Stanislaw Marczak was born 15th April 1897 in Parczew Eastern Poland then part of the Russian partition. Poland as a state had been wiped of the map in the German, Russian and Austrian partitions of 1772-1795. His father Josef worked as one of the ‘lesznicy’ (forestry workers) in the local forests that belonged to the Tsar. It was a time when the Polish population were subjected to a policy of Russification - no official Polish education was permitted.

1919 - Three months after WW1 finished in Nov 1918 Poland was involved in the Polish-Bolshevik War . (Feb 1919 - October 1920). Stanislaw was in the Polish army fighting the Bolsheviks. He joined around June 1920 the 214 Army Volunteer Cavalry Regiment. During August 12 -16th facing defeat Pilsudski ordered a pincer movement directed north from the river Wieprz and behind the Russians fighting to take Warsaw which succeeded when Stalin failed to send reinforcements and the Bolsheviks were routed - Battle of Warsaw 1920 (also 2011 film). Further battles around Zamosc including the major Battle of Komarów (considered the greatest cavalry battle of the 20th century) on Aug 31st 1920 against the Russians who again were routed and then forced to abandoned Lvov. By October 18th 1920 the fighting was over. The volunteer regiment was promoted to 24 Pułk Ułanów (24th Lancers) based at Krasnik in December of the same year.

Poland regained some of the lands (Treaty of Riga-1921) that it had lost during the partitions of 1772-1795 and after nearly 150 stateless years the 2nd Polish Republic was born.

Spring 1921- The former Polish military from the Polish -Bolshevik War were chosen exclusively to resettle the lost lands in the east. They were called "Osadniks". (Settlers). These were after all Pilsudski’s Boys. Stanislaw moved with his mother to the osada of Ułańska Dola close to Targowica between Lutsk and Dubno, Wolyn part of the Kresy or Eastern Borderlands. He was 24 yrs old.

In the Wolyn area there were 3508 parcels of land given to soldiers - 20 parcels of land around Targowica - granted to families. Stanislaw was in the 24th Polish Sabred Lancers known as Ulancy - so he and his colleagues named their settlement Ułańska Dola. (Ulanka Dola translates something along the lines of "Lancers Destiny"). Each Osadnik was given an average of 15 hectares of land, livestock, eventually American equipment and were taught the very latest efficient farming techniques which brought improvements to the communities in which they lived.
In Targowica Stanislaw met a local Pole Maria Kondradska from Lichaczowka just across the Ikva river and they married in 1922 (aged 25 for Stanislaw and 19 for Maria). Maria had two sisters Antonina and Kamila - Antonina married local Pole Boleslaw Cieslik and they also set up a farmstead. The two families helped one another to build the new homes. They farmed on the lands close to the rivers Ikva and Styr. [The river Styr forms a strategically important defensive position - in both the 1st WW and 2nd WW the river was part of the Eastern Front between the Polish Legions/ Germans and Russians]

Jurek and Leon were born in 1923, Tadzik in 1924, Renia in 1926 and Mietek in 1937.

In addition Stanislaw had two horses - one was called Kasztan named after Marshall Pilsudski's favourite Arab mare. The horses pulled an American McCormick hay reaper also owned by Stanislaw - who used to hire his services to reap/cut the hay for neighbouring plots.

In Targowica Stanislaw Stanislaw confirmed his plot as number 3. The plot consisted of 12 hectares of land
A further 1 hectare by the river for grass and reeds
A house made from 17cm timbers/wood and wooden roof covered in straw (sloma) built 1922 - 350 m3
A barn made with thick timbers built 1923 - 400m3
A stable built 1925 - 180m3
A well built 1923

Leon went to a college specially for the Osadniki- Bursa. It was in Beresteczko- about 35km south of Targovica on the Styr. (Site of famous battle in 1651)

Leon went to a college specially for the Osadniki- Bursa. It was in Beresteczko- about 35km south of Targovica on the Styr. (Site of famous battle in 1651)

Then in September 1939 when Jurek was 16 and still in Poznan the Germans invaded Poland. Within 3 days Jurek and a colleague had to get back home. They managed to get a train in Poznan for Warsaw but the journey stopped at Kolo 180km from Warsaw because the station and line had been bombed. So they had to get to Warsaw on foot over the next 7 days arriving in Warsaw on the 11th September. The Germans arrived at the
outskirts of Warsaw on Sept 8th - so Jurek was actually walking through the front line surrounded by Germans at this time.

