

# EXTRA THE Oflag DAILY BULLETIN EXTRA

First Edition Issue 1

July 2021

## Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of *The Bulletin Extra*, created to bring you updates about the on-going projects of the Polish-American Foundation for the Commemoration of POW Camps in Szubin and the Friends of Oflag 64.

*The Bulletin Extra* borrows its name from the wartime daily news-sheet, *The Daily Bulletin*, which had been published by a small group of Oflag 64 POWs from the Fall of 1943 until their last days at camp in January 1945. *The Bulletin* staffers posted news and photos about the war and the world. Their sources of information—interpreted by a few German-speaking POWs on *The Bulletin* staff— included the German Propaganda Ministry's German language radio broadcasts blasted over camp loudspeakers, and German newspapers and magazines that the guards distributed. The Propaganda Ministry also produced POW-targeted English language radio broadcasts and publications. Unbeknownst to the Germans, the POW staffers supplemented these sources with the information they heard each night over the BBC on the POWs' secret radio.

*The Bulletin* staffers used paper and ink donated by the International YMCA to hand-write their articles in tidy columns on large poster-sized sheets of paper. Twice a day, every day, they tacked up the latest issue on the bulletin board outside of the Mess Hall. By January 1945, more than 1,400 POWs were gathering around the bulletin board twice a day to read the latest news. Even the Germans came to depend on it for its honest reporting.

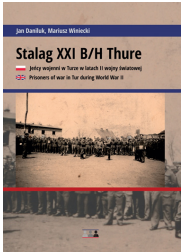
Our masthead above is a replica of the one the POWs used, and which is now archived at the U.S. Army Heritage & Education Center in Carlisle, PA. Of course, our issues of *The Bulletin Extra* will be a lot easier to publish than *The Daily Bulletin*. But we hope to keep you as well informed as the original *Bulletin* staffers would have liked, as we continue to commemorate their remarkable history.

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## FOUNDATION PUBLISHES ITS FIRST MONOGRAPH

One of the objectives of the Polish-American Foundation for the Commemoration of POW Camps in Szubin is to research the experiences of World War II POWs in German captivity, with particular emphasis on Polish lands, including the town of Szubin and its surroundings. In light of this charge, the Foundation's first publication, which came out at the end of 2020, examines the nearby Stalag XXI B/H. This little-known camp was located in the village of Tur, a few miles north of Szubin. The camp held mostly British prisoners who had been captured in France and Norway.



The publication, co-authored by the Foundation's President Mariusz Winięcki and Board Member Jan Daniluk, PhD in History, is written in Polish and English. The book draws

on memories and material supplied by the families of the camp's former British inmates. In addition, the Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War in Łambinowice, Poland, provided the book's rare photographs. The Central Museum is among several respected Polish institutions to which the Foundation is grateful for their continuous support.

The book is available to purchase on eBay: <https://ebay.us/FjBD1K>

## OFLAG 64 POWs' ARTIFACTS AND STORIES FIND THEIR WAY BACK TO SZUBIN

As we plan the design and construction of the Museum of POW Camps in Szubin, we continue to grow our collection of treasured artifacts. The Museum's artifact displays will bring the camp history to life. Sincere thanks to the tireless volunteers of the Friends of Oflag 64 Artifact Committee, many of whom are Oflag 64 descendants. The committee is led by descendant Dave Stewart.

To date, the Artifact Committee has been

in contact with approximately 70 Oflag 64 families and collected more than 750 items.

These items include journals, utensils, maps, clothing, food, cigarettes, letters and postcards, photos taken at the camp, camp sport competition awards, camp publications, items smuggled into Oflag 64, Long March mementos and other items from their time as POWs in Szubin. In addition, a museum library collection of over 250 Oflag 64 related books, newspapers, magazines and other periodicals have been donated by several Oflag 64 family members.

If you have items that you would like to donate, please download the Artifact Donation Form under Documents on the website [www.friendsofotlag64.org](http://www.friendsofotlag64.org). To view samples of some artifacts donated to date click on the Artifacts link on the above website. Enjoy!

The Museum is interested in any items used by the POWs in Szubin. By sharing your treasures with the museum, you will be educating researchers and museum visitors from around the world, for generations to come, about the history of these brave and resourceful POWs.

### Artifact Inventory ID No. 16.28 (Class I Artifact)



Donated by Janice, Susan, Marjory, and Randolph Holder, children of Howard Randolph (Boomer)  
**Artifact Description:** German silverware stamped with the Nazi *Reichsadler*

"Lt. Anthony Cipriani, acting quartermaster, issued us a knife, fork and spoon, and a small three swallow sized cup, all marked with the insignia of a square-winged eagle and swastika." Howard Randolph Holder, *Escape To Russia*, Iberian Publishing Company, 1994

## Learning from the National World War II Museum

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We are proud to announce that five members from the Friends of Oflag 64 Board and Artifact Committee and three Foundation Board members completed an online course entitled "Captured: American POWs in WWII" which was sponsored by the World War II Museum in New Orleans and the Department of Continuing and Professional Education of Arizona State University. The instructor, Kimberly Guise, is the WWII Museum's curator for its POW collection. All agree that our knowledge was enhanced by this opportunity. We will apply our learnings to our organizations' ongoing research and artifact collecting.

