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December 2017 Kresy-Siberia Foundation Report

Fighting for survival and freedom *from Stefan Wiśniowski (Kresy-Siberia Foundation President)*

Dear Kresy-Siberia supporters,

Thank you for your generous donations of money, time and historical materials towards our mission dedicated to Poland's citizens fighting for survival and freedom in eastern Poland's "Kresy" and in forced exile during World War II.

Our online discussion group hosted on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/KresySiberiaGroup/ continues growing to now nearly 1,600 members from Poland and all around the world. Please join us if you are not already a member and invite your friends and family to join as well.

Our December report features the following news items on the Kresy-Siberia Virtual Museum www.Kresy-Siberia.org and our related initiatives under our 3 mission objectives of RESEARCH, REMEMBRANCE and RECOGNITION:

- **Honouring Survivors with the Siberian Exiles Cross medal**
- **Recording and preserving Survivor Testimonies**
- **Reconstructing the Virtual Museum with your help**
- **Student intern re-joining us in Warsaw**
- **Making plans for the September 2018 Conference**

You can download this report, previous donor reports, the Foundation Statutes (constitution), Code of Conduct, and Annual Reports to regulatory supervisory Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, from the Kresy-Siberia Virtual Museum at www.kresy-siberia.org/museum/about-us/documents/.

Thank you again for your generous donations of money, time and materials, which all contribute to the survival and strengthening of Kresy-Siberia's special mission.

With gratitude and warm regards,
The Kresy-Siberia Foundation team

RECOGNITION

Honouring Survivors with the Siberian Exiles Cross medal



The Siberian Exiles Cross medal.



The Kresy-Siberia Foundation sponsored the awarding of 7 Siberian Exiles Cross medals in Australia, England and the USA in November 2017. This state medal is awarded by the President of the Republic of Poland to Survivors of World War II Soviet deportation, or to their families, if they are now deceased but were still alive on 1 January 2004.



Siberian Exiles Cross presentation in Coffs Harbour, Australia.

The Kresy-Siberia Foundation also organized a presentation ceremony for 5 of these medals in front of 40 family and friends in Coffs Harbour, Australia. The presentation was made by Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Sydney, Mrs. Regina Jurkowska to survivors Franciszka Pakuza-Twarowska, Marian Franciszek Budny, and Tadeusz Plewiński – as well as to family members of deceased survivors Tadeusz Budny and Jadwiga Pacewicz Kędzierska. The ceremonies were convened by Kresy-Siberia Foundation President Stefan Wiśniowski, who also screened the films “A Forgotten Odyssey” and “The Story of 700 Polish Children [in Pahiātu, New Zealand]” to give a historical perspective to the many non-Polish guests. View a TV news report at www.nbnnews.com.au/2017/11/28/siberian-exiles-cross-awarded-in-coffs-harbour/ and a film of the full ceremony at <https://youtu.be/j8MNFz0X-c>.

The Kresy-Siberia Foundation is authorized by the government of Poland to apply for the Siberian Exiles Cross for Survivors or their surviving family members. Though this process takes many months and involves a lot of unpaid work from our foundation volunteers, we have decided to do this for Kresy-Siberia group members and other donors who make a contribution to our ongoing costs. If you are interested, e-mail us with your details at Foundation@Kresy-Siberia.org.

REMEMBRANCE

New Survivor Testimony Recorded



Survivor Franciszka Pakuza-Twarowska.

We continue adding to the nearly 800 Survivor Testimony interviews that we have already recorded over the past few years. In November, we recorded an interview with Siberian Exiles Cross recipient,



Franciszka Pakuza-Twarowska, in Coffs Harbour, NSW, Australia.

