

## **St Illtyd's Church, Pembrey**

St Illtyd's Church in Pembrey served as a parish church during the medieval period and was part of the Deanery of Kidwelly. In 1120, Roger of Salisbury, the Lord of Kidwelly, granted the church to the Benedictines of Sherborne Abbey in Dorset. By 1353, Henry, Duke of Lancaster, and the Bishop of St David's transferred the church and its two chapels, Llandury and Llancommowr, to the New College of Leicester.



In 1366, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, granted the church to the Bishop of St David's, on the condition that a chantry be established within the church, with the revenues of St Ishmael's Church appropriated for its support. Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the church's advowson fell to the Crown and later passed into private patronage. By 1853, it was under the patronage of the Earl of Ashburnham. In 1880, the Elkington brothers purchased the patronage and subsequently presented it to the Ecclesiastical Commission. The church continued to serve as a parish church as recently as 1998.

## **Architectural Description**

St Illtyd's Church is a Grade I listed building, constructed from local rubble stone. Its structure includes:

- A three-bayed nave
- A lower and narrower two-bayed chancel
- A north aisle
- A two-bayed north chapel
- A four-storey north-west tower
- A south porch
- A toilet block (north of the tower)
- A below-ground boiler house

## **Historical Features**

- **Nave:** Likely dating to the 13th century, it features a three-light Perpendicular west window, with embedded stone uprights below the sill indicating an earlier west doorway.
- **Chapel:** Possibly a chantry chapel from the 1366 grant by John of Gaunt, dating to the 14th century.
- **Chancel:** Rebuilt in the 14th century, its east bay south wall includes a plain, two-centred aumbry and a crude, square piscina bowl.
- **Porch:** Dating to the 15th century, it has double boarded doors leading to a pointed doorway, above which is a re-set sundial with gnomon and a plate dated 1773 by David Thomas, also recording Morgan Morgan and Thomas John as churchwardens.
- **North Aisle and Tower:** These date to the 16th century. The tower, initially three storeys, features a doorway with a Tudor arch on the west face and narrow windows with round clock faces added in 1935-1936.
- **Nave South Wall Window:** Dates to the 16th century and was largely reset in 1910-1911. Below it, a possible earlier tomb recess nearly reaches the floor level.

## **Restorations and Additions**

- **1856-1857 Restoration:** Included possible installation of the chancel's two-light south wall windows and a memorial slab commemorating victims of three 19th-century shipwrecks on Cefn Sidan Sands.
- **1910-1911 Restoration:** Added the boiler house, replaced sanctuary and passage floors, blocked a priest's door in the chancel west bay, and added the fourth storey to the tower.
- **Later 20th Century:** Addition of the toilet block.

## **Notable Historical Memorials**

- **Memorial Slab:** Commemorates victims of shipwrecks, including:
  - The French vessel *La Jeune Emma* in 1828, which claimed the life of Adeline Coquelin, niece of Napoleon's consort Josephine.
  - *Brothers* of Liverpool in 1833.
  - *Pickering Dodge* of the USA in 1839.

St Illtyd's Church in Pembrey stands as a serene testament to centuries of history and faith, its quiet walls echoing tales of local lore and maritime tragedy. Nestled in the Welsh countryside, the church is more than a place of worship; it is a keeper of memories, some of which are carved into a memorial slab that honours victims of shipwrecks on the treacherous Cefn Sidan Sands.

In 1828, a French vessel named *La Jeune Emma* set sail on what would become its final voyage. The ship met its tragic end off the perilous Welsh coast, where the unforgiving sands claimed it. Among those who perished was Adeline Coquelin, the niece of Josephine, Napoleon Bonaparte's first wife. Adeline's death was more than a local loss; it tied the small community of Pembrey to the broader tapestry of European history, reminding everyone of the far-reaching impacts of the sea's capricious nature.

