



POLISH EMBASSY NEWSLETTER

2/2012

CANBERRA, June/July 2012



FROM THE AMBASSADOR



Dear Readers!

Poland is co-hosting, with Ukraine, the European Football Championship EURO 2012. For the very

first time the championship is being held in Central and Eastern Europe. The biggest sport event ever organised by Poland presents a unique opportunity to offer friendship and hospitality to hundreds of thousands of guests from Europe and other continents. You will find some information about EURO 2012 on page 5 of this newsletter.

This issue opens with short reports about our recent events. It contains news from our Consulate General in Sydney, an interview with Polish Australian sculptor Wojciech Pietranik and a feature about the Tartar Trail in Eastern Poland.

But before you start reading this newsletter, I would like to draw your attention to a very special event that we are organising on 5 July in Melbourne, together with the Embassy of Israel and thanks to the generous support of the Pratt Foundation. It will be a musical tribute to Irena Sendler, a Polish Righteous among the Nations, who saved 2500 Jewish children from the Holocaust. It is with great pride that I can announce the participation of outstanding musicians like composer Kobi Oshrat, conductor Richard Mills and members of Orchestra Victoria as well as eminent journalist Greg Sheridan who will be the guest speaker. A booklet has been prepared for the event, with messages from the Prime Minister of Australia, the Presidents of Israel and Poland, the Leader of the Australian Opposition, the Premier of Victoria, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne and many other prominent persons. Don't miss the Australian

premiere of Kobi Oshrat's concert tribute "Irena's Song. A Ray of Light Through the Darkness"!

With kind regards,

Andrzej Jaroszyński
Ambassador

EMBASSY OF ISRAEL & EMBASSY OF POLAND
In conjunction with ORCHESTRA VICTORIA
presents

An Inspiring Australian Premiere

The true story of one woman who saved thousands of Jewish children

IRENA'S SONG
A Ray of Light Through the Darkness
A CLASSICAL TRIBUTE TO THE MOST RIGHTEOUS

Tickets:
Full \$50
Conc. \$40

7PM—THURSDAY 5TH JULY 2012

ELISABETH MURDOCH HALL

Melbourne Recital Centre—Cnr Southbank Boulevard & Sturt Street
TICKETS (03) 9699 2228 ENQUIRIES INFO@CANBERRA.MFA.GOV.IL



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RECENT EVENTS

Poland's National Day celebrations



The National Day of the Republic of Poland, commemorating the anniversary of the Constitution of 3 May 1791, was celebrated on 4 May at the Embassy. The ceremony was attended by over 150 people, including representatives of the Australian Government and Parliament as well as major economic, cultural and scientific institutions, the Diplomatic Corps and the Polish community. National Day was also celebrated by Polish communities across Australia. The Polish Community Council of Victoria organised the 3 May Polish Constitution Day Commemorative Dinner at the Hotel Windsor in Melbourne. The guest of honour and key speaker was British historian Professor Norman Davies. The list of distinguished guests included the Polish Ambassador, the US Consul General, the Honorary Consul General of Poland, State MPs, the President of the Polish Community Council of Victoria and Magda Szubanski.

Professor Norman Davies and his wife, Dr Maria Davies, visited Australia from 28 April to 7 May 2012. In Melbourne, the eminent historian met the Polish community at Monash University, recorded an interview in the audio-visual studio at La Trobe University and lunched with members of the faculty.



Professor Norman Davies in Melbourne

On 4-7 May Professor and Dr Davies visited Hobart as special guests of the University of Tasmania. While in Hobart Professor Davies spoke at the Constitution Day celebrations and gave a public lecture at the University, entitled "European History for Non-Europeans" which attracted an audience of over 400.



...and in Hobart

Norman Davies is one of the leading British historians. His books include: "God's Playground: A History of Poland" (1981), "Europe: A History" (1996), and "Rising '44: The Battle for Warsaw" (2003). His most recent publication "Vanished Kingdoms: The History of Half-Forgotten Europe" (2011) "succeeds in preserving the past as a rough guide to an uncertain future". Prof. Davies has had a most distinguished academic career in universities in Britain, Italy and Poland, and has given numerous lectures across Europe, in the United States, Canada, Japan, China and Australia.

