

General Stanislaw Maczek
Memorial Trust



www.generalmaczek.co.uk



General Stanislaw Maczek's career in the Polish Army was long and distinguished. In WWII, he fought in three campaigns – in Poland, France and North-West Europe. From 1942 to 1945, he commanded the 1st Polish Armoured Division. As part of the Allied Forces, the Division played a vital role in the Normandy fighting. It then advanced through France into Belgium and Holland liberating many grateful citizens in these countries.

In September 1939, his brigade, the 10th Motorised Cavalry Brigade fought a gallant but ultimately hopeless struggle against the XXII German Motorised Corps in southern Poland.

He made his way to France to serve under General Sikorski, the new Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces.

With France in a critical situation, he took command of part of a planned Light Mechanised Division, the 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade, and again fought German forces.

Eventually reaching Scotland, he was given command of a reformed 10th Brigade.

It formed part of the defences of Scotland in the Angus Sector. In February 1942, General Sikorski appointed General Maczek commander of the 1st Polish Armoured Division. Two months later, the Division moved south to the Scottish Borders and surrounding area where the task of forming and training the Division continued. Training as a whole Division took place in England in the summer of 1943 and again in May 1944.

At the end of July 1944, it was transported to Normandy. Placed under the command of the II Canadian Corps, the Division's baptism of fire was in the fighting south of Caen.

In August 1944, the Division played a leading role in the Normandy fighting by barring the German Army's escape route from the Falaise Pocket. In intensive fighting, the Division faced desperate attempts by the enemy to break out of the Pocket. Despite being cut off from supplies and facing attacks on three sides, the soldiers of the Division courageously stood their ground.

After a few days' rest, the Division was back in action pursuing the enemy in a northeasterly direction through France and into Belgium and the Netherlands. The Dutch city of Breda to this day continues to commemorate the soldiers of the Division. Final operations were in northern Germany in April 1945, leading to the capture of the German naval base of Wilhelmshaven.

In May 1945, General Maczek was appointed commander of the 1st Polish Corps in Scotland



and from the autumn of 1945, commander of Polish Forces in Great Britain. In September 1946, the Polish Resettlement Corps was formed. The General oversaw the running of the Corps in Scotland up to its final wind-up in Scottish Command in 1948.

In 1946, he was deprived of his Polish citizenship by the Communist regime imposed on Poland. He settled in Edinburgh, never to return to his homeland.

In 1990, the President of the Polish Government-in-Exile appointed him to the rank of General. After the collapse of the Communist regime in Poland, the head of the Chancellery of President Lech Walesa came to Edinburgh and decorated the General with the Order of the White Eagle. The decoration is Poland's highest award, and only awarded to the most distinguished Poles and to heads of state.

He married his wife Zofia in 1928 with whom he had a son and two daughters, living out his final years at his adopted home near the Meadows in Edinburgh. Although he published his memoirs in 1961, his achievements were not particularly well documented in Scotland until after his death in 1994 at the age of 102.

When the Second World War ended, he was unable to return to his native Poland. As a result of Allied agreements, Poland fell under the Soviet heel.

Refused a war pension by the British, the General worked as a barman in his adopted city of Edinburgh.

In 1994, the late Lord Fraser of Carmyllie represented the British Government at General Maczek's funeral and witnessed Polish soldiers, armed with sabres, form an arch of steel as the coffin was carried from the church.

This sparked an interest in the General's achievements and further research by Lord Fraser led him to conclude that a permanent memorial to the great man in Scotland, and particularly his chosen home of Edinburgh was long overdue.



In 2013, Lord Fraser revealed details of his plan to raise funds for a metal bench that would include a figure of the General. The bench would be cast in Poland and then sited near the former Maczek family home in Edinburgh.

His proposed location of the Meadows, where the General used to walk regularly with his daughter, won unanimous support from the Friends of the Edinburgh Meadows and Bruntsfield Links when he spoke at their annual general meeting.

Lord Fraser's untimely death in 2013 stalled the project but it has been revived with the establishment of the General Stanislaw Maczek Memorial Trust.

In February 2015, the project was formally re-launched at the Scottish Parliament at a reception hosted by MSP Jean Urquhart, the

Convener of the cross-party group in the Scottish Parliament on Poland.

The trustees of the General Stanislaw Maczek Memorial Trust are Lord Fraser's daughter, Katie Fraser, his former PR advisor, Archie Mackay, and his lawyer, Roddy Harrison.

Patrons include one of the General's men, retired Captain Zbigniew Mieczkowski; the former Lord Provost of Edinburgh the Rev. Dr. George Grubb; Prof. Richard Demarco, one of the greatest promoters of European and especially Polish culture in Scotland; Dr. Andrew Maczek, the General's son; Lady Fraser; Mrs Heather Goodare, Chair of Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links; Rt. Hon. Lord Cameron of Lochbroom; Rt. Hon. Lord Hope of Craighead; HE Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the UK, Mr Witold Sobków; Mr Dariusz Adler, Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Edinburgh and Mr Robert Ostrycharz.

Drawings created by Polish artist Bronislaw Krzysztof of General Maczek seated on a bench had been agreed upon and approved by Lord Fraser and it is the aim of the trustees to use these to fulfil his pledge.

The reception at the Scottish Parliament was attended by family members of the General and Lord Fraser as well as leading figures in the Polish and British communities including the Polish Ambassador to the UK.



As Ms Urquhart said: "General Maczek was an exceptional man who lived an extraordinary life, but he was never really recognised here when he was alive."

A documentary film on General Maczek was unveiled as part of the re-launch of the Memorial Trust.

There are memorials to General Maczek and his Division in Holland, Belgium, Poland and recently in France - countries ever grateful to the Polish soldiers who fought for their freedom. However, there is no memorial to the General and to all the troops under his command in Scotland. Shortly after his death, the Polish Senate in a resolution expressed the belief that his love for Poland, impeccable character and loyalty to ideals will remain a role model for subsequent generations. There is now the opportunity to embody that spirit and to honour that debt of gratitude to the General and his troops by making a donation.

DONATIONS

Donations can be made to the **General Stanislaw Maczek Memorial Trust** at RBS and other banks using the bank sort code **83-44-00** and account number **10810625**

Cheques can be sent to **General Stanislaw Maczek Memorial Trust, c/o RAH, BTO Solicitors LLP, 48 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5HS**

or via **Paypal** - www.paypal.me/generalmaczek

