

Nazwisko **ANTKOWICZ**

Imiona **Wincenty** Pseudonim

Z domu

Data urodzenia **1915** Miejscowość, kraj

Data śmierci **15. 06. 1997** Miejscowość, kraj **Hobart, Australia**

Lat życia

Adres cmentarza

Źródła: **"Ku Wodnej Polsce", nr 95 (513) / 1997**

Zawód Tytuły naukowe

Rodzaj wojska Stopień wojskowy

Odznaczenia

.....

.....

"Ku Wolnej Polsce" nr. 95 (513), 1997
Lista zmarłych członków Związku Tobrukczyków w roku 1996/97

ANTKOWICZ Wincenty, st. sierż. 9 Baon 3DSK, ur. w 1915 r., zmarł 15.6.1997
w Hobart, Australia.

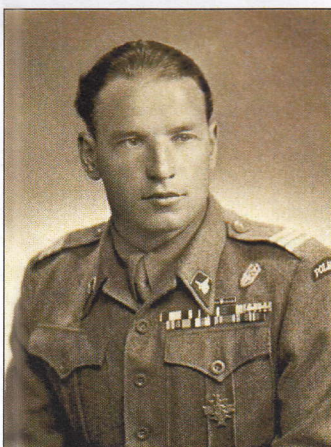


Sergeant Wincenty Antkowicz, 30032877, Polish Contingent 8th British Army (Desert Rats)



Awards and Decorations

- Cross of Valour NO: 394 (Krzyz Walecznych) – Tobruk (2nd May 1942. Awarded 14th July 1943)
- Cross of Valour (Krzyz Walecznych) – Monte Casino (unknown award date)
- 1939-1945 Star
- Africa Star with 8th Army Bar
- Italy Star
- Defence Medal
- Tobruk Siege Cross
- Monte Casino Cross
- Tobruk badge NO: 1769 awarded 2nd April 1943
- Bolonskiego badge NO: 357 awarded Polish Armed Services Medal
- Polish SPK Commemorative Medal



Personal History

Born 1915, Lodz, Poland
 Died 1997 Hobart, Tasmania, Australia
 SN: 30032877 (British)
 SN: 4/111 (Polish)

Military History

Served with Independent Karpathian Rifle Brigade (IKRB) with the 2nd Battalion (infantry) as a ordinary soldier (Private)
 Fought at Tobruk August 1941 to December 1941 / January 1942

The Siege of Tobruk began April 11, 1941 when DAK instigated several "Blitzkrieg" assaults. The IKRB replaced the 9th Div AIF (however, not the 2/13th Batt.) and 7th Div. (comprising British & Indian troops). The IKRB initially served in the 2nd "blue" line of defence, however transferred to the 1st "red" line of defence and patrolled Solaro Fort region.

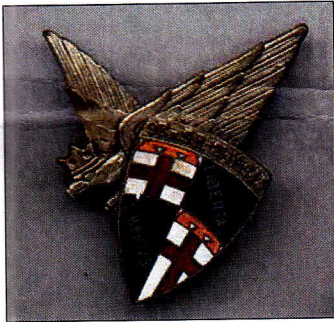
North Africa - Main Battles

- The Gap (Sept/Oct 1941); held the region for ~10 weeks along with AIF troops
- Medauar Hill 9/10th Dec 1941
- Acroma

Excerpt from Tobruk Campaign

The most dangerous aspect for all soldiers were mines which were deployed in the desert by Italians, Germans, and also Australian, Polish and British forces. The Brigade was sent to the most dangerous part of the defence - called "the gap" - replacing the 26th Australian Brigade. Their defending points were situated about 200 m from the enemy positions. The soldiers weren't able to move because the pits were too shallow.

There were able to receive the supplies of water and food only at night. The labour of fighting was enlarged by difficult climate conditions, hot sandy storms called "hamsins", lack of water and only conserved very salty food to consume. The long stay in these conditions on the desert and rocky hills was very exhausting for all soldiers, who felt themselves abandoned there. During the daylight time the artillery of both sides operated in addition to German air force unit which was bombed and dive bombed the fortress and the harbour. The Polish defended the most difficult part of Tobruk fortress in the region of Medauar Hill ("the gap") during a 10 week period. The previous record belonged to the Australians who held the area for 4 weeks.



