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History of the Polish Naval Academy and the Polish Navy and Poland. Calendar of the most important events

I judged the Poles by their enemies. And I found it was an almost unfailing – truth that their enemies were the enemies of magna – nimity and manhood. If a man loved slavery, if he loved usury, if he loved terrorism and all the trampled mire of materialistic politics, I have always found that he added to these affections the passion of a hatred of Poland. She could be judged in the light of that hatred; and the judgment has proved to be right.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936),
a British writer and philosopher, introduction in
Charles Sarolea, *Letters on Polish Affairs*, 1922

Birth of a Nation, First Polish Republic, Poland Partitioned

If God is with us, then who is against us

(motto till the 17th century)

For Faith, Justice, and the King

(motto since 18th century)

- 966 – The new Polish nation Christianised by Mieszko I, first ruler of Poland
- 1025 – Boleslaw I the Brave (*Boleslaw Chrobry*) crowned the first King of Poland
- 1136 – The Battle of Kungahälla, now Kungälv near Goteborg in Sweden, (10 August) One of largest naval and landing operations in Europe in the Middle Ages



King Sigismund II Augustus (*Zygmunt II August*, reign 1548–1572, born in 1520) creator of Naval Commission (*Komisja Morska*), the First Polish Admiralty, in 1568. His Royal titles: “Sigismund Augustus, by the Grace of God, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania, Lord and heir of the Lands of Kraków, Sandomierz, Sieradz, Łęczyca, Kuyavia, Kiev, Hereditary Lord of Ruthenia, Volhynia, Prussia, Masovia, Podlachia, Chełmno Land, Elbląg, Pomerania, Samogitia, Livonia etc. Lord and heir”. Painted by Jan Matejko in 1891

- 1308** — Gdańsk and Eastern Pomerania seized by the Teutonic Order (the Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem). Poland lost access to the Baltic for next 158 years.
- 1410** — The Battle of Grunwald (15th July), Polish victory, one of the largest in Medieval Europe fought between the Kingdom of Poland supported by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Teutonic Order.
- 1463** — The Battle of Vistula Lagoon (15th September). The first privateer fleet. The Teutonic Navy eliminated as a significant force. One of the largest in Medieval Europe naval battle.
- 1466** — The Second Peace of Thorn (*Toruń*) with the Teutonic Order (19th October), Poland regained access to the Baltic Sea with the major port of Gdańsk and took control of the lucrative grain trade. Thanks to fact that the large port of Białogród (Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiyi in the mouth of Dnister River, now Ukraine) was part of Moldavia, Polish vassal state since 1387, Kingdom of Poland spanned its influences from Baltic to Black Sea and controlled part of the significant trade route with the East before the great geographical discoveries. Following the fall of Constantinople even one of the largest European city Caffa (now Feodosia) on the Crimean Peninsula, former Genoese colony and a major trade centre, placed itself under the protection of King of Poland in 1462.
- 1517–1522** — The second privateer fleet (Polish: *kaper, korsarz*) created by King Sigismund I the Old (*Zygmunt I Stary*).
- 1558** — The Livonian War began and was fought for control of the territory of present-day Estonia and Latvia. The privateers authorized to conduct raids on shipping and ports at war on behalf of the Polish Crown were fighting against trade navigation to and from port of Narva (now in Estonia) seized by Grand Duchy of Moscow (Russia, see footnote at the page 20).
- 1561** — The Treaty of Vilna/Wilno (28th November). Commonwealth spanned its influences to the 1100 km long Baltic coast and ports from Łeba river mouth in Pomerania to Parnawa (Estonian Pärnu, historically Pernau).
- 1568** — Naval Commission (*Komisja Morska*). First Admiralty created by King Sigismund II Augustus (*Zygmunt II August*) who want to build Polish *dominium Maris Baltici* [dominion of the Baltic Sea]. One of the largest assembly halls of the PNA bears the name of King Sigismund II Augustus.