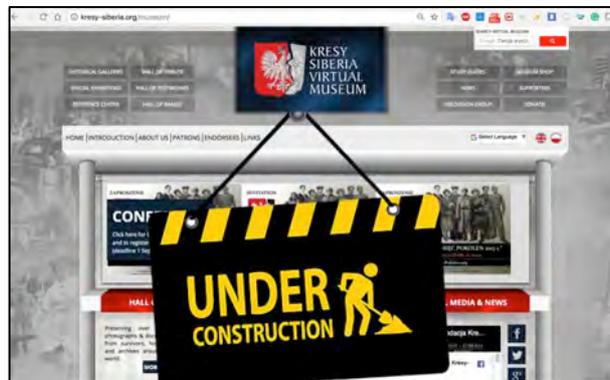
Franciszka was born on 1933-10-15, in Dostojewska Wólka (Porzecze borough, Pińsk county, Polesie voivodship). She was one of 7 children of forest ranger Wincenty Pakuza and Eugenia (nee Kondrancik). On 10 February 1940, the entire family was deported to the Ujma „special settlement” in the Pervomayskiy district of Archangel oblast. The two youngest girls, Maria and Lilia, died in the first months of the deportation. However, Franciszka managed to survive, along with her parents, her sister Helena, and brothers Jerzy, Józef and Kazimierz. On 28 August 1941, they were released under the „Polish Amnesty” and left their camp towards Samarkand in Uzbekistan. There, her father joined the reborn Polish Army and they were all evacuated to Iran. After recovering from typhus in Tehran, the children were sent to the “Children’s Home” in Isfahan. In 1945, Franciszka went on to attend the Polish school in Zouk-Mikael, Lebanon. After the war she was brought to Manchester, England, where she married wartime survivor Tadeusz Twarowski and together they had 3 children. The family emigrated to Sydney, Australia in 1969, finally settling in nearby Coffs Harbour.

Looking back over her life, and remembering her brushes with death and disease, Franciszka's message to her family was on the importance of keeping their health.

If you know of any surviving Sybiraks, residents of pre-WW2 eastern Poland or WW2 Veterans who can be film interviewed anywhere in the world, please **let us know right away** at Foundation@kresy-siberia.org so that we can arrange to preserve their wartime testimonies while they are still able to tell us about them.

REMEMBRANCE

Reconstructing the Virtual Museum with your help



Kresy-Siberia Virtual Museum upgrade is underway.

The Kresy-Siberia Virtual Museum website is our flagship program, comprising 9 Historical Galleries with 29 Exhibition Rooms, nearly 800 Survivor Testimonies, over 15,000 photos and other graphics, and over 67,000 names on the Wall of Tribute. However, the website is now over 8 years old and the internet world has moved on radically. We know that the online visitor experience needs improving, that website access is often unreliable and that we are increasingly vulnerable to hacking attacks.

We have therefore started work on the first major upgrade to our Virtual Museum website to bring its programming up to date. Though this will require some serious funding, it is a small investment to ensure the preservation and ongoing health of the Virtual Museum and the invaluable stories that it preserves for years to come.

We need your help to fund our reconstruction costs of US\$60,000 (200,000 zloty). Without any government grants, we are launching a special campaign to collect the funding required. We know that, with several thousand registered museum contributors and discussion group members, together, this goal is within our reach. Please join us in this historic effort by making your your-end donation, no matter how large or small, to this special appeal at www.kresy-siberia.org/museum/donate/.



RESEARCH

Student Intern re-joins us in Warsaw



Research Intern Katarzyna Podgórska.

We are pleased to report that Katarzyna Podgórska, an Eastern Slavonics student at the University of Warsaw, has rejoined us for a second term as a research intern. She will be continuing her work on digitising lists of names for the Virtual Museum. Our thanks go to Kasia for volunteering her time for this important work, and to our member Maciej Czarkowski in Warsaw, for again agreeing to supervise Kasia's work.

RESEARCH, REMEMBRANCE AND RECOGNITION

Dates set for 15-17 September 2018 Conference



100 years since Poland regained its independence.

Make your plans now to visit Warsaw in 2018, marking the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence after World War I and bringing the “Kresy” eastern borderlands under its sovereignty.

Our 5th Annual Kresy-Siberia “Generations Remember” Conference will be held in Warsaw on 15-17 September 2018 at the History Meeting House. The first day of the conference will feature life in the Kresy before and during World War II, while the second day will focus on wartime exile, including to forced labour by the Soviets and the Germans, and as military personnel or civilians outside Poland, including in the USSR, the Middle East, Britain, Western Europe, India, Africa, Mexico and New Zealand.

The conference will be a great opportunity to participate in the Centennial of Independence, meet other Kresy-Siberia members and Survivors living in Poland and around the world, to hear interesting speakers, and to participate in memorial ceremonies on September 17, Poland’s “Sybirak’s Day” and the anniversary of the 1939 Soviet invasion. Please start making your plans now, and watch for program details in early 2018.