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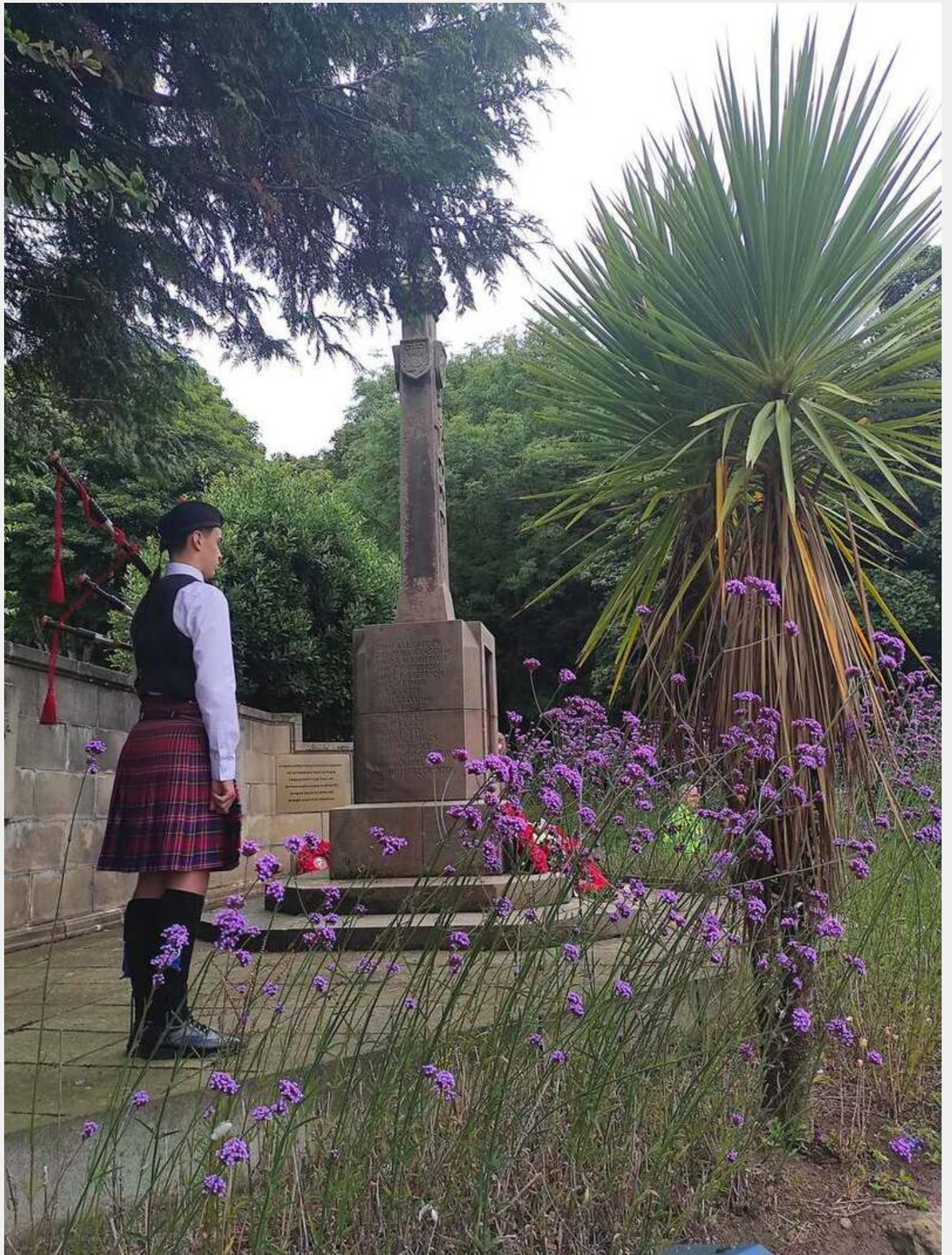
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The Shortest Way Home: General Sosabowski and the Polish Paratroopers of Fife















In memory of Major General Stanisław Sosabowski,
the 1st Independent Parachute Brigade
headquartered in Largo House, and
the Polish soldiers assigned to defend Fife
during the Second World War who
all fought as part of the Allied forces.















From 28 to 30 August 2026, a series of commemorative events was held across Fife to honour General Stanisław Sosabowski and the soldiers of the 1st Independent Polish Parachute Brigade.

Representatives of the IPN Office of International Cooperation: Deputy Director Mateusz Marek, Ph.D., and Blanka Kamińska-Pienkos, took part in the events organised in Largo, Upper Largo, Kirkcaldy and Leven.

Established in Scotland in September 1941 under the command of General Stanisław Sosabowski, the Polish Parachute Brigade trained in Upper Largo for a planned airborne operation in occupied Poland. The mission was never carried out. In September 1944, the Brigade was instead deployed to the Netherlands as part of Operation Market Garden. Polish paratroopers fought in the Driel and Arnhem area, suffering heavy casualties. General Sosabowski, who had raised concerns about aspects of the Allied plan, was later subjected to unjust criticism following the failure of the operation.

The wartime presence of the Polish paratroopers left a lasting mark on Fife. More than 80 years later, their memory continues to be preserved through memorials, monuments, commemorative ceremonies and local community initiatives.

The commemorations began on 28 August in Largo, where wreaths were laid at the War Memorial and the memorial plaque dedicated to General Sosabowski. Candles were also lit at the graves of Brigade soldiers in Upper Largo. Participants subsequently visited locations connected with the Polish military presence in Fife, including St Andrews and a mosaic created by one of the Brigade's soldiers.

On 29 August, a wreath was laid at the Falkland Memorial, followed by the Polish Harvest Festival in Kirkcaldy, organised by Polish House in Kirkcaldy. The programme included a ceremony at the Katyn Memorial and a range of cultural activities bringing together the Polish and Scottish communities.

The final day of commemorations, 30 August, took place in Leven. Following the General Sosabowski Race at Leven Beach, participants marched to Leven Memorial Garden, where wreaths were laid at the monument dedicated to General Sosabowski and at the Leven Memorial. The ceremony concluded with a performance by pupils of the General Sosabowski Polish School in Glasgow.

An important part of the programme was the opening in Leven of an IPN exhibition dedicated to Colonel Ryszard Małaszkiwicz. From 1943, Małaszkiwicz served as Chief of Staff of the 1st Independent Polish Parachute Brigade and took part in Operation Market Garden. After the war, he returned to Poland, where he was arrested and persecuted by the communist authorities for his service in the Polish Armed Forces in the West. He died in 1988 and was posthumously promoted to the rank of Colonel in 2020.

The ceremony in Leven was attended by the family of Col. Małaszkiwicz: his granddaughter, Ewa Haliniarz, accompanied by her husband, Dariusz, and their sons, Bartłomiej and Dominik.

The exhibition presents Colonel Małaszkiwicz's wartime service, his role in the Brigade and his post-war persecution. It also highlights the

experiences of Polish servicemen whose wartime service was followed by repression under the communist regime.

The commemorations in Fife demonstrated the enduring significance of the history of the Polish paratroopers and the shared heritage of Poland and Scotland. Through continued remembrance and educational initiatives, the stories of General Sosabowski and the soldiers of the Brigade are being preserved for future generations.

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