Five years later, the residents of Pembrey once again faced the grim reality of maritime danger. In 1833, the *Brothers*, a vessel hailing from Liverpool, foundered on the same deadly sands. The wreck added to the litany of tragedies associated with Cefn Sidan, a place that had already claimed so many lives. This incident, like others, brought sorrow to the community, which often became the final resting place for sailors who had ventured too close to the treacherous coastline.

The most international of these disasters struck in 1839, when the American ship *Pickering Dodge* was lost to the sands. This event underscored the universal peril of seafaring, showing that no matter the flag under which a vessel sailed, the dangers of the sea were indiscriminate. The shipwreck added another chapter to the tragic history of Cefn Sidan Sands, further cementing its reputation as a mariner's nightmare.

Within the ancient walls of St Illtyd's Church, a memorial slab quietly commemorates these losses. It lists the ships and names, bringing to life the stories of those who perished. Among the engraved names, Adeline Coquelin's stands out, her connection to Napoleon's consort adding a poignant historical note. The slab serves as a somber reminder of the personal and communal grief that accompanied each disaster.

The repeated tragedies off Cefn Sidan Sands eventually drew attention to the pressing need for better maritime safety. Over time, these shipwrecks likely

influenced improvements in navigational aids and ship design, helping to ensure that future sailors could avoid the fates that had befallen the crews of La Jeune Emma, Brothers, and Pickering Dodge.

Today, as visitors wander through the churchyard of St Illtyd's, they encounter the gravestones of those lost at sea. The memorial slab inside the church connects them to a past where the sea was both a source of livelihood and a constant threat. It tells a story of resilience and remembrance, of a community that has weathered sorrow and continues to honour those who were lost.

In this peaceful setting, the memory of the maritime tragedies is preserved, serving as a testament to the enduring spirit of Pembrey. The stories of La Jeune Emma, Brothers, and Pickering Dodge live on, reminding us of the sea's powerful grip on human history and the bonds of community that sustain us through even the darkest times.

### **Additional Historical Artifacts**

- **Benefaction Board and Inscriptions:** Dating to the 18th century, providing insights into the church's patrons and benefactors over the years.
- **Sir. Thos. Stepney, Bart.**
  - 1st Donation: £20 0s 0d
  - 2nd Donation: £20 0s 0d
- **Sir. Edward. Mansel, Bart.:** £10 0s 0d
- **John Vaughan Esq.:** £10 0s 0d
- **William. Powell Esq.:** £10 0s 0d
- **Thomas. Mansel Esq.:** £5 0s 0d
- **Thomas. Watkins Esq.:** £5 0s 0d
- **R. Mansel Esq.:** £5 0s 0d
- **Sir John Aubrey, Bart.:** £5 0s 0d
- **Lady Mansel:** £2 2s 0d
- **Samuel. Bowen Esq.:** £2 2s 0d
- **William. Martin Esq.:** £2 0s 0d
- **John. Vaughan Esq.:** £2 0s 0d
- **John. Davies Esq.:** £2 0s 0d
- **Rev. Mr. Edward. Briscoomb:** £2 0s 0d
- **Rev. Mr. Mathew Owen:** £1 1s 0d
- **Rev. Mr. H. Jones:** £1 1s 0d
- **Lewis Loughor Esq.:** £1 1s 0d
- **Rev. Mr. William. Jones:** £1 1s 0d
- **Mr. William. Cocks:** £1 1s 0d
- **Mr. Francis Jones:** £1 1s 0d
- **Mr. Howell Gwynne:** £1 1s 0d
- **Mr. William. Thomas:** £1 0s 0d

- **Mr. Thomas. Jones:** £1 0s 0d
- **Mr. Howell Evan:** £1 0s 0d
- **Mr. David Griffith:** £1 0s 0d
- **Mrs. Jane Mansel:** £1 0s 0d
- **Mr. Edward. David:** £0 10s 6d
- **Mr. David Lewis:** £0 10s 0d
- **Mr. John Griffth:** £0 5s 0d
- **Rev. Mr. John Smith:** £0 5s 0d
- **Mr. George Bevan:** £0 2s 6d

### **Analysis of Donations**

The benefaction board records contributions from various prominent figures, including baronets, esquires, and clergymen. The significant donations indicate substantial community support and involvement from the local gentry and clergy. These contributions likely supported the maintenance and activities of St Illtyd's Church during the 18th century.

