

Karol Walerian Franciszek Korytowski – (pseudonym Karol Mora). He was born in Krakow on 28 January 1892. He was a son of Adam Korytowski and Walentyna Kryńska.

Karol Korytowski



The family estates were in fact situated in Wielkopolska region (Greater Poland voivodeship) of Poland.

He came from a family of politicians and bishops, proud of their aristocratic Polish roots, very patriotic and religious. Karol's predecessors, **dr Witold Korytowski** (from Korytowa) was a Vice-Regent (Namiestnik Galicji) of Galicia from May 14, 1913 until August 20, 1915.

Witold Korytowski was born on 8 Aug. 1850 (died on 10 July 1923 in Poznan) in Grochowiska Szlacheckie near Biskupin, in Wielkopolska region of Poland; north-central Poland. It is a village that belongs to kujawsko-pomorskie voivodeship today. The Korytowski's estate consisted of Grochowiska Szlacheckie, Chwałkowo (bought in 1923 by Józef Mora Korytowski-Karol's brother) and Marcinkowo. Grochowiska Szlacheckie belonged to the Korytowski's family over the period of 300 years.

The Palace Grochowiska Szlacheckie today



It was built at the end of the 18th century. It is situated by Piastowski Track, 2 km away from the route from Poznań to Bydgoszcz, near Biskupin.

The Korytowski's coat of arm



Karol's mother coat of arm

Walentyna Kryńska z Krynek herbu (coat of arm) Przegonia



Witold Korytowski (PhD in law) was practicing in prosecuting magistrate in Vienna. He was also vice-president of Treasury Directorate in Lwów in 1891 and Treasury Minister of Austria-Hungary. In 1919, he moved to Poznań where he was setting up and directing spirits (alcohol) companies.

Karol Korytowski had four brothers. Three were killed during the war. One of the brothers, who was a very talented musician and a pianist was killed by Germans when he refused to leave his estate in Grochowiska Szlacheckie. He decided to play Chopin when Germans were entering the Korytowski's estate. He had been shot in the head straight after that incident in a local market square.

Konrad, the eldest Karol's brother wanted to stay on his estate and remained a landowner. According to Karolina Korytowska, it was only Karol Korytowski, her grandfather, among the Korytowski's brothers who was very ambitious and wanted to serve Poland being on the front line.

Karol Korytowski He was a Polish rear admiral and Polish naval officer of the surface vessels.

During the First World War, he was assigned to serve on the battleships under the Austrian-Hungarian command.

In 1914, he graduated from Navy Cadet School and earned promotion to a sub lieutenant rank.

During the First World War, he earned lieutenant commander rank when serving for the naval force of the Austria-Hungary Empire (*Kaiserliche und Königliche Kriegsmarine* – Imperial and Royal War Navy). He was also serving as an officer of the torpedo weapons on the torpedo-boats and SMS *Prinz-Eugen* battleship. SMS

Prinz-Eugen along with SMS *Szent István* were the first battleships in the world equipped with torpedo launchers built into their bows.

In 1919, after the First World War ended, Korytowski returned to Poland and joined the Polish Navy which underwent modernization. As lieutenant commander, he was transferred to the organizational department of the Naval Section in Warsaw.

During the Polish-Soviet War in 1920, Korytowski became Chief staff of Zgierz – Dębnie sector.

At the end of 1920, after being nominated for commander he went to Finland, where he took command of the newly bought (by Polish Navy) cruiser ORP (Ship of the Commonwealth of Poland) Pilsudski. She served as a training battleship for the Polish Navy.

From 1921 to 1925, Korytowski was promoted to the first commandant of the Naval Specialists School in Świecie.

In June 1925, he was nominated as chief of the Fleet/Naval Staff in Gdynia (Szef Sztabu Dowództwa Floty – perhaps Polish Navy Headquarters sounds better?).

In April 1929, Korytowski (strongly supported by vice admiral Józef Unrug – commander of the Polish Navy, took command of the Naval Officer Cadet School (Szkoła Podchorążych Piechoty) in Toruń.

Meanwhile, Korytowski became a great enthusiast of the fleet expansion programme, which was drawn up at the time. He also became very active member of Maritime Defence Fund, a fund –raising venture, created by the Polish government in January 1933. Its purpose was to expand of Polish Navy. The Fund was collecting money in Poland and among Poles living abroad.

**PRESENTATION THE NEW NAVAL OFFICERS TO THE PRESIDENT OF
POLAND PROF. I. MOSCICKI AND THE C-in-C POLISH FORCES MARSHAL
RYDZ-SMIGLY at Warsaw Castle, October 15th 1936**



From left to right Chief of Staff Polish Navy - Captain Karol KORYTOWSKI

In connection to those plans, he initiated and strongly supported an idea of building the torpedo boats in the Polish shipyards for the Polish Navy. As the former officer of the Austrian-Hungary fleet, he remembered the success of the Italian torpedo boats during the First World War. He desperately wanted to bring this experience onto the Baltic fleet. He was the author of the proposal introduced to the Maritime Defence Fund Board of the on 9 November 1937, suggesting to invest the remaining amount of money (collected by the public to build the Polish submarine) into the expansion of the Polish torpedo boats.

