

## 7th Gendarmerie Platoon (Military Police Platoon) in France and Great Britain in 1940-1945

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### INFORMATION

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### ABSTRACT

The origins of the Polish gendarmerie serving with aviation units can be traced back to the first half of the 1930s. The Gendarmerie Platoon was established at the 1st Air Regiment in Warsaw, which, prior to the outbreak of World War II, expanded its gendarmerie posts to aviation units in six Corps Districts. The gendarmerie also continued this tradition with air units in France and Great Britain. The creation of the Polish Air Force in Great Britain began at the same time as organization of Polish Armed Forces already during the Battle of France in 1940. Polish airmen and ground personnel (as well as other types of the military) arrived in Great Britain from Poland in 1939 through the Scandinavian countries at the end of the September Campaign and in 1940 from France, directly or through other countries. This article describes the history of the 7th Gendarmerie Platoon, its organization and activities, as well as the people serving in it.

### KEYWORDS

World War II, Polish Armed Forces, military police,  
7th Gendarmerie Platoon, Air Police Platoon



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## Introduction

The history of the gendarmerie – air police – in the Polish army in the West has not yet been thoroughly investigated. Only the memories of Wierzbicki (1990) and Suliński (2003) are the exception. The lack of

comprehensive monographic research justifies the Author's attempt to recount the history of this little-known unit in this article, basing on the residual materials preserved at the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London.

With the development of aviation units before the outbreak of World War II, it became necessary to create gendarmerie posts near them ensuring the preservation of order and security in the locations where the units were stationed. In 1935, the head of the Department of Aeronautics, Brig. Gen. pilot Ludomir Rayski in a letter to the head of the Gendarmerie defined the conditions for selecting a number of gendarmerie posts as an aviation security service and their professional preparation (Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe – CAW). In addition to the typical patrol and order-keeping activities, military policemen had to demonstrate expertise acquired in courses and training organized by aviation formations, necessary for the proper assessment of security incidents in the airport area, investigating into air accidents and disasters and many other procedures.

On April 1, 1936, a Gendarmerie Platoon (later called Okęcie Platoon) was formed at the 1st Air Regiment in Warsaw, commanded by Jerzy Dąbrowski. In May and June 1938, a professional eight-week course was organized only for the military policemen at the Aviation Training Centre No. 1 in Dęblin (Dziewit, 2023)<sup>1</sup>. The commander of the gendarmerie, Col. Felicjan Plato Bałaban, seconded 14 of his subordinates there<sup>2</sup>. In the opinion of the commanders of aviation units and sub-units, permanent and interim gendarmerie posts fulfilled their tasks well as a security-keeping measure. Vast areas covered by airfields were conducive to various types of events, such as theft of equipment. Most investigations were conducted against soldiers from six air regiments. Among the staff corps, junior officers distinguished themselves *for the wrong reasons*. Frequently, they fell foul of the law while being in the state of intoxication.

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<sup>1</sup> From 1 January 1929 to February 1932, the commander of the Dęblin-Lotnisko (Dęblin-Airfield) Gendarmerie post was the titular Senior Sergeant Szczepan Dziewit, followed by titular Senior Sergeant Antoni Kozak. The manuscript is in the possession of the author.

<sup>2</sup> Distribution Order of the Commander of Gendarmerie No. 3630 of 1937 allocating personnel: from Squadron 1 – three (one – Dęblin-Irena airfield, two – Sdków airfield), from Squadron 3 – four (two each for Połubanek and Białystok airfields), from Squadron 7 – one (Poznań Ławica airfield), from Squadron 8 – two (one each for Toruń airfield and one for Grudziądz), from Squadron 9 – two (Brześć airfield), from Squadron 10 – two (Krosno airfield).



Fig. 1. Lieutenant Jerzy Dąbrowski

Source: Jerzy Dąbrowski (1896-1963). (December 10, 2023). In: *Wikimedia*.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jerzy\\_Dąbrowski\\_\(1896-1963\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jerzy_Dąbrowski_(1896-1963).jpg)

Table 1. The level of crime in aviation formations in 1935-1936

Units aviation	Investigations allocated to:									
	Superiors for criminal offences		Superiors for dis- ciplinary offences		Commanders of garrisons		Other law enforce- ment agencies		Altogether	
	1935	1936	1935	1936	1935	1936	1935	1936	1935	1936
1st air regiment	22	43	83	79	4	5	-	-	-	236
Air Force Officer School (CWOL)	23	24	59	14	1	11	1	-	1	133
ITL	-	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	6
Squadron No. 2 Sadków	-	1	6	7	-	1	0	0	0	15
2nd air regiment	10	11	156	243	10	2	-	-	-	432
3rd air regiment	4	8	53	93	38	40	4	1	4	241
4th air regiment	9	4	66	77	13	20	10	1	10	200
Air Force School of Gunnery and Bombardment (LSSiB)	-	3	11	23	-	2	1	1	1	41
CTWLot. (Centre of Technical Avi- ation Training)	6	8	20	36	9	4	-	-	-	83
5th air regiment	9	8	23	91	80	19	-	1	-	231
T/5 Połubanek Airport	5	0	24	22	-	-	-	-	-	51
6th air regiment	11	5	49	142	41	19	-	-	-	267
Altogether	99	117	550	831	196	123	16	4	16	1936

Source: Jaroszuk, E. (2009). *Żandarmeria Wojskowa w latach 1921-1939*. Wydawnictwo „Avalon” T. Janowski Sp.j., p. 295.

## 1. 7th Gendarmerie Platoon in France

The gendarmerie serving with the Polish Air Force in France was organized at the beginning of February 1940 according to the model which had been applied in pre-war Poland. The brevity of its operational period was caused by the military fall of France. From the preserved at the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London short history of the 7th Gendarmerie Platoon (Instytut Polski i Muzeum im. gen. Sikorskiego [hereinafter referred to as IPMS], *Kronika 7 Plotonu Żandarmerii we Francji i Wielkiej Brytanii*, C 353)<sup>3</sup>, we can trace its operations in France (Suliński, 2017) and its evacuation to Great Britain.

In the autumn of 1939, the French management planned to allocate the Lyon-Bron airfield as a training base for Polish airmen who had managed to get out of Poland during the September Campaign. However, they were eventually accommodated in Lyon itself, with no prospects of starting training on French equipment. This led even to some perturbations known as the “youth rebellion”<sup>4</sup>. Eventually, after the French government approved the creation of the Polish Air Force in France on February 17, 1940, a group of Polish airmen, who had spent the previous winter in unheated barracks, arrived at the airport from Lyon. The Polish Aviation Training Centre established at Lyon-Bron Airport under the command of Col. Stefan Pawlikowski and Col. Charles Hugo became the main training base of the Polish Air Force in France.

