



INGHAM WHITE EAGLE

Za Waszą wolność i naszą

Summer 2021

**To the Memory of all who served at RAF Ingham and in Dywizjony
Bombowe Polskich Sił Powietrznych**



Welcome

Welcome to the Summer Edition of our newsletter ***Ingham White Eagle***. With all the uncertainty of last 18 months, we've decided to open the Heritage Centre in the Autumn. We needed to ensure that we had appropriate levels of Covid safety measures in place, to safeguard both our visitors, volunteers and staff alike. We have some very exciting projects being launched later this year including; the creation of a **Polish Air Force Bomber Squadron Trail in Lincolnshire**; and our (2020), touring Exhibition of **Polish Air Force Bomber Squadrons**, which will be visiting a number of venues around the East Midlands (more info on both in our Autumn Edition). And finally the launch of our fundraising campaign for our **Main Exhibition Centre** project.

Geoff Burton

Chair/ Trustee

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Roll Call



Jan Tadeusz Baxter (Zabłocki)

Jan Tadeusz Baxter (Zabłocki), one of the last surviving pilots of the wartime Polish Air Force, died on 12th of March, just short of his 101st birthday. Born in 1920 with the surname Zabłocki, he was selected for pilot training in Poland but did not complete his training before the outbreak of war. He escaped through central Europe to France, and from there to Britain where he was initially stationed at RAF Swinderby on ground duties with 300 Sqn, Polish Air Force. In 1943, after pilot training in Britain and Canada, he was posted back to 300 Sqn, now at RAF Ingham, flying Wellingtons mainly on mine-laying duties. He later converted to the Halifax's, and between Mar-May 1944, served in 1586

Special Duties Flight at Brindisi, Italy; flying 27 operational night sorties, 11 of which were to Poland, dropping supplies for the Home Army. He described how "Flying low over the DZ [Drop Zone] during the Drop, I opened the side window and felt a rush of clear Polish air ... The flights to Poland were exhilarating and, if the missions were accomplished, they gave a lot of satisfaction to myself and the crew. More than once I had the moving experience of seeing the lights of my home town, Kraków, in the distance." After this tour, he returned to England to serve as an instructor. He stayed in Britain after the war, flying commercially, including making 242 flights during the Berlin Airlift. In 1951 he joined the RAF and served in flying roles in Aden and Malaysia as well as home postings.

(Source: PAFMC)



Józefa Solecka (nee Kawatek)

Józefa Solecka (nee Kawatek) was born Oct. 17, 1925 in Mosciskach, Poland. At the start of the war, the Soviets invaded Poland and she and her family were deported to a labour camp in Siberia. For two years, the family struggled to survive the atrocities of Stalin's regime. After the declaration of amnesty in 1942, her family were allowed to leave Siberia. Unable to return to Poland, the family resettled in the British territories in Tanganyika (now Tanzania), where she was a border guard. In 1943, Józefa joined the Polish Air Force in Africa and travelled first to Scotland and then England where she joined the 300 Sqn, at RAF Faldingworth, as a LACW Fabric Worker. In Lincolnshire, she met

her future husband, Warrant Officer Zbigniew Solecki, Wireless Operator, 300 Sqn.

Jozefa was honoured with the Polish Golden Medal by the Polish Government, as well as the Siberian Medal for her hardship during WWII.

(Source: Am-Pol Eagle)

Our Heartfelt Thanks and Farewell

His Excellency Dr Arkady Rzegocki, has been the Ambassador to the Republic of Poland in London for the last 4 years. He has supported and encouraged our project to create our Heritage Centre at every opportunity. He has not only visited our Site, but has invited us to a variety of events and



ceremonies at the Embassy, the Ognisko Polskie and Lancaster House in London; which has enabled us to meet and make new connections in the greater Polish Diaspora within the UK.

Your Excellency, thank you for your friendship and support over the last four years, and we wish you well for the future.



COVID Secure

Following the easing of Covid restrictions, we are still extremely conscious of the safety of both our visitors and our volunteers. As a consequence, here at RAF Ingham Heritage Centre, we've provided Sanitizer Stations, Counter Screens, and Contactless Payment facilities, in both our Reception, Shop and Cafe.

We request that all Visitors/Volunteers:

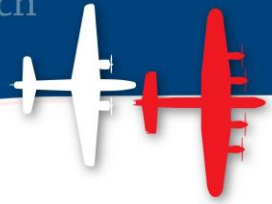
- Use Sanitizer provided.
- Wear a face mask when entering any of our buildings.
- Respect peoples space.

