

Escaped British Airman Was Hero of Warsaw Uprising

By: *Kamil Tchorek*
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Details have emerged of the heroic role played by a British airman in the failed 1944 Warsaw uprising, in which 200,000 Poles were slaughtered by the Nazis after Stalin's Red Army refused to come to their aid.

Documents released ahead of today's commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the start of the uprising reveal how Flight Lieutenant John Ward sent more than 100 messages to London describing the two months of bitter fighting in Warsaw.

Ward, who arrived in Warsaw after escaping from a German prisoner of war camp, urged Winston Churchill to use his influence with Franklin D Roosevelt, the US president, to secure intervention by Stalin. He wanted the Russians to help the Polish resistance, led by the pro-western Home Army.

The officer's appeals fell on deaf ears. The advancing Soviet army stayed camped on the east bank of the Vistula, watching the slaughter through their binoculars.

Stalin wanted to make Poland part of Moscow's sphere of influence and, in a letter to his two wartime allies, dismissed the Home Army, which was directed by the Polish government in exile in London, as "a handful of criminals".

Zofia Korbońska, 90, a former encoder from the Home Army, known as the Armija Krajowa (AK), said Ward played a vital role in alerting the world to events in the city.

"He took it upon himself to contact London to get us help," she said. "They didn't believe our reports of Nazi atrocities and that our supposed Soviet allies positioned nearby were letting it happen. John made sure London knew about it."

Revelations of the part played by Ward came as John Prescott, the deputy prime minister, prepared to join Gerhard Schröder, the German chancellor, Colin Powell, the American secretary of state, and Polish leaders at a wreath-laying ceremony in Warsaw today. Marek Belka, the Polish prime minister, yesterday urged Britain and Poland's other wartime allies to apologise for not doing more.

Ward, from the Birmingham suburb of Ward End, joined the RAF in 1937, aged 18, as a wireless operator. Three years later he was shot down and captured by the Germans. He was sent to a camp in occupied Poland.

He finally escaped in April 1941 and while on the run sought out a Polish priest who put him in touch with the AK. Ward became its only British recruit and stayed in Poland for three years. The reports he filed from Warsaw were often at odds with the version given by Stalin to his British and US allies.

"About 40% of the city centre is already completely destroyed," Ward wrote in one message in August 1944. "The German forces make no difference between civilians and troops of the Home Army."

In another report he described how 500 Polish women and children were used as human shields in front of a German panzer column.

"Sir, the main things needed are grenades, anti-tank weapons, heavy machineguns, rifles, ammunition of all types," Ward wrote on August 25.

Abandoning hope of Soviet airdrops from a captured base five minutes' flying time away, he spoke of the Poles' "unshakeable faith in Great Britain as their liberator" and urged food and arms be dropped from newly captured areas in Italy.

"Poland is a country which I, as an Englishman, am proud to call an ally," he

Albin Obal †

Philanthropist, business mogul and friend of Polonia, passed away Sept. 8 in Saddle River, NJ. Albin was the President of the highly successful Real Estate Development Company, Midland Enterprises in New Jersey. He was a founding member of The American Center of Polish Culture, Inc., in Washington DC, where he was Chairman of the Board from 1998 to 2005. Mr. Obal was active with the Felician College in Lodi, NJ, served as Chairman of its Board of Directors for many years and was a leader in its development, where he was honored with a building in his name, Albin Obal Hall.

Mr. Obal was a promoter of Poland and Polish Culture. In his tenure as Chairman of the American Center of Polish Culture, Albin, together with Mrs. Yolanta Kwasniewska, 1st Lady of Poland, started a Summer of Dreams Program for 30 Polish Orphans to visit the United States for a two-week vacation.

Albin was also active in many other activities, earning for him the Officers Cross of the Order of Merit from the Republic of Poland. President Alexander Kwasniewski described him as "an outstanding man of many genres, an outstanding businessman, a leader, a philanthropist, and a volunteer who devoted his time and energy to Polish Traditions and a positive image of Poland".

Mr. Obal was born on January 14, 1925 in the United States to a family of Polish Immigrants and served in World War II. He was a man with a caring heart, great sense of humor and responsibility. He was instrumental in sponsoring the creation of a bronze statue of Jan Karski, the great hero of the Holocaust, on the campus of Georgetown University and was a promoter of Polish Jewish Relations.

Mr. Obal received many awards and honors during his lifetime, including the Prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor on May 17, 2003. He will be missed by many of his friends. Funeral Services were private. †

wrote on September 4. "She produced no government to co-operate with the Germans . . . To end I would like to make an appeal to the British nation. It is short: HELP FOR WARSAW."

Only a handful of flights took place, however, and RAF pilots on one run from the Italian port of Brindisi to Warsaw were shot at by the Soviets. High-level telegram exchanges from

Starving, wounded and out of ammunition, Ward used one of his last dispatches to warn that the Nazis were planning to destroy the Auschwitz extermination camp to wipe out evidence of the mass killings carried out there.

After 63 days of fighting, the inevitable happened. On October 2 the Poles succumbed to the overwhelming German forces. Some 85% of Warsaw was razed, and its remaining 500,000 people deported.