Once in Warsaw they contacted the Bursary Authorities who looked after them for a further month. By this time there was no trains running between towns so again Jurek set off on foot to Brest-Litovski (200km) from where he caught a train to Lutsk. At Lutsk by chance he bumped into his old Ukrainian teacher called ‘Dyziow’ from Zady. Speculation has it that Dyziow was in Lutsk, looking for his wife. She had run off and was staying with a Polish Jewish man called Furmanek (also on settlers list). Furmanek seems to have had two wives - so a popular chap! So Dyziow met Jurek and brought him back home to Targovica.

1939 Sept - Soviets invade eastern Poland. The NKVD (Soviet Secret Police - later KGB) take control of the townships. Disguised as "agricultural experts" they visit all the Osadnik properties and documented all the family details. *(Ref Book- Behind Closed Doors)*

**3] Targowica**

At the time Targowica itself had a sizeable Jewish population who owned numerous shops.  

The Polish Business Directory of 1929 for Targowica - the village had 655 houses and listed 20 different types of businesses - some types had multiple choices such as 5 different Krawcy (tailors). Presumably most of these would have been Jewish. 

It even had a Piwiarnia (Pub)- run by Sznajder Bcia

Today there are no shops, no administrative buildings, no Jews, no 1675 Dominican Church, no mill - no ancient burial mounds - just a few homes with rickety fences is all that remains. Targowica has destroyed and lost it's history, but walking around it you can feel it in the air!


In 1938 the parish consisted of 950 worshipers. Church destroyed by Ukrainians in 1943 and after 1945 completely demolished.

When Russia invaded Poland in 1939 all Osadniks details were collated and from Feb 10th 1940 they and their families were deported to Siberia.

German troops entered Targowica on June 25, 1941 and immediately assembled all the people in the village, some 20 Jews were shot in the village square. The Jewish men were taken apart and locked up. The following day they were taken out of the village and forced to dig pits. There they were shot to death. Poles and Ukrainians were also murdered.

Later but still under German occupation but at the same time in retreat from the Russian offensive the conflict between Poles and Ukrainians in the Wolyn erupted which would lead to 4 years of ethnic cleansing (1943-47) conducted by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)

- the church in Targowica was destroyed in 1943 and completely demolished in 1945. as were all Polish Catholic churches in the Wolyn during the ethnic cleansing - along with all the Osady plots and buildings and all the Jewish buildings in the town..

The peak of the massacres took place in July and August 1943 when a senior UPA commander, Dmytro Klyachkivsky (see Wiki), ordered the extermination of the entire Polish population and all properties that were Polish or Jewish. Thus Poles that were not deported to Siberia were in for a worse fate - 80,000 poles were murdered in the Wolyn. 

Had our families remained it’s probable that that they would have shared this fate. A sobering thought.

The Russian NKVD later hunted down the UPA and in Feb.1945 Dmytro Klyachkivsky was killed in battle not far from Targowica - surviving UPA members and their families were exiled to Siberia.
4] Deported to Siberia – Journey

1939 Sept - Soviets invade eastern Poland. The NKVD (Soviet Secret Police - later KGB) take control of the townships. Disguised as "agricultural experts" they visit all the Osadnik properties and documented all the family details. *(Ref Book- Behind Closed Doors)*

1940 - February 9th - mid winter the NKVD began the process of deporting all the Osadniks in one mass deportation

Marisia Stawiarska was born in Ulanska Dola. Her mother was Antonina Kondrad ska (married Boleslaw Cieslik and lived in Ulanska Dola) and was sister to Stanislaw’s wife Maria Kondrad ska.
(The Komdradskis had always lived around Targovica they were there before Stanislaw arrived.) Marisia was 5 when our family was deported she remembers the day very vividly as essentially two close sisters were being torn from each other.

It was February deep into winter with snow on the ground the harshest winter for may years. In the early hours whilst people slept The Russians began arresting the Polish Soldier families Osadniks at gun point. Our grandfather had his hands tied behind his back and told to lie on the floor face down he shook through fear. Our Grandmother Maria had to pack essential items. They then had to put these on a sleigh and were herded to the school at Ulanska Dola and guarded.