### **War Memorials in the Cemetery**

The cemetery of St Illtyd's Church includes notable war memorials, especially dedicated to airmen of various nationalities who lost their lives during World War II. These memorials honour the bravery and sacrifice of those who served in the Royal Air Force and other Allied air forces.

- **Commonwealth War Graves:** The cemetery contains the graves of several Commonwealth airmen. These graves are marked with the distinctive Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstones, commemorating those who served and died far from their homes.
- **International Airmen:** Among those buried are airmen from various nationalities, reflecting the international cooperation and shared sacrifices of the Allied forces during the war. The memorials serve as a poignant reminder of the global nature of the conflict and the diverse backgrounds of those who fought together.

St Illtyd's Church in Pembrey stands as a monument to history, commemorating not only local and maritime tragedies but also the valiant efforts of those who fought in World War II. An integral part of its memorials is dedicated to the members of RAF Polish Fighter Squadron 316, a testament to the international collaboration and sacrifices made during the war.

### **War Memorials of St Illtyd's Cemetery in Findagarave**

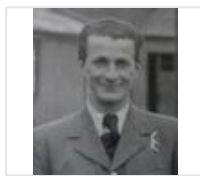


A VIRTUAL CEMETERY CREATED BY TUDOR59

## St Illtyd's Church Pembrey War Memorials

St Illtyd Church in Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales, is a significant historical site, particularly known for its war memorials. The churchyard contains the resting places and memorials of numerous servicemen, including airmen from Pembrey Airfield.

 38 memorials



**Porucznik Bogdan Anders** ✿

27 Feb 1918 – 2 Jun 1941

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales

228015059

Plot info: **Row 1 Coll Grave 11.**

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)



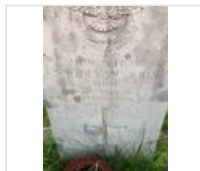
**Pilot Officer John Raymond Baldock**

1932 – 9 Oct 1953

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales

230201275

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)



**Pilot Officer Spencer Rhys Bevan** ✿

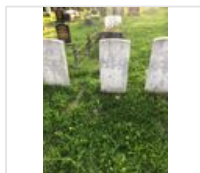
11 Mar 1921 – 30 Sep 1940

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales

98180494

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 12-13.**

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)



**Sergeant David Jack Blair** ✿

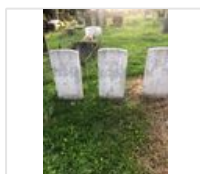
unknown – 17 Sep 1940

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales

98180495

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 7.**

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)



**Sergeant George Warden Brown** ✿

unknown – 17 Sep 1940

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales

98180496

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 6.**

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)



**Third Engineer William Lewis Chubb** ✿

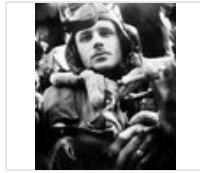
1889 – 25 Aug 1917

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales

98180497

Plot info: **In South East part.**

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)