The May Constitution was the second written Bill of Rights in the world and the first in Europe. It was initiated by members of the nobility to provide a modern form of government and legislation that would reverse the political decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the second half of the 18th century. The Constitution didn't save Poland's statehood but it became a symbol of the fight for freedom and independence for many generations. After the partition by Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1795 and the following occupation, Poland regained sovereignty on 11 November 1918. The anniversary of this event marks Poland's second National Day.



Cezary Skubiszewski and Magda Szubanski in Melbourne



Professor Davies with Denise and George Luk-Kozika in Melbourne

THE EMBASSY FILM SERIES „UNDER POLISH EYES”

Feature film „Zero”

The feature film „Zero” by Paweł Borowski, which was screened on 18 April at the Polish Embassy, opened the series „Under Polish Eyes”. The series is intended for cinema goers interested in Polish features, documentaries and short-films, both classic and new ones. The show gathered approximately 100 representatives of Canberra’s political and diplomatic circles, media, culture, academia and the Polish community.

Read more: <http://www.filmzero.com/>



Order presentation



Tomasz Magierski and Yoram Gross

Documentary „Blinky and Me”

On 27 June a documentary by Polish American director Tomasz Magierski was shown. The film entitled „Blinky and Me” tells the life story of Cracow born Holocaust survivor Yoram Jerzy Gross, Australia’s leading animation director and producer who created the famous koala Blinky Bill. Mr Magierski and Mr Gross were present and answered questions from the audience after the screening. An important part of the event was the presentation of the Commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit to Yoram Gross. During the short ceremony the Ambassador highlighted Gross’ significant contribution to promoting Poland and its culture in Australia and the development of bilateral people-to-people links. Among the invited guests were Mrs Sandra Gross and other members of the Gross family, representatives of Australian cultural institutions, the diplomatic community and other film goers.

Read more:

<http://www.yoramgrossfilms.com.au/>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2258287/>



The Ambassador with Arianne Caoili, International Chess Master and Levon Aronian, the reigning World Blitz Chess Champion

OTHER EVENTS

In conversation with ANU students

On 19 June the Polish Ambassador, together with H.E. Stephane Romatet, Ambassador of France, and Ruth Pearce, former Australian Ambassador to Poland and the Czech Republic, took part in an informal „wine&chat” evening with ANU students. The topic was „How I got here” and presented

the Ambassadors’ careers and their views on diplomacy. An inspiring and entertaining exchange of views followed. The student-run event held at Brian Kenyon Student Place was hosted by the ANU Contemporary European Learning Community in the presence of Prof. Jacqueline Lo, Director of the ANU Centre for European Studies, and Dr Ben Wellings, ANU CELC.

ACP/EU

On behalf of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs the Ambassador participated in the 37th ACP/ EU (African Caribbean Pacific/European Union) Council of Ministers meeting in Port Vila, Vanuatu 14-15 June.

Read more: <http://www.acpsec.org/content/press-release-ACP-EU-take-joint-stand-sustainable-development-rio-20>

„Why Central Europe Matters”

How have the Central Europeans managed their transitions almost 25 years after they rejected communism and their countries had to be transformed before entering the European Union in 2004? What do the changes mean to Australia? These questions and related issues were discussed at the symposium “Why Central Europe Matters” organised by Monash European and EU Centre and The Australian Institute of International Affairs Victoria at the Monash Conference Centre in Melbourne on 8 June. Offering an academic perspective were Dr Gosia Klatt, Melbourne University, Dr Patrick Kimunguyi, Monash University, Dr Stefan Auer, La Trobe, and Prof. Leslie Holmes, Melbourne University. During the second session on Central Europe and Australia the following speakers discussed business and investment opportunities: Mr Paul Myler, Europe Division – Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Mr Charles Kovess, Australia-Hungary Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and Mr Steve Rank, Australian Trade Commission (AusTrade). H.E. Hynek Kmonicek, Ambassador of the Czech Republic, H.E. Anna Siko, Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary, H.E. Andrzej Jaroszyński, Ambassador of the Republic of



Ambassadors of Visegrád Group Countries

Poland, and H.E. Eva Ponomarenkova, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic joined the third session for the roundtable. Thanks are due to Dr Eva Polonska-Kimunguyi, Monash University, for initiating the symposium and its efficient proceeding and inspiring outcome. She and Dr Klatt are co-authors of two recent books on Central Europe and Poland recommended in our “books of interest section” of this issue.