Word reached Antonina who was also living in Ulanska Dola at this time, horrified and with just scant clothing - throwing on some slippers she ran through the snow to the school.

Things were quite distraught the two sisters could only communicate through the school window Maria had packed some of her fine clothes and she was throwing these out through the window onto the snow for Antonina, - Maria didn’t think she would be needing then to wherever they were taking them. Antonina had a bakery ( I think ) and had two sacks of dried breads in store the guards were persuaded to allow Jurek and Leon to go the bakery and collect the sacks for their journey they were escorted under guard.

Trucks then arrived and took all the Soldier families to Dubno/Rowne railway station for the journey to Siberia. At Rowne where they were herded onto cattle trucks.. The trains were over a kilometer long and would take nearly 3 weeks on the journey to Kotlas leaving Rowne on 11th February. They were the first of 4 phases of deportations.

Our family were deported to the Specposioleks in the far northern Russian Wastes to Kotlas/ Oblast Archangelsk (referred to as Siberia) from the Kresy regions

An estimated 500,000 + Poles were deported to Siberia over 4 phases of deportations.

The cattle trucks had bunks against the long walls - there was a stove in the centre to keep warm and boil water and a hole in the floor - this was the impersonal toilet - A blanket was hung from the ceiling to give some privacy.

They would head due south east .towards Zdolbunów 

Iwanko station 
cross the Polish border
Szepetówka. Turn to head due north east towards Moscow.

River Don. start to veer north 
Karaczew, Aleksandrowka, Rybne., Holworsk

Voskriesensk. Around East of Moscow. Lots of standing . At night the lights of Moscow were bright against the snowy landscape. Uncle Tadeusz seemed to think the authorities had not decided exactly where to send the train from here. They carried heading due East.

Gorki.
frozen River Volga Having crossed the Volga river they turned to head due North.

Kiyrow, Sobotkow

27 Feb KOTLAS in the Archangelsk oblast.,

Here they spent a couple of days waiting for the sleds to arrive to take them further into the tundra forests. It was -40 C some people would freeze to death in these conditions. The rivers were frozen and these were the main throughways to move them 100 kms north east to Specposiolek of Bierdyszchya in the Oblasts smaller province of Lensky .Convoys set out on foot and by sleds up the Vychegda river. They would arrive at Bierdyszchya on March 2nd. Many of the Ulanska Dola families were kept together and sent to this location near Litvinovo in Lensky district.

---
The deportees were housed in special camps called specposiolki (special work camps) governed by the NKVD. Also referred to as the Kartoga - a penal system which became a common penalty for participants of national uprisings that has affected Poles ever since Kosciuszko's uprising of 1794. Followed by further uprisings in 1830 and 1863 - Poles sent to these work camps were known as Sybiraks.

These were open settlements/prison farms unlike some of the fenced gulag prisons settlements. It was a means of supplying forced labour into the desolate reaches of Russia. Searching the Karta Index on "place of repression" as Bierdyszcha reveals 383 individuals across 80 families from Rowne (123) and Tarnopol (260) departure stations. Part of this list with Ulanska Dola links is in the gallery below.

There were primitive huts and barracks, where the deported families of peasants awaited their dispatch. Convoys set out on foot and by barge down the Northern Dvina and up the Vychegda, they took people into the forests, into virgin areas. Here they had to build themselves settlements and work at cutting and rafting timber and building roads. They were only a few kilometers from Litvinovo - certainly easy walking distance - Jurek recalls taking logs down to the rivers edge and releasing them so that the logs would float downstream towards Kotlas. These specposiolki no longer exist.

Their staple diet was Kasza - a porridge made from barley grain that they could buy and bread. According to Lenin, enforced at the camps the motto "He who does not work shall not eat ". And so it was as a family of a strong father with equally strong boys and a mother who also worked preparing felled trees each was rewarded with a kilo of bread each day. At the end of the month each received a small amount of money for the work they did. Collectively they were in surplus and distributed the bread to other families that did not have the capacity to work. Those with young children and sick fathers - for these families life was more than just survival. Winter months were hard - when living in the Siberian hut, Leon remembers wearing 'walonki' ( fur shoes ) and 'kufajki' ( fur jackets ). but during summer months Jurek remebers there was an abundance of blackberries and mushrooms.

