



# No Greater Ally: The Untold Story of Poland's Forces in World War II

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**No Greater Ally: The Untold Story of Poland's Forces in World War II** Kenneth K. Koskodan  
There is a chapter of World War II history that remains largely untold, the story of the fourth largest allied military of the war, the only nation to have fought in the battles of Leningrad, Arnhem, Tobruk and Normandy. The story of millions of young men and women who gave everything for freedom and in the final victory lost all. In a cruel twist of history the monumental struggles of an entire nation have been forgotten, and even intentionally obscured. This book redresses the balance, giving a comprehensive overview of Poland's participation in World War II. Following their valiant but doomed defense of Poland in 1939, members of the Polish armed forces fought with the Allies wherever and however they could. With previously unpublished first-hand accounts, information never before seen in English, and rare photographs, this title provides a detailed analysis of the devastation the war brought to Poland, and the final betrayal when, having fought for freedom for six long years, Poland was handed to the Soviet Union.

## No Greater Ally: The Untold Story of Poland's Forces in World War II Details

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## From Reader Review No Greater Ally: The Untold Story of Poland's Forces in World War II for online ebook

### Wanda says

No Greater Ally by Kenneth Koskodan is a work that presents brand new information about the WW2-era Poland. My father was in General Anders second armored division, as well as in the special forces (Cichociemni) and the AK. He did not tell me much about his exploits, but he did tell me that the history of WW II was significantly skewed and the Polish contribution diminished. I did not believe him and thought he was exaggerating – until the past few years. This book is yet another confirmation that he was correct. Koskodan writes: “So much have the heroic accomplishments of Poland and the devastating suffering inflicted on Poland during the war been distorted, obscured and dismissed, that much of the truth remains misrepresented at best and completely unknown at worst. The truth of Poland's war efforts has been so obfuscated that the commonplace misstating of facts and printing of errors goes unchecked and unchallenged.”

Kenneth Koskodan is of Polish descent. He is not a historian and it shows. The book is written emotionally and he makes statements that are not always referenced by facts or primary sources. He does make use of many selective and secondary sources, some of them of very dubious credibility (e.g. Long Walk: The True Story of a Trek to Freedom by Slavomir Ravicz). I think that this lack of training in historical writing, and his so-so writing detract from a story that has to be told better than this. His editors did not do a great job of catching repetition and there is some unevenness in style and tone, making me wonder if some of the material was simply re-written by the editors at Osprey. Also, emotionality aside – Norman Davies, the eminent historian, has a hard time being non emotional about this time in Polish history – I wish this book was actually written by someone with better credentials and hence more credibility. Actually Davies comes to mind.

Because of the relative quick fall of Poland at the beginning of the second World War, and because Poland and its citizens were muzzled by the Soviets, who sought to distort and diminish their contribution to that war, that contribution has never been fully acknowledged. For that acknowledgement, I do thank Koskodan. He does set about trying to correct the inadequately understood and under-appreciated role played by the Poles, as well as to correct some downright stupid assertions found in the history books. These include the notion of Polish horse-mounted cavalry charges against German tanks seen in Nazi propaganda and the fact that the Polish air force was destroyed at the beginning of the war. The truth about the latter is fascinating – but I won't spoil that truth in this review.

Accurate accounts of civilian experiences were perhaps even harder to come by. People who left Poland after the war, like my father, feared Soviet reprisal for their families and feared for themselves as well. It is notable that AFTER the war, when Poland had been “liberated” by the Soviets, the Polish puppet government arrested 150,000 remaining members of the AK. No wonder my father refused to return to Poland until the late 1980s, when Solidarity and the Polish pope helped boot the communists out of power.

