted to the enemy. This assumption is confirmed by the ascertainment that at his delivery of the food, two rations of sausage and two rations of chocolate were missing. K had the apparently the intent to desert and he used this opportunity to get food because there might have passed a longer time till he was captured.

I obviously have mixed feeling regards this information, I know what kind of a fighter in life my dad was. I feel he was in such a state then he was past caring, but he was obviously clever enough to know that his next warning would have probably meant the firing squad, so he had nothing to lose but how must he have felt deserting the Germans with them after him heading in the direction of the then enemy, us.

He was taken prisoner at a place called San Vittori in Italy by the American Army (I have actually managed to find a copy of a documentary film made at the time by John Houston, of the Battle at San Vittori). His war could have been over, as I have been told by many people including members of his division. He was held prisoner till about May 1944. He joined the Polish 2nd Corps. 5th Kresowa Division 18th Lwowski Battalion who had just completed one of the bloodiest battles in WW2 at Monte Cassino, where very many Polish soldiers lost there lives. He saw his first action at Anconna and fought for the remainder of the war up to Bologna, May 1945.

His record also told us that he was entitled to some medals one of which was the Cross of Valour which totally took us by surprise, and so far we have not been able to find out how, where or when this was won.

Although I was sent loads of great information, there was nothing about what happened to him when he was resettled in Scotland and I am also trying to find out more about this.

Since receiving all this information I have been down to London, first for the 60th Anniversary of his Division being formed, where I met loads of old soldiers, sadly non that knew him, I have been down two more times and have now become very friendly with most of the men and women who attend.

I had also managed to go back to Katowice, for the first time since my dad died, Easter, 2001. We stayed in Krakow, this is approx. 30 miles from Katowice and due to the fact we had not been able to contact our family before we left Scotland, we were not able to spend a lot of time with them. While we were there we went to Auschwitz Concentration camp which is only 15 miles from where

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## NATO code compromise

A Washington Times "Inside the Ring" article by Bill Gertz reports... The recent crash of a Polish military transport that killed most of Warsaw's senior civilian and military leaders was not only a human catastrophe for a key U.S. ally. NATO sources said that in addition to the loss of nearly 100 pro-U.S. Polish leaders, the crash provided Moscow with a windfall of secrets.

The crash killed Polish President Lech Kaczyński in western Russia on April 10 and decapitated Poland's military, killing two service chiefs, key military aides and several national security officials, many of whom were carrying computers and pocket memory sticks that contained sensitive NATO data.

Perhaps the most significant compromise, according to a NATO intelligence source, is that the Russians are suspected of obtaining ultra-secret codes used by NATO militaries for secure satellite communications.

The compromise of the codes is considered what electronic spies call a "break" for Moscow code-breakers. New NATO codes almost certainly were issued to allied militaries immediately after the crash.

But if the Russian electronic intelligence service, known as the Federal Agency of Government Communications and Information, was able to recover and use the communication key code from the wreckage, electronic spies will be able to decode months or perhaps years worth of scrambled communications that are routinely gathered electronically for just such an occasion.

The coded communications, if decrypted, would reveal some of NATO's most intimate secrets, such as plans for defenses and even the identities of agents or allied eavesdropping sources.

Other Polish and NATO secrets also were believed to be aboard the jet, and so far Russia's government is refusing to cooperate fully with Poland's government in providing details on the cause of the crash, or even to turn over the Polish jet's black boxes.

Additionally, Poland's interim government has not pressed the Russians for answers to questions about the crash, such as why Russian aviation authorities, without any investigation, ruled that pilot error caused the crash minutes after the jet crashed short of the runway in fog at Russia's Smolensk airport. Polish security and aviation authorities also were denied access to the crash site.

Public pressure is mounting on Warsaw to call for an international commission to investigate the crash. Tens of thousands of Poles already have signed a petition calling for the international probe.

Many Poles, who need little encouragement to be critical of the Russians based on past enmity, have taken to calling the crash the "second Katyn," after the 1940 Katyn Forest massacre when Russian agents killed more than 21,000 Polish officers in an effort to decimate the Polish military.

Mr. Kaczyński, who was viewed as politically more anti-Russian than current leaders, was on his way to Katyn, about six miles from Smolensk, to mark the anniversary of the massacre. □

## Polish priests remembered

*An article in Agenzia Fides dated 3/5*

*POLAND - At the Marian Shrine of Jasna Góra a Book with the names of 3,000 Polish priests killed during World War II, under the Communist rule and in mission lands*

The presentation to the "Black Madonna" venerated at Jasna Góra Marian Shrine, of a Book, "The Priest's Vow", containing the names of some 3,000 Polish priests killed during the Second World War, under Communist rule and in mission territories, was the highlight of a Pilgrimage for Priests 30 April - 1 May to the Shrine of Jasna Góra, in Częstochowa, as part of events for the Year for Priests. According to information sent to Fides Agency, the Book also contains the names of seminarians killed at the same time. Besides the Book, the priests presented the Blessed Virgin Mary with a special urn containing earth from the place where the Polish priests were persecuted and killed.

The pilgrimage included a Prayer Vigil in the Chapel of the Black Madonna at Jasna Góra and a Priests Prayer in the Cathedral of the Holy Family of Nazareth, in Częstochowa, with the participation of about 50 Polish Bishops and 3,000 priests. Among those present Cardinal Claudio Hummes, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, and Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, metropolitan Archbishop of Krakow. A Procession with relics of Saint Jean Marie Vianney, from Holy Family Cathedral to Jasna Góra, was presided by Cardinals Hummes and Dziwisz, together with the metropolitan Archbishop of Częstochowa Stanisław Nowak. At the end of the procession about 5,000 priests and seminarians took part in a Holy Mass presided by Cardinal Hummes, who made a vibrant appeal in his homily to the priests of Poland urging them carry the Gospel to all the different areas of social life and cultural environments: "You must go to families, to work places, to schools, to university environments, you must seek out those who have no faith". The Cardinal concluded by saying that when a priest carries out his mission with enthusiasm, faith and courage, he discovers the authentic meaning of the priestly identity. □

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## What's Your Legacy

Many people talk about leaving their will to worthy causes, but don't have a will, and do not realize it requires a will to do so. The laws of most states make it clear that personal property goes automatically, by law, to your nearest relative, even if they are quite distant ones, unless you have a legal will that says otherwise. If you have no relative, it goes to the state. More than half of all adult Americans die without having made their wills. Most of them undoubtedly planned to do so, but never got around to it. Some had wills but didn't keep them current. When you have a will, you should update it every few years as conditions change. Also, always name an executor who will carry out your wishes. Besides money, non-cash possessions can also be used as contributions and various donation plans can be carried out. Be a philanthropist: leave your stocks, bonds, real estate, art, valuable collection or insurance to continue the Polish - American traditions. Your will is the most important way of giving. When you're gone, it is a legacy that is not forgotten. In your will, you can specify what you would like your donation to be used for. For help in making your will, contact a competent lawyer. **The Kosciuszko Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that needs your help and legacy.**

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