Awarded Gallantry Decorations

Awarded Cross of Valour (Krzyz Walecznych) for actions in Tobruk (gazetted 2nd May 1942. Awarded 14th July 1943. The award was earned pre 2nd May 1942)

Mentioned in Dispatches (Pochwaza) for action in Tobruk, 6th Nov 1941. He searched for Germans and was successful in capturing an officer.

Battalion Operational Movements

June/July 1943 IKRB transferred to Palestine from North Africa for autumn training in mountainous areas for the Italian Offensive

IKRB and Polish Soviet-created units (and others from POW camps) amalgamated to form 2nd Polish Corps in June 1943

W. Antkowicz completed NCO training on 6th May 1942 and was promoted to Corporal

21 December 1943 to mid April 1944 - the 2nd Polish Corps deployed to Italy (21 Dec 1943 to Taranto) as part of the British 8th Army

W. Antkowicz served with the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division (3 Dywizja Strzelcow Karpackich) attached to the 9th Bolonski Battalion Strzelcow Karpackich MG Battalion (so named because the 3rd Rifle Brigade, 9th Battalion liberated the town of Bologna in April 1945)

W. Antkowicz promoted to Sergeant sometime during or after Monte Casino.

Italy - Main Battles

- Monte Casino 11-18 May 1944
- Capture of Ancona Port June 1944
- Capture of Imola and Bologna 15 & 21 April 1945

Excerpt from Italian Campaign

The Poles' most spectacular success came in May 1944 at Monte Casino, which had defied three previous assaults by other Allied forces. On the 18th, after three days of fierce fighting, in which heavy casualties were assumed by the Corps, the Polish banner finally waved over the ruins of the Monte Casino abbey, thus securing the opening of the road to Rome for the Allied forces as a whole. Many soldiers of the 2nd Polish Corps, who gave their lives in the name of democracy, lie with honour at Casino Polish War Cemetery.

In June, the Battle of Ancona led to the capture of this important port by the Polish Corps. Further operations led in the direction of Pesaro along the Adriatic coast. The Corps was then moved inland covering the British Eighth Army's flank in the Emilian Apennines. In January 1945 the Corps reached the river Senio, initiating three months of static warfare in preparation for the assault on Bologna. The offensive which began on April 9, 1945, led to the capture by Polish forces of Imola on April 15 and Bologna itself on April 21. The Corps was then withdrawn for recuperation, thus ending its campaign in Italy.

Awarded Gallantry Decorations

Cross of Valour (Krzyz Walecznych) - Monte Casino (unknown)

Monte Casino Cross awarded 5th May 1945

Monte Casino Battle Medal

Other Cloth Patches and Badges

- Christmas tree cloth patch - divisional insignia of 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division (3 Dywizja Strzelcow Karpackich)
- Christmas tree with number 3 metal badge - divisional breast badge
- Eagle with shield metal badge - collar and cap badge of 9th Bolonski Batalion Strzelcow Karpackich MG Battalion
- Gold and white shield cloth patch - The 8th Army shield was awarded to the 2nd Polish Corps after the final battle for Monte Casino. Order No.65 dated 12-June-1944 indicates that this honorary badge was to be worn permanently by the units that took part in the battle whether or not they remained under command of the 8th army. In addition to order No.65, another order was added. Order No.95 dated 17 August 1944 extended the privilege to wear the 8th army shield for all 2nd Corps and 2nd Corps based formations and units.



Cross of Valour (Krzyz Walecznych) - General Information

Instituted by decree of the State Deafens of August 11, 1920, during the Polish-Soviet war; revived in 1940 and in the People's Army in the East in 1943 and 1944 respectively. Revived again by the Act of October 16, 1992. It can be awarded for acts of valour while serving with UN peacekeeping missions. The cross is equivalent to the American Silver Star, French Croix de Guerre or German Iron Cross. Conferred in a single class to members of the Polish Armed Forces, for acts of valour in the battlefield. In exceptional cases it can be granted to allied soldiers and civilians. The cross can be conferred up to four times, yet the awards in WW2 were counted independently of those of 1920.

LEFT: Sergeant W. Antkowicz wearing his award after issue.