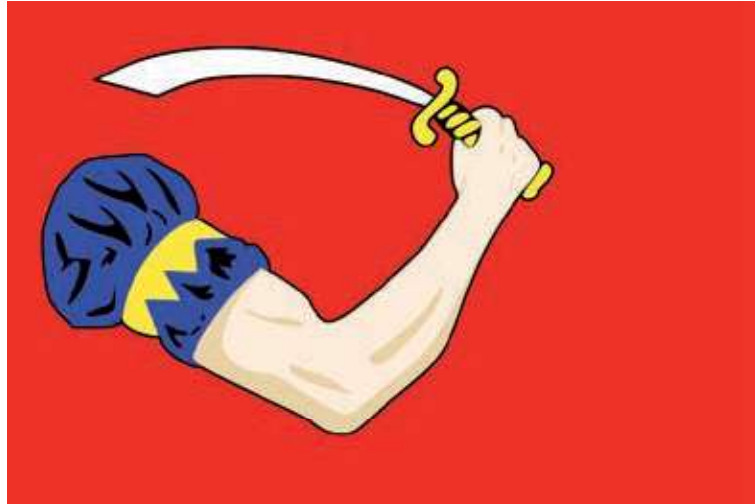
- 1569** – The Union of Lublin (1st July) created a single state, the Commonwealth of the Polish Kingdom (the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth). It replaced the personal union of the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with a real union and elective monarchy. The Commonwealth was an absolutely exceptional in Europe, religiously tolerant and democratic.
- 1609** – The Battle of Salis (now Salacgrīva), Gulf of Riga (23rd–24th March). Polish victory over Swedish Royal Navy. First use of fire ships in the Baltic Sea.
- 1610** – After a decisive victory in the Battle of Klushino/Kłuszyn (4th July) over the Grand Duchy of Moscow and Kingdom of Sweden, Polish forces entered Moscow (9th October) and occupied the city for more than two years. At the Battle of Klushino, 7,000 Polish winged hussars defeated the greater forces of the Russian and Swedish army of about 35,000–40,000 soldiers.
- 1619** – The Truce of Deulino or Treaty of Dywilino (4th January) with the Grand Duchy of Moscow (Russia). The agreement marked the greatest geographical expansion of the Commonwealth of the Polish Kingdom (990,000 km²).
- 1620–1621** – Polish-Ottoman (Turkey) War. The 1621 Battle of Khotyn (2nd September–9th October) and Polish Cossack naval activity at the Black Sea (see map 3, p. 21).
- 1625** – Commission of Royal Navy Ships.
- 1627** – The Battle of Oliwa (near Gdańsk). Polish victory over Swedish Royal Navy (28th November).
- 1651** – Duchy of Courland (present territory of Latvia), vassal of Poland, established colony in Gambia, West Africa (26th October).
- 1654** – Duchy of Courland established a colony and settlement (*New Courland*) in Tobago, Caribbean (20th May).
- 1683** – The Battle of Vienna, Austria (12th September), a decisive battle of the Christian Army under King of Poland John III Sobieski against the Ottoman Empire, seen as the turning point in history, after which “the Ottoman Turks ceased to be a menace to the

The Royal Fleet flagship, galleon *Rycerz Święty Jerzy* (St George the Knight) fighting with Swedish flagship *Tigern* during the 1627 Battle of Oliwa



THE POLISH NAVAL ACADEMY

Naval Jack (Pennon) of the Polish Royal Navy in the 17th century



Christian world”. The last major victory of the Polish Hussars as a best ever type of heavily armoured shock cavalry.

- 1765** – Nobles’ Academy of the Corps of Cadets of His Royal Majesty and the Commonwealth (*Akademia Szlachecka Korpusu Kadetów Jego Królewskiej Mości i Rzeczypospolitej*).
- 1772** – First Partition of Poland, the subsequent ones took place in 1793 and 1795. Polish poets, politicians, noblemen, writers, artists, many of whom were forced to emigrate, became the revolutionaries participating in all European and American uprisings of the late 18th and 19th century, fulfilling their desire for freedom under the slogan of “For our freedom and yours”.
- 1812** – Polish troops entered Moscow for second time in history (15th September) as the first soldiers of the Napoleonic French army (the *Grande Armée*). Poles supported Napoleon because of his attempts to restore Poland.
- 1830** – The November Uprising against the Russian Empire. Midshipmen’s Day (*Dzień Podchorążego*) is celebrated in Polish military academies in order to commemorate this event every year on 29th November. There were other uprisings in 19th century, the biggest ones were the Greater Poland uprising of 1848 against (German) Kingdom of Prussia and the January Uprising of 1863–1864 against the Russian Empire, etc.