**Sergeant John Douglas Laing Cooper**  Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
unknown – 17 Sep 1940

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180498

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 5.**



**CPT Ralph Picton Daniel**   
1882 – 31 Jul 1917

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales

272341912




**Steward Joseph Emery**   Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
1867 – 2 Jan 1918

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180499

Plot info: **North of church.**



**2LT Thomas George**   
1894 – 27 Aug 1918

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales

262411373



**Lieutenant Montague Beaumont**  Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
unknown – 11 Aug 1941

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180500

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 17.**

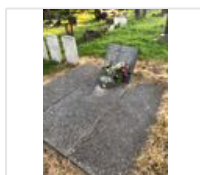


**Lieutenant R.N.R Arthur Charles Gravelle**   
Jul 1908 – 24 Feb 1941

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales

261844234

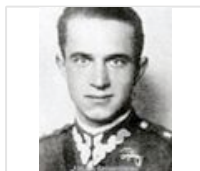


**Gwynfryn James Griffiths**  
1921 – 10 Jul 1940

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales

230048044



**Kapitan Roman Grzanka**   Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
1 May 1912 – 27 Jun 1943

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

228015146

Plot info: **Row 1 Grave 24**



**Leading Aircraftman Harold George**  Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
unknown – 24 May 1942

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180501

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 21.**



**Wing Commander John Harvey Pembrey** \*  
Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
unknown – 8 Oct 1940

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180502

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 10.**



**Private William James** \*  
Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
1878 – 11 Jan 1917

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180503

Plot info: **On South boundary.**



**Gunner William Thomas Jones** \*  
Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
14 Jun 1906 – 11 Oct 1943

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180504

Plot info: **Row 2. Grave 2.**



**Porucznik Olech Antoni Kawczynski** \*  
Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
20 Feb 1916 – 8 May 1941

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

228015273

Plot info: **Row 1 Coll Grave 11**



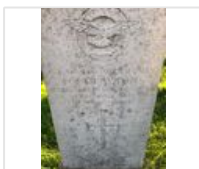
**Kapral Jacek Zygmund Fran King** \*  
Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
28 Mar 1925 – 8 May 1944

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

228015344

Plot info: **Service Row 2 Grave 4**

Page 2



**Leading Aircraftman George Alfred Pembrey** \*  
Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
unknown – 24 May 1942

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180505

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 20.**



**Major Montagu Stanley Melliss** \*  
Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
1852 – 4 Mar 1919

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180506

Plot info: **Row 2, Grave 21.**



**Leading Aircraftman Wilfred Leonard Pembrey** \*  
Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
unknown – 1 Aug 1941

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180507

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 18.**



**Gunner Robert Noble** \*  
Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
unknown – 11 Feb 1942

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180508

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 19.**



**Sub-Lieutenant (A) Stephen John Jenkins** \* Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
unknown – 7 Oct 1943

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180509

Plot info: **Row 2. Grave 3.**



**Sergeant Elwyn Rees Owen** \* Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
1921 – 10 Apr 1941

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180511

Plot info: **S.E. of church.**



**Starszy Sierzant Wacław Oyrzanowski** \* Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
18 Sep 1903 – 28 Jun 1943

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

228015429

Plot info: **Row 1 Grave 23.**



**Pilot Officer Stanisław Piatkowski** \* Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
unknown – 25 Oct 1940

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

227995950

Plot info: **Row 1 Coll Grave 11**



**Aircraftman 2nd Class Alec Frederick Pugh** \* Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
unknown – 15 Apr 1941

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180513

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 15.**



**Private Albert Rees** \*  
unknown – 19 Jun 1915

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales

98180514

Plot info: **On South boundary.**



**Sergeant William Leyson Rhys** \* Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
unknown – 31 Oct 1942

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180515

Plot info: **Row 2. Grave 1.**



**Warrant Officer Bernard James Sperry** \* Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
5 Apr 1918 – 26 Jan 1945

[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180516

Plot info: **Row 2. Grave 22.**



**Pilot Officer Basil York Sowter** \* Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
1920 – 17 Sep 1940

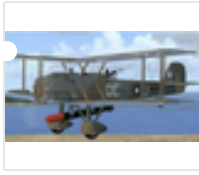
[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)

98180517

Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 8.**



[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)  
**Gunner David George Roderick Thomas** \*  
 Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
 1905 – 23 Feb 1941  
 98180518  
 Plot info: **N.E. of church.**



[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)  
**Huw Thomas** ▾  
 Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
 1916 – 16 Feb 1938  
 272340950



[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)  
**Flying Officer Beverley John Wernham** \*  
 Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
 unknown – 6 Jan 1945  
 98180519  
 Plot info: **Row 2. Grave 23**