Koskodan confirms much of what I had read in the works of Allen Paul, Norman Davies, and Serhii Ploky and helps to answer the questions about why history books painted a pathetic picture of Poland's mounted cavalry defense against the blitzkrieg (making them comical); why it is seldom, if ever, recorded that nearly 20 percent of the RAF airmen were Poles; how the Poles made the breakthrough at Monte Cassino, after THREE other armies tried and failed, and that Poles supported the Allies in nearly every major conflict during WWII? It also helps to explain why they then they got shunted aside in the end, their fate being decided by “the big three.” Koskodan, Ploky and others, opine that very possibly the major Polish contributions to the Allied cause were ignored out of Allied embarrassment. If they came to light, the question as to why they handed their greatest ally over to the Soviets would have had to be answered. Once again, as in recent histories that take a hard look at what happened post WW II, Roosevelt comes off as being stubborn, elitist, dismissive of Poles, and sadly naïve. He presented Stalin, the greatest mass-murderer

in history, to the American people as “Uncle Joe” and he banishes his ambassadors who dared disagree with him about the suppression of Katyn and other atrocities.

One of the most poignant parts of the book – and one rarely told – is how Polish displaced persons were shabbily treated after the war by the same allies with whom they fought. This last rang very true. This displaced person remembers it well.

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## **Ren says**

This book helps to straighten out the skewed perspective that developed after the war about Poland's tremendous contribution. It provides many interesting details and personal stories that make it all the more difficult to believe that an entire nation's efforts could be swept under the rug so easily. And more horrifyingly, that nation was then sold out and handed over post-war as some kind of bargain offering by the countries it had fought with and for. It's pretty unbelievable. The book seems very well researched and the only problem is that it can be a little dry at times when it gets deeply into blow by blow military move accounts, but it's completely worth it for the unique stories.

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## **Ben says**

Congratulations, Kenneth Koskodan. 70 years after World War II, you have managed to find a new and largely untapped angle to the war, an untold story that everybody should hear.

All I knew about Poland's involvement in WWII was that the German invasion triggered the war... that, and a vague story about Polish cavalry charging German tanks and getting mowed down. That's consistent with the Polish stereotype over the years - Poles are dumb, ineffective, naive. Indeed, in the 2004 presidential debates, when Kerry criticized the Iraq invasion as lacking any real international support, George W Bush's response, "you forgot Poland," drew wide snickers and head shakes. As if. As if a country and a military like Poland is even worth mentioning on the global stage.

But when you read Koskodan's account, you realize just how integral Poland was to Allied victory, especially after the country surrendered and Polish refugee soldiers and officers joined other nations' forces. Could England, the US, and the Soviets have won without Polish support? Almost certainly. But it would have been harder, and more Americans would have died.

Then, toward the end of the book, you realize the true injustice of it all. Why have Poland's contributions been swept under the rug? Well, the Soviets had taken over half of Poland and installed a brutally oppressive regime. To many, including FDR, the Soviets were a key Ally that we couldn't antagonize. So we all turned a blind eye, marched in our tickertape parades, while millions of Poles went back home to be slaughtered by Stalin's goons. (Or, thankfully, decided to emigrate elsewhere, if they had such a chance.) Poland had the unique experience of winning the war with the Allies, then being handed to one of its co-Allies on a silver platter. It's hard to argue Poland would have been any worse off if it had joined the Axis powers instead.

So, you should read this book. It will give you a better appreciation for the Polish people and the sacrifices they endured to keep the world free.

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## **Jan Peczkis says**

### **The Much-Unappreciated Polish Military Contribution to the Allied Victory in WWII. Occasional Acts of Polish Collaboration Driven By the Extreme German-Caused Circumstances**

This is one of the most comprehensive works on this subject. It includes not only excellent descriptions of relatively well-known events (September 1939, the Battle of Britain, Monte Cassino, and Warsaw Uprising) but also lesser-known ones such as Poles fighting a large-scale guerilla war at home (1939-1945), fighting as fliers in the anti-German Allied air war (1940-1945), and fighting as regular soldiers in 1940 western Europe, in 1942-1943 Africa, in post-1941 Soviet Union, in 1943-1945 Italy, and in 1944-1945 post-D-Day western Europe.

