

## The Ukrainian Connection

by Graham Francis

As we approach February 24th and the anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine it is easy to think of it as a distant event with no connection to the Battle of Arnhem. But as the Russian missiles rained down again on the cities and villages of Ukraine, I was reminded of how many of those places do in fact have a strong link with the Battle of Arnhem.

It is easy to think of the members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Polish Independent Parachute Brigade as all coming from Poland, that is to say, modern day Poland as we think of it, with its current borders. But the Poland of pre-Second World War Europe was a very different and much larger country than the current one.

To the east it incorporated all of what is now western Ukraine including the cities of Lwow (now Lviv), Wolyn (now Volhynia) and Tarnopol (now Ternopil). The country extended over 100 miles in to modern Ukraine and what is more, northwards into territories now falling into Lithuania and Belarus. Its north-eastern cities included Wilno (or Vilna, now Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania) and Nowogrodek, (now Novahrudak, Belarus).



*Map of Poland in 1939, showing cities now falling in western Ukraine*

A significant proportion of the men that fought in the streets of Oosterbeek and the farms and orchards around Driel were men from those Eastern Polish territories that had been overrun by the Russians in late September of 1939. Thousands of people were murdered and in February 1940 whole villages were emptied of people, forced to leave their homes and farms and deported thousands of miles east to the camps and gulags in Siberia, where millions were incarcerated and tens of thousands lost their lives, many of starvation.

## Arnhem 1944 Fellowship

By the time Germany had attacked Russia and the Russians finally allowed the Poles to join General Anders and the Free Polish army and fight the Nazis, many of the young Polish men had lost some, or all, of their close family. Even those family members that survived were not freed until after Stalin's death in 1953.

Meantime, the Polish forces that had fought on the Polish western front against the Germans and had made their way across Europe to France and then to Britain, to fight as part of the Polish armies in exile, were undergoing training. Among them were men of the newly formed Parachute Brigade under the command of General Stanislaw Sosabowski. He was born in the city of Stanislawow, as was his Second in Command, Lieutenant Colonel Stanislaw Jachnik, who eventually replaced Sosabowski when the later was so disgracefully removed from his command.

Stanislawow is now known as Ivano-Frankvsk and lies deep in to Ukraine. It was heavily bombed only yesterday as I write this article.

Unfortunately, I don't have place of birth details for all of the 1689 men of the Brigade that fought during the Battle of Arnhem. But details are available for the men that died during the battle, or in accidents either side of the battle.

The list below shows the 'Ukrainian casualties' and others of particular note, listed by their district of birth: -

### **Lwow, Poland (now Lviv, Ukraine):**

Banas Private Bronislaw 30942 3rd Parachute Bn, 8th Company. KIA 26.9.1944 Oosterbeek.	AOWC 25.B.7
Barkiet Corporal Tomasz 31548 3rd Parachute Bn, 9th Company. KIA 24.9.1944 Driel.	AOWC 34.A.4
Bednarski Gunner Jan 223217 Anti-Tank (Air Landing) Battery. KIA 22.9.44 Driel.	AOWC 34.A.11
Blazejewicz Private Mieczyslaw 30937 3rd Parachute Bn, 8th Company. Drowned 23.9.1944 Body recovered 9.10.1944 Rhenen.	AOWC 33.A.4
Dec Private Adam 32684 3rd Parachute Bn. Drowned 26.9.1944 Body recovered 15.11.1944 Beusichem.	AOWC 25.B.7
Gorzko Gunner Wiktor 28452 Anti-Tank (Air Landing) Battery. KIA 19.9.1944 Oosterbeek.	AOWC 25.B.19
Hewak Private Kazimierz 30418 1st Parachute Bn, 2nd Company. KIA 25.9.1944 Driel.	AOWC 34.A.3
Kanda Private Piotr 30374 3rd Parachute Bn HQ Company. KIA 24.9.1944 Arnhem.	No Known Grave
Kocaj Gunner Piotr 30745 Anti-Tank (Air Landing) Battery. KIA 19.9.1944 LZ-L	No Known Grave

## Arnhem 1944 Fellowship

Lipecki Private Tadeusz 30509 2nd Parachute Bn, HQ Company. Boryslaw near Lwow  
 DoW 30.9.1944 Nijmegen, Wounded 26.9.44 Driel. AOWC 34.A.21  
 Awarded: KW (Cross of Valour)

Moszowski Private Michal 23891 3rd Parachute Bn, 9th Company.  
 Drowned 26.9.1944 Body recovered 28.6.1945 Rhenen. AOWC 33.A.6  
 Awarded: KW (Cross of Valour)