On February 5, 1940, the commissioning of gendarmerie, and thereby the 7th Gendarmerie Platoon in Lyon<sup>5</sup> under the command of Capt. Jerzy Dąbrowski were approved. The platoon reported to the commander of the Aviation Training Centre in Lyon (IPMS, *Historia Żandarmerii (Dowództwo)*, C 353). The post of this Platoon was to be established at the Modena checkpoint. The platoon consisted of 1 officer, 12 non-commissioned

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<sup>3</sup> Chronicle of the 7th Gendarmerie Platoon in France and Great Britain (Instytut Polski i Muzeum im. gen. Sikorskiego [hereinafter: IPMS], *Kronika 7 Plotonu Żandarmerii we Francji i Wielkiej Brytanii*, C 353) was written in Great Britain by Gendarmerie Capt. Jan Łysakowski on 8 pages. Platoon commanders were required, in accordance with an order from the Commander of Gendarmerie, to recreate a chronicle of the unit's operations and personnel from the time of the September campaign.

<sup>4</sup> Difficult social and living conditions, the lack of flight training classes, and the disregard of the French side for the postulates of the Air Command and Air Defence Command led to unrest among the several-thousand-strong Polish aviation personnel. A state of turmoil engulfed mainly junior and middle personnel (Król, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> On February 6, 1940, organisation of the third Polish fighter squadron in France began and the Lyon-Born airfield became its base.

officers and 8 privates. The platoon was subordinated to the Directorate of the Independent Department of Gendarmerie of the Ministry of Military Affairs in Paris. By the order of the Aviation Training Centre of February 19, Cpl. Serafin Wichrow was transferred to the 7th Platoon from the Air Forces by the oral order of the Commander-in-Chief. On February 21, from the reserve gendarmerie squadron, the following military policemen were referred to the Platoon: Master Sgt. Antoni Zwoliński from the former 10th Squadron, Master Sgt. Piotr Słotwiński – former commander of the State Police station in Dubno, Master Sgt. Maciej Machnik, Sgt. Paweł Toffel from the former protection squadron 1st Squadron protection, Sgt. Henryk Romański – second-in-command of the Platoon, MCpl. Alojzy Bryze from the former Warsaw Okęcie Gendarmerie Platoon (the only military policeman, except for the platoon commander, having professional preparation for this work), MCpl. Bolesław Borzęcki from the former security company of the 1st Squadron, MCpl. Stanisław Albrycht, Cpl. Kazimierz Kędzierski, Cpl. Stanisław Franczak, Cpl. Leon Śmigiel, Cpl. Kazimierz Rawicki, Cpl. Jan Glarek, Cpl. Jan Ciurko. The quarters allocated to 7th Platoon were beneath contempt.

A gendarmerie post of the Lyon Air Base Command was established in Foire, and Master Sgt. Piotr Słotwiński was appointed commander, to whom the following reported: Cpl. Stanisław Franczak, Cpl. Leon Śmigiel, Cpl. Jan Gularek (translator of the French language). After two weeks, the commander of the post was changed due to his alcohol abuse. Master Sgt. Paweł Toffel was appointed as the new commander (IPMS, *Kronika 7 Plutonu Żandarmerii we Francji i Wielkiej Brytanii*, C 353).

On March 27, the Commander-in-Chief and the Air Force commander arrived at the barracks in Lyon, where the farewell of the first pilot officers leaving for the front along with the French squadron (6 vee formations of 3 machines each) took place.

On March 30, 1940, in accordance with the order of the Ministry of Military Affairs (3299/Pers. of March 18, 1940) Capt. Jerzy Dąbrowski<sup>6</sup> was

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<sup>6</sup> Gendarmerie Capt. Dąbrowski Jerzy Kazimierz Gracjan, son of Jan – born on August 20, 1896, obtained his extramural secondary education in 1918. Knowledge of languages: fluent – Russian, intermediate – English. Service in the army since 1915. In March 1933, he returned from the gendarmerie of the Border Protection Corps (commander of the gendarmerie platoon with the “Polesie” Border Protection Corps Brigade), taking the position of commander of the Warsaw Okęcie platoon at the 1st Air Base. In February 1940, he took command of the 7th Platoon in France. In March of the same year, he was transferred to the security department at the Polish Air Force Command. From June 1940 in the base in Blackpool. From September 16, 1942, the head of the air police in the Air Force Command.

appointed staff clerk at the Air Force Command in Paris and Sgt. Henryk Romański was appointed commander of the 7th Platoon. The military policemen spent Easter together in the Platoon. Among the invited guests of the Platoon were: Maj. Dziewulski, Judge-Advocate Capt. Kaczorowski, Judge-Advocate Lt. Cypian, Capt. Wołowicz and Sgt. Kazanecki.

On April 10, in accordance with the order of the Ministry of Military Affairs (4473/Pers. of March 28, 1949), a new commander of the 7th Platoon was appointed – Capt. Jan Władysław Łysakowski<sup>7</sup>. The following were transferred from the backup squadron of the gendarmerie to supplement the Platoon: Reserve Master Cpl. Jan Kochelski, Professional Cpl. Michał Rydel and Reserve PFC Stanisław Mikołajczyk (as an emigrant, Mikołajczyk knew the French language well). On 13-22 April, the gendarmerie post in Foire was reinforced with three military policemen on account of the Lyon Trade Fair being held at that time.

On April 14, 1940, Cpl. Serafin Wichrow stopped two fugitives from the 1st Squadron of the 2nd Squadron of the Reserve Aviation Training Centre in Lyon-Bron in St. Etienne. The detainees were: Flight Cpl. extended service Stefan Pliszke and PFC Bronisław Gajos, the former of whom had remained on an unauthorised leave since January 29, and the latter since January 21, 1940. Both worked as freight forwarding day labourers in St. Etienne. Dressed in civilian clothes, they engaged in relationships with local women whom they wanted to marry and had no intention of

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After the war he remained in Britain. He died in Eastbourne, England. Promotions: captain – 1935, major – 1945. Wife and two daughters.

<sup>7</sup> The assignment was announced in Order No. 94/40 of 12 April 1940 of the Aviation Training Centre. Gendarmerie Capt. Łysakowski Jan Władysław – born on May 6, 1898, in Lviv, graduated from secondary school in 1916. In the same year, he was drafted into the 15th Infantry Regiment of the Austrian Army, where he served until 1918 with the rank of second lieutenant. In May 1919, he voluntarily joined the Polish Army. In 1920, the commander of the Złoczów Platoon of the Lviv Gendarmerie 6th Battalion. In 1922, the commander of the Brody Platoon. In 1933, the commander of the Tarnopol Platoon. In March 1939, acting 2nd deputy commander of the 6th Gendarmerie Battalion. In September 1939, he served as a staff clerk to the head of the Kraków Army Gendarmerie. In March 1940, after arriving from Hungary, he took up the post in the 7th Gendarmerie Platoon at the Aviation Training Centre in France. On September 23, 1940, he was transferred from 7th Platoon to 6th Platoon (from November – 12th Reserve Platoon in Peebles). From October 1941, commander of the 1st Gendarmerie Squadron. From November 30, 1942, he was a staff clerk to the head of the gendarmerie of the 1st Armoured Division. On December 12, 1942, he took the position of deputy commander to the 1st Armoured Division gendarmerie commander. On February 27, 1943, he became the deputy commander of the 3rd Gendarmerie Squadron of the 1st Armoured Division. When the Squadron was disbanded on January 26, 1944, he was transferred to the 1st Squadron. In July 1945, he was promoted to the rank of major.

returning to their original unit. On April 16, they were handed over to the Field Court-Martial No. 7 in Lyon (IPMS, *Kronika 7 Plutonu Żandarmerii we Francji i Wielkiej Brytanii*, C 353).

