

# Transcript of video file

Hello, my name is Stan Krawczyk and I'm the son of Walenty Krawczyk, a Polish soldier who served during the Second World War in 1939 to 1945.

This is the story of his journey from Poland across North Africa to England. My father was born in a place called Jag [?] in Poland in 1910. In 1932 he joined the Home Guard for his national service, called the 2nd Ulam Cavalry Lancers, based in Suwałki [?] in Poland. But by 1935 he was discharged from national service. But in 1939, with the dawn of the Second World War, he was recalled to join the Carpathian Lancers. Then crossed the border to Kispest camp in Hungary and in November 1939 he moved to Baia [?] in Romania, crossing the border to Yugoslavia 4 weeks later.

Then Bulgaria and by train to Istanbul, Turkey. By 1941, train again from Turkey to Aleppo in Syria, then home. Then moved again to Camp Latron in Palestine and Egypt, followed by a place called Mex outside Alexandria. Once again travelling this time by ship down the Suez Canal to Tobruk. Onwards to Cairo, a place called Manor Camp, just outside the pyramids. Which probably explains why my Dad always talk about the pyramids and he loved Egyptology. In 1941 he fought in the Siege of Tobruk.

In 1943, the brigade moved to Palestine and Iraq, joined by soldiers from Russia, and became known as the Second Corps Unit. Then on to Egypt and Italy. That particular unit was manned by soldiers from Polish soldiers from around the world, most of them volunteered to join up. In 1943 he was wounded twice in Italy. But on the 18th of May 1944 he was severely wounded in the Battle of Monte Casino. Taken to an Italian military hospital, the surgeons couldn't remove shrapnel that was deep in his chest because it was too close to his heart and they couldn't take the risk. He also had a punctured lung and more shrapnel in his right hand which remained there for the rest of his life. One of his party pieces was taking a magnet and sticking it to his wrist there, and he could hold the magnet up. He always had a sense of humour.

In 1945 he sailed to England on board a Red Cross ship, transferred to Killearn Hospital near Glasgow in Scotland. The following years, he moved to a number of camps up and down the country, which were resettlement camps for ex-Polish servicemen and their families. In 1949, he started as a quality inspector at Remploy Furniture Factory in [?] in Lancashire, which explains why we always had the house full of their furniture and it was always the best quality furniture that they sold, so perk of the job. By 1966, he had met my mum and he lived in the family home until his death in 1995.

He was awarded many medals for his service during the war, but the price he paid during the post-war years was a heavy one. Reliving the horrors of war every day, being physically disabled for life, daily medication and pain, living alone, not able to return to free Poland. Not until 1990, after the Berlin Wall had fallen and the Cold War had finished did he finally make a visit. It was to be his only one, but at least he went. Thankfully, when he met my mum, that pain and grief diminished. He was the best husband and father.

I have created this recording as a tribute to all Polish ex-servicemen often overlooked by history. They carried a heavy burden for our freedom.