[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)  
**Unknown Unknown Airman**  
 Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
 unknown – May 1943  
 230044991



[St. Illtyd Churchyard](#)  
**Sergeant Charles Albert Venn** \*  
 Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, Wales  
 unknown – 24 Feb 1941  
 98180520  
 Plot info: **Row 1. Grave 14.**

## **The Story of RAF Polish Fighter Squadron 316**

RAF Polish Fighter Squadron 316, known as the "Warsaw Squadron," was one of several Polish squadrons formed during World War II. After Poland was invaded by Germany in 1939, many Polish pilots escaped to Britain and joined the Royal Air Force. Squadron 316 was formed in 1941 and became known for its fierce determination and skill in aerial combat.

## **Commemorating the Polish Airmen**

The memorials at St Illtyd's Church include tributes to these brave Polish airmen who fought alongside British forces. These pilots played a crucial role in defending Britain during some of the war's darkest days. The cemetery at St Illtyd's Church is the final resting place for several members of Squadron 316, who lost their lives in the struggle for freedom.

## **Historical Context**

The presence of Polish airmen in the memorials highlights the church's connection to broader historical events and the multinational efforts during World War II. These memorials not only honour the bravery and sacrifice of the Polish pilots but also serve as a reminder of the unity and cooperation between nations during times of conflict.

## **Remembering the Past**

St Illtyd's Church, with its historical memorials, stands as a silent witness to the past. The inclusion of RAF Polish Fighter Squadron 316 in its commemorations reflects the church's role in honouring those who have served and sacrificed, whether they were lost at sea or in the skies above.

As visitors walk through the church and its grounds, they are reminded of the bravery and sacrifice of individuals from various nationalities who came together during World War II. The memorials at St Illtyd's Church ensure that the stories of these heroic airmen, along with the victims of maritime tragedies, are remembered and honoured for generations to come.

## **Bohdan Anders**

Bohdan Anders was born on February 27, 1918, in Poznań, Poland. With a strong sense of duty to his homeland, Anders joined the Polish Air Force, demonstrating exceptional skill and bravery. His service began in Poland, where he likely saw the early stages of World War II unfold, witnessing the invasion of his country by German forces.



After the fall of Poland, many Polish airmen, including Anders, made their way to France to continue the fight against the Axis powers. In France, Anders continued to hone his skills as a pilot, contributing to the efforts of the Allied forces. However, the rapid advance of German troops soon forced him and his fellow Polish aviators to seek refuge in Great Britain.

In Great Britain, Anders joined the Royal Air Force (RAF), which welcomed Polish pilots who had escaped the fall of their homeland. He became a member of the famed No. 303 "Tadeusz Kościuszko" Polish Fighter Squadron. This squadron gained a legendary reputation during the Battle of Britain for its remarkable effectiveness and bravery. As part of No. 303 Squadron, Anders flew numerous sorties, defending Britain against the Luftwaffe and contributing to the eventual Allied victory in the Battle of Britain.

Later, Anders was transferred to No. 316 "City of Warsaw" Polish Fighter Squadron. This squadron, named to honour the capital of their occupied homeland, continued to fight valiantly in various operations over Europe. Anders' skills and dedication as a pilot were critical to the squadron's successes.

Tragically, Bohdan Anders' promising career was cut short on June 2, 1941. While flying a Miles Magister, serial R1838, from 316 Squadron, he struck a barrage balloon cable near Malpas, Newport Gwent. The collision was fatal, and Anders perished in the incident.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228015059/bogdan-anders>

### **Olech Antoni Kawczyński**

Olech Antoni Kawczyński was born on February 20, 1916, in Wudzyn, Poland. His early life in Poland was marked by a strong sense of duty and patriotism, leading him to join the Polish Army, where he rose to the rank of Lieutenant. With the outbreak of World War II and the subsequent invasion of Poland, Kawczyński, like many of his compatriots, found himself compelled to continue the fight beyond his homeland's borders.