Second Polish Republic and World War II

God, Honour, Fatherland

(Motto of the Second Polish Republic, "God" added in 1943)

- 1918** – Poland (11th November) and Polish Navy (28th November) reborn after the end of World War I.
- 1919** – The inland port of Pińsk (Pripyat River, Polesia Marshes) seized after the battle against the Bolsheviks (5th March) and the Riverine Flotilla of the Polish Navy (Pińsk Flotilla) created (19th April).
- 1920** – Regained access to the Baltic Sea (without port of Gdańsk), Poland's Wedding to the Sea in the fishing town of Puck (10th February).
- 1920** – A survey vessel ORP Pomorzanie (10th February), first ship of Polish Navy, under Naval Ensign of Poland till 1932.
- 1920** – The Battle of Czarnobyl (near the mouth of the Pripyat River to Dnieper, 27th April) during the Polish-Soviet/Bolshevik War (the 1920 Kiev Operation). The first victory of reborn Polish Navy (Pińsk Flotilla).
- 1920** – The Battle of Warsaw (12th–25th August), decisive Polish victory during the Polish–Soviet/Bolshevik War. Poland, on the verge of a total defeat, repulsed and defeated the Red Army. Under Bolsheviks' plan the fall of Warsaw would be a signal for the start of communist revolutions in Poland, Germany, and other Western European countries.
- 1921** – The Peace of Riga (18th March). The treaty ended the Polish–Soviet/Bolshevik War.
- 1921** – Provisional Instructor Courses (*Tymczasowe Kursy Instruktorskie, TKI*).
- 1922–1928** – Naval Officers School in Toruń (*Oficerska Szkoła Marynarki Wojennej, OSMW*).
- 1928–1946** – Navy Midshipmen School (*Szkoła Podchorążych Marynarki Wojennej, SPMW*).
- 1930** – First cruise of training ship ORP Iskra (first) through Atlantic Ocean with visit in Cuba and United States.
- 1930** – First destroyer ORP Wicher (*Wicher-class*), launched in 1928 Blainville, France, in service 1930–1939 (sunk on 3rd September). Two ships of this class were built, the other was ORP Burza (in service 1932–1960).
- 1931** – First submarine ORP Ryś (*Wilk-class submarine*), launched in 1929 in Nantes, France, in service 1931–1955 (1939–1945 interned

- in neutral Sweden). There were built three *Wilk*-class submarines, two other *ORP Wilk* (escaped from Baltic to the United Kingdom in 1939) and *ORP Żbik* (1939–1945 interned in neutral Sweden).
- 1938** – The Navy Midshipmen School based in Bydgoszcz.
- 1938** – Port of Gdynia founded in 1923 reached the highest trans-shipments among the Baltic ports (80% of Polish export and 60% of Polish import passed through Gdynia).
- 1939** – The Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact (23rd August), officially known as the Treaty of Non-aggression between Germany and the Soviet Union, in fact the secret protocol of the treaty defined the borders of Soviet and German “spheres of influence” in Central and Eastern Europe and was a base for joint aggression against Poland in 1939 (Fourth Partition of Poland) which marks the beginning of World War II. Untill 22nd June 1941 (German attack on Soviet Union), Germany and the Soviet Union were allies cooperating on trade and military matters and on extermination of Polish elites and leaders.
- 1939** – The Agreement of Mutual Assistance between Poland and the United Kingdom (25th August). United Kingdom and France were not ready for war. Both governments knew the secret protocol of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact but did not inform their ally – Polish government. Moreover, they were not going to keep their legal obligations towards Poland and only needed time to catch up with Germany which initially planned to attack the West first. Nazi Germany was forced to attack the East first, and Western Allies were given time to prepare for war thanks to military guarantees extended to Poland.
- 1939** – At 04:47 on 1st September, German troops attacked the Polish Military Transit Depot of Westerplatte. The joint aggression by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union (17th September) marked the beginning of World War II. Defensive War. 2nd Naval Battalion (midshipmen) in the squad of the Independent Operational Group “Polesie” under the command of General Franciszek Kleeberg. Last battle of Kock from 2nd to 5th October.
- 1939** – Defence of the Coast (Rear-Admiral Józef Unrug commander of Coastal Defence and Navy, Colonel Stanisław Dąbek commander of Land Coastal Defence). The longest was defence of the Hel Fortified Area untill 2nd October (the Battle of Hel).
- 1939** – The Navy Midshipmen School moved its base for a short period to Horodyszcze, Polesia (3rd–11th September 1939).

