

Władysław Bieleśz (1925-2011)



Władek - before 1946.

Władysław or just plain Walter to his friends was born in the picturesque village of Koniaków in Southern Poland on 26.06.1925.

In 1939, when Germany invaded Poland, aged just fourteen and living on the farm with his family in Koniaków, he found himself under the German sphere of occupation. Then in 1940 he left to go to work in Czechoslovakia where he remained until 1943. From 1943-44 he was forcibly conscripted into the German army. During the years 1944-46 he saw service with the Polish Forces under British Command in Italy specifically from 30.12.1944 to 22.09.1946 when he worked as a driver for army officers and their wives. During the course of the war he also found himself in Egypt and later in France.

Władek eventually arrived in the UK on 29.06.1946 and he enlisted with the Polish Resettlement Corps on 23.09.1946, settling in Askern, Doncaster on 21.07.1947. Like many Poles, he chose not to return to his homeland after the war, because Communists were now in control of Poland.



Władek chose initially to settle in the UK where he trained to be a miner and lived at the Miner's hostel on Adwick Road, Mexborough (this closed in 1958). In 1950 he started the application process for immigration to the United States with the intention of living with his Aunt. It is not known what became of the application, whether or not it was successful, we only know that Władek would remain in the UK. Going to live abroad was an option for Poles who had initially arrived in the UK. After 1955 (exact date unknown) Władek transferred to Antoni Jałowiczor's house in Rotherham where he found lodgings, joining a number of Polish Ex-Servicemen there. After Antoni died, he transferred to the Sue Ryder Home at Hickleton Hall, near Doncaster in 1972, mainly for reasons of health. He was to remain there for nearly forty years until his death in 2011. Władek never married and did not have any family in the UK. His ashes were taken back to Poland by his nephew Roman Bielesz for burial at his place of birth in Koniaków.

This account has been drawn up after discussions with Marian Macko, Władek's family in Poland and pieced together from remaining documents and from the author's own memories. His story is fragmentary.



Władek at the Sue Ryder Home, Hickleton Hall taken during a visit by the author in summer 1990.