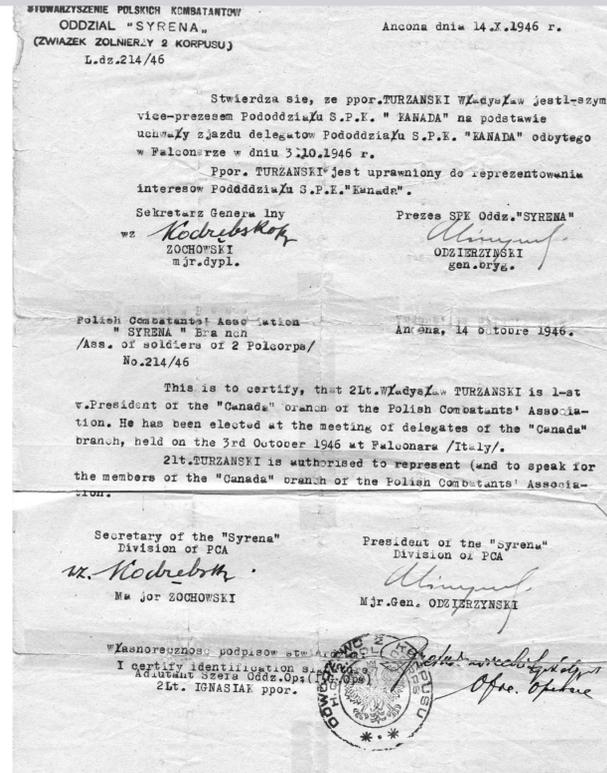
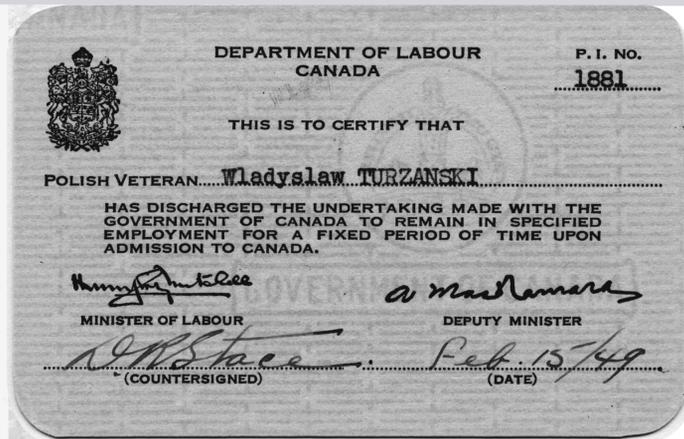


Wladyslaw Grzymala-Turzanski

(1905-1986)

Community activist



Wladyslaw Turzanski devoted his life in Canada to serving Polish veterans. He was a member of the Polish Combatants' Association since its foundation in London in 1946. Stationed at war's end in Italy, with thousands of Polish soldiers awaiting emigration to Canada and other countries, he participated in organizing Canadian division of the Association, and was elected its first vice president. In 1946, he led the first group of nine hundred Polish combatants to Canada.

Wladyslaw Turzanski was born in Bokijowka, Poland (now part of Ukraine.) In 1920, as a fifteen-year-old boy, he participated in the war against the Soviet invasion of Poland and was wounded in battle. After the war, he completed high school education, graduated from a teachers college in Lvov, and began his teaching career in the eastern district of Tarnopol.

When the Soviets again invaded eastern Poland in 1939, Turzanski tried to escape to Rumania, but was arrested at the border and sent to a Soviet gulag. Released thanks to the Polish Soviet agreement after the Germans attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, he joined the Polish army formed in Russia by General Anders, left with it for the Middle East and took part in the Italian campaign. By war's end, he was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant of artillery.

In 1948, Lieutenant Turzanski became one of the founding members and vice president of the Combatants' Association in Toronto. In 1953, he was co-founder of a Combatants' Savings and Loans Fund, serving as its chairman for over twenty-five years. In the 1950s, he was instrumental in acquiring a site at Beverly Street for the headquarters of the Association. Completed in 1973, the building became one of the most important centres of social and cultural life for the Polish community in Toronto.

In the last years of his life, Lieutenant Turzanski allocated a substantial amount of his life savings to set up a foundation to promote Polish culture in Canada. Shortly after his death, the project was implemented by his widow by creation of the Wladyslaw and Nelli Turzanski Foundation, which has honoured dozens of cultural and scholarly achievers in the twenty years of its activity.

Wladyslaw Turzanski received many military honours, among them the Cross of Valour and Monte Cassino Cross. His contribution to the welfare of Polish veterans in Canada was recognized by the Combatant Cross of the World Federation of Polish Combatants.

Photos from top left clockwise:
• Lieutenant Wladyslaw Turzanski • Discharge after two years of employment mandatory for Polish veterans upon their admission to Canada • W. Turzanski elected first vice president of the Canadian Branch of the Polish Combatants' Association, Ancona, Italy, 1946 • Twentieth anniversary of Wladyslaw and Nelli Turzanski Foundation, Toronto, 2008 • Polish Combatants' Association, Toronto, co-founded by W. Turzanski in 1948
All photos – Nelli Turzanski's archives

POLISH SPIRIT