HANDS - FACE - SPACE



POLISH BOMBER SQUADRON CENTRE

Centrum Polskich Dywizjonów Bombowych

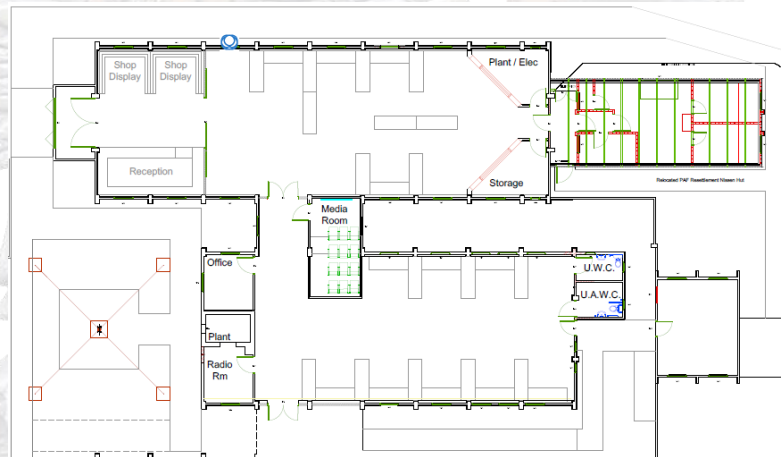


MAIN EXHIBITION CENTRE - Fundraising Appeal

During the Reception following this year's Polish Air Force Commemoration, we were delighted to be able to announce the official launch of our major fundraising appeal for the our new **Main Exhibition Centre** project.

Our aim is to create a globally unique Heritage Centre in the heart of Lincolnshire. Dedicated to remembering and celebrating the remarkable lives and stories of the men and women of the Polish Air Force Bomber Squadrons, who worked and flew alongside the RAF during WW2.

The project involves the complete renovation of the old 'Airmen's Mess', to create a new **Main Exhibition Centre** building, with a combined exhibition space of 290.95m²; featuring two Exhibition Halls, a Cinema/Media Suite, a Polish Families Resettlement Hut, Research Facility, Meeting Room, Cafe and Toilets.



Please Support Our Project

www.goldengiving.com/wall/raf-ingham-heritage-centre



Through the summer, it's been great to welcome our new friends from Polskie Yorkshire. Polskie Yorkshire are drawn from across their County, coming together for a variety of activities. Over the summer, they've regularly volunteered their time, to become actively involved with work on the Site.

And as a real bonus, they've brought along some Polish Sausages.

Does life get any better than this?



85th Anniversary - Bomber Command



14 June 2021 saw the 85th Anniversary of the forming of RAF Bomber Command in 1936. The occasion was marked by a ceremony at the Bomber Command Spire, International Bomber Command Centre, Lincoln. RAF Ingham were asked to lay a wreath on behalf of the Polish Air Force Bomber Squadrons.



Annual Talk - Michael Czajkowski

Michael Czajkowski's eagerly awaited annual talk took place on Thursday 16 September, at Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa.



This year's talk is entitled:

"The very few; Polish Airmen in the Battle of Britain"

(And was last year's postponed Talk to coincide with 80th Anniversary of Battle of Britain.)

All proceeds of the talk have been donated to RAF Ingham Heritage Centre.

We'd like to thank Emma and team at the Petwood, for providing the venue, and to Michael for his knowledgeable talk.



New Garden & Picnic Area

Our Garden and Picnic Area is nearing completion. The lawn is looking good, thanks to a good mix of rain and sun. The new Picnic Tables and Benches have arrived (through Business Revival Grant funding) and will provide a welcoming rest and relaxation facility for both our visitors and volunteers alike.

They're made from recycled plastic, so won't deteriorate or need annual maintenance, as would wooden furniture, and you have to look hard to spot they're recycled plastic.



RAF Ingham Heritage Centre
"Home of the Polish Bomber Squadrons"



VOLUNTEERING?

With Lockdown now easing, we're looking forward to welcoming back our Volunteer Team.

We're always looking for new volunteers, are you interested?

We have roles to suit everyone:

**Administrative to Painting,
Gardening to Building work,
Mechanics to Fundraising,
Visitor Guide to Carpentry,
Reception/Shop to Cafe**

You'll be warmly welcomed, and we'll find a volunteering role that will suit you, your skills and abilities, and the time you can offer.

Contact

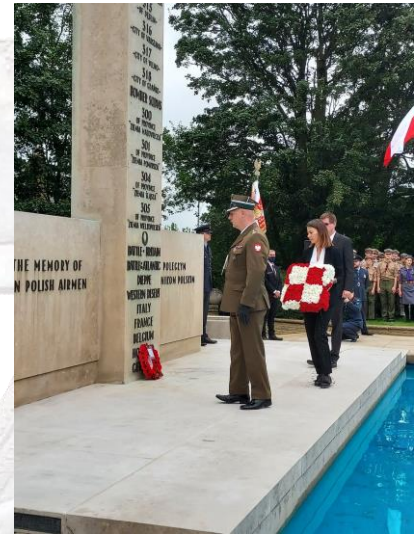
Interested in Volunteering, please contact:
rafingham@hotmail.co.uk Tel. 07787805978





Polish Air Force Commemoration

Following its cancellation in 2020, it was an honour once again, to be invited to attend the 60th Polish Air Force Commemoration at Northolt, London. Despite reduced attendance due to Covid restrictions, including the absence of the PAF Cadets from Dęblin, the local Air Cadets, as well as many of the descendant families, the Ceremony remained as poignant as ever, to the fallen Polish Airmen.



It was wonderful to see Jan Black (Stangryciuk), Rear Gunner, 300 Sqn, able to be there. With the new Ambassador not yet in-post, Ms Agnieszka Kowalska, Chargee d'Affaires a.i of the Republic of Poland, laid a wreath on behalf of the Republic. Then, as is traditional, the moving notes of 'White Roses', played by a RAF trumpeter, drifted out across the Memorial.

(Photos @RAFNortholt @POLAND_MOD)

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