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“I Share My Story with You” – Captain Eugeniusz Niedzielski

A life shaped by history, an extraordinary journey, and a story that deserves to be passed down to future generations. On Opowiedziane.pl, we have published a filmed testimony lasting over two-and-a-half hours featuring Captain Eugeniusz Niedzielski, one of the last surviving soldiers of General Stanisław Maczek’s 1st Polish Armoured Division. His remarkable life reflects the fate of a generation of Poles whose lives were profoundly shaped by the upheavals and tragedies of the twentieth century.



Born on 1 September 1923 in Volhynia, near Dubno, Eugeniusz Niedzielski grew up in a world that would soon be changed forever. On 10 February 1940, while still a young boy, he was deported with his family to Siberia by the Soviet authorities. After leaving the Soviet Union, he embarked on a long and arduous journey through Persia, Palestine and Africa, eventually reaching Great Britain. There, he underwent military training and, in 1944, joined General Stanisław Maczek's 1st Polish Armoured Division. He fought alongside his fellow soldiers as the Division advanced through France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. After the war, he remained in exile, settling in London, where he built a new life and made a home for his family.

Through this filmed testimony, Mr Niedzielski offers a first-hand account of the events that shaped his life: his childhood before the war, the loss of his family home, deportation, his wartime journey and the life he built in the years that followed. Yet his testimony is far more than a record of historical events. It is a deeply personal account of longing, courage, loss and the difficult work of rebuilding a life. He speaks of the people he encountered along the way and of the strength that enabled him to endure even the darkest moments.

Particularly moving are Mr Niedzielski's reflections, shaped by a life spanning more than a century. His recollections offer an extraordinary perspective on the past, taking us beyond dates, battles and political decisions, to the human lives shaped by these events. They remind us that behind every major historical event are individuals with families, hopes, dreams, losses and difficult choices of their own. As the last

living witnesses gradually leave us, preserving their experiences and ensuring that future generations can learn from them has become ever more important.

Captain Eugeniusz Niedzielski's story forms part of the broader history we have been bringing to audiences for years through our international project, *Trails of Hope: The Odyssey of Freedom*. The project explores the experiences of Poles driven far from their homeland by war, deportation and forced displacement; their long and often painful journeys towards freedom; the wartime service of Polish soldiers in the West; and the post-war lives of those unable to return home. Mr Niedzielski's testimony lends these stories a profoundly personal dimension, bringing the wider history of wartime displacement, military service and exile into focus through one man's memories, experiences and life choices.

We believe that preserving the testimonies of people like Mr Niedzielski is not merely an important act of historical documentation. It is a responsibility we owe to those who came before us. History recorded in textbooks helps us understand the facts, but the history recounted by those who witnessed it helps us understand the people behind the facts the figures.

We are deeply grateful to Mr Niedzielski for placing his trust in us, for the time he devoted to this project, and for his willingness to share his life story. It is a privilege to preserve his testimony so that future generations, too, may listen to his story and learn from his experiences.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Mr Tom Wiśniewski, whose support and commitment were instrumental in making this project possible.

We invite you to watch the complete filmed testimony on Opowiedziane.pl. This is a story worth taking the time to hear in full—not only to gain a deeper understanding of the past, but also to recognise our shared responsibility to preserve these accounts and pass them on to generations yet to come.

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