After Poland's fall, Kawczyński made his way to Great Britain, where the Royal Air Force (RAF) was integrating experienced Polish pilots into its ranks. Kawczyński joined the RAF and served with distinction as a Pilot Officer, initially with No. 32 Squadron. His skills as a pilot were critical in the defence of Britain, contributing to the efforts to thwart the Luftwaffe's relentless attacks.

Kawczyński later transferred to No. 79 Squadron, continuing his brave service in the skies. No. 79 Squadron was actively involved in various operations, and Kawczyński's role as a pilot was vital to the squadron's missions. His aircraft, a Hawker Hurricane,

was a formidable fighter that played a key role in the RAF's defensive and offensive operations.

Tragically, Olech Antoni Kawczyński's service was cut short on May 8, 1941. While on target practice over Cefn Sidan Beach, his Hawker Hurricane, Serial Z2324, crashed, resulting in his untimely death. The exact circumstances of the crash remain a poignant reminder of the perils faced by those who took to the skies in defence of freedom.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228015273/olech-antoni-kawczynski>

### **Jacek Zygmund Fran Kinel.**

Jacek Zygmunt Fran Kinel was born on March 28, 1924, in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Despite his young age, Kinel's early life was profoundly impacted by the onset of World War II. Driven by a strong sense of duty to his homeland, he joined the fight against the Axis powers, a decision that would lead him far from his native land.



As the war progressed, Kinel joined the Royal Air Force (RAF), a common path for many Polish airmen who had escaped the fall of Poland. His dedication and skill earned him the rank of Sergeant Pilot, and he was assigned to the 1st Air Gunnery School in Pembrey, Wales. This school was crucial in training airmen in the essential skills of aerial gunnery, which were vital for the success of bombing missions and air combat.

Tragically, Sergeant Pilot Jacek Kinel's promising career was cut short on May 8, 1944 at Cwrt Malle Farm. The specific circumstances of his death remain a sombre testament to the dangers faced by those who served in training as well as in combat. The rigorous training regimes and the ever-present risk of accidents meant that even those not on the front lines were exposed to significant peril.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228015344/jacek-zygmund-f-kinel>

### **Waclaw Oyrzanowski**

Waclaw Oyrzanowski was born on September 18, 1903, in Zawady, Poland. His early years were marked by a dedication to his country, which led him to join the Polish Air Force. With the outbreak of World War II and the invasion of Poland, Oyrzanowski's journey took him across Europe as he continued to serve with unwavering commitment.



Following Poland's fall, Oyrzanowski, like many Polish airmen, made his way to Great Britain. Here, he joined the Royal Air Force (RAF), where his expertise as a mechanic became invaluable. Oyrzanowski initially served with No. 302 "Poznański" Polish Fighter Squadron, a unit renowned for its bravery and effectiveness in aerial combat. His skills were critical in maintaining the squadron's aircraft, ensuring they were always ready for their vital missions.

Oyrzanowski later transferred to No. 307 "Lwowskie Puchacze" Night Fighter Squadron, another distinguished Polish squadron within the RAF. The squadron specialized in night-time operations, defending Britain from enemy bombers under

the cover of darkness. Oyrzanowski's role as a senior mechanic was crucial in keeping the squadron's planes operational and combat ready.

On June 27, 1943, while serving as a mechanic aboard a Mosquito, Serial DD644, piloted by Kaptain Roman Grzanka, Oyrzanowski was fatally wounded in a crash at Pennard on the Gower. Despite the best efforts to save him, Waclaw Oyrzanowski succumbed to his injuries the following day, June 28, 1943. This tragic incident underscores the constant dangers faced by airmen and support crews, not just in combat but also during training and operational flights.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228015429/waclaw-oyrzanowski>

### **Roman Grzanka - The Legendary One-Legged Pilot**

Roman Grzanka was born on February 8, 1903, in Ujma Duża, Poland. His early life was marked by a strong sense of duty and adventure, leading him to join the Polish Air Force. Grzanka quickly distinguished himself as a talented pilot, demonstrating exceptional skill and determination.