[To read Prof. Rowland’s response and more here](#)

Polish order for Prof. Tracey Rowland

On 7 June the Ambassador presented Prof. Tracey Rowland, the Dean of the John Paul II Institute in Melbourne, with The Officer’s Cross of the Order of Merit. “I feel privileged to share my joy that Professor Rowland has been recognised with the highest distinction given to foreign nationals by the Polish President,” Ambassador Jaroszyński said. “It is not often that theologians are honoured with this award.”

The presentation, held at the Thomas Carr Centre, gathered around 150 people including Bishop Peter Elliott, Dr George Łuk-Kozika, Honorary Consul General of Poland, religious and community leaders, members of the faculty and students.

[To read the Ambassador’s speech](#)

UWS speech

The Ambassador was a guest speaker at the Equity and Diversity Open Forums, the University of Western Sydney, Parramata Campus, on 29 March. He delivered a lecture “Where Dreams and Reality Begin. The Future of Europe”. He was introduced by Dr Stev Ozdowski OAM, Director of

Equity and Diversity, UWS. A lively discussion followed in the presence of, among others, the Hon. John Acquilina, members of faculty, students and representatives of the Polish and other communities.



EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP EURO 2012

For the first time, the European Football Championship has been organised by two countries in Central and Eastern Europe – Poland and Ukraine. Host cities are: Warsaw, Gdańsk, Poznań and Wrocław in Poland, and Kiev, Kharkov, Donetsk and Lvov in Ukraine. The opening match (Poland vs. Greece) was played on 8 June at the National Stadium in Warsaw. The finale is scheduled for 1 July (2 July Australian time) in Kiev. UEFA EURO 2012 has featured 16 national teams playing a total of 31 matches. The tournament is broadcast live by approximately 100 TV channels across the world, including Australian channels (Setanta, SBS). At least 150 million people watch the matches each day. Fan zones

were established in host city centres, where all the matches are shown on giant screens. In order to meet UEFA requirements, five new stadiums were built and three underwent major renovations. Billions of dollars were spent on infrastructure (motorways, airports, hotels etc). For both countries the tournament has been an opportunity to show their organisational skills as well as their achievements in the transformation from communism to democracy and a free market economy. According to many of the 3200 foreign journalists registered for the event, it is a resounding success. It is sufficient to say that more than 80 per cent of football fans from other European countries have expressed an interest in returning to Poland as tourists after the tournament.



POLISH ARTISTS ABROAD

Wojciech Pietranik

Wojciech Pietranik was born in 1950 in Gdańsk where he graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in 1975 with an Honours Degree. After his graduation, until 1985, he exhibited his work both in Poland and internationally. In 1985 Wojciech migrated to Darwin, Australia, where he taught sculpture. Three years later he moved to Canberra.

MK: When did you decide to emigrate? What was the main reason?

WP: On the day martial law was introduced in Poland.

MK: In 1989 you took up the position of Designer and Sculptor at the Royal Australian Mint in Canberra. Did you consider it to some extent a new profession for you? It seems that medallic art involves slightly different skills from sculpture.

WP: It was a compromise I had to make, but at the same time a fantastic opportunity.

I had a family to feed and making the transition was not as difficult as you suggest, since medallic art is traditionally part of sculpture. However, there was still a lot to learn. In 1992 I was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship. I went to Italy to improve my skills in medal and coin making. The six months I spent at the School of Medallic Art in Rome was an unforgettable experience.

MK: While working at the Royal Australian Mint you designed many nationally significant coins including \$1 The Last Anzacs Fine Silver (1999), \$1 Silver Kangaroo Coin (1999), Royal Flying Doctor Service coins (1998), and Kangaroo at Sunset (2007). Did all your notable works created for Australia and its people make you more Australian?



it caught the attention of the Olympic Committee. Some alterations followed, such as the replacement of the Opera House by the sports arena (obverse) and the Olympic torch (reverse), but I'm still very proud of my design.

MK: You have just completed your work at the Royal Australian Mint. Could you tell us more about your plans for the future? Will you miss medallic art?

WP: My work at the Royal Australian Mint concentrated mostly on coin design; medal design work happened occasionally. The coin design process changed significantly in recent years, mainly through the introduction of computer software. Personally I enjoyed both methods: the traditional, hand modelling and modelling using computer software.

For years I have been involved in creating art medals and stone sculpture outside my work place. Some of my art medals are in the collections of the British Museum and other European collections. I am going to continue to pursue my private art.