Jurek recalls a few names - The guards were governed by the "Commandant" - The manager who allocated the forestry work was Kolnuv Ilnisky and the regional head was Katarski. Katarski was of Polish decent but thoroughy Russified. The main aim of the posiolki was the assimilation of the Poles into the host Russian peasant culture and the Russification of the population (transnationalism). In public the Poles were not allowed to speak in their native tongue Polish.

Their other neighbour Sorderl died in Kotlas due to asthma and the minus -42 temps. Leon remembers that when it was really cold and they worked in the forests they would make fires out of the branches - even Renia would help to collect these bits of wood. They were not allowed to burn wood in the summer months, though! Leon confirmed they used to eat kasza Owszana, at a communal dining area called a 'stolowka. ' ( stowufka ) . Our grandmother worked in a bakery for a while - piekarnia.

The family were part of a specific team - felling trees - removing branches and cutting the trunks into three segmants. Monetary rewards were based on productivity - but only just enough to feed oneself. Families were also granted some allotment space and again the allotment size was based on the families level of productivity - Jureks recalls they had one of the largest allotments.

Initially the deportees were crammed into overcrowded ramshackled barracks - but with the tree felling they were instructed to build new log huts for themselves and thus build their new settlement (posiolek) - this included a very fine home for the "Comandant". It was never envisaged that they would ever leave these new settlements.

Mietek was around 3 years of age at this time - Stanislaw managed to get a cow from Russian neighbours and thus fresh milk so things were looking up a luxury by specposiolek standards. However the cow didn't give much milk, because she was lonely and away from the rest of the herd !

But things change
1941-June Germany invades Russia August 1941 Russia joins the western allies and does a deal with Churchill to an Amnesty to free all deported Poles.
6] Amnesty

1941–June  Germany invades Russia August 1941 Russia joins the western allies and does a deal with Churchill to an Amnesty to free all deported Poles.

June 1941 - The Polish government-in-exile and the Soviet government signed the Sikorski-Mayski Agreement which announced the willingness of both to fight together against Nazi Germany and for a Polish army to be formed on Soviet territory. The Polish general Władysław Anders began organizing this army, and soon he requested information about the Polish officers who were missing. During a personal meeting, Stalin assured him and Władysław Sikorski, the Polish Prime Minister, that all the Poles were freed, and that not all could be accounted because the Soviets "lost track" of them in Manchuria.

The Germans later discovered the Katyn Forest graves of the Polish Officers around Jan/Feb 1943 - Stalin blames the Germans for this act and denounces the "Polish Government in exile" in London for cooperating with the Germans in suggesting it was the Russians that carried out this massacres.

The family are given papers to travel south on 10th September 1941 to Soroczynsk (Sorochinsk) near Buzuluk. Details show they were released on 10th September 1941 and headed for town of Soroczynsk close to Buzuluk and Tockoye - where Anders was gathering his Polish Army. Winter is approaching, it's starting to snow and cold has set in they have some makeshift tents for shelter - but spirits are high. Jurek and Leo leave first (18 years old now) and set of with colleagues to join the Polish Army and head south heading for Tashkent 1750 miles south. Soon they split in smaller groups to get a better chance to hitch onto transport and get food. The rest of the Marczak family would follow a little later.

Russia agrees for Poles to start to assemble an army on Russian soil, initially around Buzuluk in central Russia - everyone presumes the Poles will fight alongside the Russians - but the relationship between the Poles and Russians is a strained one. General Anders and Sirkorski visit Stalin and ask him to release the Polish officers - to which Stalin replies everyone has been released. Under further questioning Stalin says that they all must have escaped to Manchuria - "what every one of them" retorts Anders.

As the battle of El Alamein began on July 1st - Stalin made a surprising offer on July 2nd 1942 Stalins sugesting to the British to evacuate 3 Polish divisions to the Middle East - presumably his thoughts were to give additional strength to stop the Germans entering Russia via Egypt and Persia.

It's also possible that Stalin didn't want a strong Polish force on Russian soil that wanted to liberate it's own country from the Germans. Realising that he can't meld the Polish army into being a Russian entity he advises that they should join the other allies.