With the outbreak of World War II and the invasion of Poland, Grzanka, like many of his compatriots, continued the fight beyond his homeland. He served with distinction in Poland, and after the fall of his country, he moved to France, where he continued to combat the Axis forces. Eventually, Grzanka found his way to Great Britain, where his experience and bravery were highly valued.

In Great Britain, Grzanka joined the Royal Air Force (RAF), where he became a member of No. 307 "Lwowskie Puchacze" Polish Night Fighter Squadron. This

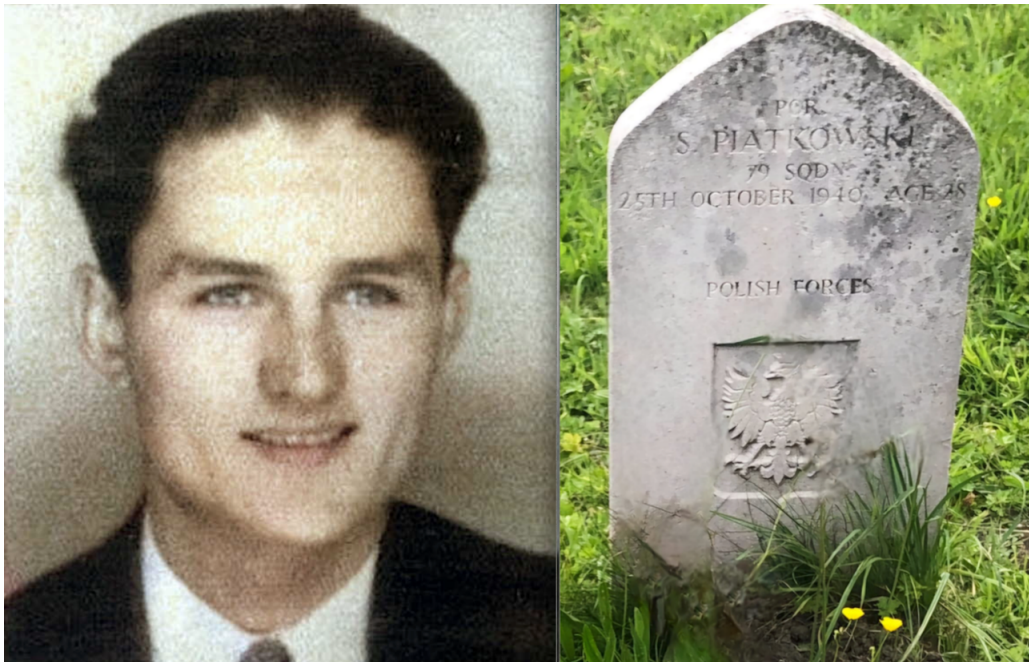
squadron was renowned for its effectiveness in night-time operations, defending Britain from enemy bombers under the cover of darkness. Despite losing a leg, Grzanka's determination and skill allowed him to continue flying, earning him a legendary status as a one-legged pilot.

On June 27, 1943, Grzanka was piloting a Mosquito, Serial DD644, based at RAF Fairwood Common. Tragically, the aircraft crashed at Pennard on the Gower, resulting in Grzanka's death. His co-pilot, Sergeant Mechanic Waclaw Oyrzanowski, succumbed to his injuries the following day. The loss of these brave airmen was a significant blow to their squadron and to the broader war effort.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228015146/roman-grzanka>

### **Stanisław Piątkowski**

Stanisław Piątkowski was born on May 1, 1912, in Jaroszówka, Poland. From a young age, Piątkowski demonstrated a strong sense of duty and a passion for aviation, leading him to join the Polish Air Force. His dedication and skill as a pilot were evident early in his career, earning him the rank of Lieutenant.



With the outbreak of World War II and the subsequent invasion of Poland, Piątkowski, like many Polish airmen, sought to continue the fight against the Axis powers. He made his way to Great Britain, where he joined the Royal Air Force (RAF). His experience and bravery were a valuable addition to the RAF, and he was assigned to No. 79 Squadron.