Nycz Lance Corporal Walenty 28345 3rd Parachute Bn, HQ Company.  
 Drowned 26.9.1944 Doorwerth. AOWC 21.C.8

Paszko Corporal Piotr 30901 2nd Parachute Bn, 5th Company. Slota near Lwow  
 Died 21.9.1944 Driel Parachute didn't open. AOWC 34.A.17

Pudelko Lieutenant Mieczyslaw Jozef 2856 3rd Parachute Bn, 7th Company.  
 Drowned 26.9.1944 No Known Grave

Siniak Corporal Mateusz 12351 Anti-Tank (Air Landing) Battery.  
 KIA 19.9.1944 LZ-L. AOWC 18.B.20

Wiecek Private Stanislaw 24850 3rd Parachute Bn, 9th Company.  
 Drowned 26.9.1944 Body recovered 21.10.1944 Rhenen. AOWC 33.A.7  
 Awarded: KW (Cross of Valour)

Wolbin Private Piotr 30612 2nd Parachute Battalion, HQ Company.  
 KIA 25.9.1944 Driel. AOWC 33.A.21  
 Awarded: KW (Cross of Valour)

Zjawin Lance Corporal Cadet Officer Zbigniew Jan 6182 Anti-Tank (Air Landing) Battery.  
 KIA 20.9.1944 LZ-L. AOWC 25.B.15

## Arnhem 1944 Fellowship



*Lance Corporal Cadet Officer Zbigniew Jan Zjawin, born 8 August 1922. He reached Britain in 1940 aged just 17. He completed his parachute course in September 1942 and was awarded eagle wings number 1600. He landed on LZ-L in glider 135 on 19 September 1944. His grave stone shows his death as 25.9.44, but his body was found north of Reijerskamp, north-west of Wolfheze, so it is likely that he died in that area within forty-eight hours of his landing.*

## Kiev (now Kyiv, Ukraine)

Grabowski 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Walenty 10825 Signals Company.  
KIA 26.9.44 Oosterbeek. No Known Grave

## Stanislawow, (now Ivano-Frankvsk, Ukraine)

Abramiuk Private Dymitr 31267 3rd Parachute Bn, 9th Company.  
KIA 25.9.44 Oosterbeek No Known Grave

Horodynski 2nd Lieutenant Boguslaw 23049 1st Parachute Bn, 3rd Company.  
KIA 25.9.1944 Driel. AOWC 33.A.24

Koszela Corporal Tadeusz 30589 2nd Parachute Bn, 5th Company.  
KIA 25.9.1944 Driel. AOWC 34.A.5

## Tarnopol, Poland (now Ternopil, Ukraine)

Bzowy Private Micolaj 28937 3rd Parachute Bn, 7th Company.  
KIA 24.9.1944 Oosterbeek. AOWC 25.B.3

Klapouchy Lance Corporal Stanislaw 24773 1st Parachute Bn, HQ Company.  
DoW: 25.9.1944 Nijmegen, Wounded 25.9.44 Driel. AOWC 33.A.26

Kozak Private Lukasz 31286 3rd Parachute Bn, HQ Company.  
KIA 25.9.1944 Oosterbeek. AOWC 25.B.10

Krzczkowski Private Mieczyslaw 25734 3rd Parachute Bn, 7th Company.  
KIA 24.9.1944 Oosterbeek. Mook 4.C.11

Liczner Private Aleksander 23791 3rd Parachute Bn, 7th Company.  
DoW: 27.9.1944 Apeldoorn Wounded 25.9.44 AOWC 18.C.1

Ratowski Gunner Jozef 24852 Anti-Tank (Air Landing) Battery.  
KIA 23.9.1944 Oosterbeek AOWC 25.B.13

Soskow Private Tadeusz 28511 3rd Parachute Bn, HQ Company.  
Drowned 26.9.1944 Recovered Rhenen. AOWC 33.A.5

Awarded: KVSM V. (The Silver Cross)

## Arnhem 1944 Fellowship



*Lance Corporal Stanislaw Klapouchy from Tarnopol was on one of the planes that aborted and returned to base on the 21<sup>st</sup>. He flew on chalk no 3 landing near Grave on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. After being transported by truck to Valburg he marched to Driel on the 25<sup>th</sup>. He was wounded within hours of arrival and died of his wounds later that day in Casualty Clearing Station no 2 in Nijmegen. His eagle wings, number 2095, are clearly shown in the photograph above*

## Wolyn, Poland (now Volhynia, Ukraine)

Jankiewicz Private Zdzislaw 30479 2nd Parachute Bn, 5th Company.  
Rowne, Wolyn DoW 1.10.1944. AOWC 33.A.10  
Shot by accident by a colleague, previously wounded at Driel on 26.9.44,  
Died in hospital at Neerloon.