There is a strong possibility that he was also an author of the document titled: *“The sixth year plan of the expanding of the Polish fleet.”*

In 1930, Korytowski was awarded the rank of commander (komandor porucznik).

From 1933 until 1939, Korytowski took a new responsibility of Chief of Staff of General Command of the Polish Navy (Szef Sztabu Kierownictwa Marynarki Wojennej) in Warsaw.

In the last two years before the war, he dedicated his spare time to writing and publishing. His articles were based on his personal naval experience he had gained during the First World War. Korytowski's memories appeared in *“Przegląd Morski”*, a

Polish monthly naval publication. Eventually, he managed to publish his stories in a book printed under his pseudonym, Karol Mora. Later on, he was also publishing in the following magazines, "Morze" and "Polska Walcząca".

In the end, between 1928 and 1933, he became an editor of "Przegląd Morski".

On 1 January 1938, he was nominated to captain rank (komandor).

In 1939, he participated in the preparations of "Plan Peking", an operation in which three destroyers of the Polish Navy, the *Burza* ("Storm"), *Błyskawica* ("Lightning"), and *Grom* ("Thunder"), were evacuated to the UK in late August and early September 1939 prior to the outbreak of war. The plan was successful and allowed the ships to avoid certain destruction in the German invasion.

After the September Campaign and evacuation to Rumania, he arrived to France from where in June 1940 he directed the evacuation of the Polish Forces to the British Isles.

On 11 October 1939, he was nominated to vice Chief of Directorate of the Polish Navy [or the Polish Navy Command – another translation]-(KMW-Kierownictwo Marynarki Wojennej) in France.

In 1945 (on 3 May), Korytowski became a rear-admiral (kontradmiral) and the second vice Chief of the Directorate of the Polish Navy (KMW). The position of the first vice chief of the Directorate of the Polish Navy (KMW) was offered to Józef Unruga, recently released from the labour camp in Germany.

After the war, he became Chief of the Naval Section of the Polish Resettlement Corps and later a director of the Polish Naval Association in London.

Korytowski as mentioned by all biographers, was remembered as a very pleasant and more importantly loyal individual among his employees' and employers' during his professional career.

He died on 11 October 1966 in London. He was buried at the Gunnersbury Cemetery.

Karol Korytowski was awarded the *Most Excellent Order of the British Empire* (Order Imperium Brytyjskiego), most populous order of chivalry in the British and other Commonwealth honours systems which were established in 1917 by King George V.

Karol Korytowski's wife's name was Genowefa. They had a daughter-Marysieńka and a son- Ksenio. Marysieńka married Andrew Precupe. They only had one daughter – Karolina Mora Korytowska (Hanes).

The below story is based on the interview with Karolina Korytowska (verified as much as I could with historical resources).

Karolina Mora Korytowska was Karol's granddaughter (**Hanes-** took this surname after her first husband). She was interviewed by me in March 2014. Her aristocratic roots are connected to her mother's family. Karolina's mother died suddenly in 1979

after a stroke. She was very close to her daughter. They spoke to each other on daily basis till the end of her life.

Just before her death she was engaged in conversations with a film director from Channel 4 about her life and transition from her aristocratic pre-war Poland life to her new life in exile. It is possible that the emotions associated with those talks could have brought a massive stroke she had suffered. She had died within 12 hours after the talks with a film director. Karolina, the only daughter of Marysieńka Korytowska (born in 1924) remained very close to her mother and grandmother throughout her life. She did not speak English until she was 5 years old.

When the war broke out in September 1939, Marysieńka was staying on the family estate, Chwałkowo. She remembered a German tutor who was teaching her German language asking the family to go to the nearest town and get the Kodak film to take last photos of her family estate and then leave as soon as possible. Marysieńka indeed took some photos. The last one, enlarged by her daughter Karolina is now placed in her drawing room, in her London flat.

Karol Korytowski, Karolina's grandfather was at that time away working in the Polish Naval Headquarters. The family had no contact with him at that time. They could only hear his speeches over the radio. All family was instructed by Karol Korytowski to take their limousine and ask their family driver to go towards the eastern border of Poland. At some point during that journey Karol joined them. According to Marysieńka Korytowska, they considered themselves very lucky to be able to escape. During their escape they often slept in the forest. Karol, who accompanied them had his browning (a revolver) on him to protect the family. He eventually had to leave the family and went back to his headquarters.

The family ended up their escape in Romania (Constanta) where they were helped by a Jewish family, who offered them food. Their chauffeur at that point of the journey decided to leave them and stayed in Romania. Korytowski family left Rumania and headed towards Italy where they met with Karol Korytowski. From Italy they went to southern France where they stayed for a year. Karol was serving at the sea at that time. In France, Marysieńka opened a school for Polish children. There was a small Polish community residing in southern France.