In writing this book, the author uses a combination of previously-published sources (including little-known memoirs), interviews with aging participants, and unpublished information. For instance, his excellent, detailed chapter on the Polish Underground incorporates information from the AK (Armia Krajowa: Polish Home Army) archives located at Orchard Lake, Michigan, USA. Koskodan includes discussion of the Cichociemni (the silent and unseen), who were specially-trained Poles parachuted-in into German-occupied Poland.

#### **THE RED AND BLACK GENOCIDE AGAINST POLES**

Details are included about the multitudes of Poles deported into the Soviet Union to die slow deaths, and the crème of Polish society destroyed via direct genocide in the Katyn massacre. The author is clear about the unspeakable cruelties faced by the Poles in the hands of the German and Soviet invaders.

#### **POLES SOMETIMES BETRAYED JEWS (AND--DON'T FORGET--ALSO OTHER POLES) OUT OF THE IMPOSSIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES**

Koskodan writes, "Desperate, starving civilians might betray an underground member for a reward of money or increased rations." (p. 71). [How many instances of Poles denouncing fugitive Jews were the results of the Germans taking advantage of the extreme circumstances they had caused, rather than [what else?] anti-Semitism?]

#### **POLES AND THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN (1940)**

Kenneth K. Koskodan summarizes the pivotal Polish involvement in the Battle of Britain as follows: "By revised accounts, 12 percent of all confirmed aircraft shot down was achieved by Polish pilots....At some of the most desperate points in the battle, the RAF had only 350 fighter pilots to scramble, of which nearly 100 were Poles. In conclusion, the Polish pilots downed over 200 enemy aircraft and lost only about 25 of their own. The British kill-to-loss ratio was about half of the Polish fliers." (p. 96).

#### **POLISH MILITARY INNOVATIONS**

Various interesting items of information are included. For instance, Polish engineers developed a 100-foot jump tower for parachutist training. "The tower design and training methods were so effective that they became the standard among Allied forces." (p. 155).

#### **DUTCH GRATITUDE FOR THE POLISH LIBERATORS. EVEN THE ENEMY HONORED POLES**

The Dutch in and near Arnhem remembered, and still honor, the Poles who gave their lives in the liberation

of Holland. (p. 176). Sometimes, the German enemy showed greater respect for the fighting Poles than did the Allies. For instance, German ace Adolf Galland is quoted as praising the Polish fliers and instructing German fliers to learn from Polish ones. (p. 100). After the fall of the Soviet-betrayed Warsaw Uprising, a Waffen-SS officer saluted the surrendering Polish fighters. (p. 220).

#### POLES SHAFTED BY BRITISH POLITICS. THE WESTERN ALLIES' EVERLASTING SHAME

In the Grand Victory Parade in London (June 1946), all the Allied nations (even nominal participants) were invited--except Poland. (p. 246-247). Even then, with the war long over, the British were more interested in not offending the Soviets than doing justice to Poland. Koskodan elaborates on the Teheran-Yalta betrayals of Poland and the Soviet-installed Communist puppet state. He suggests that Poles were naïve to believe in the goodwill of others [I agree], as evidenced by the "For Your Freedom and Ours" slogan. Apropos to the latter, and with evident reference to Britain's freedoms, Koskodan concludes: "Ours was achieved. Theirs was stolen from them in shameful and cowardly fashion...The world owes a debt of gratitude that has yet to be paid to the unknown soldiers of Poland." (p. 250).

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### Charles says

No Greater Ally was no doubt a great read, and an excellent choice by the World War Two Readers group for the Poland theme-read month.

For me, the book allowed me to learn about a number of areas in the war that had hitherto been a little underexplained, or perhaps even undersold in common history to me - namely the opening stages of the Second World War and the Polish military and political rationale for the country's actions, as well as the attitudes of some neighbouring states in letting refugees and escaping servicemen through.

Also of interest was the story of life in occupied Poland, providing some detail on the resistance, the divisions within the population, and how the AK and Polish government-in-exile exercised its authority. Additionally, adding the view of life in Soviet-occupied Poland was interesting and one I had not really thought of before (beyond some knowledge of the Katyn massacre).