On the basis of the order issued by the Air Base Command, the Polish and French military policemen in Brona performed the tasks ordered by the local unit Commander. Their duties included: maintaining good appearance of Polish soldiers, accompanying French military policemen during their patrols, supervising Polish civilians who might have contacts with Polish soldiers, manning the detention centre and guarding defendants. Non-commissioned gendarmerie officers received catering in the casino for non-commissioned officers, and corporals and privates received ordinary privates' rations. The Air Base Commander was instructed to find a special lodging for the Polish gendarmerie: one room for senior sergeants, one or two rooms for other non-commissioned officers, one or two rooms for corporals and was expected to present proposals to the local unit Commander.

On April 25, 1940 Master Sgt. Piotr Słotwiński left the platoon to join the reserve squadron of the gendarmerie in Coëtguidan, in order to dismiss him from the gendarmerie, in accordance with the order of the Ministry of Military Affairs (4257/40/gendarmerie of April 14, 1940). On May 3, a gendarmerie post was established<sup>8</sup> in Modena numbering one plus two – Master Sgt. Maciej Machnik – commander of the post, Professional Cpl. Kazimierz Rawicki and Reserve Pvt. Stanisław Mikołajczyk. The post was tasked with providing security services in Medina, with particular emphasis on the railway station and the border point.

On May 5, the platoon commander, Capt. Łysakowski, as a result of fracturing the ankle joint of his left leg, went to a French military hospital for treatment. On May 10th at 4.20, the Germans, for the first time, carried out a raid on the airport of the Aviation Training Centre and the French Air Base in Bron. Nine aircraft took part in the raid, mostly bombing airport buildings. Three barracks were destroyed, including one located next to the barracks housing the headquarters of the 7th Gendarmerie Platoon. As a result of the bombing, 19 soldiers were killed and 19 wounded. About 60% of the casualties were French soldiers. None of the Platoon military policemen were injured. The bombing lasted about 30 minutes. On June 2nd at 8.45, the enemy carried out a second raid on the airfield and air base

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<sup>8</sup> Modane – a town and municipality in France, in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, in the Savoy department.



in Bron. Twenty-four German aircraft took part in the raid. As a result of the bombing, 5 buildings were completely or partially destroyed, including one hangar. The casualties were 4 killed and 3 wounded. The raid lasted until 9.10. None of the military policemen were injured (IPMS, *Kronika 7 Plotonu Żandarmerii we Francji i Wielkiej Brytanii*, C 353).

On June 8, Capt. Łysakowski returned to work following his recovery. By order of the border officer in Modane, Maj. Krzeczunowicz, the gendarmerie post in Modane, was evacuated on June 10 as a result of Italy declaring war on France and England. The crew of the post returned to the Platoon in full strength on June 11. On June 17, on account of the Germans approaching Lyon, the Gendarmerie platoon was transferred from Bron to Foier and on the same day, after boarding a train at the Lyon train station, it departed with the first transport. On June 19, at 9.00 the Platoon arrived with the transport to the town of L'Hospitalet near Millau, where it was accommodated in the barracks of French artillery, but on June 20 it left the town. On June 21 at 5.00 the Platoon arrived in the town of Argeles Sur Mer, where it was accommodated at the local French airfield. On the way to Argeles Sur Mer, the following deserted the transport without permission, along with uniforms and armament: Reserve Cpl. Jan Czurko and Reserve Cpl. Jan Gularek, who, as emigrants, probably remained in France with their families.

On June 23, in the port of Vendres, 7th Gendarmerie Platoon boarded the ship "Gouverneur General Chansy" with the first transport of the Aviation Training Centre numbering 1200 personnel. On June 24, she left the port sailing across the Mediterranean and the next day, after 31 hours, reached the port of Oran in North Africa (Algiers). During this trip, the majority of military policemen suffered seasickness. After a rest in the village of Sidi Chami, near Oran, the Platoon boarded the train heading for Valmy train station. The means of transport for the journey, i.e. trucks and buses, were provided by the 1st Regiment of Colonial Troops accommodated in Oran. That same day, the Platoon left Valmy Station.

On June 29th, at 0.30 the Platoon transport reached the port of Casablanca in Morocco and after unloading was accommodated at the local French airport, waiting for ships to be embarked on. In Casablanca, two military policemen reported to the Platoon. These were: Professional Cpl. Ferdynand Krawczyk from the 3rd Gendarmerie Platoon of and Professional Cpl. Mieczysław Mytejsztadt from the 11th Gendarmerie Platoon. The servicemen listed as lost during the evacuation of the aforementioned platoons, were enlisted in the 7th Platoon.

On July 2, 1940 at 24.00, the platoon embarked an English cargo ship in Casablanca and sailed for Gibraltar across the Atlantic Ocean. On that day, Professional Cpl. Stanisław Franczak left the platoon without permission. He was supposedly hired as a stoker on a Polish ship "Wilia". On July 3, the ship arrived in Gibraltar, where it waited until July 7 for the arrival of transport to continue the journey. The vessel remained continuously afloat without the right to disembark. On July 5, at 6.00 am, during a stopover in Gibraltar waters, a raid was carried out against the port by the Germans, which the local anti-aircraft artillery repelled, with one German aircraft being shot down. The following day, the Germans launched an air raid against the port again, but without success. On July 7, at 6.00 p.m., the Platoon sailed towards England. On July 16, at 9.30 p.m., after a 15-day journey, the ship arrived in the port of Glasgow, Scotland. During the voyage from Lyon to Glasgow, the platoon performed security duties for the air force grouping in stopover locations, in transport, and onboard the vessels, resulting in 11 criminal reports to Field Court-Martial No. 3 in Crawford on August 15, 1940 (IPMS, *Kronika 7 Plutonu Żandarmerii we Francji i Wielkiej Brytanii*, C 353).

## **2. Air Police Platoon in the United Kingdom**

On July 16, 1940 at 9.30 p.m., the 7th Gendarmerie Platoon arrived in the United Kingdom. The following day, the platoon disembarked and was accommodated in tents in the Glasgow city park. By order of the Head of Gendarmerie at the Command of the Camps and Troops of the Polish Army in Scotland, the following military policemen were transferred to the local unit Command as unfit for service in Gendarmerie: Professional Cpl. Kazimierz Rawicki, Professional Cpl. Kazimierz Kędzierski, Extended Service Cpl. Bolesław Borzęcki and Pvt. Stanisław Mikołajczyk, and the following were referred to the hospital: Professional Cpl. Michał Rydel and Professional Cpl. Mieczysław Mytejszdt.

On August 9, by order of the Head of Gendarmerie, the Platoon departed at 4.00 p.m. for Blackpool, the location of the Polish Air Force Camp Command. The Air Police Platoon attached to the Polish Air Force in the United Kingdom had a different organisational structure and competence range from the Gendarmerie in France or the Land Forces. The small size of this formation stemmed from English regulations (RAF and English Air Police) and the operational subordination of the Polish air force to the RAF. Special

attention should be given to the commanders of this service in the United Kingdom, their merits and achievements, namely Capt. Jerzy Dąbrowski and 2nd Lt. Hieronim Wielądek and their subordinates. The headcount of the Platoon included one officer and seven non-commissioned officers (Gendarmerie Capt. Jan Łysakowski, Master Sgt. Maciej Machnik, Sgt. Henryk Romański, Sgt. Paweł Toffel, MCpl. Alojzy Bryze, MCpl. Stanisław Albrycht, Cpl. Ferdynand Krawczyk, Cpl. Serafin Wichrow).

