

Kazimierz Benz (1899 – 1957)

W rocznicę odzyskania niepodległości mieszkańcy Nieżywieć i okolic w hołdzie poległemu bohaterowi obu wojen, upamiętnili swojego rodaka pięknym obeliskiem. Umieszczony na nim napis głosi:

pułkownik dypl. pilot Kazimierz Benz

ur. 29 X 1899 Nieżywieć (Polska)

zm. 5 V 1957 Violet Grove (Kanada)

Uczestnik walk we Flandrii i Szampanii 1916-1918 w szeregach 2. Pułku Gwardii Berlińskiej

W wojnie polsko-bolszewickiej 1919-1921 żołnierz 1. Pułku Szwoleżerów

W okresie II Rzeczypospolitej organizator i dowódca kolejno: 124 (142) Eskadry Myśliwskiej

i 142 Eskadry Towarzyszącej Dowódca 41 Eskadry Lotniczej. Szef Sztabu 1. Grupy Lotniczej

Dowódca Dywizjonu Lotniczego i Eskadry Treningowej w Lyonie (Francja) 1939-1940

Dowódca 307. Nocnego Dywizjonu Myśliwskiego „Lwowskich Puchaczy” w Wielkiej Brytanii

1940 Odznaczony Srebrnym Krzyżem Orderu Wojennego „Virtuti Militari” oraz

czterokrotnie Krzyżem Walecznych

Drayton Valley resident honoured at Polish Independence Day

[November 11, 1918](#) is celebrated in the west originally as Armistice Day and later, as Remembrance Day, but in Poland it is the Polish Independence Day. Poland ceased to exist in 1795, when it was finally swallowed by the empires of Prussian Germany, Tsarist Russia and the Hapsburg Austria-Hungary. On November 11, 1918, without waiting for permission Poles declared an independent Poland, made up from lands recovered from these three fallen empires.

Recently, a small village of almost 400 residents in central Poland celebrated the life of one of its own sons within the greater context of 100 years of Polish Independence.

Kazimierz Benz was born in [Nieżywieciu](#) in October 1899, then part of Prussian Germany. His professional military career, covering three 20th century wars was recognized by the five European nations: Poland, France, Latvia, Germany and Great Britain. At the age of 16 he entered the Imperial Germany Army, and fought in the trenches of France. Convalescing after being wounded towards the end of the war, he responded to the 1918 call of Marshal [Józef Piłsudski](#) for all Poles to return and defend the creation of an independent Polish state. He joined the famous cavalry regiment [1st Pułk Szwoleżerów Józefa Piłsudskiego](#), as a 2nd Lieutenant and fought in the Polish-Soviet war of 1919-1921, including the deciding battle, the defence of [Warsaw in 1920](#).

In 1924 he joined the fledgling Polish Air Force. By the early 1930s he was responsible for leading the creation of three new air force squadrons, including fighter squadron 124/142 Eskadra Dzikie Kaczki, the Wild Ducks.

In 1939 he was assigned to central military command in Modlin Poland. With the fall of Poland, he escaped to France where he was given the rank of Commandant in the French Air Force, the Armée de l'Air. After the fall of France in 1940 he escaped again, this time to England, where he joined the Royal Air Force. During the battle of Britain, in October 1940, he was assigned to 307 Squadron as Squadron Leader, a newly formed night-fighter outfit named the "[City of Lvov Owls](#)". After a month, he returned to central command. Chafing at not getting and active command, he began commando training in May 1942 with the intent to be eventually dropped back into Poland as an Allied agent. A broken ankle prevented his joining the [Cichociemni](#), as elite special-operations paratroop group of the Polish Army in exile, and he again returned to Polish Air Force command in December 1943

After the war in Europe ended in May 1945, Poles that had fought the entire war in the West discovered that a return to Poland was dangerous. Of the few that did, most were imprisoned and a few were shot. Many of those that stayed in England took advantage of scholarships offered to veterans and completed studies in technical schools or universities. Anti-Polish sentiment began to rise in England as the population's privations increased with the return of British troops from all over the world. This culminated with the London Victory Celebrations of 1946 held one year after the end of [WWII](#). The celebrations took place in London on [8 of June 1946](#), and consisted of the military parade through the city. Almost all Allies (some 70 countries including Canada) took part in the parade but Polish Forces were conspicuously absent. The British government of the time, led by the Prime Minister Clement Attlee, capitulated to Russian demands that Poles only march in the Moscow [parade of 1946](#) even though more than 200,000 members of the Polish Armed Forces in the West fought under British High Command.

In 1947, Kazimierz Benz joined the Administrative and Special Duties Branch of the Polish Resettlement Corps, an organization formed as holding unit form members of the Polish Armed Forces who had served with British Armed Forces and did not wish to or could not return to Communist Poland after the end of the war. It was designed to ease their transition from military to civilian life and to keep them under military control until they were fully adjusted to civilian life. An important aspect was to provide employment opportunities outside the British Isles where such an influx of refugees could be absorbed more easily.

He was officially de-mobbed in February 1949. In March 1952, Kazimierz, along with his wife Zofia immigrated to Canada to join his son and wife. Adjustment to civilian life was difficult but he did find employment with small Drayton Valley oil & gas firm, and lived in [Violet Grove](#), Alberta. He died peacefully in his sleep on May 5, 1957. Wing Commander (retired [PAF/RAF](#)) Kazimierz Benz is buried in [Drayton Valley](#), Alberta.

His only daughter, Private (AK) Jadwiga Benz, disappeared in the fierce fighting towards the end of the Warsaw Uprising in the first days of October 1944. His only son, 2nd Lieutenant (AK) Tadeusz Benz, died in 1971 and is buried in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta.

Victor Benz



Pamiętkowy obelisk w miejscu urodzenia Kazimierza Benza



Widok ogólny cmentarza wojskowego w Drayton Valley



Nagrobek Kazimierza Benza na cmentarzu wojskowym w Drayton Valley



ppłk pilot RAF (W/Cdr P-0991) Kazimierz BENZ



Ćwiczenia na lotnisku 4 pułku lotniczego. w Toruniu r 1932.



1933 r. Metalowy myśliwiec polskiej konstrukcji PZL P -7 z 4

*Step forward now, you soldier
How shall I deal with you?
Have you always turned your cheek? To my Church have you been
true?*

*The soldier squared his shoulders and said" No Lord, I guess I ain't
Because those of us who carry guns
Can't always be a saint*

*I've had to work most Sundays And at times my talk was tough
And sometimes I've been violent Because the world is awfully
rough*

*But never took a penny
That wasn't mine to keep
Though I worked a lot of overtime, When the bills got just too
steep*

*And I never passed a cry for help Though at times I shook with
fear And sometimes, God forgive me I've wept unmanly tears*

*I know I don't deserve a place Among the people here
They never wanted me around Except to calm their fears*

*If you've a place for me here Lord It needn't be so grant
I never expected or had too much But if you don't, I'll understand*

*There was a silence all around the throne Where the saints had
often trod
As the soldier waited quietly
For the judgment of his God*

*Step forward now, you soldier You've borne your burdens well
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets You've done your time in Hell*

-Author unknown

