

Nazwisko LASEK

Imiona Michał

Pseudonim

Z domu

Data urodzenia Miejscowość, kraj wieś k/Przymorsku, Polska

Data śmierci 6.06.2015 Miejscowość, kraj Clifton, NJ, Stany Zjednoczone

Lat życia 92

Adres cmentarza Amerykańskie Cmentarz, Doylestown, PA

Źródła: Weteran nr 1131 lipiec 2015

Zawód Tytuły naukowe

Rodzaj wojska Stopień wojskowy

Polska Samodzielna Brygada Spedochronowa

Odznaczenia

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Pogrzeb śp. Michała Laska



W upalny piątek 12 czerwca 2015 r. na cmentarzu weterańskim w Amerykańskiej Częstochowie, Doylestown, PA, odbył się pogrzeb ś. p. Michała Laska - honorowego komendanta Placówki 36 SWAP w Passaic, NJ - zmarłego nagle 6 czerwca 2015 r. w Clifton, NJ.

Na tę smutną uroczystość, oprócz najbliższej rodziny Zmarłego, przyjaciół i znajomych, przybyła grupa kolegów weteranów ze SWAP. Obecni byli m.in.:

Anthony Domino - I-szy wice komendant naczelny SWAP, Antoni Chrościelewski - komendant Okręgu II SWAP z żoną Walerią, Antoni Płotka - komendant Okręgu X SWAP, Andrzej Maciejewicz - dyrektor wykonawczy Fundacji SWAP, Andrzej Olszak - komendant Placówki 36 SWAP w Passaic, NJ; Marian Doda - komendant Placówki 51 SWAP w Jersey City; Krzysztof Mazur - komendant Placówki 21/201 w Nowym Jorku. Ponadto obecni byli koledzy weterani z



Koledzy weterani w oczekiwaniu przed kaplicą cmentarną

Placów
Placów
Placów
Placów
Poczt
36 w
Harris
Msz
egzekw
Bogusł
Jana K
Placów
Zmar
pożegn
Michał
który d
pożegn
ubran
Polskie

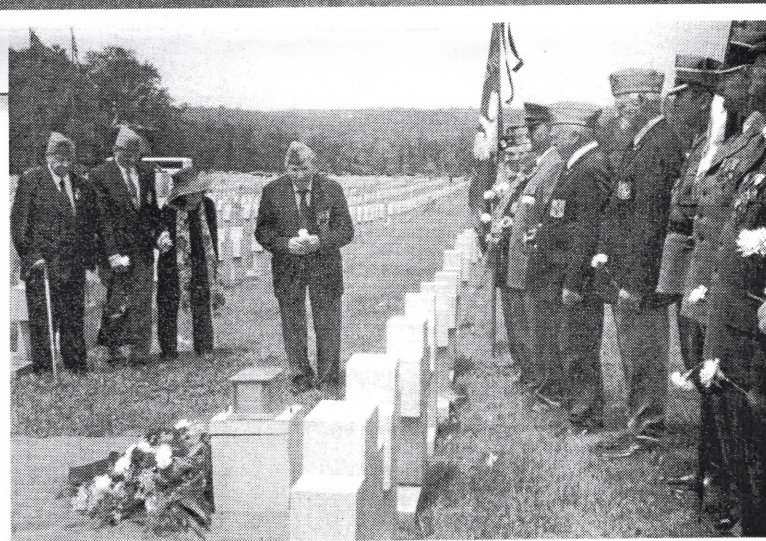


*Kondukt pogrzebowy przed
wyruszeniem na cmentarz*

Placówki 57 SWAP w Elizabeth, NJ;
Placówki 81 SWAP w Trenton, NJ;
Placówki 99 SWAP w Harrison, NJ i
Placówki 123 SWAP w Nowym Jorku.
Poczty sztandarowe wystawiły Placówka
36 w Passaic, NJ i Placówka 99 w
Harrison, NJ.

Mszę św. w kaplicy cmentarnej oraz
egzekwie na cmentarzu odprawił ks.
Bogusław Czerniakowski z Parafii św.
Jana Kantego w Clifton NJ, kapelan
Placówki 36 SWAP w Passaic, NJ.

Zmarłego w imieniu całej organizacji
pożegnał kol. Antoni Chrościelewski podkreślając, że ś. p.
Michał Lasek był gorącym polskim patriotą-żołnierzem,
który dobrze zasłużył się dla SWAP. Salwę honorową i
pożegnalny capstrzyk przygotował Krzysztof Czuj
ubrany w zrekonstruowany mundur połowy żołnierza
Polskiej Samodzielnej Brygady Spadochronowej, w



Zmarłego w imieniu SWAP pożegnał Antoni Chrościelewski

której w czasie wojny służył i walczył ś. p. Michał Lasek.

Tego samego dnia, gdy w Amerykańskiej Częstochowie odbywał się pogrzeb ś. p. Michała Laska, w Watykanie Mszę św. za spójność jego duszy odprawił o. Krzysztof Wieliczko - b. naczelną kapelan SWAP.

Tekst i zdjęcia: Teofil Lachowicz

Weteran Nr 1131, Lipiec 2015



In Memory of My Friend Michal



My friend, Michal Lasek, passed away peacefully, in Clifton, New Jersey, on Saturday, June 6, 2015 while planting tomatoes.

