

## Brantford, Brant County, Six Nations and Poland

**FREE** 46 page full colour fun facts, Polish Heritage Guide, is available to download. Go to [www.canadianauthorededucation.com](http://www.canadianauthorededucation.com)



1. **Polish people** have been migrating to North America since the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. A significant migration of Poles to our area was around 1900 and post-World War Two.
2. **Friendships** have been ongoing between Poland, Upper Canada (now Ontario), and Six Nations since the War of 1812.
3. In **November of 1814**, at Ft. Erie in the Niagara Peninsula, Six Nations warriors, Polish soldiers, British regulars and militia, pushed the American invaders back across the Niagara River.
4. **American General McArthur**, from the Detroit area, invaded the Six Nations Territory in November of 1814, with over 750 mounted troops. Unable to cross the Grand River engaged the local militia in Oakland where the last battle of the War of 1812, north of the Great Lakes, occurred.
5. **During WW1** Canada allowed Polish patriots to train at Camp Kosciusko at Niagara on the Lake. Over 25,000 Polish soldiers were shipped to Europe and there fought alongside Canadian troops.
6. **Grand River Six Nations** Captain A.G.E. Smith, father of Jay Silverheels and grandfather to Steve Smith, trained Polish troops at Niagara on the Lake and went with them overseas to fight. For this he received the Polish Order of the Black Star.



7. **Grand River Six Nations** Charlotte Edith Anderson Monture graduated as a nurse and ended up in Europe. During WW1 she took care of allied troops including Canadians and Poles. A school in Brantford was named in her honour.

8. **Walter Gretzky's father**, Antoni, left the United States and joined the Canadian army in 1917. He saw action in Europe, was wounded and built a homestead in Canning Ontario. Antoni's wife was of Polish descent. Walter received the SPK Polish Gold Cross medal from the Polish Combatants' of Brantford in 2019.

9. **Brantford and Ostrów Wielkopolski** have been sister cities since 1989. This relationship was rekindled during the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polish Combatants' Br2 anniversary in 2022. Mutual mayoral visits are pending.

10. **Two Polish Military monuments**, commemorating the loss of Poles during WW2, can be found in Tom Thumb Park and St. Joseph's Cemetery. An inscription on each of them reads; 'We fought for Your Freedom and Ours'. In other words, Poles fought for Canadians and Canadians for Poles.



11. The **Polish, Canadian and the Dutch** community share a WW2 bond as both Canadians and Poles helped liberate Holland in 1945. All the Canadian and Polish military veterans are gone and only a few Dutch survivors remain who were children in Holland at that time. Miriam Busker and Raymond Rayenga.



12. **Monte Cassino**, 79<sup>th</sup> anniversary in June, in Italy, was the site of a vicious battle during which Canadian and Polish soldiers fought side by side. After 55,000 allied casualties Monte Cassino was finally taken by the Polish II Corp. The Polish Battle Colours are displayed in Brantford's Canadian Military Heritage Museum.

12. **SPK, Polish Combatants' Br2** was established in Brantford by the 82 Polish veterans of Monte Cassino. SPK, is an international association of Polish ex-servicemen and women, is still active to this very day and can be seen every year at the Brant County War Memorial.

13. **Polish Halls and St. Joseph's Church** have been the core of the Polish community. The Polish community has donated 100's of 1000's of dollars to the community in a myriad of ways aligned with most community social clubs and volunteer organizations.

14. **WW2's destroyers**, the HMCS Haida, now a museum ship in Hamilton Harbour, Ontario, Canada and ORP Błyskawica also a museum ship in Gdynia Poland, are twin ships both part of the same allied fleet during WW2.



15. The **Royal Hamilton Light Infantry**, at the Dieppe's' Veterans Park Memorial, annually commemorate the losses during a failed 1942 raid by the allies. Scott Clare's father, of Brantford, a doctor, was captured. John R. Bradley from the Grand River Six Nations survived but his cousin died on the beach. A Polish ship, ORP Blyskawic, saved 85 allied soldiers lives as they swam out to sea.
16. **NATO**, to which Canada and Poland belong, is unified against Russia's unprovoked WW2 style attack on Ukraine. Poland is playing a major role against this aggression.

I hope that I have enlightened you on some facts regarding our collective community.

I encourage you to download the visually stimulating Polish Heritage Guide.

I encourage you to visit military memorials in Brantford, Brant County, and the Six Nations Territory.

I encourage you to visit Brantford's Canadian Military Heritage Museum.

Brantford has a very interesting, diverse and engaging history. We need to embrace and celebrate it all and build bridges of tolerance and acceptance. It is through history that we know and understand our present and build our futures together; in PEACE.

**We encourage you to follow SPK, Polish Combatants' of Brantford, Br#4.**  
**<https://www.facebook.com/polishcombatantsbrantford>**