(view spoiler)

Overall, I felt the structure of the book was a little awkward, with one chapter sometimes reversing a three-four year period from the end of the previous chapter in order to fulfil the structure the author had laid out for it.

Other additional features could have been added to help the reader - more maps could have been added to assist the reader in divining context of a complex battle scenario, particularly the Arnhem battles as the

author goes into heavy detail of the action. No doubt the publisher, Osprey, would have had some in-house graphics from previous titles which could have been used without much cost to add the extra value.

In terms of his writing, I feel that Koskodan has done a good job, particularly as it is his first book. However, I did feel at times there was an overwhelming bias towards the Polish side of things bordering almost on the Mr India sketches from Goodness Gracious Me. Having read the book and gone in with the knowledge that the Poles were indeed hard-done by at the war's outcome, and were both brave and ingenious fighters, the lack of balance could be a little frustrating at times.

Lastly, a couple of areas were glossed over on, and would have been interesting had they been developed. These include the Polish Navy and the Jewish Ghetto uprising in Warsaw. No doubt there were reasons for this - in the case of the Navy, perhaps a lack of source material/veterans - but these are personal preferences I felt would have strengthened the title.

(hide spoiler)]

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## **Sweetwilliam says**

No Greater Ally, The Untold Story of Poland's Forces in World War II by Kenneth K. Koskodan.

My brother insisted that I read this book. Our family is of Polish descent and my brother thought that all family members that are students of history should read this book. I had other books on my TDL but I agreed to read this book first and I'm glad I did. As a result, I am convinced that this book should be required reading for any student of European history. The Polish contribution to the War effort was purposely downplayed by the West because the Soviet Union was a more important ally. I believe the author's purpose was to set the record straight. No Greater Ally chronicles the Military contributions of the Poles as well as their suffering. The Poles that survived World War II were left with a country in ruins, controlled by the Soviets. Fellow Poles that fought so hard to defeat the Axis all over Europe had no home to go back to. Many that returned to Poland were jailed or simply disappeared. Up until now the only time the Poles are ever mentioned in history is when they are brunt of racist jokes. No Greater Ally finally gives Poland her due.

First, the Poles were let down by their allies the French. Prior to the war, the two countries had an agreement that either side would attack Germany if Germany were to attack either Poland or France. In the face of the German mobilization, the English and the French cautioned the Poles not to mobilize. This would be interpreted as an act of aggression they cautioned. The Poles secretly did this anyway but could only achieve 50% mobilization and only 50% of those mobilized could be armed. When the war started, the Poles were attacked by the Nazis and the Soviet Union on two fronts. The French did not attack Germany as dictated by the treaty.

In spite of all this, the Poles fought on with whatever they had, inflicting thousands German casualties at a staggering cost to themselves. The Poles made a last stand in Warsaw which the Nazis leveled. Groups such as the Polish Postal workers fought the last bullet. They only surrendered when there was no more possible means to fight and were unceremoniously executed shortly thereafter. Meanwhile the Soviets attacked from the East. The forbears to the KGB rounded up all the Polish leaders such as school teachers, business men, landowners, the wealthy, and police. They were executed or sent to the Gulags to be worked to death. Even

Boy Scouts were arrested and sent to the gulag because they wore a uniform.

After Poland fell, Poles escaped through Europe and made their way to France for another chance to fight the hated Germans. Poles that remained formed the AK or Polish Underground and carried out death sentences and acts of sabotage against the Germans. They gathered munitions and bided their time plotting uprising such as the Warsaw uprisings in 43 and 44.

The Poles that made it to France were greeted with indignation. The French looked down their noses at the Poles and called them warmongers. They blamed them for the starting the war. When the Germans invaded France, once again the Poles fought with much fervor. Many French units on the other hand, didn't care to fight. They also refused to listen to the Poles that understood German tactics first hand. Polish eye witness accounts reported that if you went into battle with a French unit on your left or right you would be soon find yourself cut off. Collectively, the French did not seem to have the stomach to fight like they did in the first war. Finally, the Poles were aghast when the French declared Paris an open city after the Poles had sacrificed their beloved Warsaw only months earlier.

