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News of the **Tweedsmuir Camp Exhibition** at
the Rural Life Centre (RLC) in Surrey, England

Thank you for your contribution



17 June 2011

I was born in Diddington - A story from a son of a pilot who served with the 300 Polish Bomber Squadron

My name is Sylwester Andrzej Maciej and I was born in Diddington on 1st December 1947. My father was a pilot, Warrant Officer Ludwik Maciej (792369), who served with the 300 Polish Bomber Squadron stationed at RAF Swinderby from the beginning of the war. He was transferred from Bramcote, Nuneaton, I believe, on 1st August 1940. My mother was in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force: LAC2 Janina Maciej (Nee Gwizdak) stationed at Blackpool, and later Dunholm Lodge in Lincolnshire.

My father managed to do 13 sorties over enemy territory, but was shot down on a bombing raid over Duseldorf on June 12th, 1941. Although the aeroplane managed to stay in the sky on the return flight, it eventually came down in the Wash. Three days later he was picked up by the Germans, imprisoned as a Prisoner of War in Zagan, and witnessed, but did not take part in, the 'Great Escape'.

He worked in the Polish Resettlement Corps after the war, which was later disbanded. Our family (3 of us) emigrated to Argentina on 20th, January 1949. We sailed from Tilbury Docks on a 21 day voyage on the Royal Mail ship "Highland Princess" to Buenos Aires. My brother, Luis Martin Maciej was born in Argentina on 16th August 1950.

After a 12 year period we emigrated to the United States on 6th March 1961. We were put on a 6 year waiting list for a visa to the United States.

I returned to the United Kingdom on September 7th, 1965 at the age of 17 and stayed with my Uncle Chester in London. After completing my 'O' Levels and 'A' Levels, I carried on with my education at Portsmouth University where I got my degree in Mechanical Engineering. In 1974 I married Stephanie Ayles, a catering teacher at a local school in Droitwich, Worcestershire. I now run my own business, which supplies, repairs and sells domestic and commercial appliances.

As for my parents: father died on 12th March 2007 in San Pedro, California, at the age of 91 and mother on 20th May 1999, aged 75.

Andrew Maciej



300 Polish Squadron badge