MK: Is being an artist easier in Poland or in Australia?

WP: I don't know the answer to this question. What is an artist anyway? To be an artist in an institution like the mint, for example, requires too many compromises, and you have to be prepared for a lot of them. In 2009 the Royal Australian Mint honoured me by staging an exhibition of the work I have done over the years, entitled "Striking Art Lasting Impression". I have no idea how these things are seen in Poland these days but I suppose that the competition for work is much tougher now.

MK: Do you plan to visit Poland more often?

WP: More often than before? Who knows? I have been back five times in the last 28 years and I'm going again in July.

The interview was conducted by Małgorzata Krakowiak.



WP: I think that my coin and medal design improved more and more as the years went by. The number of coins is in the high tens, if not the hundreds. There were coins for other countries as well. Many projects required an understanding of Australian nature and history so I had to educate myself in these subjects. My hope is that my interpretations,

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK - Tartar Trail

The two small villages of Bohoniki and Kruszyniany are called the Polish Orient or Tartar Trail. Lost in the eastern borderland, in the Podlasie Province, they are Poland's oldest Islamic centres. The Tartars have lived in the Podlasie region for more than 300 years. The history of their settlement is connected with King John III Sobieski, the saviour of Christian Europe who defeated the forces of the Ottoman Empire in 1683 at Vienna. Even today, the inhabitants of Kruszyniany will show you a place under old linden trees where,



centuries ago, stood the manor house of colonel Samuel Murza Krzeczowski, the commander of a Tartar cavalry company. In 1683 he saved King John's life. For their faithful service in the Polish-Lithuanian troops, John III Sobieski endowed the Tartars with landed property. Bohoniki and Kruszyniany lie 30 km (19 miles) apart. In Kruszyniany, there is Poland's oldest Muslim temple, a 18th-century wooden celadon mosque. Its architectural style resembles that of modest

Orthodox or Catholic parish churches. It has a sloping shingled roof and gilded crescents on the tower domes. Next to it, on a small hill among tall trees, there is a Muslim cemetery, surrounded by a strong wall. It is the best place to appreciate the strength of the historical connection between the Tartars and the Poles. Some of the old mossy graves date from the 18th century, and their tombstones reveal inscriptions in Arabic, Russian and Polish. Nowadays there are approximately 5,000 Tartars living in Poland, most of them in Białystok, the



capital city of Podlasie, and its environs. Tartar villages have become depopulated. Bohoniki and Kruszyniany come to life only during Muslim holidays – the Ramazan Bayrami and Qurban. Entire Muslim families come here to celebrate. They pray at the mosques and visit the cemeteries. This is the time for famous Tartar delicacies:

- pierkaczewnik (a roll-shaped pasta pie stuffed with curd and raisins or meat and vegetables etc),
- trybuszok (a sausage stuffed with ground potatoes)
- and kołduny (dumplings with meat stuffing).

BOOKS OF INTEREST



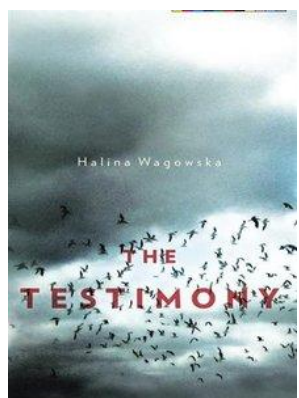
Transitions revisited. Central and Eastern Europe twenty years after the Soviet Union.

Ed. by **Eva Polonska-Kimunguyi and Patrick Kimunguyi**

Warsaw: Scholar Publishing House,
2012, 318 p., bibl.

This book is a collaborative effort of scholars from Australian universities and prominent international researchers. It examines both the achievements and the challenges of Central and Eastern European countries in the political, economic and social transformations that have taken place in the post-communist era.

The editors, Dr Polonska-Kimunguyi and Dr Kimunguyi, were both educated in Poland and now lecture at the European and EU Centre, Monash University, in Melbourne.

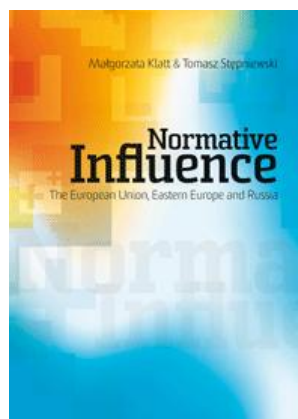


Halina Wagowska The Testimony

Richmond, Victoria: Hardie Grant Books,
2012, 206 p.