After the fall of France, the Polish aviators distinguished themselves in the battle of Britain. British flight instructors soon learned that the many Polish aviators had logged 500 combat hours against the Germans. They understood the German tactics, weaknesses and tendencies. The Poles, who had won dogfights with 1920 technologies, were given Spitfires by the British. The Poles hated the Germans so much that they would use what were considered suicide tactics by the English. When their guns jammed, for example, the Poles would use their props to cut off the tails of the German bombers or ram them forcing them into the channel. The English and the Americans thought the Poles were suicidal but soon came to respect them. The book is also full of countless stories of Poles on the ground who had distinguished themselves in the air and on the ground in North Africa and Italy as well as the elite 1st Polish Airborne division who were sacrificed by Montgomery in operation Market Garden.

Meanwhile, the Poles in Eastern Poland suffered terribly at the hands of the Soviets. Finally they were saved by an unlikely event - Operation Barbarossa. The German invasion of their ally the Soviet Union created a need for infantry. The Soviets emptied their gulags of the Poles who were being worked to death. Men were nursed back to health and formed Polish infantry units and were armed mostly by the West.

As the Wehrmacht retreated across the Russian steppes, the Polish underground in Warsaw created an uprising the German rear. It was supposed to be coordinated with the Soviet advance. However the Soviets stalled so that the Germans could put down the uprising. Finally, members of the AK surrendered under terms that would allow them to be treated as POWs according to the Geneva Convention. They were the lucky ones because they were sent to POW camps outside the reach of the Soviets.

After the war Poland was controlled by the Soviets until 1991. The Poles that had fought under the slogan, "For Your Freedom and Ours," had no country left to go home to. The final disgrace was when they Poles were not allowed to march in the victory parade in the United Kingdom. This was done solely to appease the Soviet Union. Only the aviators were invited but they declined due to the severe slight of the Polish ground units.

In conclusion, do yourself a favor. Download a copy of Koskodan's No Greater Ally. It's time to set the record straight and give Poland her due.

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**Andrew Brozyna says**

You may be surprised to learn that it was an all-Polish squadron that scoured the most enemy kills and fewest lost planes during the Battle of Britain. These Polish pilots reported enemy kills only when doubly-confirmed. This careful reporting was meant to accurately display their value to the doubting British military and public. Author Kenneth Koskodan accomplishes a similar goal with the same means. Based on first-person interviews, official military documents, and other published works his well-assembled account dispels any doubt one may have about the Poles' important contribution to the Allied war-effort.

In *No Greater Ally: The Untold Story of Poland's Forces in World War II* Koskodan aims to correct the errors and ignorance which traditionally surround the Polish military forces in the war. In-depth English-language histories have been absent, and until recently Soviet oppression had prevented the Polish themselves from freely writing about their part in the war. The author's writing is enthusiastic, while keeping the objectivity of a proper historian.

The German invasion of 1939 did not proceed without a serious and determined challenge from the Poles. That old story of a pathetic Polish cavalry charge against German tanks is revealed to be a myth of fascist newspapers. Much like highly mobile dragoons, the Polish "cavalry" actually dismounted to attack with effective personal anti-tank weapons. Koskodan addresses other long-held distortions and brings the obscured accomplishments of the Polish forces to our attention.

No Greater Ally tells of the Polish military forces' dramatic escape from the German and Russian invaders, their attempt to support the poorly-lead French, their highly successful role within the British army and air force, and the ill-fated resistance of their secret army in Poland. Polish fighting skill, zeal, and success impressed the Allies. Yet, the war-weary British and Americans abandoned the Poles to subjugation by the Soviets in 1945. The Polish heroism and the devastation brought to their country will impress any scholar of World War II.

P.S. Polish forces fought with the Allies all across Europe and North Africa. This book is a broad overview of Polish military service during the war. If you are interested in details particular to a certain battle then you'll need to find a more specialized book.