So the armies have to assemble in Uzbekistan and move to the British sphere of influence. There are no formal travel arrangements. Chaos reigns, food and water becomes an issue. There was always a reluctance from Stalin to provide any adequate food provision for the gathering army - Stalin had his own problems facing the Germans, feeding the Poles wasn't one of his high priorities.

People have to make their own way south although cattle trucks do stop to give Poles lifts down to the south. Weak and starving with a shortage of water many perish in the hot climate. Stalin grants only a small window in time for this assembly and they will be Churchills responsibility so have to move off Russian territory.

The rest of the family set off from Kotlas some months later and its during this journey that Renia (13 years old) gets off the train in search of food (leaving family in cattle truck) the train is gone when she gets back. Tadzik recalls that he and his father Stanislaw made their way back to the station but Renia was nowhere to be found.

Eventually Jurek and Leo get to Tashkent but there isn't enough food to feed the gathering army. The local Uzbeks have collective farms called Kolchozy (Russian Kolkhoz) that required workers "Kolchoznici". The Poles are encouraged to go and work on the Kolchozy in order to earn some brownie points to get food to eat. The local Kolchozy soon fill up, Leon and Jurek get a tip that there is work in the cotton fields near the Aral Sea, by cattle train nearly 1000 km / 600 miles they arrive in Moynoq and get work as shoe repairers for a couple of months.
1942 - Summer  
They then realise there are no trains back to Taszkent where the Polish Army is assembling properly, so start to walk back along the Amu Darya (Oxus) river towards Buchara (through desert lands) all off 465 miles on foot!! Jurek recalls that the Uzbeks generally welcomed the Poles and finding a place to sleep and some unleavened bread to help them on the way wasn't too difficult. They learned a few vital Uzbek words - Makara (friend) and Karsch Yaman (We're hungry) Under nourished and weak, Walking between 50 and 100 km per day - This was some achievement. They join the army at Buchara. They finally join up with the main Polish Army forces from Jangijul and are transported to Krasnovodsk Caspian Sea where they are shipped on coal vessels to Pahlavi in Persia, a journey that would take 24 hours.

Two schedules of evacuations from Kranovodsk took place between August 9th and August 30th 1941, after this all further evacuations were stopped by the Russians. Camps are set up on the beeches around Pahlavi Here they get British uniforms and adequate rations.

Soon the ship was unloaded and they were moved to the camps on the beaches of Pahlavi. The tents housed women and children. The army camped in an open space. The sunshine warmed up tired bodies and the waves of the sea bathed and refreshed them. Next day they were paraded to the bathhouses. Old clothes had to be left outside before they were subjected to a "delousing program". All these clothes contained not only lice but also the germs of typhoid dysentery and other illnesses, which were so rampant in Russia. All these clothes were burnt. After a good shower (what a luxury) they received the new, clean British uniforms!

Hungry. When they were told that they would receive 400g of bread a day they grumbled: "In Russia we had 800g of bread and we were hungry". "Don't worry"-said the General- "there is more". Happily surprised when they received their first meal on the beach, which included: corned beef, cheese, crackers, oranges, dates, and jam. What a feast! For supper they went to the field kitchen. The meal included soup, lamb, rice, and fruit. Once they regain some strength they then move to camps around Tehran (Persia now IRAN) where they undergo more rigorous training. There are some 95,000 Polish soldiers assembled at this point and 35,000 civilians and orphans who would be sent to the British colonies in Africa and India.

There is a request from UK that Polish General Stanislaw Maczek troops assembling in Scotland be beefed up and some 10,000 soldiers and Polish airmen are sent to Scotland. Jurek and Leon move up via Baghdad through Palestine finally arriving in SUEZ where they were boarded onto big liners. Given that the Med and Straights of Gibraltar were heavily guarded by German U boats/subs the route to the UK was a long one. The liners head south through Suez around the horn of Africa to Sth Africa - they stayed in Durban for a couple of months. Finally another big liner takes them around west Africa and up to Glasgow and they get based in Kelso Scotland.

Stanislaw and Tadzik join up with Anders army and are sent to Palestine and then onto Italy and Monte Casino.

