



# POLISH AMERICAN News

June / July 2009

## Polonia Highlights 65th Anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino 1944-2009



On maps, the tiny Italian town of Cassino was little more than a speck. To Nazi master military strategists, it was an objective of the highest priority. And to the American, British, New Zealander, French, Indian and Polish foot soldiers who stormed its seemingly impregnable heights, it was nothing less than hell itself.

Between September, 1943, when the Germans occupied the town, until its eventual capture by the Allies the following May, four distinct and bloody battles were fought for its possession. The four campaigns faced long odds from the start. The terrain was virtually impassable - a long spine of steep mountains with narrow littorals and rivers draining from the spine - a formidable natural area which the Germans had skillfully fortified. Wherever Allied forces tried to climb, the Germans had perfect cover and observation points. The Allies, able to utilize only a few rutted roads, found themselves endlessly fighting their way across rivers, always under the guns of the German fortifications above them.

On May 18, 1944, after many failed attempts by Allied forces to conquer Monte Cassino, the 2nd Polish Corps, under the command of General Wladyslaw Anders, captured this strategic point blocking access to Rome. After a bloody battle lasting seven days, the Polish flag was hoisted upon the ruins of the monastery. The road to Rome was open! Tragically, 860 Polish soldiers died and over 2,800 were wounded of which 10 percent were officers.

The Battle of Monte Cassino, won by the Polish forces, holds its place in history as one of the most decisive battles of World War II.

In May, 2009, many gathered at the Polish cemetery of Monte Cassino to remember and honor those who survived and those who gave their lives for freedom of their nation. Let us ponder on these words -- the inscription on the monument in the Monte Cassino cemetery, which reads,

*We Polish soldiers  
For our freedom and yours  
Have given our souls to God  
Our bodies to the soil of Italy  
And our hearts to Poland*

## 2009 Pulaski Day Parade Grand Marshal Stephen Skorczynski



The Polish American Congress, Eastern Pennsylvania District, is proud to announce that Stephen Skorczynski will be the Grand Marshal of the 2009 Pulaski Day Parade that will take place on Sunday, October 4th, in Center City Philadelphia.

The Polish American Congress selected Stephen Skorczynski in recognition of his more than 30 years of participation with the Polish American Congress and its member organizations. Throughout his life, Stephen has been very active in Philadelphia's Polish community. Having many talents, he is a teacher of Polish history at the Adam Mickiewicz Polish Language School, where he attended as a child; dancer with the Polish Intercollegiate Club for over 20 years; actor in the Adam Mularczyk Theatre Company; and currently President of the Associated Polish Home.

Stephen attended Abraham Lincoln High School, LaSalle College, where he graduated with a BA in Chemistry, and Pennsylvania State University, where he earned a Ph.D in Analytical Chemistry. Stephen and his wife Dorothy have two sons, Christopher and Anthony.

Stephen is a long time member of the Polish American Congress, Eastern PA District, its Youth Committee, Pulaski Day Observance Committee, Polish American Heritage Month Committee and a participant in various events sponsored by the Polish American Cultural Center Museum in historic Philadelphia. The Polish American Congress and the entire Polonia extend congratulations to Stephen Skorczynski, Philadelphia's 2009 Pulaski Day Parade Grand Marshal.



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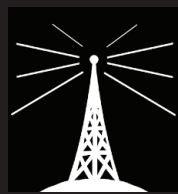
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