

PAFMC COMMENDATIONS

In 2014 the Polish Air Force Memorial Committee began awarding Commendations. These are given to people who, with no personal connections with Poland, have nonetheless made an exceptional contribution to preserving the memory of Polish Airmen.

1. Mr Peter Whitaker and the late Mr Jim Hartley

For their work in establishing a memorial to seven Polish airmen who died when their Wellington bomber crashed at the side of the Leeds Liverpool canal at Bradley on September 23, 1943, tracing descendants of those airmen, and taking the medals to which they were entitled back to their families.

2. Mrs Nina Britton Boyle

For her work over many years sending information about Polish airmen who died to their families in Poland, tending their graves, and erecting memorial plaques.

3. Mr Colin Mitchell-Smith

For his work in creating the memorial at Faldingworth to Polish airmen, organising ceremonies there, and recently creating an Anglo-Polish 'Path of Friendship' at the Church there.

4. The R J Mitchell Primary School

This School is built on the former parade ground of RAF Hornchurch. Classrooms are named after Battle of Britain pilots, and they chose to include Ferić and Gabszewicz among them. It is one of only two schools in the country allowed to wear the RAF tie as its school tie. The Commendation will be received by the headmaster, Mr Read.

5. Ms Kate O'Mara

A Commendation has also been awarded to Ms Kate O'Mara, who was responsible for establishing a memorial to 302 Squadron in the church at Leconfield. As she is unable to be here today, it will be presented subsequently.

6. Wing Commander Richard Willis
RAF Northolt

For exceptional dedication to the role of the Polish Air Force, particularly at RAF Northolt, and for assistance to the Polish Air Force Memorial Committee.

2015

7. Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE
Leader of Hillingdon Council

For many years work, both on routine matters, such as the impeccable maintenance of the Monument and its grounds, and one-off events, such as the wonderful gesture of the creation of the Memorial Garden to mark the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

8. Peter Devitt
RAF Museum, Hendon

For curating the splendid 'Brothers in Arms' exhibition at the RAF Museum and in giving presentations in Britain and in Poland on the role and achievements of the Polish Air Force.

9. Kelvin Youngs
Aircrew Remembered web-site

For creating and maintaining the Aircrew Remembered website, which has grown into a source of immense value to family members, scholars and the general public.

10. Jan Mills
RAF Northolt

For the care provided to visiting veterans and their descendants, as well as the trouble taken to make sure that no visitor to RAF Northolt, from whatever background, leaves without understanding the role played by the Polish Air Force.

2016

11. 307 Squadron Project
Michael Parrott, Founder

For restoring 15th November to its war-time title of 'Polish 307 Squadron Day' in the City of Exeter, in tribute to the night-fighter Squadron stationed there for two years and a key defence during the Blitz. In support of which, the Project has created exhibitions, secured the involvement of the Lord Mayor and the Polish Embassy, and built up a growing body of local interest.

12. Clitheroe Youth Forum
Mel Diack MBE Chairman

For engaging young people locally in researching the history of 15 aircraft crashes on the fells of the Forest of Bowland, marking each site with a memorial stone, and creating a common memorial to the 25 aircrew killed. Particular care was taken to ensure that Polish aircrew were properly remembered and that their heritage was reflected in the ceremonies that took place.

13. RAF Ingham Heritage Group
Geoff Burton, Founder and Trustee

For the Group's work in acquiring the site of the former RAF Ingham - predominantly a Polish bomber base - and creating firstly a memorial and over the longer term restoration of some of the buildings to create a museum. The RAF Ingham Heritage Centre is seen as the home of the Polish Bomber Squadrons for commemorative purposes.

14. Calverton and Woodborough Branch, Royal British Legion
Sue Bereznyckyj, President

For maintaining since 1940 a memorial cross deep in local woodland marking the site where a 300Sqn Fairey Battle crashed during the Battle of Britain on 13 October 1940 on returning to RAF Swinderby, killing its three crew, F/O Jan Gebicki pilot, Sgt Edward Morawa observer and Sgt Tadeusz Egierski wireless operator/gunner, and securing the presence of relatives of those killed at a 75th anniversary service in 2015.