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### **Pierre Lauzon says**

The subtitle begins "The Untold Story . . ." and the book was certainly an untold story to me until I read it.

My recollection from youthful reading was that Poland was overrun quickly by the Nazis and were enslaved and killed through the duration of the war.

I learned from this book that Poland had the fourth largest Allied army before being overrun. I also learned that many soldiers and airmen escaped the Nazis and participated in the Battle of Britain, the conquering of Italy, service in North Africa and many other campaigns and battles of the European Theater. Also, the Poles fought an effective guerilla war in Eastern Europe.

The sadness of the story is the sell-out of Poland to the Soviet sphere of influence in the horse-trading that followed the surrender of Germany. It took decades for the Poles to regain their nationhood and nation, a fitting testament to the service of Poland's Forces in World War II.

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## **Irene Thomas says**

An untold story. I knew that Polish troops fought in Norway when Germany invaded in April 1940, and I knew that a Polish submarine sank a German troop ship off the southern coast of Norway the day before the invasion of Norway, but the rest of the story was all new to me. Poland suffered at the cruelty of the both the Germans and the Soviets, yet kept fighting not only for themselves, but for the Allies. Their story is unknown because they were forgotten by the Allies that they fought for and alongside of. A sad story. I'm glad I read this book.

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## **Kathryn says**

The title of this book says everything: the U.S., Britain, and France had no greater ally than Poland during WWII and yet the story of the Poles' fierce loyalty to the Allied cause during that war has been, up till now, almost completely untold.

Why is that? Why do history books always paint a pathetic picture of Poland's mounted cavalry defense against the blitzkrieg, inferring by that image that the invasion was over in a matter of days because the Polish defense was apparently laughable? Why does no one ever mention that nearly 20 percent of the RAF airmen were Poles? Why does no one seem to know that Polish servicemen supported the Allies in nearly every major conflict during WWII?

It is very possible that stories of the major Polish contributions to the Allied cause were swept under the rug out of sheer embarrassment. If the stories got out, the obvious question would be, "why then did the Allies hand over Poland to the Soviet Union at the end of the war? Why didn't we fight for their freedom as they had fought for ours?"

As one reads through the extremely well-written, well-researched, and well-organized text of Kenneth Koskodan's book, that heartbreaking question, though not actually posed by the author, comes to mind again and again.

Koskodan's narrative – which focuses on military specifics while remaining immensely readable – generally follows the timeline of the war and clearly delineates the contributions of the Polish armed services along that timeline. For instance, in chapter two– “French Misfortunes -- Koskodan reveals how Polish troops, having escaped to France during the invasion of Poland, and waiting through the “Drole de Guerre,” were shocked at the naïvety of the French military leaders (who ignored the Poles' hard-earned advice regarding the nature of the new German lightning war) and at the slack unpreparedness of the French troops.

Nevertheless, Polish troops assisted in the French during the Battle of France -- incredulous at the quick French surrender -- and after the evacuation at Dunkirk, many of them ended up in Britain. In chapter four – “On Wings of Eagles: The Polish Air Force” – Koskodan gives details regarding air war between the German Luftwaffe and the Polish air force during the Polish invasion. He relates how Britain recruited hundreds of already-trained Polish airmen to fly with the RAF where the air-borne Poles gained almost celebrity status because of their incredible courage in the air.

Some military Poles remained in Poland and fought in the “Armia Krajowa” (Home Army, or AK). Chapter three – “Everything was in Secret” – discusses in detail the organization and military activities of this impressively large and well-organized underground army which worked against Poland's enemies, both Germans and the Soviets.

But in the end, the real enemies of Poland turned out to be their supposed friends, the Allies who had accepted and benefited greatly from their help but then in the end, betrayed them into the hands of the Soviets, which act Koskodan points out very simply but eloquently at the end of chapter nine, “Glory and Heartbreak: The Warsaw Uprising, 1944”: “This time, the invasion had come with the consent of the rest of the free world. There was no hope of an ally coming to Poland’s aid, and there was not even talk of the Polish Army returning to free its countrymen. This time, the AK harbored no illusion of harassing the enemy while biding its time until it could fight for liberation. This time, the invaders, with their mighty army and their mightier politics, had won. The world would not fight for Poland.”

