



POLISH AIR FORCE
COMMEMORATION
2015



**75th Anniversary of the
Battle of Britain**



Hawker Hurricane in the markings of 303 Kościuszko Squadron
Photo: © J.Mainka; Courtesy of Historic Aircraft Collection

Saturday 5th September 2015

12.00

55th Ceremony of Homage to Fallen Polish Airmen

***The Polish Air Force Memorial Committee thanks the
following for their help in organising this event:***

*RAF Northolt
The London Borough of Hillingdon
The Polish Air Force Academy, Dęblin
Middlesex Wing ATC
The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight
The Historic Aircraft Collection
The Polish Scouting Association
St John Ambulance Brigade
The Metropolitan Police (Hillingdon OCU)
The Gaelic Athletic Association*

*The Trumpeter and Drummer from the RAF Central Band
play by permission of the Air Force Board of the Defence Council*

ORDER OF CEREMONY

The Trumpeter sounds the ASSEMBLY

PLEASE STAND

Fly-past by Hurricane RF-E, 303 Sqn, Historic Aircraft Collection

Parade

*The Wilno Standard of the war-time Polish Air Force
The Standard of the Polish Air Force Association GB
The Standard of the Polish Air Force Association Nottingham
The Standards of the Polish Scouts and Guides
The Standards of Polish Schools
The Standards of the Association of Retired Members of the Polish Air Force
ATC Cadets with wreaths
Polish Scouts and Guides
Officer Cadets from the Polish Air Force Academy, Dęblin,*

Introduction to the Ceremony

Chairman of the Polish Air Force Memorial Committee,
Mr Richard Kornicki

The Roll-call of the Fallen – Apel Poległych

The Polish Roll-Call of the Fallen: Dęblin Officer Cadets

Lotnicy Polscy!

Polish Airmen

Bohaterowie walk o Niepodległość

Heroes of the struggle for Freedom

Szanowni Zebrani!

And all people here present

In a moment of profound solemnity, we gather for this roll-call, our hearts joined in remembering the heroes of the Polish sky. We are come to honour their memory and to pay tribute to all the airmen who laid down their lives and their strength in the service of the Republic. We owe our deepest gratitude to those who, in a struggle high above the earth, did not spare their blood for Poland, the country that would not be overcome.

Stąńcie do apelu!

Present yourselves for the Roll-Call

Polegli na Polu Chwały!

They fell on the Field of Honour

I call on you airmen, wanderers overwhelmed with the pain of Poland's defeat in September 1939, who carried in your hearts the craving for battle and, by different routes, found it in the Allied ranks where you could take revenge for the humiliation you had experienced. Take your places now.

Stąńcie do apelu!

Present yourselves for the Roll-Call

Polegli na Polu Chwały!

They fell on the Field of Honour

I call on you, the heroes of the Battle of Britain. Defending this Island of the Last Hope, you won the admiration of the world for your deeds. Yours was the most successful Fighter squadron of any in the Battle, protecting London to the utmost. You hunted Hitler's marauders over the North Sea, in the Bay of Biscay, in the English Channel. You were heroes of the air war above the sands of Africa. Far from your native land, you laid down your lives with thoughts of Poland. I call on you, the crews of the Bomber squadrons, making raids on distant enemy targets and supporting the air-bridge to our occupied country.

Stańcie do apelu!

Present yourselves for the Roll-Call

Polegli na Polu Chwały!

They fell on the Field of Honour

I turn to you, brother airmen, murdered in Hitler's concentration and prisoner of war camps, in the Soviet labour camps, and in the Gulag: your tragic fate prevented you from continuing the struggle. I call you all: your devoted hearts were for Poland to the last moment of your lives. I call on all airmen in technical and logistics units, who gave your lives whilst keeping the aircrew flying on all Second World War fronts.

Stańcie do apelu!

Present yourselves for the roll-call

Chwała bohaterom!

Praise to the heroes

Finally, I turn to you, their Descendants. Remember the blood and the lives offered by Polish airmen on the altar of our homeland: they have met beyond measure those momentous words on our Standard – Love demands Sacrifice. Their heroic deeds are stamped in history as an example for all generations. Let them be the testimony of vows faithfully fulfilled.

Chwała bohaterom!

Praise to the Heroes

Cześć ich pamięci

Hail to their Memory

Prayers for the Fallen in Polish

Ks Stefan Wylężek,

Rector of the Polish Catholic Mission in England & Wales

The LAST POST is sounded, Standards and Banners are dipped.

There will be a minute's silence, ended by REVEILLE.