By order of his superiors from September 11, the commander of the 7th Platoon, Capt. Jan Łysakowski, in accordance with an order from the Camps and Troops Command in Scotland (5016/Pers./40, i.e. dated 11 September 1940), he was transferred to the position of commander of the 6th Platoon in Peebles. Thus, the 7th Gendarmerie Platoon was reorganized into the Air Police Platoon, which had nothing to do with gendarmerie<sup>9</sup>.

The centre in Blackpool became a camp for airmen arriving from France. This centre was named the Aviation Training Centre<sup>10</sup> (Garbacz, 2001). A platoon of Air Police was created and was not subordinated to the Head of Gendarmerie (Król, 1976). On October 23, 1940, 19 soldiers joined the platoon: Master Sgt. Marian Zawadzki, Master Sgt. Maciej Machnik, Sgt. Paweł Toffel, Sgt. Marian Śliwa, Sgt. Marian Skibiński, Sgt. Franciszek Chwastek, Reserve Sgt. Piotr Chmielewski, MCpl. Bolesław Wojtalik, MCpl. Franciszek Sieradzki, MCpl. Władysław Pełda, MCpl. Edward Kanabus, MCpl. Józef Mitek, MCpl. Ignacy Adamski, Cpl. Władysław Skóra, Reserve Cpl. Michał Machowski, Reserve Pvt. Józef Klobus, Reserve Cpl. Ryszard Roszkowski, Reserve Cpl. Stefan Latałski, Reserve Pvt. Józef Skąpski. A post in Weeton and Kirkham was designated<sup>11</sup>. On November 6, 1940, Professional Cpl. Jakub Mierzwa left to join the Aviation Training Centre in Blackpool.

<sup>9</sup> He was not subordinated to the Head of Gendarmerie at the Command of Camps and Troops of the Polish Army in Scotland. The platoon was under the Command (Inspectorate) of the Polish Air Force.

<sup>10</sup> The centre was transformed into the Aviation Training Centre on the orders of the Commander-in-Chief. The following were established at the Centre: a personnel assembly point, a specialized training wing, an administrative wing, a selection committee for flying and technical personnel, conscription command, a translation and publishing office and sections of the following services: health, intelligence, **air police** and pastoral services; Commander-in-Chief's Staff Order ref. No. 226/tjn/Og.Ng/40 of October 11, 1940, listed the personnel and subordinated the platoon commander directly to the Inspector of the Polish Air Force. The inspector supplemented this with an executive order on 18 October concerning the organization of the platoon and air police stations, cooperation with Camp Commanders and RAF Police.

<sup>11</sup> The commander of the gendarmerie platoon developed instructions, which he submitted to the commander of the Aviation Training Centre in England for approval, and a patrol service instruction for the gendarmerie post at the Centre.

Władysław Wierzbicki presented in his book a photograph of 4 soldiers of the Air Police Platoon from 1941, which shows, among others, WO Jarosław Jaworski (Wierzbicki, 1990, p. 78). The Head of the Air Police Department in the Polish Air Force Inspectorate was Capt. Jerzy Dąbrowski, who had held this function in France. In addition, Wierzbicki states that Reserve 2nd Lt. Hieronim Wielądek<sup>12</sup>, after the September campaign, reached the United Kingdom via Romania and France and served in the Air Police, holding the position of deputy commander of the 7th Gendarmerie Platoon in July 1940. From residual materials obtained from the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum it appears that in 1940-1941 air police stations were established at Bramcote<sup>13</sup>, Hucknall<sup>14</sup>, Newton at 309 Squadron<sup>15</sup>, Lindholme<sup>16</sup> and Northolt<sup>17</sup>.

In September 1941, the platoon commander presented a seven-page document discussing the status of the Platoon's work over the past months<sup>18</sup>. In the introduction, he described the mood of officers and soldiers after landing in England (their frustrations, expectations, hopes, assessment, etc.). In order to bring one closer, the way of thinking shown

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<sup>12</sup> 2ndLt. (res.) Wielądek Hieronim, born on November 14, 1910 in the city of Raguszyn, Węgrów district, graduated from St. Stanisław Kostka Middle and High School in Warsaw in 1929 and the Faculty of Law at the University of Warsaw in 1935. From October 1, 1935 to September 15, 1938, he worked as a secretary at Starachowice Mining Works Joint Stock Company. Drafted to a gendarmerie application course on January 1, 1939. On February 20, 1939, he was sent for training as a platoon commander in Częstochowa to the 4th Gendarmerie Battalion. Mobilized on August 26, 1939 as the commander of the 10th Field Platoon of Gendarmerie with the 10th Infantry Division. Interned in Romania for six months. He reached England via France. From May 15, 1940 to June 27, 1940, the commander of the Gendarmerie Platoon at the Motorised Cavalry Centre. From July 1940, deputy commander of the 7th Gendarmerie Platoon at the Air Force Command of the RAF, and from August 13, commander of the Air Police Platoon. From September 6, 1945, air police officer at BAFO. After his retirement, he worked as a teacher in Aberlady, East Lothian, Scotland. He died on August 2, 1996 in Cheshire, United Kingdom. Promoted: lieutenant – 1941, captain – 1946. The English service card of Capt. Wielądek is in the possession of the author.

<sup>13</sup> In 1940, four Polish squadrons (300, 301, 304 and 305) were established in Bramcote.

<sup>14</sup> In 1941, the 1st Polish Flying Training School was established (No. 1 Polish FTS) and 25 Polish Elementary Flying Training School (No. 25 EFTS).

<sup>15</sup> 16 EFTS was transferred from Hucknall to Newton on 15 July 1941.

<sup>16</sup> A bomber station, where Polish bomber squadrons were stationed.

<sup>17</sup> Northolt was the base where the 303 Squadron trained, and from where the Polish pilots set off on their first sortie.

<sup>18</sup> Lt. Wielądek is probably the author; letter was entitled: *Disciplinary Officer – Air Police Platoon* (IPMS, *Chronicle of the Air Police Platoon and other documents*, Lt. AV 14/2c). In October 1941, a third gendarmerie organization (battalions modelled on the English pattern) was introduced.

by the commander of the gendarmerie platoon, it is worth quoting the broader context of his arguments:

*The events of the recent past should be approached with extreme caution. While a record of facts alone does not constitute any difficulty due to the freshness of material, any attempt to evaluate these facts, let alone to draw conclusions, indicates that the factor of objectivity, which is ever so important and desirable in any portrayal of life, may be seriously lacking [...]. Before reviewing the life of the soldiers in the camp, viewed through the prism of the security service, it seems purposeful to shed light on the conditions under which the soldier found himself in Britain – for these conditions mainly affected views, aspirations, ideas, subsequently externalised in words or reactions and deeds in conflict with the military order upheld by the authority enforcing security, namely the military police.*

*Ironically, it was Blackpool that had been chosen as the place to accommodate aircraftmen arriving in England in 1940, after the collapse of France. Here, they were to await assignments to schools and military units. Here, they were to wait for work. The majority of aircraftmen arrived in this city, which was a dreamt-of destination for the working class of central England's industrial cities during the holiday season. These soldiers, who came from various social environments in Poland and whose living standards were low, were accommodated in Blackpool's guesthouses. According to the author, it is noteworthy, that no military crime took place during the one-year period [...].*

Against this background, the author presents the actions of the Air Police Platoon, further stating that he was aware that many violations and disciplinary transgressions escaped their attention.