Koskodan spent years researching his subject, which included many hours of interviews with Polish veterans, and his immensely readable book is a giant leap towards an increased understanding of the incredible and heartbreaking story of the Polish contributions to the Allied cause during WWII.

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### Jason says

Worthy topic—& I sympathize with the author’s pro-Poland perspective—but inexpertly done. Lots of sweeping, conclusory statements lacking support. Clichéd writing.

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### A.L. Sowards says

I have a huge admiration for the Poles and the sacrifices they made during WWII, and a huge amount of sympathy for all the horrible things that happened to them during the war and the forty (plus) years of Communist rule they endured after such a heroic struggle. This book added significantly to my knowledge of their efforts and it’s a good place to start for someone interested in learning more about Poland during WWII. I felt most of the chapters covered topics that would make for interesting reading if expanded into book. *No Greater Ally* was kind of the CliffsNotes version.

The book was written with a lot of emotion and passion for the subject . . . and a few examples and statistics that felt skewed. One that sticks out was (view spoiler) Overall, I felt the author looked for sources that supported his view, instead of trying to write an unbiased account.

I’d rate this book 3 or maybe 3.5 stars. It wasn’t bad, and I don’t mind a little flag-waving, but I felt Polish valor would have shone more brightly in a more objective account.

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### Dj says

A book that brings much needed light to the Polish effort in WWII. While maybe not quite as unknown as the author suggests, in general the contribution of the Poles is not something that is looked at in a whole picture. The author breaks the book down into sections and looks at how the Poles did and what they did in their efforts to return their home to freedom. Mostly this book starts after the fall of Poland. It then, again mostly, follows the paths of various individuals that you are introduced to at the beginning of the book.

It looks at the various means of escape from Poland that were used to get out of a country that was more or less surrounded by its enemies.

It looks at the contributions of Polish pilots, first with the French and then with the British.

It looks at the Poles conditions in Russia and their final leave taking from that Country, at least for a very large number of them.

It talks about the Polish Second Corps under Anders and what they went through in taking Monte Cassino and afterwards.

It covers the Polish Armored Division that helped to almost close the Pocket in France.

It talks about the Polish Independent Airborne Brigade and how they not only got their start but how in the end they were thrown under the bus by the British.

From there, and most of these are things that have come up in Western writing, but generally not all in one place. It moves on back to Russia and the Poles that stayed or were left behind and the creation of a Polish force under the Russians.

Then it talks about the AK, with a section all its own for the Warsaw uprising.

The last thing the book goes over is the aftermath and the author has some few choice things to say about both the US and Britain for letting Russia gain control of Poland after the war.

While I don't agree with everything the author says, mostly in regards to how unknown some factors of the book are, as well as his conclusions. I find that this book is well written and very informative. It isn't a complete picture by any means but it is a full look and a great basis for a start in looking more deeply into Polish involvement in WWII.

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### **Adrian Breto says**

This one was a slug.

I enjoyed the history of Poland's contribution to WWII, the stories of the men and women within were both horrible and incredible, a testament to human resilience and tenacity in the face of true horror.

Koskodan, however, does a very good job at making it hard to follow. Koskodan isn't a bad writer, not at all. I would even venture to say he is very good, however, the topic of the book is clearly personal. A lot of his criticism is laced with bias -- though not incorrect -- and his depictions can sometimes belittle the efforts of others who stood with the Polish people in their darkest hour. I prefer my history novels with a clear, even-handed tone. I had to struggle to read this one, and probably won't seek any further work from him.

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### **PVLD Reads says**

Outlines a woefully under-reported aspect of World War II history: Poland's tremendous contribution to the Allied cause.

Reviewed by Librarian Dennis P.

You can check out this item here!

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