Adopted mother Frieda keeps telling the young Halina that if they survive the Nazi death camps they will have to testify until they die, but “My Testimony” is also a record of

Halina’s experiences after the camps – including her arrival in Australia after the war where, as a young woman, she worked with charwomen at Collins Street doctors’ surgeries before pursuing a career in pathology at Alfred Hospital. Described by the author as her last testimony ‘before she drops off the twig’, this carefully crafted work is not a straightforward autobiography but one in which the people and places Halina has known take



Malgorzata Klatt and Tomasz Stepniewski Normative influence. The European Union, Eastern Europe and Russia.

Lublin – Melbourne: The Catholic University of Lublin Publishing House,
2012, 172 p., bibl.

This book addresses the ramifications of the Eastern enlargement (Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus) of the European Union.

“This book brings together important analysis of both normative power and Europeanisation literature with up-to-date analysis of the European Union’s relationship with its Eastern neighbours, including Russia. The study of the role of Poland in this engagement is excellent” Assoc. Prof. Philomena Murray, School of Social and Political Sciences, The University of Melbourne.

Małgorzata Klatt, PhD is Fellow Researcher at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne. Her forthcoming publications include: “Europeanisation and Poland”

Tomasz Stepniewski, PhD is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Political Science at the Catholic University of Lublin and Adjunct Professor at the Institute of East-Central Europe in Lublin.

centre stage. The short stories within these pages offer jewels of wisdom from a woman who has lived a truly full – richly rewarding as well as horrifically harrowing – life. Eighty-one-year-old human rights activist Halina Wagowska survived Auschwitz and Stutthof concentration camps in her early teens before migrating to Australia. Over the years she has frequently testified to the consequences of prejudice she witnessed: she has provided material for Thomas Keneally’s book on Schindler; and for Spielberg’s Shoah Institute, via the Jewish Holocaust Centre in Melbourne; as well as lectures presented at international psychology conferences as a child survivor.

For more Embassy news + information:

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K'Ozzie Fest 2012 – Over the Moonbah

Yet another edition of K'Ozzie Fest, this year called *Over the Moonbah*, took place in the vicinity of Mount Kosciuszko in mid April. The festival celebrated multiculturalism, harmony and history in the Snowy Mountains area through a series of colourful, exciting events over two days. The rich programme of the festival offered a unique variety of attractions, such as live music and dance performances (by Polish folk ensembles Kujawy and Lajkonik, the Celtic Pipers Band, Cabaret Vis a Vis and others), piano recitals by Krzysztof Małek and Olivia Urbaniak, book and film



Kujawy in action at St. Thomas Heritage Church premises (Photo: Puls Polonii)



Mass on top of Mt. Kosciuszko (Photo: Puls Polonii)

by Polish didgeridoo maker Arkadiusz Buczek, photo sessions and a marriage ceremony at the Strzelecki Monument in Jindabyne. Two new publications were officially presented at the festival: *The Best of Human Nature: Strzelecki's Humanitarian Work in Ireland* – Felix Molski's monograph about Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki's humanitarian work in Ireland during the Great Famine, and the fact-sheet *Kosciuszko & Strzelecki: The Men, the Mountain, the Monument*, written by U. Lang, E. Skurjat-Kozek and F. Molski, produced by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

presentations and Polish food and drink tasting. The highlight of the festival was a set of friendship flights over Moonbah and Mount Kosciuszko, Australia's highest mainland mountain. Several pairs of Aboriginal and Polish Australians took off into the sky, soaring over this beautiful part of Australia. Other festival highlights included: a special Mass celebrated on top of Mt. Kosciuszko by Rev. Fr. Wiesław Wójcik, a performance



Group picture at the Strzelecki Monument (Photo: Puls Polonii)

Over the Moonbah was organised by Kosciuszko Heritage (formerly the Puls Polonii Cultural Foundation). The Foundation's past Kosciuszko Festivals include: Kosciuszko Music on Mount Kosciuszko (2006), the Mound and Mount Kosciuszko Festivals (2007-2008), the K'Ozzie Fests (2009-2010) and the Day of Fun at Kosciuszko Run (2011).