*This is understandable in view of the fact that the Land Forces were supported by 12 Gendarmerie platoons (with an average strength of 15-20 military policemen), while for a similar number of airmen who passed through Blackpool – there was one air police platoon with only 4 policemen, later reinforced for a short period to 38, only to be reduced again to 8, being replenished to 12 only in May 1941<sup>19</sup>. This negligible percentage of police officers were on duty in the Blackpool camp, which included the Non-Effective Pool, i.e. Polish Aviation Camp. It should be mentioned here that the Camp at that time was a collectivity of soldiers who had not received their posting yet but were awaiting one. Therefore, it was necessary to apply Polish regulations and – as it was part of the RAF – as a team undergoing training on*

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<sup>19</sup> The author of this letter does not explain why there was such a high personnel turnover during the period the Platoon's existence.

*the ground, it was subject to English instructions. This dualism in the legal treatment of soldiers and their responsibility for the acts committed was a circumstance that made it extremely difficult to perform police service duties, all the more so because police officers not envisaged to serve with the RAF, and thus not holding English function ranks, were exposed to their orders being disregarded by soldiers.*

*The legal status and liability for acts committed are regulated by the executive provisions of the aviation contract, assuming the date of March 26, 1941, as the date after which liability was to be determined under English laws, except that the Polish law is supposed to apply where it recognizes certain acts as offences which the English law does not recognize as such.*

*Then the author discusses individual areas of military life.*

*The subject of the offences committed at that time was dominated by defamation of superiors and senior ranks. The platoon registers recorded many such acts, the more the closer they were to the date of arrival in England, the fewer the further away in time they were from that moment. They described that the moral depression resulting from the second disappointment (the fall of France) forced them to look for culprits. [...] The period of idle waiting was conducive to looking for something to do. In this manner, every step taken by colleagues was scrutinised, regardless of their rank. The atmosphere of irritation and nervous excitement, often oversensitivity to one's own dignity while lacking respect for others, led to the gendarmerie being inundated with reports in such a quantity and containing such content that many of them had to be returned to the author, explaining the lack of grounds for initiating an investigation. Not even people who were already dead were spared. Gossip was circulated about those who had fallen in combat about them fleeing to the enemy, thus accusing them of treason. As a rule, rumours were the source of such conduct, the author of which in most cases remained elusive. Accusations made against commanders who were said to have deserted the troops should be included in this group. Many investigations, which had already been completed in Romania and sent to France, did confirm the validity of these allegations [...].*

*The appropriation of a military rank was one of popular offences. This was often due to the fact that in Romania, ranks were arbitrarily appropriated or informal promotions were awarded by commanders in order to improve the material status of their subordinates. Many revision trials had not yet completed when the new evacuation from France provided an excellent opportunity to elevate one's rank. During the last evacuation, there were many cases of commanders and soldiers who, knowing the orders awarding promotions*

*from the Lyon Air Command, did not wait for their formal issuance. Hence, many cases had been discontinued due to the absence of guilt in the suspect. Many soldiers were formally promoted to an appropriate rank already in England. Two cases of doubtful ranks of officers were recorded. Both cases were explained with a positive outcome.*

*Accidents caused by drunkenness should be classified as rare, rather occasional, occurring mostly in restaurants, hotels and guesthouses. [...] They were committed by soldiers with certain talents as well as certain addictions. In such a large concentration of troops, young organisms and temperaments had to find an outlet. The factor that incited such incidents the most was jealousy (on the part of the English people) of their being popular with the ladies [...].*

In Blackpool, there were two fatal accidents in which Polish Air Force servicemen crossing a road in the dark were run over. In addition, there was one case of serious gas poisoning during a bath. A firearm accident, in which one of the airmen suffered, was widely commented on as a double attempt to commit suicide (distressing news about close family in the homeland). Two suicide attempts due to a heartbreak.

In the initial period, offences in external discipline dominated: failure to salute, incompliant uniforms, staying in town after curfew.

In February 1942, the acting commander of the Air Police Platoon, Sgt. Cdt. Franciszek Kuzan informed the Commander in Blackpool that the Platoon was conducting an inquiry into deposits left by fallen airmen. In January, there were 5 cases of disciplinary punishment by the commander of the Aviation Reserve Centre for minor offences, such as: fights, leaving the garrison without a pass, absence at the morning assembly, non-compliance with accommodation regulations. In addition, there were several cases of officers losing their ID cards as a result of negligent storage of those documents. At that time, the Platoon sent few preventive patrols due to a low number of military policemen and a larger number of investigations commissioned by the 9th Field Court Martial, the Polish Air Force Inspectorate and the Inheritance and Deposits Committee.

Personal difficulties were solved when ranks began to be awarded according to the English system. Experienced non-commissioned officers from the security service were appointed as post commanders, choosing privates from among the aviation personnel at the Station to assist them. Difficulties with obtaining English ranks for privates ceased with the launch of courses at the English Police School. The first course took place in Uxbridge at the turn of June and July 1942.

In 1942, a police station was established at the RAF Uxbridge school in Brighton. In 1943, two courses were held at the aforementioned school, one course in Weeton, and another course in 1944 also in Weeton. In December 1944, the Air Police had 65 trained non-commissioned officers, all from Blackpool, who became familiar with the conditions of performing the security service.



Fig. 2. Platoon of the Polish Air Police, 1941 (second from the left WO Jaworski, others not identified) Source: (Wierzbicki, 1990, p. 78).



Fig. 3. Blackpool. A training course in Uxbridge in June 1943. In the photo: Lt. H. Wielądek, St. Albrycht, F. Krawczyk, Moliaszewski, B. Lange, F. Strawczyk, M. Jabłoński, A. Kozłowski, Fr. Witczak, J. Szpakowski and others not identified Source: (IPMS, *Kronika Plutonu Policji Lotniczej i inne dokumenty*, Lot. AV 14.2c).



Fig. 4. Course at Weeton in 1943. In the photo: Lt. H. Wielądek, St. Słojewski, T. Maciejczyk, Bem, St. Berger, Sroka, St. Sulma, K. Drejczuk, A. Ostrowski, P. Piasecki, Z. Szych, Z. Wąsik and others not identified

Source: (IPMS, *Kronika Plutonu Policji Lotniczej i inne dokumenty*, Lot. AV 14.2c).