Badge: bronze cross 43 x 43 mm (there exist smaller copies 37 x 37 mm), of slightly concave arms and convex arm bases; the arms bear the motto: NA : POLU : CHWALY : 1920. (on the field of glory,



1920). In the center is a heraldic shield bearing a crowned eagle. On the vertical arms of the reverse is a sword pointed upwards and piercing a laurel wreath in the middle; the horizontal arms bear the inscription WALE : CZNYM (to the valorous). There exist copies with the year 1939 or 1940 instead of 1920; the crosses bestowed in People's Poland have the year 1943 (rare) or 1944.

Ribbon: 35-37 mm, claret with broad white side stripes; those conferred by the Government in Exile during WW2 have the colours reversed - white with claret stripes; awards in the People's Republic - 40 mm, dark crimson with white stripes. Each subsequent award is denoted by a bronze bar with oak leaves on the ribbon; in People's Poland each award was worn as a separate badge.

The Polish Contribution to the Italian Campaign

On September 1, 1939, without a declaration of war, Germany's army, navy, and air force invaded Poland from three directions, plunging Europe into a second devastating world war, barely 21 years after the ending of the first one. On September 17, another surprise rocked the Poles. The Soviet Union attacked from the east, leaving the Polish Army surrounded on all sides by the two most powerful armies in the world. Despite the staggering odds, the Poles fought valiantly, making the invaders pay for every inch of ground they took.

In the end, the Polish government and armed forces were forced to flee to England, where they regrouped and fought alongside the Allied forces throughout the war. For operations in Italy, the 2nd Polish Corps was composed of the 3rd Carpathian Rifles Division (incorporating the old independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade), the 5th Kresowa Infantry Division, the 2nd Armoured Brigade, and the Army Group Artillery, as well as the necessary corps units, including the Polish Women's Auxiliary Service. The 2nd Corps, under the command of General W. Anders, landed in Italy in December 1943 and January 1944. As part of the British Eighth Army, it took up defensive positions along the river Sangro. Earlier, the Polish Commando Company had been sent to Italy for special duties.



The Poles' most spectacular success came in May 1944 at Monte Casino, which had defied three previous assaults by other Allied forces. On the 18th, after three days of fierce fighting, in which heavy casualties were assumed by the Corps, the Polish banner finally waved over the ruins of the Monte Casino abbey, thus securing the opening of the road to Rome for the Allied forces as a whole. Many soldiers of the 2nd Polish Corps, who gave their lives in the name of democracy, lie with honour at Casino Polish War Cemetery.

One of the "hero's" of the 2nd Polish Corps was Wojtek, a brown bear adopted in Iran as its mascot. At Monte Casino Wojtek actually helped in the fighting by carrying ammunition for the guns. He died, famous and well-loved, in Edinburgh Zoo in 1964.

In June, the Battle of Ancona led to the capture of this important port by the Polish Corps. Further operations led in the direction of Pesaro along the Adriatic coast. The Corps was then moved inland covering the British Eighth Army's flank in the Emilian Apennines. In January 1945 the Corps reached

the river Senio, initiating three months of static warfare in preparation for the assault on Bologna. The offensive which began on April 9, 1945, led to the capture by Polish forces of Imola on April 15 and Bologna itself on April 21. The Corps was then withdrawn for recuperation, thus ending its campaign in Italy.



LEFT: Wincenty Antkowicz in the late 1950's after immigrating to Australia and securing employment working for the Tasmanian Hydro Electric Scheme.

During the whole of the war, the Polish nation with its President and government at its head, refused to lay down arms, or surrender, and accept the temporary occupation of the country by its two neighbours. The Polish armed forces earned honours on battlefields in Norway, Libya, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Germany, from Narvik to Berlin.

Wincenty Antkowicz was demilitarised in 1945 and subsequently immigrated to Hobart, Tasmania, Australia (his first choice was Canada, however, he inadvertently boarded the wrong ship).

In Tasmania, Wincenty worked initially for the Hydro Electric Corporation which was responsible for the development of hydro electric power in Tasmania during the 1950's and 60's. After completing his contract he went on to work in the Engineering Department of the University of Tasmania before retiring in the early 1980's. His main interests were gardening, maintaining his connections with Polish friends and reading.

[\[Top of page\]](#)