Kowalski Lance Corporal Lucjan 30375 1st Parachute Bn, 1st Company. Horohow, near Wolyn. DoW  
26.9.1944 Nijmegen Wounded 25.9.44 Driel. AOWC 34.A.22

Palka Lance Corporal Wladislaw 24037 2nd Parachute Bn, 5th Company. Kowel, Wolyn.  
KIA 25.9.1944 Driel. AOWC 33.A.18

Zolyniak Private Bronislaw 25609 Signals Company.  
DoW 23.9.1944 Oosterbeek. AOWC 19.B.17

## Nowogrodek, Poland (now Novahrudak, Belarus)

Krukowski 2nd Lieutenant Zbigniew 28372 Signals Company.  
KIA 25.9.1944 Driel. AOWC 33.A.17

Nowak Lance Corporal Marian 24112 3rd Parachute Bn, 8th Company.  
KIA 26.9.1944 Oosterbeek. AOWC 25.B.2

Skaczko Bombadier Jozef 24030 Anti-Tank (Air Landing) Battery.  
KIA 25.9.1944 Oosterbeek. AOWC 25.B.18

Skiers Private Wladislaw 30313 1st Parachute Bn, 2nd Company.  
KIA 21.9.1944 Killed on drop zone, Driel. AOWC 34.A.9

## Pierszaje, Poland (now Pershai, Belarus)

Kulikowski Lance Corporal Jan 24080 1st Parachute Brigade, HQ Company.  
DoW 29.9.1944 Nijmegen Wounded 25.9.44 Driel AOWC 34.A.24

## Pinsk, Polesie, Poland (now Belarus)

Lukaszewicz Private Franciszek 30608 2nd Parachute Bn, HQ Company.  
DoW 3.10.1944 Shot accidentally, wounded 26.9.44 Driel. AOWC 34.A.19

## St Petersburg, Russia

Zawistowski Corporal Stefan 28433 Anti-Tank (Air Landing) Battery.  
KIA 25.9.44 Oosterbeek. No Known Grave.

**Arnhem 1944 Fellowship**

*Marian Nowak was born on 21 August 1925 in Baranowicze, Nowogrodek which is now in Belarus. He was just 14 when the Russians invaded his homeland, 16 when he volunteered for service. He served with the Polish services under British command from 1 September 1942, aged 17. He was awarded his Polish eagle wings, number 1828 in January 1943. He was just past his nineteenth birthday when he died near no 8 Stationsweg, Oosterbeek.*



### Wilno, Poland (now Vilnius, Lithuania)

Bogdziewicz Lieutenant Kazimierz 2022 Medium Transport and Supply Company (Seaborne Echelon).  
Died in road accident 13.9.44 Brussels. Brussels Town Cemetery 10.22.22

Chmielewski Gunner Wiktor 28452 Anti-Tank (Air Landing) Battery. Swieciany, Wilno  
DoW 24.9.1944 Arnhem, Wounded 19.9.44 Wolfheze. No Known Grave

Kopec Lance Corporal Stanislaw 30433 1st Parachute Bn, HQ Company.  
KIA 19.9.1944 Wolfheze. No Known Grave

Paulski Private Boleslaw 28826 Signals Company.  
DoW 2.12.1944 Germany, Wounded 20.9.44 Oosterbeek. No Known Grave

Szylak Private Artur 25602 Medium Transport and Supply Company  
KIA 22.9.44 Driel. AOWC 34.A.8

Zebrowski Lance Corporal Cadet Officer Ignacy 29859 1st Parachute Bn, HQ Company.  
DoW 26.9.1944 Nijmegen, Wounded 25.9.44 Driel. AOWC 33.A.25

There are a total of ninety-seven 1<sup>st</sup> Polish Independent Parachute Brigade casualties, including six that came from the First Seaborne echelon.

The list above details forty-five of those of which no less than eighteen of the casualties came from the district of Lviv, which we are now so used to seeing on our news broadcasts. Fourteen more come from other districts now in Ukraine, including one from Kiev, giving a total of thirty-two 'Ukrainian Poles', effectively one in every three of the casualties.

If that is representative of all of the men that dropped at Arnhem and Driel it suggests that about 560 men will have been of Ukrainian descent. Six more came from modern day Lithuania, six from Belarus and one from Russia.

It suggests that around 800 men came from territories to the east of the current Polish borders. The vast majority of those men will have been subjected to the enforced deportation from their homes to the camps in Siberia.

It was a story we thought confined to the history books. But the occupation of eastern and southern Ukraine these past twelve months, together with the murders and deportation of millions of people from those occupied territories has been a chilling reminder of how history can sadly repeat itself.