- 1939–1945** – The Battle of Atlantic. Atlantic and Arctic Convoys (3rd September – 8th May): *ORP Burza*, *ORP Garland*, *ORP Orkan* (sunk), *ORP Dzik* and *ORP Jastrzqb*.
- 1939–1941** – The Navy Midshipmen School based in Devonport (UK).
- 1940** – Naval Battles of Narvik (9th April – 8th June): *ORP Błyskawica*, *ORP Burza* and *ORP Grom* (sunk).
- 1940–1942** – Siege of Malta (11th June – 20th November). Malta was a base for destroyers *ORP Garland*, *ORP Krakowiak*, *ORP Kujawiak* (sunk) and submarines *ORP Sokół* and *ORP Dzik*.
- 1941** – The sinking of German Battleship *Bismarck* (26th–27th May): *ORP Piorun*.
- 1941–1944** – The Navy Midshipmen School based in Bickleigh (UK).
- 1943** – Allied invasion of Sicily (10th July): *ORP Krakowiak*, *ORP Piorun*, *ORP Ślqzak* and *ORP Dzik*.
- 1943** – Allied invasion of continental Italy (2nd–15th September): *ORP Krakowiak* and *ORP Ślqzak*.
- 1943–1946** – Naval Reserve Midshipmen School (*Szkoła Podchorążych Rezerwy Marynarki Wojennej, SPRMW*).
- 1944** – Operation Tempest (*Akcja „Burza”*), a series of anti-German uprisings and fights conducted by the Home Army in Poland occupied by Nazi Germany after the Red Army had entered pre-war Polish territory (January). Major uprisings were in Wilno/Vilna (now Vilnius), Lwów (now Lviv) and Warsaw (only in Warsaw 200,000 mostly civilian people were killed and the left bank of the city was completely annihilated).
- 1944** – The Normandy landings (6th June): *ORP Dragon*, *ORP Krakowiak*, *ORP Ślqzak*, *ORP Błyskawica* and *ORP Piorun*.
- 1944** – The Battle of Ushant, Celtic Sea (9th June): *ORP Błyskawica* and *ORP Piorun*.
- 1944** – The Battle of Jersey, English Channel (14th June): *ORP Piorun*.
- 1944–1946** – The Navy Midshipmen School based in Okehampton (UK).
- 1945** – The Polish 1st Armoured Division commanded by General Stanisław Maczek with great satisfaction seized (6th May) the main naval base of Kriegsmarine (the German Navy) in Wilhelmshaven, Western Germany, taking captive the entire garrison



Polish Flag in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising



1st Armoured Division seized the city and naval base of Wilhelmshaven, Germany (6th May 1945). Local authorities in front of Polish officers

with some 200 naval ships. Cruiser *ORP Conrad* with her crew later joined Polish soldiers in the port of Wilhelmshaven (7th–14th June). “**From Westerplatte to Wilhelmshaven**, from Gdynia to Falaise” Song of the 1st Armoured, Author unknown.

1945 – End of World War II in Europe (8th May), after six years of bloody and cruel occupation by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Apart of the Polish Navy activities, Polish land and air forces were fighting since first days of the war in Poland, in the Arctic (the land Battle of Narvik), in Africa (the Battle of Tobruk), to defend France and the United Kingdom in 1940 (the Battle of Britain), to liberate France (the Battle of Normandy, the Battle of Falaise Pocket), Italy (the Battle of Monte Cassino, the Battle of Ancona, the Battle of Bologna), Belgium (Ghent) and the Netherlands (Arnhem, Operation Market Garden, Breda), on the Eastern front (the Battle of Lenino, the Battle of Berlin, the Prague Offensive), etc. We may add achievements of military intelligence, counterintelligence and cryptography (first cryptanalysis of the Enigma, provided the Allies with crucial intelligence on the German V-1 and V-2 rockets, information gathered by the Polish-led Agency of Africa used in planning the amphibious November 1942 Operation Torch landings in North Africa, 43% of all reports received by British secret services from continental Europe in 1939–45 came from Polish sources, etc.). Moreover, in occupied Poland, under supervision of the legal Government-in-Exile, but thanks to Polish excellent ability to self-organize and historical experiences, Polish Underground State unprecedented in Europe was built, with the 390,000-strong Home Army that fought against the occupants (the culminating point was the Operation Tempest and the Warsaw Uprising in 1944 when the underground army was transformed into

