



**Service dedicating the memorial to
Sgt Stefan Wójtowicz on 19th June 2016**



“One of the Few”

Killed on the 11/09/1940 during

The Battle of Britain

Biographical Note on Stefan Wójtowicz

Stefan was born on the 19th June 1919 at Wypicha in Lublin region, son of Stanislaw and Weronika, nee Pejta.

In 1936 he joined the Air Force NCO school for Minors in Bydgoszcz and graduated from Krosno in 1939 as a fighter pilot. On 1st July 1939 he received posting to the 111th Fighter Squadron of the 1st Air Regiment in Warsaw. Stefan then took part in the Polish air campaign until crossing the Rumanian border in Sniatyn on the 18 September 1939.

He reached France, where in the spring of 1940 he was posted to the unit of Capt Kuzian defending Nantes. After the fall of France he was evacuated to Britain, where he received the service number P-5024. On the 2 of August he was posted to 303 Squadron. (Whose aircraft carried the same Kościuszko badge as 111th Sqn had in Poland).

On the 3 September 1940 his Hurricane 1 R2688 RF-F was damaged in combat, and he force landed the aircraft near Woodchurch, slightly wounded.

On 7 September he claimed two Dorniers Do 215 (in fact these were Do 17'S as Do 215's were not used during the Battle Of Britain).

On the 11 September he shot down a Bf 109E which was destroyed, and another Bf 109E as a probable. Five minutes later he was shot down while in single handed combat against several German Fighters. His Hurricane 1 V7242 RF-B crashed in flames near Westerham, Kent.

He was decorated with the Silver Cross Of the Virtuti Militari no. 8818. Source Peter Sikora.

Order of Service at 1.30 p.m.

Presentation of the Wilno (Polish Airforce) Standard by 2427 (Biggin Hill) Squadron ATC led by Fg Officer Rob Smith RAFVR(T)

Welcome and overview: John Kaye

A letter from Poland: read by Nina Britton Boyle

Impressions of a Pilot by Gary Claud Stoker: Read by Mike Reader

Flight is freedom in its purest form,
To dance with the clouds which follow a storm;
To roll and glide, to wheel and spin,
To feel the joy that swells within:
To leave the earth with its troubles and fly,
And know the warmth of a clear spring sky;
Then back to earth at the end of a day,
Released from the tensions which melted away.
Should my end come while I am in flight,
Whether brightest day or darkest night;
Spare me your pity and shrug off the pain,
Secure in the knowledge that I'd do it again;
For each of us is created to die,
And within me I know,
I was born to fly.

Act of Remembrance led by Henry Warde

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.

All: We will remember them.

The Last Post (Cadet Flight Sgt Will Green)

A minute's silence

The Reveille

Unveiling of the Memorial by Nina Britton Boyle and Beata Podolska

at the same time Stephanie Drake reads: “Today we unveil this plaque to the memory of Sgt Stefan Wójtowicz . In doing so we thank our Lord for what he accomplished in his life; may his dedication and courage be an inspiration to us all.”

Some people may like to lay flowers around the Memorial

The memorial is blessed by Father Ivan

Prayers of remembrance

Almighty God, we thank you today for all those who across the ages have been examples of courage, have given inspiration to subsequent generations; all whose words and actions have given inspiration to subsequent generations.

In glad thanksgiving.

All: **We will remember them.**

We thank you for those who have had the courage to stand up for their convictions, come what may; to fight against evil and injustice, even at the cost of their own lives; to live out their faith and share it with others in the face of bitter opposition.

In glad thanksgiving.

All: **We will remember them.**

Especially today we thank you for those who displayed such courage in all the horror of war; those who fought so bravely, who served so faithfully, and who sacrificed so greatly for the cause they believed in.

In glad thanksgiving

All: **We will remember them.**

We give thanks for the freedom we enjoy through their sacrifice; we salute their courage; we acknowledge again the debt we owe them; and we pray that the lessons of the past may not be forgotten, or the sacrifices wasted.

In glad thanksgiving.

All: **We will remember them.**

As we have prayed that your Kingdom may come, give us wisdom and grace to work together to establish the reign of peace and justice which is your will for your world.

Thanks be to God.

Amen

Prayer for Fallen Airmen by Father W Staniszewski

Translated by Group Captain S. Wandzilak, OBE., DFC., AFC.

O Holy Lord, Holy Almighty, Holy and Immortal, O God, giver of forgiveness and lover of human salvation, To Your Mercy we humbly commend the souls of all airmen killed in defence of Polish and foreign skies, who, "lighter than eagles, stronger than lions are no separated in their death".

In their earthly life they fought well, reached their goal and kept their faith.

Blessed at Baptism with the sign of the Holy Trinity they longed to fulfil Your will and, as here on earth, their true faith has embraced them in the society of believers and in the communion of Saints, so in the Kingdom of Heaven let Your

mercy unite them with the choirs of Angels and give them a share in the glory of Your Saints.

And when their sins, of which all of us are guilty, are balanced on the scales of Your Justice, then You, who are Love and Mercy, accept the sacrifice demanded of them by their love for You and for Poland.

Having delivered them from earthly life, admit them to eternal tranquillity, brightness and peace.

Let the sacrifice of their lives be not in vain but be the seed of a better future for Your Church, for Poland and for the whole world.

We, for our part, pray that You fill us with joy and peace in our faith, so that we may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

Words of thanks by John Kaye

Blessing

2427 (Biggin Hill) Squadron ATC marches off with the Wilno Standard

Information about the words on the Memorial Plaque. “On our wings sing the winds of liberty” come from the Song of 303 Squadron. We thought was especially poignant in regard to Stefan’s life and his incredible bravery and its a lovely connection to his comrades in arms.

The Song of 303 Squadron
By
Czesław ‘Czechura’ Kałkusiński

An eagle in flight as the engines pay a march
In a grim dance with death, longing drives us.
The roar of engines is the airman’s own song,
The roar of the engines like our hearts resonates within us.

Through murk and thick fog,
In defence of foreign isles –
That’s us, 303 Squadron,
That’ us!

On our wings shine Polish emblems,
On our wings sing the winds of liberty,
Like a tune of the free – we sail over the earth,
To pound into dust that bed of crime and evil.

The propellers too play a melody of the heart.
This tune to battle calls us like a gust of vengeance.
That song, that’s our song,
It plays to us on those emblems and on those wings,
A call to battle, a call to battle,
A soaring flight! A tune of victory.

Through murk and thick fog,
In defence of foreign isles –
That’s us, 303 Squadron, That’s us!