Over the Moonbah enjoyed an honorary patronage by the Polish Ambassador to Australia, Andrzej Jaroszyński. In his message to the participants, read out by Polish Consul General in Sydney, Daniel Gromann, Ambassador Jaroszyński stressed



Ngarigo Elders: Aunty Rachel (on left) and Aunty Rae
(Photo: Puls Polonii)



Some of the participants in the fraternity flights
(Photo: Puls Polonii)

that the Festival had evolved into a truly multicultural endeavour and this year it highlighted the contribution of Aboriginal people, Irish settlers and Polish-Australians to the development of the beautiful Snowy Mountains region. He expressed his appreciation for the creativity, enthusiasm and engagement of the organisers, among others, the event coordinator Mrs Ernestyna Skurjat-Kozek, who tirelessly promotes the scientific achievements of Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki and Tadeusz Kosciuszko's struggle for liberty and equality of all people.

Celebration of the Polish National Day in Sydney

On 3rd May the official National Day reception took place at the Consulate. The occasion – Constitution Day – commemorates Poland's Constitution of 3rd May 1791, which was Europe's first and the world's second modern codified national constitution.

The Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, representing the Premier of New South Wales, the Honourable Barry O'Farrell, conveyed a message of appreciation for the Polish community and their contribution to the development of Australia. He also paid tribute to the Polish veterans of World War II, some of whom were present in the hall, as well as to the Polish struggle for independence and justice carried out by the Solidarity movement in the 1980s.

In turn, Consul General Daniel Gromann emphasised that the Constitution of 3rd May 1791 was one of the most progressive laws of the Western world of that time and a milestone not only in Polish, but also in European and world



Toasts to the Queen of Australia and the President of Poland: Consul General Daniel Gromann (right) and the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, representing the Premier

political and social history. He also discussed the successes of modern Poland: peaceful transition from communism to democracy and free market economy, GDP growth (4.3 percent in 2011;



historically, from 1995 until 2011 Poland's average annual GDP growth was 4.53 percent), successful European Union Presidency last year and the ability to combine a healthy economy with social, intellectual and spiritual values.

The well-attended ceremony included the presentation of the Gold Cross of Merit, high Polish civil state award, to Ms. Krystyna Cyroń, in recognition of her distinguished service to society.

(All photos in this section: Bogumila Filip).



The Australian premiere of *The Officer's Wife*

An exclusive pre-release screening of the film *The Officer's Wife* took place at the Consulate at the end of March. The event was organised together with the Kresy-Siberia Foundation.

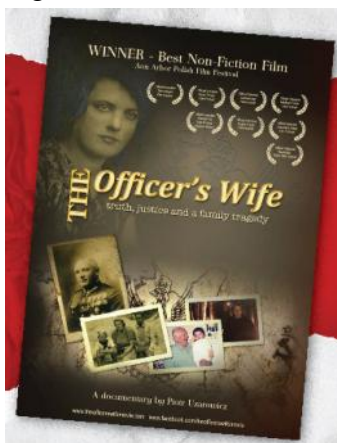
Upon the death of his father, a son makes a startling discovery. A forgotten safe deposit box reveals his grandmother's memoirs, old photos of an army officer and a mysterious postcard that all link to a concealed crime: the Katyn Forest massacre.

Weaving dramatic interviews with bold animation, Piotr Uzarowicz's *The Officer's Wife* probes the collision of truth, justice and memory in a shrouded family tragedy.

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Former NSA Director, said, "I watched *The Officer's Wife* with gripping intensity and outraged emotions. It is a most



Consul General Daniel Gromann (second from right), Stefan Wiśniowski, President of the Kresy-Siberia Foundation (next to him) and other members of the foundation



effective presentation of the overall context of the crime." In words of Alex Storzynski, President and Executive Director of the Kosciuszko Foundation, "*The Officer's Wife* presents Katyn and its aftermath like no other film - it is deeply moving."

The Kresy Siberia Virtual Museum is dedicated to the Polish citizens who fought in the Eastern Borderlands of Poland, and in exile, during WWII and to the tens of thousands of residents of the pre-war 'Kresy' who were deported into the depths of the Soviet Union. The galleries of the museum show what life in the Borderlands was like before the war, the Nazi and Soviet repressions during the war, all the way to the fate of the citizens of Kresy after the war.

www.theofficerswifemovie.com

<http://kresy-siberia.org>