regular army units as large as divisions, e.g. 27 Volhynian Infantry Division). What is more, the total number of people involved in underground armed resistance was even higher – up to 600,000 (apart from the Home Army, there were National Armed Forces, Farmers' Battalions, etc.). Despite the enormous war-time efforts and massive losses (6 million killed, but in the newly defined borders there were 11 million fewer citizens), Poland had been betrayed (for the third time in the 20th century, in 1920, 1939 and 1945) by the Western Allies and could not enjoy the victory. In fact, Poland which was officially among the winners was treated worse than Nazi Germany. Almost half of Polish territories were annexed to the Soviet Union, with great historical and cultural centres such as Wilno/Vilna (now Vilnius) and Lwów (now Lviv), and Poles were displaced, while the rest of the territory was under the total control of the cruel Soviet communist dictatorship¹. Patriotic elites or soldiers of the Underground State that have survived the war and those returning home from Polish troops in Western Europe or German prisoner-of-war camps were exterminated and replaced by new communists elites composed of national minorities, Russians or Russified Poles from the Soviet Union². The national wealth was reduced by 38% and the Soviets went on to rob it after the war. But some Poles, the last Cursed (Indomitable) soldiers, continued to fight for freedom until 1963.

Communist regime in Poland

There is no freedom without solidarity

(One of the mottos of the Solidarity Independent Self-Governing Trade Union in 1980, and Solidarity social movement)

1946–1958 – The Naval Officers School based in Gdynia (*Oficerska Szkoła Marynarki Wojennej, OSMW*).

1950–1952 – “Plot of Naval Officers” or “Naval Officers Trial” (*Spisek komandorów*) a criminal show trial against seven officers of Polish Navy

¹Sixteen leaders of the Polish Underground State, all survivors of Warsaw Uprising, were deceitfully kidnapped to Moscow in 1945 by the NKVD secret service and after several months of brutal interrogation and torture they were falsely accused of “illegal” activities against the Red Army. There was no official protest in the West. N. Davies, *Europe at War 1939-1945: No Simple Victory*, Macmillan, 2006, pp. 195, 448.

²For example there were two Soviet officers as commandants of the Naval Officers School in Gdynia (1949–1954).



Military ceremonial funeral procession for Rear-Admiral Józef Unrug in front of the PNA (1.10.2018)

organized by the communist authorities. Five of them were sentenced to death and two were given life sentences, all as a result of false accusations. Three of the officers were executed and one died of wounds received during interrogation by communist investigators.

1955–1987 – The Naval College (*Wyższa Szkoła Marynarki Wojennej, WSMW*).

1978–1986 – Military students from Libya, first foreign groups of students.

1979–1991 – Military students from Vietnam.

1980–1981 – “Solidarity”, ten million of Poles self-organized themselves against violations of their rights by the Communist regime.

1987 – Polish Naval Academy (*Akademia Marynarki Wojennej, AMW*).

1989 – Formal end of Communism and dependence on the Soviet Union (but the last Russian troops left Poland on 17th September 1993, exactly 54 years after the 1939 aggression).

Third Polish Republic

God, Honour, Fatherland

(Motto of the Second Polish Republic and Third Polish Republic, mainly the motto of the Polish Armed Forces, “God” was added in 1943 and restored in 1993)

1990–1991 – *ORP Wodnik*, adopted to the role of a hospital ship, and the rescue and salvage ship *ORP Piast* participated (29th December – 20th May) in the Gulf War (first Operation Desert Shield then Operation Desert Storm) and was based in Saudi Arabia. First direct cooperation of Polish Navy with the Western Allies since World War II.

- 1993** – BALTOPS (Baltic Operations), an Allied large scale naval exercise conducted since 1971 in the Baltic Sea and focusing on joint activities (submarine search and combat, mine warfare, air defence and naval missions), first time with Partner Nations (Partnership for Peace) among them Polish Navy (rescue and salvage ship *ORP Lech*).
- 1995–1996** – The first circumnavigation of the World by Polish Navy training ship – *ORP Iskra* (second) under the command of Commander Czesław Dyrz (Rector-Commandant 2007–2015).
- 1996** – First civilian students in military academies.
- 1999** – Poland and Polish Navy joined (12th March) the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).
- 1999** – First women in the military studies.
- 2002–2003** – *ORP Konradmiral Xawery Czernicki* a multitask logistical auxiliary ship in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean (July 2002 – September 2003) joined the United States Fifth Fleet and took part in the Global War on Terrorism (Operation Enduring Freedom) and the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom).
- 2015** – Military students from Kuwait and Qatar.
- 2016** – Military students from Saudi Arabia.
- 2017** – Academic championship of Poland in basketball for the PNA.
- 2018** – Poland, the Centenary of Regaining Independence and Rebirth of the Polish Navy.
- 2019** – Graduation of the first midshipmen from Kuwait and Qatar.
- 2020** – Poland, the Centenary of Regaining access to the Baltic Sea.

Monument of Maritime Poland (24.06.2018)