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## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS Monetary Donors

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The Friends and the Foundation launched a U.S. fundraising drive near the end of 2020 through mailing over 400 introductory letters with an accompanying brochure. If you did

### ***Donors as of June 11, 2019 – June 11, 2021***

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Baldauf Families	Jones, Leslie	Roberts, Dr. Surry P.
Boon, Brenda Bucci	Kinlan, Patrick K.	Shade, Sara
Boswell, Jeannine and Jay	Korber Family, Mary, Jim Mason, Mike and Robert	Sharpe, Lois Jean
Bruno, Elizabeth	Kreutzer, Anne Hoskot and Tom	Sharpe, Mary and Wilbur (ex- Oflag 64 POW)
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not receive this mailing, please [contact us](#) and we will send you a copy. If you have friends or family who would be interested in receiving our mailings, please provide their names and addresses and we would be thrilled to include them.

To date our 2020 campaign has raised \$12,731.00. Since our inception in 2019, we are honored to report almost \$100,000.00 has been donated to help fulfill our mission to support the Polish-American Foundation of POW Camps in Szubin.

If you have a professional skill, such as grant writing, fundraising or social media, please consider sharing it with our organizations. Contact us at [office@friendsofotlag64.org](mailto:office@friendsofotlag64.org). You will be welcomed with open arms.

Many thanks to our newest financial donors and to those of you who have donated in the past. You have brought us to great heights. The next edition of *The Bulletin* will highlight the donors of artifacts.



## Coded Messages from Oflag 64 Confirm Executions

Seventy-eight years ago, on April 13, 1943, the German Propaganda Ministry announced to the world their discovery of the murder of 22,000 Polish leaders, officers, and intelligentsia. They had found the executed bodies in a mass grave on the edge of Poland's Katyń Forest. These killings came to be known as the Katyń Massacre, but only since 1989 have Poles been able to commemorate it. In fact, the U.S. Government did not reveal the full truth of its own part in the discovery until 2012. However, Oflag 64 played a unique role in supporting the Polish people during this tragic time of their history.

In the German's 1943 announcement, they accused the Soviet Union of these murders and its cover-up. The Soviets reacted by accusing the Germans. They said that the German accusation was an attempt to drive a wedge between Russia and its western Allies. In response, the Germans rounded-up a small group of Allied POW senior officers, and forced them on a thousand-mile journey to visit the site and bear witness to their discovery. Among them were Americans Lt. Col. John H. Van Vliet and Captain Donald B. Stewart.

Stewart and Van Vliet arrived at Oflag 64 a few weeks later. From Szubin, they sent their first coded messages to the Allies, detailing what they had seen. They confirmed that the Soviets were indeed the perpetrators of this horrific action. In a coded response, the U.S. Government ordered the men to keep this knowledge under wraps, for the sake of maintaining a strong front against the Germans and the Axis powers.

Today, a monument commemorating Van Vliet and Stewart's efforts on behalf of the Polish people stands at the former site of the gates of Oflag 64 and the future home of the Museum of POW Camps in Szubin. Each anniversary, officials and citizens gather

there for one of several commemorations held throughout Poland. Polish TV and radio cover these events. The attendees in Szubin this year included the most senior Polish government and U.S. Army officials to have ever participated in this local ceremony.

Following this year's ceremony, Poland's largest independent newspaper ran a full-page article in its regional edition about the Americans' role in witnessing the truth about the Soviet's responsibility. In addition, the article paid tribute to our Foundation and its mission to highlight the history of the Allied POWs held in German-occupied Poland. We are honored that the Foundation is becoming a valued source for POW history.

To read more about the tragic and complex history of Katyń, the coded messages, and the decades long secrecy, please visit the Foundation website at <http://bit.ly/KatynOflag64>.



Photographs courtesy of Lt. Pawel Banasiak



## Friends of Oflag 64

**MISSION:** Friends of Oflag 64 supports the Polish-American Foundation by fundraising, collecting artifacts, publicizing and promoting the Museum of POWs in Szubin, so that the history of the POW camp in Szubin and the courageous Polish citizens who assisted them will be preserved for generations to come.

Visit our website for more history and photographs, follow us on Facebook to keep up to date, and contact us to volunteer, donate, or say hello:

 [friendsofotlag64.org](http://friendsofotlag64.org)

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 [office@friendsofotlag64.org](mailto:office@friendsofotlag64.org)

 [donate to Friends of Oflag 64](#)

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Cindy Sharpe Burgess, Chairman



## Polish-American Foundation

for the Commemoration of POW Camps in Szubin

**MISSION:** The Foundation contributes to the knowledge of World War II by studying and commemorating the experiences of Allied prisoners-of-war. In addition to the history and operations of the German POW camps, its projects focus on the thousands of POWs who the Germans incarcerated in Szubin, Poland, and the brave Polish citizens who assisted those prisoners. Its cornerstone project is the creation of a museum in Szubin at the original site of one of the camp's barracks.

Visit our website for more history and photographs, follow us on social media for the latest discoveries and updates, and contact us to volunteer, donate, or say hello:


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 [office@szubinpowcamps.org](mailto:office@szubinpowcamps.org)

 [donate to Polish-American Foundation](#) (via Friends of Oflag 64)

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