

Poland's Important Role in World War II

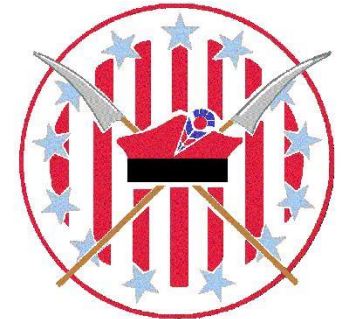
Lesson 4

Poland helps the Allies defeat Germany; The Allies betray Poland; Enslavement under Soviet Communism for the next 45 years.

Poles Defeat Germans in Major Allied Battles

Battle of Britain – *Largest Air Battle of the War*

- 8 Polish RAF Fighter Squadrons fought the Luftwaffe
 - 302nd and 303rd – fought the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain
 - 306th, 307th, 308th, 309th, 315th, 316th, 317th, 318th
 - Fought the Luftwaffe after Battle of Britain
- 303rd Kosciuszko Squadron – RAF's highest scoring unit
 - 126 German planes shot down in 6 weeks
 - 14 German planes shot down in one mission without a loss.



303rd Emblem



303rd Pilots return from a mission



Donald Zumbach



Relaxing between missions



Witold Łokuciewski

Commander-in-Chief of Fighter Command, Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding:

“Had it not been for the magnificent work of the Polish squadrons and their unsurpassed gallantry, I hesitate to say that the outcome of battle would have been the same.”

Poles Defeat Germans in Major Allied Battles

Battle of Monte Cassino, Italy

Polish 2nd Corps led by General Anders

- Defeated German forces and broke Hitler's Gustav Line
- Liberated cities of Loreto, Ancona, Faenza, and Bologna



Polish 2nd Corps Emblem



Churchill and General Anders in Italy



Polish soldiers advance up Monte Cassino



Polish soldiers liberate city of Bologna

Poles Defeat Germans in Major Allied Battles

Battle of Falaise Gap, France

1st Armoured Division led by General Maczek

- Destroyed 14 German Army and SS Divisions
- Collapsed the German position in Normandy
- Liberated Belgian and Dutch cities



*1st Polish Armored Division Emblem
"The Black Devils"*



General Maczek with General Eisenhower



Breda's Dutch welcome Maczek's liberators



The Black Devils guard captured German prisoners

Polish Navy Fights in Major Allied Operations

The Polish Navy fought alongside the Allied Navies with distinction

Fought in the North Sea, Atlantic Ocean, and Mediterranean

- Sank 12 enemy ships, 5 submarines, and 41 merchant ships
- Damaged 24 enemy ships; shot down 20 enemy aircraft

Escorted 787 Allied transport convoys in the Atlantic

Participated in the sinking of German battleship Bismarck

Participated in the Normandy D-Day landings



Polish Navy Insignia



Submarine Sokół (Falcon) showing enemy ships sunk and damaged



Polish destroyer Wicher (Whirlwind)



Submarine Orzeł (Eagle)



Polish destroyer Piorun (Thunderbolt)

Polish Technologies help Allies defeat Germans

Polish mathematicians broke the German Enigma code

Provided Enigma replicas to Britain and France

- *Gave Allies a unique advantage; Allies could read many of Hitler's messages*



Marian Rejewski



Henryk Zygalnski



Jerzy Rózycki



Enigma Encryption Machine



Germans operating an Enigma

Polish Technologies help Allies defeat Germans

Mark 1 Mine Detector — *invented by Józef Kosacki*

- 100,000 made; highly effective in Normandy and Sicily invasions

Vickers Tank Periscope — *invented by Rudolph Gundlach*

- Rotary 360-degree view; used in many Allied tanks

Świątecki Bomb Slip — *invented by Władysław Świątecki*

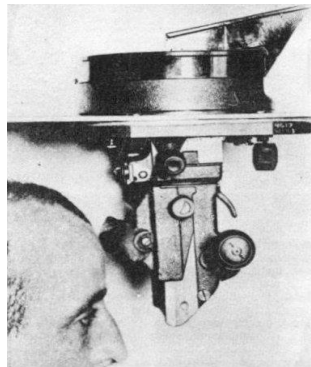
- Bomb release system used in many Allied bombers