No. 79 Squadron was an essential part of the RAF's efforts during the Battle of Britain. The squadron was equipped with Hawker Hurricanes, a key fighter aircraft in the defence of Britain. As a Pilot Officer in No. 79 Squadron, Piątkowski participated in numerous patrols and combat missions, contributing to the squadron's valiant efforts to repel the Luftwaffe and protect British skies.

On October 25, 1940, after a routine patrol over Linney Head, Piątkowski tragically crashed his Hurricane, Serial N2728, near Carew Cheriton. The circumstances of the crash underline the constant dangers faced by fighter pilots, both in combat and during routine operations. Piątkowski's untimely death was a significant loss to his squadron and to the broader war effort.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/227995950/stanislaw-piatkowski>

### **Stanislaw Waldemar Szmejl**

Stan Szmejl's early life in Poland born May 6 1913 was marked by a profound sense of duty and a passion for aviation. His commitment to his country and his desire to serve led him to join the Polish Air Force, where he trained and developed his skills as a pilot.



With the outbreak of World War II and the subsequent invasion of Poland, Szmejl, like many Polish airmen, sought to continue the fight against the Axis powers. He made his way to Great Britain, where the Royal Air Force (RAF) was integrating

experienced Polish pilots into its ranks. Szymejl joined the RAF and was assigned to No. 79 Squadron, a unit known for its valour and effectiveness in combat.

No. 79 Squadron played a crucial role in the defence of Britain, flying Hawker Hurricanes, one of the most important fighter aircraft of the war. As a Flying Officer (Pilot) in No. 79 Squadron, Szymejl participated in numerous patrols and combat missions. His bravery and skill were vital to the squadron's efforts to protect British skies from enemy incursions.

Tragically, Stan Szymejl's service was cut short on June 26, 1941, Flew Hurricane into cliff in bad visibility on convoy patrol at Freshwater East, Pembrokeshire. The circumstances of his death are a poignant reminder of the constant dangers faced by fighter pilots during the war. Whether in combat or training, these pilots faced significant risks, and their sacrifice was immense.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/207494665/stanislaw-waldemar-szymejl>

### **Leon Jan Watorowski**

Leon Jan Watorowski served with distinction in the Polish Air Force during World War II, specifically with 317 Squadron. This squadron, part of the Polish Air Force in exile, played a vital role in the defense of Britain during the Battle of Britain and later participated in offensive operations across Europe.



Watorowski's duties as a pilot included escorting bombers, conducting reconnaissance missions, and engaging enemy aircraft in aerial combat. His bravery

and skill in the cockpit were instrumental in the squadron's successes and in ensuring the safety of Allied forces. Tragically, he died at the age of 24 on December 8, 1944, while piloting Supermarine Spitfire LF.IX, nr. MK986. He was killed during a training flight in a mid-air collision over Port Talbot.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228057238/leon-jan-watorowski>

### **Tadeusz Blach**

Tadeusz Blach was born on November 20, 1915, in Warsaw Poland, he rose to the rank of Lieutenant Pilot, serving with honour in the esteemed 308 Squadron fighter pilot. 76689 PAF Age 22.



His missions were not without peril, and it was during a routine training flight in a Spitfire IIb (P8676 ZF-H) that his life was claimed. On August 9, 1941, the engine of his aircraft is believed to have stalled at low altitude, causing it to dive into the ground at Ruislip, Middlesex.

Though his final resting place is in St. Clears, his spirit soars among the clouds, forever remembered for his selfless sacrifice and unwavering devotion to duty. Tadeusz Blach remains an enduring symbol of valour and heroism, inspiring future generations to cherish the gift of freedom secured through his bravery.

The Polish Servicemen story is a poignant reminder of the contributions and sacrifices of Polish airmen who served with the RAF. Their commitment and valour were instrumental in the Allied efforts to secure victory, and their legacy continues to inspire future generations.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/164064464/tadeusz-blach>