Fig. 5. F/Sgt with a very poorly visible white stripe (covered with a hand) controls passes at Faldingworth station before boarding the bus to Lincoln

Source: *Forum dyskusyjne miłośników polskiego lotnictwa*. (2006). <https://mysliwcy.pl/forum/watki.php?id=488&ustaw=&s=2=488&ustaw=&s=1>



Fig. 6. Commander of the Air Police Platoon who visited No. 131 Wing in Ahlhorn

Source: *Forum dyskusyjne miłośników polskiego lotnictwa*. (2006). <https://mysliwcy.pl/forum/watki.php?id=488&ustaw=&s=2=488&ustaw=&s=1>

In his memoirs, the Platoon commander wrote that he had received 14 Polish prisoners of war from the German army, who were unfamiliar with the security service and were only doing their practical training. The course was to be launched for them in a short period of time (in the so-called Krzystek's list – 8 people have double surnames, as it was usual for Polish prisoners of war released from the Wehrmacht to assume new surnames).

### **3. List of the Air Police military policemen of the Polish Air Force in the United Kingdom serving in the years 1940-1947** *(Personel Polskich Sił Powietrznych w Wielkiej Brytanii 1940-1947, n.d.)*

1. Maj. Dąbrowski Jerzy Kazimierz Gracjan, RAF service number P-1004, born on August 20, 1896 in Warsaw, assignment – Polish Air Force Base, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal four times. He passed away in Eastbourne, Great Britain.
2. Capt. Wielądek Hieronim, RAF service number P-1002, born on November 14, 1910, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal three times; passed away in August 1996 in Cheshire, Great Britain.
3. Lt. Kuzan Franciszek, RAF service number P-2744/793928, born on October 3, 1911 in Solec, Opoczno district, passed away in Argentina, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal three times.
4. Master Sgt. Albrycht Stanisław Franciszek, RAF service number 783059, born on September 16, 1895 in Konieczno, Włoszczowa district, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal three times.
5. Master Sgt. Bergier Stefan, RAF service number 704367, born on January 19, 1903 in Biała, Kutno district, passed away on August 9, 1974 in Wisbech Cambrigde, Great Britain.
6. Sgt. Biernacki Wiktor, RAF service number 704368, born on July 18, 1912 in Zakrzówek, Garwolin district, passed away in 1994 in London, Great Britain, assignment – No. 303 Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal three times.
7. Master Sgt. Bryze Alojzy, RAF service number 783069, born on May 12, 1913 in Tarnów Podgórne, Poznań district, passed away on October 1, 2005 in Blackpool, Lancs, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal four times.

8. Sgt. Dobrzeniewski Władysław, RAF service number 703234, born on April 3, 1902 in Łomża, passed away on September 11, 1986 in London, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
9. Sgt. Domagalski Bogdan, RAF service number 793650, born on January 23, 1916 in Poznań, passed away on March 12, 1979 in Poznań, assignment – No. 302 Fighter Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
10. MCpl. Drejewicz Kazimierz, RAF service number 704356, born on February 26, 1916 in Yaroslavl, Russia, passed away on December 30, 1997 in Warsaw, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
11. Sgt. Duk Alfred, RAF service number 703155, born on 25 March 1913.
12. Master Sgt. Dybowski Aleksander, RAF service number 784463, born on 16 September, 1909 in Sztum, passed away in 1956 in Derby, Great Britain, assignment – No. 318 Fighter-Reconnaissance Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal four times.
13. MCpl. Fedenczuk Stefan, RAF service number 706913, born on November 22, 1922, passed away in Argentina, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
14. WO Frankiewicz Stanisław, RAF service number 781651, born on October 7, 1891 in Ołobok, Ostrów Wielkopolski district, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
15. Sgt. Gaładyk Stanisław, RAF service number 792006, born on April 11, 1915, passed away on August 15, 1992 in New York, USA, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal three times.
16. MCpl. Górski Zbigniew, RAF service number 706831, born on April 10, 1923, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
17. Sgt. Grudziński Czesław, RAF service number 705304, born on August 20, 1920, passed away on October 31, 1993 in Westcliff-on-sea, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
18. Sgt. Grzonka Rainer Józef, RAF service number 783199, born on April 29, 1918, passed away in September 1982 in Hillingdon, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal three times.
19. Cpl. Haase Ernest (Hrubasiński), RAF service number 708263, born on June 11, 1911, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
20. MCpl. Jabłoński Mieczysław, RAF service number 703392, born on January 3, 1916 in Warsaw, passed away on January 8, 1966 in Lincoln, Great Britain, assignment – No. 300 Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.

21. MCpl. Jaglarz Franciszek, RAF service number 703750, born on September 8, 1903, passed away in 1980 in London, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
22. Cpl. Janeta Wilhelm (Janik Józef), RAF service number 708408, born on December 12, 1916, passed away in Venezuela, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
23. Sgt. Jankowski Antoni, RAF service number 703393, born on May 26, 1913, passed away in 1999 in Great Britain, assignment – No. 300 Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
24. MCpl. Jastrzębski Bronisław (Jay), RAF service number 705865, born on November 20, 1920 in Modlica, Łódź district, passed away on July 12, 1988 in London, Great Britain, assignment – No. 301 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
25. MCpl. Jedliński Franciszek, RAF service number 78407, born on January 26, 1905 in Wysokie, Koniński district, passed away on February 24, 1981 in Kramsk, Poland.
26. Cpl. Jędrocha Józef Stanisław, RAF service number 705867, born on August 21, 1924 in Zuje (?), Poland, Lithuania, assignment – No. 302 Polish Fighter Squadron RAF, passed away in 2000 in London, Great Britain.
27. Cpl. Kaletka Franciszek (Atleta), RAF service number 708378, born on November 17, 1919, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
28. Sgt. Kanabus Edward, RAF service number 783067, born on October 13, 1911, passed away in 1998 in Rotehrham, Yorks, Great Britain, assignment – No. 302 Polish Fighter Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal three times.
29. Master Sgt. Kilnar Jan, RAF service number 783081, born on March 19, 1904, passed away in 1993 in Thurrock Essex, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal four times.
30. Sgt. Kosmalski Jan, RAF service number 783731, born on February 17, 1901, passed away in 1974 in Blackburn, Lancs, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal three times.
31. MCpl. Kotowski Aleksander, RAF service number 707413, born on August 13, 1903, assignment – No. 304 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
32. Sgt. Kowalski Stefan (Martin), RAF service number 782703, born on July 21, 1915, passed away on November 28, 2005 in Derby, Great Britain, assignment – No. 318 Polish Fighter-Reconnaissance Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.