Ward, who had been ordered back to Britain, managed to slip out of the city and travel to Moscow, where he underwent a 12-hour interrogation by Soviet agents in the British embassy.

He died in 1995, never having spoken publicly about his ordeal. Korbońska said his motivation in staying so long may have been personal as well as political: "He was living with a Polish family: a widow, her daughter and two magnificent dogs he adored. The daughter fell in love with John. There were rumours of marriage." □

Halina Polek-Vernon †

By: *Marcin Karpziel*



Halina Vernon-Polek, my Godmother, a Polish Armia Krajowa ("AK") veteran, was born in Łódź, Poland to Antonio and Marina Książek on December 27th 1919. She died in Los Angeles on August 17th, 2010.

After her brother was released from Pawiak Prison by the Gestapo in 1943 she took him to Budapest where she reported to the head of AK Courier Section, my father Capitan Stanisław Karpziel. She transferred documents all over Central Europe during the remainder of the war. After the Russian takeover of Budapest most of the AK members escaped through Austria and joined General Anders' Army in Italy.

After the war she married a wonderful man Anthony Polek a Polish Air Force officer who fought in 1939 over Warsaw and during the Battle of Britain. In 1954 they moved to the United States to New York. In 1960 they moved to Southern California where they enjoyed a vibrant life. While Halina immensely enjoyed all that Los Angeles offered, she never got over her love of New York City. Halina adored all forms of art and was a member of several area art museums. She and Tony were active members of the Polish community in Los Angeles. She worked as a travel agent and loved to travel. She especially enjoyed Paris. She has been to every continent other than the South Pole.

A memorial mass will be held in her honor on October 9th at 10:00am at Our Lady of the Bright Mount Parish in Los Angeles. They had no children and she is survived by cousins in Paris and Poland. Her ashes will be buried along with her husband in the Tegoborze cemetery, a small highland town outside of Nowy Sącz.

In lieu of flowers, please send tax deductible donations to Friends of John Paul II Foundation c/o Our Lady of the Bright Mount Parish. †

Moscow's Shadow War Playing Now in Poland

A September 22, 2010 article by Thor Halvorssen on the *Huffington Post website* reports... Alexander Litvinenko, a former KGB/FSB operative, was murdered in one of the most sensational assassination plots in history. In November of 2006 he was poisoned in a London hotel by two KGB agents. The killers inserted a highly toxic radioactive compound, polonium-210, into his tea. The world was captivated as he lay dying in a hospital, completely bald from radiation, mumbling conspiracy theories about how Putin had ordered the hit.

Anna Politkovskya, a Russian-American journalist published in *Novaya Gazeta* and outside of Russia exclusively in Norway's *Ny Tid* (full disclosure, I have an ownership stake in this news magazine), was shot four times in the elevator of her Moscow apartment building--one bullet into her head at point blank range and three into her upper body. The date was October 7, 2006.

Natalya Estemirova, a Russian human rights activist known in the field as a legend for her fearlessness and good humor, was kidnapped on the morning of July 15, 2009. She was found later that day near the Caucasian village of Gazi-Yurt in Ingushetia with bullet wounds in her chest and head. She had been executed.

What did these three Russians have in common? The first two were murdered on the orders of Vladimir Putin and the third was killed on the orders of Russia's puppet government in Chechnya. A spy, a journalist, and a human rights activist. Why were they killed? Because they were disgusted with the Russian government's slow-motion genocide in the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and were actively exposing it. The sheer number of killings in Chechnya is unfathomable and sometimes includes entire villages. The actual details (mutilation of ears and genitals, torture, electric shocks, eye-gouging) and the photographic evidence available are impossible to ignore.

Chechnya has been suffering from Russian aggression for centuries. Most notoriously, Stalin deported the entire population of Chechnya to Kazakhstan in 1944. One fifth of them died in the forced relocation and were only allowed to return after Stalin's death. In 1990, when Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan proclaimed their independence, so did Chechnya. Two wars with Russia have been fought since, the first between 1994 and 1996 and the second since 1999. Several Chechen presidents have been murdered by the Russian government, and in 2007 the legitimate government of Chechnya was forced into exile. Moscow installed a puppet government in its place. At the same time, a rebel Islamist terrorist network proclaimed a "Caucasus Emirate" in Chechnya.

Three factions exist in Chechnya: one is the puppet government, another is the Islamist rebellion led by Dokka Umarov, and the third is the legitimate government of Chechnya, headed by Akhmed Zakayev (who is relentlessly pursued by the puppet government and by Umarov who even issued a Fatwa against Zakayev). The most famous of the three--Umarov's rebel network--claims responsibility for the numerous bloody attacks in Moscow and elsewhere. Ironically, they are reportedly supplied and financed by the Russian state security apparatus. Umarov provides Putin, Medvedev, and the criminal gang that controls Russia's vast energy resources with a scapegoat villain. Fear works, and in Russia the Chechens are cast as the perfect enemy: Islamist radicals who celebrate the 9/11 attacks and pay homage to Osama bin Laden. Even President Bush ceremoniously praised Putin's strong hand against

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