1923

Born ninety-two years ago in a farm village near Przyworsk, Poland, his route to his peaceful and well-manicured garden had taken him from the edge of the Arctic Circle to Scotland and then into the hell of a parachute drop into an enemy-held drop zone.

With the German invasion of Poland in 1939, the then 16-year-old left his village to join the Polish soldiers regrouping in the east. This came to nothing when the Soviet Union invaded eastern Poland, and dividing the nation with Nazi Germany.

The young man soon was deported to a Soviet labor camp not far below the Arctic Circle. The nameless camp was between Kotlas and Vorkuta. He was one of countless slave laborers building a railroad to connect Russia with the White Sea.

Maria Grycuk, deported with her sisters from Nowogrodek to the camp, remembered him as a very quiet but observant young man. Together with the other inmates they spent the winters chopping down trees, and moving them onto a frozen river where they would go down river with the spring thaw. In 1941, Stalin announced an 'amnesty' for the deported Poles, and they traveled down that same river on rafts to reception camps in the south, and then to Iran. One of Maria's sisters died from the combination of disease, hunger and exhaustion. With her mother, and surviving sister, Maria was sent to a refugee camp near Bombay, India.

Michal Joined the Polish Army in Kermine, Uzbekistan, in 1942 and eventually arrived in Scotland to join the Polish Forces there. He volunteered to become a paratrooper, and with his other comrades in the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade, hoped to be the first to return to Poland.

After months of training, the political and military situations conspired to have the Parachute Brigade fighting



My wife Marie, Michal Lasek and Me. Pulaski Parade in New York City, NY 2005

for the freedom of Holland, despite the fact that the city of Warsaw was trying to liberate itself in a bloody uprising.

During Operation MARKET GARDEN, the Polish troops flew through a "huge wall of fire and steel" as one of them so described, and then parachuted into fields where the enemy was waiting for them. The next morning, Michal saw his platoon commander killed, and was among the wounded as a German attack overran his company's position.

That September, Hitler had won his last victory in the west, having destroyed an entire British airborne division. Less than a week later, Warsaw capitulated. With over 200,000 Poles killed, and the city destroyed, the end of the war saw a Soviet takeover of Poland.

Very few of the Polish exiles would return to a homeland which had traded one foreign totalitarian dictatorship for another. Discharged from the army, Michal took courses as

a machinist, and was working in Coventry when he again met Maria Grycuk. They married in 1949, and with their son, George emigrated to the United States. They spent their first nights in New York in the Chelsea Hotel, with baby George sleeping in a dresser drawer, unaware that it was also the haunt of famous artists, writers, and musicians.

Six years later, with another son on the way, the couple moved to New Jersey. It was there that I met Michal. I was writing an article about the Poles at Arnhem for CAMPAIGNS magazine, and attended the New Jersey Chapter of the Polish Airborne Forces Association. He knew my father, a fellow member of Post 36, Polish Army Veterans Association in Passaic.

After the article was published, I began work turning the article into a book. The work meant multiple trips to England, Holland, Scotland and Poland. Attending reunions and commemorations, I had spent time with dozens of

former paratroopers. These ran the full spectrum of soldiers, from generals to yardbirds. Somehow, Michal Lasek remained my favorite. He was always cheerful, and when he had to say anything deservedly bad about anyone, it was always done quickly, quietly, and without drama.

Year after year we attended Polish Soldiers' Day ceremonies at the Cathedral in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, home to a cemetery for Polish Army veterans. After Mass, a veterans' parade, and speeches, we sat together with other veterans and their families, picnicking on Polish delicacies and food from the garden.

We were together in Washington in 1990, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the United States Airborne, and during the 40th and 70th commemorations of the Battle of Arnhem in Holland. I watched as Michal was presented to Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands when the Polish Parachute Brigade was decorated with the Dutch Order of William. The one regret I had, was that I was not with him after Poland adopted democracy and became independent. Polish soldiers came from all over the world to Warsaw to march in a victory parade long denied them.

Living in Louisiana for over two decades, I always visited the Laseks whenever I was in New Jersey. After hugs, kisses and a few jokes, the table would be covered with tasty cold cuts, homemade pickles, and Polish beer that sat in the

cellar waiting for my visits.

This humble former paratrooper spent much time involved with the Polish community. I was very proud of my friend, son of a peasant from Przyworsk, when he stood watch over the remains of the famous pianist and former President of Poland Ignacy Paderewski's coffin. The vigil lasted for two days, with the honor guard present day and night at Arlington National Cemetery in preparation for the return of Paderewski's remains to Warsaw.

Maria Lasek passed away four years ago, and Michal remained at the house he and his wife loved, visited frequently by his daughter Dorothy. I last saw him less than a month before I sat down to write this. Living as a widower, he stayed busy, reading and waiting for the weather would allow him to work in the garden. Whenever I had an opportunity to speak to his daughter Dorothy (who inherited the warmth and humor of both of her parents), how her father was doing. She would say, "You know my father . . . to him the glass is always half full, rather than half empty." My friend was a simple man who ignored any pretentious people, as he was without any trace of pretension himself. He was my friend, and I, along with many others, will miss him.

*George Cholewczynski,
New Orleans, LA*