



Warsaw, December 21, 2020

HEAD

OF THE OFFICE FOR WAR VETERANS
AND VICTIMS OF OPPRESSION

Jan Józef Kasprzyk

Ms Alicja Maria Zyrmont-Sullivan

Dear Ms Zyrmont-Sullivan,

I would like to sincerely thank you for an extremely interesting publication devoted to the memory of your father, Sergeant Edward Zyrmont, who fought first in the 10th Cavalry Brigade and then in the 1st Armoured Division under the command of General Stanisław Maczek, fulfilling this very Polish postulate "For our freedom and yours". He paid the highest price for this service to his ideals. The portrait you have created of a brave Polish soldier, a tank commander, faithful to the end and devoted to his homeland, but also a sensitive and charming gentleman, who taught your mother to dance the tango and speak Polish, is very touching.

General Stanisław Maczek used to say that "a Polish soldier fights for the freedom of many nations, but he dies for Poland only". Over three hundred and fifty soldiers of the Polish 1st Armoured Division were killed and wounded in the hills of Mont-Ormel. In their positions they endured three days of heavy fighting and played a key role in the final phase of the Normandy battles. On the third day, the Canadians arrived with relief, finding General Maczek's deadly tired but invincible soldiers and they called Mont-Ormel the "Polish battlefield", as you write in your book. They

were all buried at the Polish Military Cemetery in Grainville-Langannerie, where you found your father's grave in June 1994.

The 1st Armoured Division of General Maczek brought freedom to the people of Western Europe. After the Battle of Falaise, the division fought side by side with the Allies to liberate Belgium and the Netherlands. The trail of battles ended with the capture of the German naval base in Wilhelmshaven in May 1945. It is a paradox, however, that although Poles were among the winners of World War II, they did not feel the taste of victory themselves. Poland found itself "behind the Iron Curtain" in the Soviet sphere of influence and had to wait a very long time for freedom.

For my part, I would like to emphasize that your commitment to the memory of the soldiers of the 1st Armoured Division and its commander, who fought against the enemy and the adversities of fate in such a knightly manner, deserves full recognition. Congratulations from the bottom of my heart on your valuable publication. Certainly, it will be an important contribution to the efforts to ensure that the wartime history of the Poles and the combat deeds of our soldiers find their proper place in the European account of the 20th century.

On the occasion of the upcoming Christmas, please accept my sincere wishes of health and joy, as well as fulfilment of personal plans and further professional successes in the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Janusz', written in a cursive style.