33. Sgt. Kozłowski Antoni, RAF service number 703755, born on March 31, 1909 in Oszczeklin, Kalisz district, passed away in 1986 in Melton Mowbray, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
34. Sgt. Krawczyk Ferdynand, RAF service number 783086, born on February 10, 1912 in Łąkowa Górna, Bochnia district, passed away on June 15, 1996 in Warsaw, assignment – No. 309 Polish Fighter-Reconnaissance Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice and the Decoration of Honor for Officers and Other Ranks for Wounds and Injuries.
35. MCpl. Krętus Kazimierz Tadeusz, RAF service number 783135, born on January 14, 1911 in Częstochowa, passed away in 2006 in Sheffield, Yorks, Great Britain, assignment – No. 309 Polish Fighter-Reconnaissance Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
36. MCpl. Krogulski Stanisław Wiktor, RAF service number 705307, born on April 21, 1912 in Nowy Sącz, passed away in 1974 in Todmorden, Yorks, Great Britain, assignment – No. 301 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
37. Cpl. Kuglin Stanisław (Bielak), RAF service number 708382, born on April 7, 1922 in Mysłowice, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
38. MCpl. Kurianowicz Igor, RAF service number 706631, born on January 12, 1925 in Grodno, assignment – No. 317 Polish Fighter Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
39. MCpl. Kusek Stanisław, RAF service number 707422, born on March 26, 1896 in Wólka, Łuków district, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
40. Sgt. Kutal Józef, RAF service number 705110, born on September 12, 1914 in Bogdanów, Piotrków Trybunalski district, passed away on January 12, 1988 in Piotrków Trybunalski, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
41. Master Sgt. Lange Bronisław, RAF service number 703763, born on October 15, 1900, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
42. MCpl. Lisztwan Karol, RAF service number 708442, born on September 10, 1922 in Wędrynia, Czech Republic, assignment – No. 300 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
43. MCpl. Łastowski Edmund, RAF service number 705931, born on October 13, 1908 in Michnicze, Belarus, passed away in 1986 in

- Crawley, Sussex, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
44. Sgt. Maciejczyk Tadeusz, RAF service number 784020, born on September 20, 1900, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
  45. MCpl. Majda Franciszek, RAF service number 707501, born on August 8, 1896, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
  46. Cpl. Małkowski Franciszek (Kowalewicz Jan), RAF service number 708280, born on April 20, 1920, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
  47. Sgt. Marciniec Jan Władysław, RAF service number 707992, born on September 22, 1907, passed away on August 7, 1957 in London, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
  48. MCpl. Matiaszewski Marian, RAF service number 703482, born on April 17, 1907 in Lviv, passed away on October 23, 1990 in Bytom, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
  49. MCpl. Matuszczyk Alfons (Kanicki), RAF service number 708605, born on September 1, 1915, passed away on June 22, 1995 in Mysłowice.
  50. Sgt. Michalak Józef, RAF service number 781797, born on June 21, 1905 in Sobotka, Ostrów Wielkopolski district, was awarded the Polish Airforce Medal once.
  51. Cpl. Mikołajczak Jan, RAF service number 729050, born on September 16, 1918.
  52. Master Mikołajczyk Stefan Józef, RAF service number 706969, born on December 12, 1912, passed away on July 13, 1998 in Elbląg, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
  53. Cpl. Mileszkiewicz Kazimierz, RAF service number 707507, born on February 3, 1898, passed away in 1982, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
  54. MCpl. Mitko Alojzy, RAF service number 703611, born on May 13, 1916, passed away on August 16, 1960 in Nottingham, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
  55. Master Sgt. Mozel Jan, RAF service number 783735, born on January 22, 1901, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal three times.
  56. Cpl. Nieradzik Paweł (Nowara), RAF service number 708456, born on June 28, 1914, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
  57. MCpl. Niewiński Paweł, RAF service number 707511, born on March 17, 1898, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
  58. Sgt. Ostaszewski Jan, RAF service number 703516, born on June 26, 1910 in Ślubów, Ciechanów district, passed away on December 1,

- 1999 in Leicester, Great Britain, assignment – No. 300 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
59. MCpl. Ostrowski Aleksander, RAF service number 781436, born on October 23, 1915 in Warsaw, passed away on February 20, 2005 in Warsaw, assignment – 131 Wing RAF, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
60. MCpl. Pacholski Stanisław, RAF service number 707478, born on January 2, 1896, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
61. Sgt. Piasecki Piotr, RAF service number 703522, born on January 23, 1913, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
62. Sgt. Polnik Franciszek, RAF service number 709879, born on March 28, 1915, passed away on July 19, 1994 in Chicope, Ma, USA, assignment – No. 318 Polish Fighter-Reconnaissance Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
63. Sgt. Raczkowski Stanisław, RAF service number 705212, born on August 29, 1910, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
64. Sgt. Radziszewski Zygmunt, RAF service number 703628, born on October 17, 1917, assignment – No. 304 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
65. Sgt. Rakszewski Józef, RAF service number 783474, born on March 19, 1904, passed away on December 9, 1963 in London, Great Britain.
66. MCpl. Remis Kazimierz, RAF service number 706918, born on March 4, 1921, passed away in Brazil, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
67. MCpl. Rosiński Franciszek (Osowski), RAF service number 708322, born on September 13, 1915, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
68. Cpl. Rudnicki Franciszek Kazimierz, RAF service number 706264, born on January 29, 1921, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
69. MCpl. Ryszka Ryszard (Krawczyk), RAF service number 708214, born on February 8, 1914, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
70. Master Sgt. Sieradzki Franciszek Walenty, RAF service number 783068, born on October 4, 1909, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal three times.
71. Cpl. Sierosławski Janusz, RAF service number 709893, born on March 25, 1922, passed away on July 11, 1970 in Mishawaka, USA,

- assignment – No. 318 Polish Fighter-Reconnaissance Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
72. Sgt. Sklepowicz Michał, RAF service number 709900, born on January 1, 1915, passed away on December 29, 2006 in Fort Erie, Canada, assignment – No. 318 Polish Fighter-Reconnaissance Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
73. Cpl. Skwiercz Alfons (Dobiński), RAF service number 708116, born on July 22, 1922, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
74. MCpl. Sławiński Krzysztof Władysław, RAF service number 706764, born on February 20, 1916, passed away on December 17, 1992 in Leicester, Great Britain, assignment – No. 304 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
75. Sgt. Słojewski Stefan, RAF service number 705116, born on May 5, 1911, assignment – No. 304 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
76. Sgt. Stachura Stanisław, RAF service number 707445, born on March 18, 1901, assignment – No. 304 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
77. Sgt. Stróżyk Kazimierz, RAF service number 781920, born on February 7, 1907 in Pniewy, Szamotuły district, passed away on May 2, 1968 in Pniewy, assignment – No. 301 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
78. Cpl. Strzyżewski Zygmunt (Bączkiewicz), RAF service number 708381, born on December 14, 1914 in Barmen, Germany, passed away on December 3, 1986 in Bydgoszcz, assignment – No. 302 Polish Fighter Squadron, No. 304 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
79. Sgt. Sulma Stanisław, RAF service number 705312, born on March 3, 1914 in Niedzieliska, Brzesko district, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
80. MCpl. Szczurek Władysław, RAF service number 705062, born on July 24, 1920 in Lipowiec, Krosno district, passed away in 2001 in Great Britain, assignment – No. 301 Polish Bomber Squadron RAF.
81. Sgt. Szpakowski Jan Józef, RAF service number 703697, born on September 30, 1903 in Vilnius, passed away on January 30, 1975 in Derby, Great Britain, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
82. MCpl. Szych Zdzisław, RAF service number 705063, born on April 6, 1911, assignment – No. 304 Polish Bomber Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.