PLEASE SIT FOR THE WREATH LAYING

- 1 Mr Ken Olisa OBE FRCS FBCS
HM Lord Lieutenant for Greater London,
- 2 HE Mr Witold Sobków
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland
- 3 Cllr George Cooper
The Worshipful Mayor of the London Borough of Hillingdon
- 4 Cllr Harbhajan Kaur-Dheer
The Worshipful Mayor of the London Borough of Ealing
- 5 Cllr Mercy Umeh
The Worshipful Mayor of the London Borough Hammersmith
and Fulham,
- 6 Cllr Robert Crowe
The Worshipful Mayor of the Borough of Newark
- 7 gen. dyw. pil. Jan Śliwka
Inspector General of the Polish Air Force,
- 8 AVM Andrew Turner CBE MA MSc BA FRAeS FCMI RAF
(representing the Chief of the Air Staff)
- 9 Col. Jiri Svatos
Defence Attaché, Czech Republic
- 10 Lt. Grzegorz Buśko
Polish Air Force Academy, Dęblin
- 11 Gp Capt David Manning ADC MA CMgr FCMI RAF
Station Commander, RAF Northolt
- 12 Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton GCB LLD (Hon) BSc FRAeS CCMI
Patron, Polish Air Force Memorial Committee
- 13 gen. dyw. w st. spocz. pil. Franciszek Macioła,
Chairman, Association of Polish Air Force Seniors
- 14 Mr Artur Bildziuk
Chairman, Polish Air Force Association GB
- 15 Ven Ray Pentland CB
Battle of Britain Fighter Association
- 16 Air Cdre Charles Clarke OBE
Chairman, Bomber Command Association
- 17 Druh. hm T. Ciecierska
Polish Scouting Association

Druh. hm M Nalewajko
Polish Scouting Association

Wreaths will then be laid for each of the Polish Squadrons and Units commemorated on the Memorial, by veterans of those Squadrons or their descendants.

Concluding Prayers

PLEASE STAND

Fr. James Caulfield, Principal Catholic Chaplain to the RAF

PLEASE SIT

Anyone wishing to lay a personal wreath will be invited to do so at the conclusion of the prayers: please form up to the right of the monument and follow the Marshal's instructions. Traditional Polish military songs will be played by the Trumpeter.

PLEASE STAND

The National Anthem of Poland

The National Anthem of the United Kingdom

The Standards are marched off

The Drummer and Trumpeter march off, playing 'White Roses' before they leave the enclosure:

The buds of white roses are blooming again,
Come back, Jasiu, come back from your war.
Come back and kiss me, as in days gone by,
And I will give you those roses once more.

[Echo:]

But for Jasiu, nothing now is needed,
White roses are blooming in front of his eyes,
At the edge of the wood their petals will fall,
On the battlefield grave where cold he lies.

END OF CEREMONY

Fly-past by Battle of Britain Memorial Flight

The Polish Air Force and the Battle of Britain

The Battle of Britain is often presented as the time when Britain stood alone against the enemy. But on the 15th of September, 'Battle of Britain Day', one in five of all pilots in the air defending Britain was Polish.

Although occupied in 1939 by Germany and the Soviet Union, Poland never surrendered and its Government transferred to France and then to Britain. The Polish Air Force escaped through Romania to France, and then to Britain: for them, 'The Island of the Last Hope'.

By June 1940 some 6,000 members of the Polish Air Force had reached Britain, pilots, ground crew, and administrative staff. They had come here to fight under the traditional Polish motto 'Za Wolność Waszą i Naszą' – 'For Your Freedom and Ours.'

302 was the first Polish Squadron to be declared operational on 15th August, followed on 31st August by 303 at RAF Northolt. In addition, a number of other Poles served in existing RAF Squadrons, bringing the total number of Polish pilots who took part in the Battle of Britain to 145. They constituted the largest national group after the British and accounted for 7.5% of all enemy aircraft destroyed.

Although operational for only six weeks out of the sixteen that are regarded as the Battle period, 303 Squadron became the highest scoring Squadron of any that took part in the Battle with 126 confirmed victories.



Among the pilots of 303 was Sgt Josef František, a Czech who had flown with the Polish Air Force since the occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939; he became the highest scoring pilot of the Battle with 17 confirmed victories before he was killed.

The achievements of the ground crews were equally exceptional. By the end of the fighting on 15th September, all the surviving Hurricanes of 303 Squadron were judged to have levels of battle damage that could only be repaired by return to the factories. But overnight the ground crews managed to repair everything in the hangars, and by next morning all aircraft were restored to operational capability.



Overall, the judgement on the contribution of the Polish Air Force is best left to those who bore the highest responsibility. Sir Archibald Sinclair, Secretary of State for the Air Force said: "Our shortage of trained pilots would have made it impossible to man the squadrons which were required to defeat the German air force and so win the Battle of Britain if the gallant airmen of Poland had not leaped into the breach". And yet more tellingly:

"Had it not been for the magnificent material contributed by the Polish Squadrons and their unsurpassed gallantry, I hesitate to say the outcome of the Battle would have been the same".

ACM Sir Hugh Dowding



HM King George VI inspects 303 Sqn Pilots at readiness at RAF Northolt



Sunday 6th September:

12.00 - Mass will be offered for fallen Polish Airmen at the Garrison Church of St Andrew Bobola, Leyfield Place, Hammersmith

18.00 - Premier of documentary film 303, directed by Tomasz Magierski, Winston Churchill Theatre, Pinn Way, Ruislip HA4 7Q, telling the Squadron's story through the lives of veterans and descendants of key personnel (80 mins.).

Next year's ceremony will take place on Saturday 3rd September, 2016 at 12.00

Veterans or descendants wishing to be added to the Squadron wreath-laying roster should contact the Committee through the web-site www.polishairforcememorialcommittee.org