HF/DF Antenna System — *invented by Wacław Struszyński*

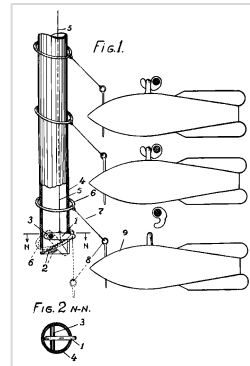
- Found U-Boats effectively; reduced convoy losses 25% to 50%



Mark 1 at Al Alamein



Vickers 360-degree periscope



Świątecki Bomb Slip



HF/DF from HMS Belfast

Poles Provide Critical Intelligence to the Allies

Intelligence provided by the Polish Home Army (*Armia Krajowa, AK*)

Reported on German units, locations, and movements

First to inform Allies of murder of Jews at Auschwitz

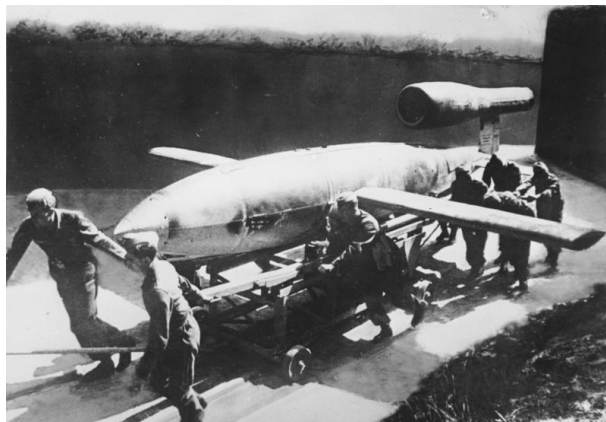
- Auschwitz prisoner *Witold Pilecki* sent reports to Home Army HQ

Provided crucial information on Hitler's secret V-1 and V-2 rocket programs

- Made detailed drawings of secret launch site Peenemünde
- Recovered new V-2 rocket; airlifted it to Britain (Operation Wildhorn III)



Captain Witold Pilecki



German V-1 Rocket



German V-2 Rockets



AK recovers V-2 (Operation Wildhorn III)

Poles Provide Critical Intelligence to the Allies

First to inform Allies of Warsaw Ghetto's horrible conditions

- Jan Karski's eyewitness accounts *ignored by Roosevelt and Churchill*

Spy network "Interallie" in occupied France

- *Convinced Germans that Allies would not invade at Normandy*
- Led by Roman Czerniawski (codename "Brutus")

Spy network "Agency Africa" in Algiers

- *Enabled Allies' successful invasion of North Africa*
- Led by Mieczyslaw Słowikowski (codename "Rygor")



Secret Courier Jan Karski



Lt. Colonel "Brutus" Czerniawski



Major "Rygor" Słowikowski

Allies Betray Poland

Betrayal 1: Britain and France

- *Both pledged military help if Hitler attacked; did nothing.*

Betrayal 2: U.S. and Britain with Stalin at Tehran

- *Roosevelt and Churchill secretly agree that eastern Poland will become Soviet territory.*

Betrayal 3: U.S. and Britain with Stalin at Yalta

- *Stalin promises free elections in Poland after the war. None were held.*
- *Poland must remain under Soviet control and accept a communist government.*
- *Poland remained under Soviet rule for the next 45 years; ejected Communists in 1989.*

Betrayal 4: U.S. and Britain at Nuremberg Trials

- *U.S. and Britain ignore Stalin's war crimes against Poland.*
- *U.S. and Britain suppress all evidence submitted by Poland on Stalin's massacre of 22,000 Polish officers at Katyn.*