From France the family went to the UK (Plymouth) by a boat. According to Marysieńka Korytowska, it was a terrifying experience as their boat was constantly escaping the bombs and they were wearing life jackets all the time. This trip took them 14 days. The sea was a land-mined. Karol was serving in Paris. The family was happily reunited with Karol Korytowski (who was chief of staff at that time) in Plymouth. The New Cavendish Headquarter offered them a flat in London.

Karol Korytowski in Karolina's eyes was a very gentle and elegant man. He was often writing for the Polish press in exile after the war including the Polish Daily. He had his first stroke in 1960s, being in his 50's at that time. He was 72 when he died. For the last five years of his life he was in a wheelchair.

During the war, Karol Korytowski's family was living in London in South Kensington. Marysieńka adored that place. She was often holidaying in Oakhampton in Devon (rugby club) in the Polish B&B by the sea. There were happy times for the family hoping that the war would soon end and they would return to Poland. There was always hope.

Then, they bought a home in Harrow on the Hill.

Marysieńka Korytowska met her husband, Andrew Precupe through her father, rear admiral Karol Korytowski. Andrew, was Karol's lawyer during the war. He helped Korytowski in investing his money in purchasing his very specious house in South Kensington after the war. Korytowski received a lump sum from the British government for his service in the navy during the war. Andrew Precupe was a young handsome and successful lawyer in his early 30's when he met Marysieńka Korytowska, a young beautiful opera singer and a painter. She resisted his proposal for 7 years. At that time, she was being approached by many handsome young Polish and Russian aristocrats. She was also continuing her opera and painting studies.

Marysieńka was working for the Red Cross during the war. She drove ambulances from Scotland (Inverness) to London.

She eventually married Andrew Precupe in 1951 in London. Karolina was born in 1952. Andrew was born in the UK. His mother was coming from the Russian aristocratic family who lost their fortune during the Bolshevik revolution. Marysieńka thought that losing family fortunes (estates and lands) by her and his family was something (a sense of loss) that they both had shared throughout their lives.

Guests visiting the family.

According to Karolina Korytowska, Commander Ludwik Ziembicki and Henryk Aibel (not sure about the spelling of his name) who was remembered as a very brave soldier (awarded *Virtuti Militari*) were frequently visiting the family in London. Later on, Marysieńka Korytowska was informed that Henryk Aibel was living in London in poverty in early 50's (one room with no electricity) in East London. He was taken by Karolina's family to their London home and looked after by them. Karolina remembered him as uncle Henio.

Social life.

Social life revolved around Ognisko and Daquise restaurant in London. Ognisko however, was not regarded by Karol Korytowski as good place to meet. In his words: *They opened up their doors to anybody and everybody*. During the war, it was a rather glittering place for aristocrats. The family was meeting very distinctive people from aristocratic circles. They met princes Marina, duchess of Kent, who despite the war time would be wearing turquoise eye shadow and her décolleté would be covered with glitter. Princess Marina was the wife of Prince George, Duke of Kent, the fourth son of King George V of the United Kingdom and Mary of Teck. Suddenly, (according to Karol Korytowski) after the war Ognisko became a rather shabby place and stopped attracting the high rank officers. Ognisko attracted many types who

were suspicious and he thought they might be communists spying there (late 50's and 60's). There were lots of drunken sailors who made roars and almost pushed the officers out of the restaurant. Later on, the officers decided to set up a debating society in Daquise restaurant, in South Kensington. Karol and his wife Genowefa used to go there every single night. Many commanders were meeting there. They were reminiscing old days and speculating on the future events etc.

Karolina's upbringing

She was brought up to remember from where she was coming from, they had to remain standards, be kind and charitable to others. Cultivating religion and great sense of patriotism were also important factors in her education. Karol thought his granddaughter all prayers in Polish.

Karolina often referred to a comparison quoted by her grandmother: *A bird is born in a stable. Is it a bird or a horse? It is like you*, she said. (A connection to her Polish roots).

Karolina's father (Andrew Precope-Greek origins) was very wrapped up by his work, but remained very tolerant to her Polish traditional upbringing and education. Karolina speaks fluent Polish and was even working as a translator.

Andrew Precope did not learn Polish and he only knew a few words in this language. He liked Polish food. He was also very proud of his wife's background. Marysieńka was terribly spoiled by his father, Karol Korytowski, who was her greatest love in her life. Marysieńka, his daughter adored and looked after him. She was genially proud of him. He was a very kind man.

Karol's wife Genowefa was a true aristocrat and spoiled woman. She could not even cook. She would be ringing the bell to call her housekeeper all the time to the extent that she had to leave the family after decades of serving them (since 30'). *I am not your slave*, she shouted one day and left the family.

The family despised the Soviets and the Germans.

Disbelief, saddens and shock accompanied them when they learnt the Yalta results. As a result, Karol like many other soldiers also became very depressed.

Marysieńka Korytowska, similarly to many Polish aristocrats never forgot what had been lost (in terms of her family fortune) during the war and consequently became very depressed. Sadness and feeling of being dispossessed accompanied her throughout her life. However, she never thought about returning to Poland.

Karolina Korytowska became an actress and was strongly involved in acting for a Polish theatre in POSK, in London.