83. Cpl. Świątek Zygmunt (Wierchowski), RAF service number 708498, born on 28 July 1922.
84. Master Sgt. Tarko Stanisław, RAF service number 783122, born on November 9, 1906 in Młodziejowice, Kraków district, passed away on May 19, 1964 in Dortford, Kent, Great Britain, assignment – No. 309 Polish Fighter-Reconnaissance Squadron, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal four times.
85. Master Sgt. Toffel Paweł Jan, RAF service number 783065, born on June 21, 1907, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal 3 times.
86. Cpl. Waciński Jan, RAF service number 705979, born on December 17, 1920, in Suchodęba, Kutno district, passed away in Australia and was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
87. Cpl. Walica Eugeniusz, RAF service number 708606, born on June 5, 1917, in Bobrek, Cieszyn district, passed away on April 28, 1998, in Cieszyn.
88. Cpl. Wankiewicz Roman (Pawłowski), RAF service number 708462, born on February 9, 1924, passed away on April 24, 1994, in Lincoln, Great Britain, and was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
89. MCpl. Wawrzyniak Stanisław, RAF service number 703015, born on April 22, 1913, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
90. Sgt. Wąsik Zygmunt, RAF service number 703642, born on May 1, 1901, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
91. Sgt. Werel Aleksander, RAF service number 794994, born on January 7, 1912, passed away in 1981 in Great Britain, and was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
92. Sgt. Wiśniewski Antoni, RAF service number 706542, born on June 5, 1909, passed away on November 3, 1973, in Wolverhampton, Great Britain, and was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
93. MCpl. Wojtczak Franciszek, RAF service number 704418, born on April 2, 1911, in Józefów, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal twice.
94. MCpl. Wojtowicz Henryk, RAF service number 781590, born on April 13, 1916, in Lublin, passed away in 2001 in Great Britain, assignment – No. 301 Polish Bomber Squadron RAF, and was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
95. Master Sgt. Wróblewski Tadeusz, RAF service number 794157, born on April 17, 1910, passed away in 2000 in Great Britain, and was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal three times.

96. Master Sgt. Wyka Stefan, RAF service number 781801, born on August 16, 1904, was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
97. Sgt. Wysocki Henryk, RAF service number 706030, born on July 9, 1914, in Grabówek, passed away in Canada and was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
98. Sgt. Wyszomirski Józef Jan, RAF service number 783075, born on May 6, 1914, assignment – No. 309 Polish Fighter-Reconnaissance Squadron RAF, and was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
99. Cpl. Zientek Franciszek, RAF service number 707473, born on April 30, 1898, passed away on January 10, 1979, in Northwich, Great Britain, and was awarded the Polish Air Force Medal once.
100. Cpl. Żukowski Józef, RAF service number 707470, born on December 13, 1900, passed away in 1974 in Great Britain.

ID numbers were assigned to every soldier in the Polish Air Force. They were unique and served the purpose of unambiguous identification of an airman. This number was the only information, apart from his full name, that a captive airman could reveal to the Germans during the interrogation. The structure of the numbers was as follows:

- officers arriving after the collapse of France (June-July 1940, as well as further additions of personnel) had four-digit numbers in the range P-0001-P-3047, e.g.:
  - Maj. Dąbrowski Jerzy – P-1004,
  - Capt. Wielądek Hieronim – P-1002,
  - Lt. Kuzan Franciszek – P-2744;
- non-commissioned officers and cadets had six-digit numbers in the range of 703000-783069, e.g.:
  - Sgt. Biernacki Wiktor – 704368,
  - Master Sgt. Bryze Alojzy – 783069.

The above list shows that a total of 99 military policemen served in the period under study, with military police posts (sections) manned by the Air Police Platoon personnel at 8 air squadrons and 131 Wing.

Furthermore, it has been established that, in addition to the military policemen listed according to Krzystek and those already mentioned, the following served in the platoon: MCpl. Adamski Ignacy, Bem, Sgt. Chmielewski Piotr, Sgt. Chwastek Franciszek, WO Jaworski Jarosław, Cpl. Klobus Józef, Cpl. Latawski Stefan, Master Sgt. Machnik Maciej, Cpl. Machowski Michał, Cpl. Mierzwa Jakub, Moliszewski, MCpl. Pełda Władysław, Sgt. Romański Henryk, Sgt. Skibiński Marian, Cpl. Skóra Władysław, Cpl. Raszkowski

Ryszard, Sroka, Sgt. Śliwa Marian, Cpl. Wichrow Serafin, Mcpl. Wojtalik Bolesław, Master Sgt. Zawadzki Marian.

Aircraftmen (including military policemen<sup>20</sup>) were required to wear RAF rank signs (blue and black) on the sleeves of their jackets and on the shoulder boards of their coats. Polish signs of military ranks (golden) were worn in the form of a tab sewn onto the collars of jackets and winter coats. On both sleeves of the uniform, 1.5 cm below the shoulder board seam, all aviation servicemen were obliged to wear the POLAND patch embroidered with blue thread on a tab with colour matching the uniform. The airmen of various squadrons wore variously coloured scarves for their field clothing. The field clothing for aircraft personnel was a fur suit, identical throughout the RAF.

## Summary

The operations of the 7th Military Police Platoon in France were carried out from the outbreak of the Second World War in Poland in cooperation with the French gendarmerie. Polish emigrants (due to the lack of Polish military policemen) with a proper knowledge of the French language were recruited to the 7th Platoon and were needed for day-to-day interaction with the French Local Command Units and the French military police.

Changes occurred on the territory of the United Kingdom – the name of the unit changed to the Air Police Platoon and there were organizational changes – due to the legal regulations being in force in the British RAF. The commander, Lt. Hieronim Wielądek, expressed his dissatisfaction at the underestimation of this formation by his superiors, which resulted in the platoon being low on personnel. In comparison, the number of military police platoons in the land forces of the Polish First Corps was considerably larger than in the Polish Air Force despite comparable personnel levels.

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<sup>20</sup> Gendarmerie servicemen wore round British caps with a white cover. Red-white-red service armbands with the letters MP were worn on the right shoulder, and aiguillettes on the left shoulder (Żygulski, Wielecki, 1988).

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## **7 Pluton Żandarmerii (Pluton Policji Lotniczej) we Francji i Wielkiej Brytanii w latach 1940-1945**

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### **STRESZCZENIE**

Polska żandarmeria przy jednostkach lotniczych miała swoją genezę w pierwszej połowie lat trzydziestych XX wieku. Powstał Pluton Żandarmerii przy 1 Pułku Lotniczym w Warszawie, który do wybuchu II wojny światowej rozwinął swoje posterunki żandarmerii przy jednostkach lotniczych w sześciu Okręgach Korpusów. Żandarmeria kultywowała tę tradycję także przy jednostkach lotniczych na terenie Francji i Wielkiej Brytanii. Polskie Siły Powietrzne w Wielkiej Brytanii zaczęto tworzyć wraz z organizacją Polskich Sił Zbrojnych już w trakcie kampanii francuskiej w 1940 roku. Polski personel lotniczy i naziemny (podobnie jak i innych rodzajów sił zbrojnych) docierał do Wielkiej Brytanii z Polski w 1939 roku pod koniec kampanii wrześniowej przez kraje skandynawskie, a w 1940 roku z Francji, bezpośrednio lub przez inne kraje. W artykule opisano historię 7 Plutonu Żandarmerii, jego organizację i działalność oraz służących w nim ludzi.

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### **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE**

II wojna światowa, Polskie Siły Powietrzne, żandarmeria, 7 Pluton Żandarmerii, Pluton Policji Lotniczej

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### **Author contributions**

The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

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### **Ethical statement**

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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