

Your Excellency, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Paris
Your Excellency, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in London
Prefect
Deputies
Senators
Representatives of the Armed Forces
Regional Counsellors
Vice-Presidents of the Departmental Council
Ladies and gentlemen

Welcome to Normandy, welcome to the Community of Communes of the Coeur de Nacre, and welcome to Plumetot. Bienvenue, Witamy.

Our charming little village of Plumetot was built for the most part in the time of Napoleon the First. If it remains virtually intact to this day, we owe it to our English friends who liberated us on the 6th of June 1944. Be in no doubt of our deepest gratitude and undying thanks.

Today, after two and a half years of work, we will together inaugurate this Memorial to the memory of the Polish pilots who flew from the temporary airfield known as B10, constructed by the English at Plumetot in 1944.

The fulfilment of our plans could never have seen the light of day without the financial support of numerous partners, including the Ministry of the Armed Forces, the Departmental Council, the Community of Communes, other Anglo-Polish, and numerous private donors.

I would like to pay particular tribute to the members of our B10 Committee, comprising Mrs Smaga, Polish Consul, Col. Pita, Deputy Defence Attaché, Sqn Ldr Tenniswood, RAF, Mr Bouyx, the Parliamentary representative of this constituency, Mrs Durand and Mr Nouvelot, our representatives in the Departmental Council, Mr Jouy, President of the Community of Communes of the Coeur de Nacre, Mr Lecomte, Director of the National Office for Veterans, Mrs Marie, Deputy Mayor, and Mrs Hamelin, financial assistant, all acting under the Presidency of Mr. Kornicki, Chairman of the Polish Air Force Memorial Committee, with the Secretariat provided with exceptional diligence by Mrs Ruffier, Secretary to the Mayor. I must also include the Municipal Council, Mr Peronne, our technical specialist, and all the other volunteers who have worked relentlessly to ensure that our village is decorated and blooming with the colours of Poland. Well done, and a huge 'thank-you' to all of you.

In this village, we value and protect our architectural and environmental heritage, but that does not prevent us from placing a contemporary work beside a medieval church. This sculpture, chosen by the members of the B10 Committee and by the residents of the village in response to a public consultation, has been set up for all time at the centre of our village. It is a perfect illustration of how tradition and contemporary values can be reconciled. Thank you again to the Polish Air Force Memorial Committee.

Our Memorial is first and foremost a place of Memory for us and for future generations. It carries a significance that is at once historic, symbolic and emotional. It is by the sacrifice of those young Polish pilots, that we are allowed to live together in peace today. We will never forget them.

And thanks to them and to their brothers in arms, Europe, for all its difficulties and differences, is today based on solid values: peace, brotherhood, and friendship between its peoples.

Long live Poland! Long live the United Kingdom! And long live France!