Renia does get to Tashkent on her own - but the door to the west has now been closed. A Russian family in Tashkent take her in and she becomes part of their family. She lives with them for 5 years until 1947 (two years after WW2 finished). By then Russia had re-established some of the transport infrastructure and Renia (now 21) could make her way back home to Poland. Despite her Russian family pleading for her to stay - her Polish roots were to deep not to follow back. Later Jurek recalls how she mentioned to him how good the Russian family were to her - but despite this she never wrote to them - her hatred of Stalin and the Russian system stopped her from doing so - something that she regretted in later years.

Recap -
Jurek and Leon are heading for Scotland via Sth. Africa to join General Maczek's Polish 1st Armoured Division in Scotland before heading to of Normandy. 
The rest of the family arrive in Tashkent, Stanislaw and Tadzik join the Polish "Anders" Army and are heading for Palestine and Italy.
Renia (13) as mentioned is now lost in Russia.
Mietek (5) and Mother are heading for a British Refugee camp Kidugala South Tanganyika in Africa. The family have been truly splintered.
Scotland: Pierwsza Diwizja Pancerna (PDP) - Polish 1st Armoured Division

Having arrived in Kelso in the Scottish borders Leon and Jurek were now part of the Polish 1st Armoured Division. They had joined the remnants of the Polish army in France that evacuated from Dunkirk. The Polish military structure in Scotland had grown larger, more sophisticated and more efficient. Poles could be seen in Cupar, Leven, Milnathort, Auchtermuchty, Biggar, Douglas, Duns, Kelso, Forres, Perth, Tayport, Lossiemouth, Arbroath, Forfar and Carnoustie.

The 1st Polish Armoured Division was formed by General Maczek in 1942 at Kelso and Duns, 16,000 soldiers, 380 tanks, 470 guns under Polish General Stanislaw Maczek and were subsequently integrated with the First Canadian Army. Specifically both Jurek and Leon were in the 1st Armoured Regiment - 51 - you see 51 on their tanks part of the 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade.

They bore the "Coat of Arms" of feathered wings and helmet of the elite Polish Winged Hussars. Between the Battle of Lubiszew in 1577 and the Battle of Vienna in 1683, the Polish-Lithuanian hussars fought countless actions against a variety of enemies, and rarely lost a battle. (research Jan Sobieski)

Polish Hussars were also famous for the huge 'wings' worn on their backs or attached to the saddles of their horses. The wings were made of a wooden frame and, most commonly, eagle feathers.

1943 After training in Kelso, Jeremi and Longin Marczak as brothers, were split into separate tank groups, initially using British Crusader tanks. They moved to Bury St. Edmunds where they collected the American Sherman M4 tanks.

Towards the end of July 1944 they were sent to Caen in Normandy and very soon were engaging the German 7th Army.

On August 8th they had their first combat role in Operation Totalize - Within another week they would be in the thick of things at the Battle of Falaise Pocket.

Before Jeremi got to Falaise - on day 4 they encountered heavy resistance from German tanks that were sunk behind protective mounds and difficult to dislodge. Soldiers have to go on a walkabout from time to time and Jurek had just got to a copse of trees some way from his tank. At this point American planes arrived dropping bombs meant for the German tanks but falling all around Jurek and continuing towards his brigade. Jurek immediately dived into a bomb crater (on the basis that lighting doesn't strike twice in the same location).

He started hearing calls from some other soldiers on the other side of the copse and started diving from one crater to another before finally reaching three Canadian soldiers also sheltering from the friendly fire. When the raid had passed Jurek hopped into the Canadian jeep and they drove him back to his brigade. Mayhem was all around - the brigade had lost soldiers in the raid and many wounded. Jurek was covered in dirt from head to foot after diving from one crater to another and when his mates saw him they asked where on earth he had got to!!

Falaise – Maczuga

Commencing on 14th August 1944 with an attack on Falaise itself, very quickly it soon developed into classic pincer movement to encircle the entire German 7th Army heading them off between the towns of Falaise, Trun and Chambois.

General Maczek was a very modern armoured commander, having commanded brigades in the campaigns of 1939 and 1940 with great skill. He had carefully studied German tactical methods and applied what he had learned in the field. While 3rd Rifle Brigade (with the 1st & 2nd Armoured Regiments (51 and 52 markings) under command) was sent to seize The Mace (Mont Ormel or Hill 262 North), the 10th Cavalry Brigade to seize and hold the village of Chambois, thereby linking up with the US XV Corps coming up from Le Mans.

