

Tadeusz Bletek - Roadmap 1939-1946

In 1939, Tadeusz Bletek graduated as a chemist and enlisted in the Corps of Engineers in Modlin near Warsaw as a candidate officer.

After the invasion of German and Russian troops in September 1939, he is a prisoner of war in Russia but escapes towards Romania.

En route, he is picked up by German units and taken prisoner of war in Germany. (different camps: Murnau OFlag - Oberlangen - Bonn-Duisdorf).

In early 1942, he escapes a second time from Elsenborn Belgium, to Thy-lez-Spa, to Paris and to Châlon-sur-Saône where he swims across the river to reach Vichy-France.

After registering in Auch and staying around Foix in the Arriège, he decides to move on to Gibraltar. He crosses the Pyrenees with a group of peers but is arrested in Figueres (SP) and imprisoned in Lerida. He then ends up in the Spanish concentration camp Miranda de Ebro (Burgos).

He escapes the camp and reaches British Gibraltar after about 3 weeks. After identification he is put on an Allied military transport ship and reaches Glasgow on 5 March 1943.

On 6 March 1943, he enlists in the 1st Polish Armoured Division and becomes a sub-lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers in the 11th Kompania Saperów / 1st Platoon.

With his unit, he landed in Arromanches on 1 August 1944 and fought for the liberation of the West until the 'ceasefire' and capitulation of Germany in Wilhelmshaven on 6 May 1945.

In 1946, he married the woman he met at the liberation there in Gentbrugge. He then applied for early demobilisation and left the army on 14 November 1946.

He finds work as a chemist in a French company in the Canal Zone and settles permanently in Zelzate.



28.09.39: POW in Wlodawa /River Bug near Lublin and transfer to Starobilsk (USSR)

1940: POW in Germany / Oflag VII-A Murnau - Offizierlager - Transfer to Oberlangen

4.01.1942: POW in Bonn-Duisdorf (Stalag VI G) (date postcard) / transfer to Camp Elsenborn Belgium

Escape route via Risquons-Tout (Tournai) border to Paris and arrested during 'Polizeistunde'

Escape route from Paris via Chagny lez Beaune to Châlon-sur-Saône - crossing the Saône.

Arrested by the French army and lodged in lazaret near Bourg en Bresse

12.05.1942: Mobilisation centre Auch (Toulouse) (document): fictitious demobilisation and hospitalisation

22.05.1942 : Joining Polish units in Foix - stay at Ussat les Bains (Pyrénées Ariégeoises) (postcard)

Sabotage operations with French Resistance on bauxite & aluminium plants

Escape route to Gibraltar and grouped crossing of the Pyrenees to Spain

Arrested in Figueras (SP) - detention in Lerida - POW in camp Miranda de Ebro (Burgos)

Escape and 3-week journey to Algeciras and Gibraltar

5.03.1943: Boat trip from Gibraltar via the Atlantic and arrival at Greenock harbour near Glasgow

6.03.1943: Joining the 1st Polish Armoured Division - Staying at Gullane / Dalkeith (Scot) (date document)

1944-1945: Campanje in France-Netherlands-Germany with the Corps of Engineers / 11th Kompania Saperów

13.06.1946: Marriage in Gentbrugge near Ghent Belgium

14.11.1946: Early demobilisation from the 1st Polish Armoured Division (date document)