The British engaged the Germans in the east whilst the USA Pattons 3rd Army moved up from the south to Chambois (Right hand pincer). The Canadians (left hand pincer) took Trun and the Polish 1st had to break out from the Canadian ranks and force through to Chambois joining the Americans on August 19th thus hoping to encircle the Germans. Despite being somewhat exposed during this manoever they did link up the Yanks - candy bars were their reward.
However army resources were thin between Trun and Chambois and a gap developed "Faliase Gap" though which the German 7th were able to retreat.

Strategically positioned was hill 262 - Mont Ormel "Maczuga - The Mace" and the Polish 1st was best placed to try to take the hill and stem the German Retreat. At this point the Poles were sandwiched between supporting German 2 SS Panzer divisions and the retreating 7th Army. Into Hells Gate if ever there was one.

The German 7th having sustained heavy losses from the direction of the hill imediately set about eliminating the Polish position by throwing substantial forces at the hill including diverting the 9 SS Panzer division as well. The Poles were using up ammunitions as fast as they were getting re-supplied at times nearly running out. Fierce fighting lasted for two full days but the Poles clung on by August 21st the gap was closed.

The Poles lost 1290 men and 3820 were injured (30%) of the division. The Poles won the respect of all the Allies.

General Crerar sent the following telegram to Maczek: First Canadian Army is very proud because of the fact that Polish Armoured Division is a part of us. If in the future we all continue to fight as at the present time, the mutual celebration of final victory should not be much delayed.

But for the Germans it was their biggest defeat since Stalingrad. In the week long battle 10,000 to 15,000 Germans were killed and 50,000 taken prisoner, most of their armoury was left behind in the pocket.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower commented, No other battlefield presented such a horrible sight of death, hell and total destruction.

Pierwsza Diwizja Pancerna Route

Scotland Kelso
England - Bury St. Edmunds - Southampton
France - Arromanches/Gold Beach - Caen - Faliase "Maczuga - Mont Ormel - Hill 262" - Rouen
Belgium, Breda Holland
Wilhelmshaven Germany.

After the Allied armies broke out from Normandy, the Polish 1st Armoured Division pursued the Germans along the coast of the English Channel. It liberated, among others, the towns of Ypres, Ghent and Passchendaele. Sometime after Falaise Jureks tank went over a mine and was badly damaged - the crew were fortunate to only get some small shrapenal wounds - they were soon patched up and given a new tank. Although Jurek was the driver - during stationary battle formations he occasionaly swapped with the cannon gunner to fire off a few salvo's.

A successful outflanking manoeuvre planned and performed by General Maczek allowed liberation of the city of Breda without any civilian casualties (October 29, 1944).

The Division spent the winter of 1944-1945 on the south bank of the river Rhine, guarding a sector around Moerdijk in the Netherlands. In early 1945 it was transferred to the province of Overijssel and started to push along with the Allies along the Dutch-German border, liberating the eastern parts of the provinces of Drenthe and Groningen with towns such as Emmen, Coevorden and Stadskanaal.

Germany
In April 1945 the 1st Armoured entered Germany in the area of Emsland. On May 6 the division seized the Kriegsmarine naval base in Wilhelmshaven, where General Maczek accepted the capitulation of the fortress, naval base, East Frisian Fleet and more than 10 infantry divisions.

After the war the Polish troops remained in their final destinations as occupying forces for a further 2.5 years. They were allowed holidays and during one of these Jurek went to Italy and met up with their father Stanislaw and brother Tadzik.

In 1947 Leon and Jurek returned to England and were barracked at Tilset near Salisbury. Once de-mobbed Jeremi and Longin were sent to Dolgellau North Wales clearing trails in the forest around the old "Gold" mines. Companies from Sth Wales came to visit and offer work in the foundaries of Port Talbat/Swansea where they worked for 18 months before finally coming to Manchester.
9] Carpathian Brigade - Karpacka Brygada

Stanislaw and Tadzik joined the Polish forces in Jan-gi-Jul near Tashkent - General Anders Army in Russia. Soon after as soldiers they were sent to Persia (Iran) Iraq and Palestine (Israel). In Palestine their division was joined with the Carpathian Brigade and 3 DSK (3rd Carpathian Division) was formed.

After the fall of France in June 1940, the brigade moved to Palestine to avoid falling under Vichy control, and then to Tobruk where its commander, Maj-General Stanislaw Kopański, commanded the Allied garrison after the Australian garrison had been replaced.
In November 1941 it took part in the CRUSADER offensive in the Western Desert campaigns before being withdrawn to Palestine in March 1942 having suffered 200 killed and 424 wounded.

It was then reorganized as the 3rd Carpathian Division with the inclusion of freed Poles from Russia. Stanislaw was in transport battalion moving ammunition up to the front troops along with "Wojtek the Bear". Tadzik recalls seeing Wojtek fully grown when he visited his father Stanislaw during leave.

Tadzik was in the 3rd Carpathian Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment. They were part of the 2nd Polish Corps (Anders’ army) which in turn was part of the British 8th Army.

As the war ended in 1945 Tadzik unfortunately lost one of his best friends during the battle of Loreto. He was killed as he stood right next to him.

Tadzik recalls sadly "I visited his grave and many other friends graves when I visited Monte Cassino in 1973 and also again in 1994".

The brigade's name reflected the soldiers' hopes that they would be able to liberate their homeland by crossing Southern Europe and traversing the Carpathian Mountains. (Karpaty)

This aim is immortalised in the words of the Polish National Anthem chorus sung to a Mazurka beat.

March! March, Dabrowski!
March from Italy to Poland!
Under your command
We shall reach our land

Dabrowski was a Polish General whose army became one of Napoleon's legions in Italy. His soldiers marched to the Dabrowski Mazurka which would later become the Polish National Anthem. After the third partition Polish legions escaped the country and joined up with Napoleon.

But it was a wishful dream – Napoleon was only interested in having the support of large legions of Polish warriors in his army in gaining Poland for himself as an annex to France. Actually a 4th partition - he never allowed Dabrowski to cross the Carpathian Alps into Poland.

In the end the uniform of the army that crossed from Italy to Poland to help Poland gain it’s freedom wasn’t in the colours of soldiers khaki but white the colour of the Papacy.
After the war finished the Polish troops remained in their final destinations as occupying forces for a further 2.5 years before they returned to England in 1947.

Renia was repatriated back to Poland and was not allowed to join her family in England. Stanislaw died in Manchester 1969

General Maczek left the army on 9 September 1948. After the war, General Maczek was stripped of Polish citizenship by the Communist government of the People's Republic of Poland, and thus had to remain in Britain. Maczek decided to take up residence in the city of Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, along with his family. As he was not considered by the British to be an Allied soldier (since Britain now recognized the Communist Polish Government), he was denied combatant rights and a military pension.

He was forced to do menial work until the 1960s he worked as a bartender in an Edinburgh hotel. In 1961, he published his memoirs entitled: "Od podwody do czolgą" (From horsedrawn carriage to tank). He died 11 December 1994, at the age of 102 He is buried among his soldiers in the Polish military cemetery on the Polish Military Field of Honour on the Ettensebaan in the city of Breda, The Netherlands in accordance with his last wishes. Each year during Liberation Day festivities, Breda is visited by a large Polish contingent and the city reserves part of the festivities for the fallen Polish soldiers.

The Poles fought alongside the Allies hoping to gain a free and Independent land - they hoped to go back to their lands in Kresy, but it was not to be. Despite having the third largest army facing the Germans (After Russia and GB) there was no room for Poland at the negotiating table in Yalta. Even though Roosevelt and Churchill had inaugurated the Atlantic Charter in Aug. 1941 laying down

Article 2 ] No territorial adjustments without peoples consent and Article 3] People’s right to self-determination

It seems it had no bearing on the Yalta negotiations. The Russians retained the Kresy lands - the Poles were given part of the German lands (which had Polish roots historically) to compensate - but Poland would fall into the Soviet Communist bloc. As a result the Polish fighters and those that had escaped from the Gulags of Siberia and Kazakhstan had no home to go back to, they were offered residence throughout the Allied lands, but weren't invited to participate in the Victory marches and celebrations.

These accounts are constantly under review and additions are on-going.