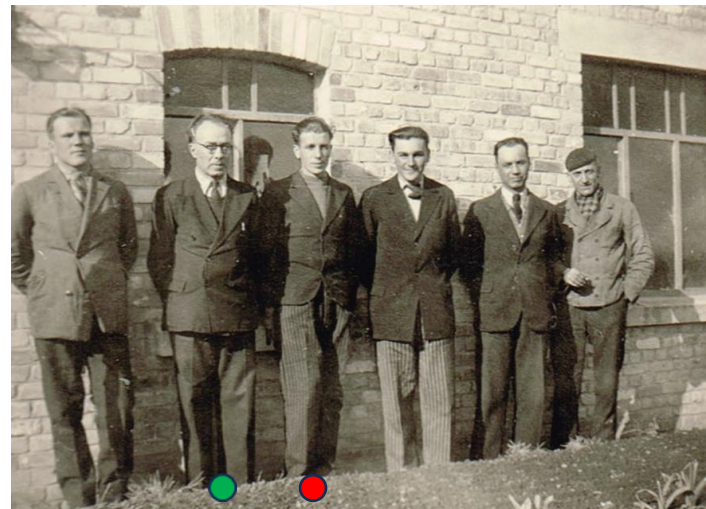
Tadeusz Bletek

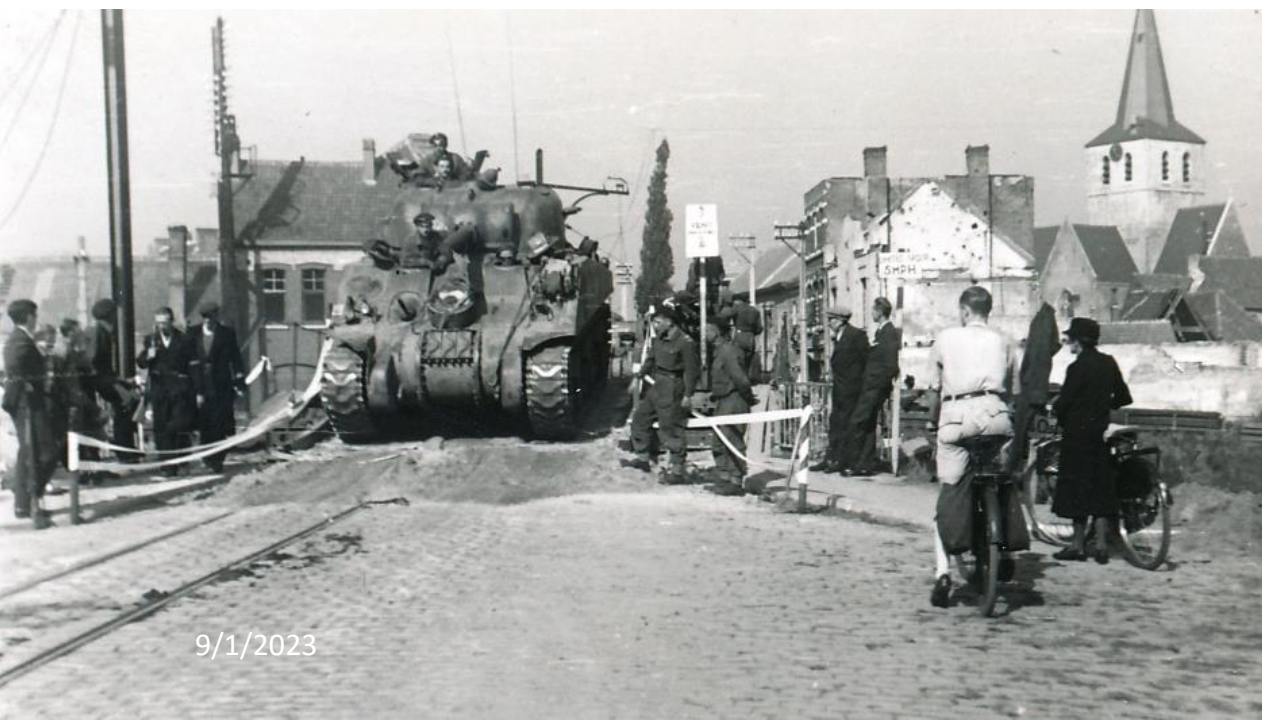
Escape to freedom

POW
Bonn-Duisdorf
Stalag VI-G

Hiding away
Thy-lez-Spa with
family Ch. Bivord

Reunited
Auch (F)





11 Kompania Saperów

Divisional Engineers in action

VILNO Bridge at Nevele Belgium

River Leda in Emsland Germany



1^e Polish Armoured Division Campaign

Data

- 01.08.44: Landing at Arromanches – Courseulles
- 8-14 aug: Operation “Totalize”: action Caen-> Falaise
- 15-22 aug: Battle of Falaise and Mont Ormel – Hill 262
- 6.09.44: Crossing Belgian border at Abele & Poperinge
- 7.09.44: Ieper - 8.09.44: Tielt and Ruiselede
- 9.09.44: Aalter Brug
- 12.09.44: from Nevele to Mariakerke/North of Ghent
- 17-20 Sept: Zeeuws-Vl.: – Axel – Hulst -Terneuzen
- 28 okt-3 Nov 1944: Breda and action at “Markkanaal”
- 29 Dec-7 Jan 45: Bergsche Maas & Kapelse veer
- 15.04.44: Winschoten liberated– marching NE.
- 26.04.45: Battles at river Leda and Küsten canal (PL+CDN Armoured Division)
- 6 May de Kriegsmarine-basis in Wilhelmshaven
- 5-7 May 1945: einde gevechten

1/09/2023





Regained
freedom

Liberation - Surrender - a new beginning

Bletek, Tadeusz

Service number: A 04891

Nationality: Polish citizenship (1918-1939, Second Polish Republic)

Period: World War II (1939-1945)

Rang: Porucznik (1st Lieutenant)

Army unit: 11th Company Engineers, Divisional Engineers, 1st Polish Armoured Division, Polish Armed Forces in the West

Distinctions

Period: World War II (1939-1946)

- **Krzyż Walecznych 1, 2 and 3 (3x)** RP II (Polish Second Republic)
Cross of Courage with white pattern - Polish Forces in the West
- **Military Cross (MC)** UK in 1945 (Por)
- **Odznaka 9 Batalion Strzelców Flandryjskich** (Action Leda and Küsten canal)
- The 1939-1945 Star UK
- France and Germany Star UK
- War Medal 1939-1945 UK
- Medal Wojska za Wojnę 1939-1945 RP II
- Krzyżem pamiątkowy 1 Dywizji Pancernej RP II

Period: Post-war period

- **Krzyżem Kawalerskim Orderu Odrodzenia Polski** RP III in 1993
- **Krzyżem Czynu Bojowego Polskich Sił Zbrojnych Na Zachodzie** - Polish Armed Forces War Cross RP III in 1991
- **Krzyżem Czynu Bojowego Polskich Sił Zbrojnych na Zachodzie** RP III in 1989
- The commemorative war medal D. Eisenhower 1939-1945 (Sphinx IMOS)
- Interallied Distinguished Service Cross (Sphinx Imos)
- Cross of Honour NSB Belgium
- Erasmus medal NL 1984
- Commemorative medal "Thank You Liberators 1945" NL



“For your freedom and ours”

“Za waszą i naszą wolność »

