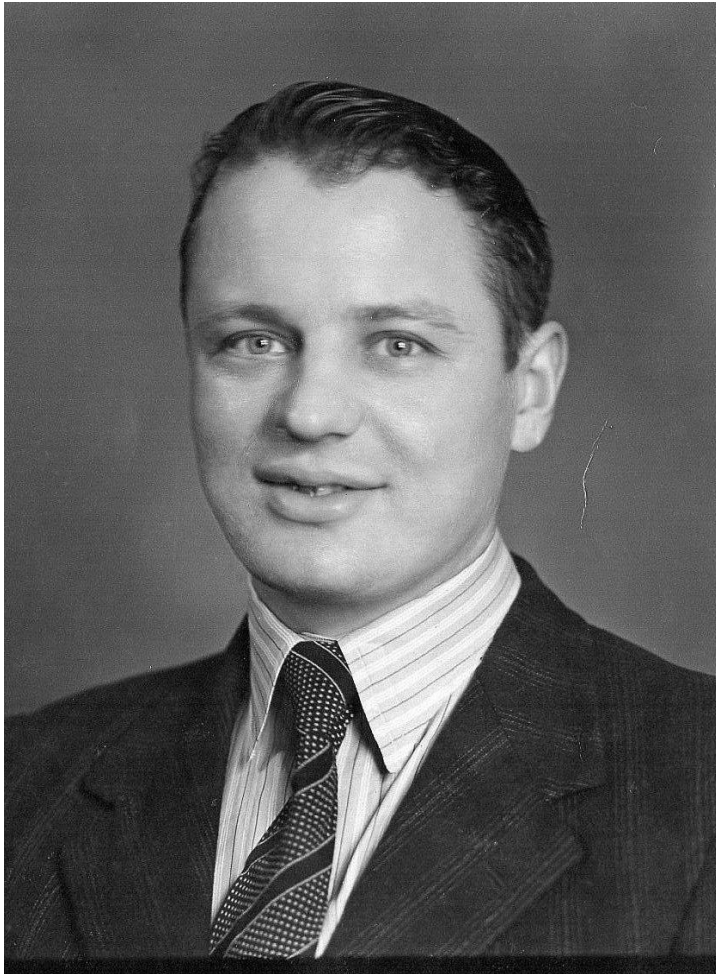


Stanisław Kuźnicki (1923-1989)



Stanisław, taken in the 1950s.

My father Stanisław was born on the 1st of March 1923 and lived in the village of Dąbrowica (situated roughly in the centre of Poland). He was the fourth oldest in a family of six children. Before and after the war his family were farmers and once owned fifteen hectares of land. During the war, the Russians, later the occupying force, took land away from the family.

When Germany attacked Poland he was aged sixteen and was taken away from the family home by the Germans, like many others from the area, to the city of Łódź. The Germans told his mother that if she did not agree they would both be shot. My Uncle Adam, who was the eldest son, ran away into the forest. From Łódź the German soldiers took my father to Dachau concentration camp in Germany. If he had been Jewish he would have been killed. My father's job there was to pick up dead aircraft pilots shot down by the Germans. Food rations there were very meagre and prisoners were very badly treated.

The Americans liberated Dachau on 29.04.1945 and my father joined the US army to be a driver. To be more exact, he joined the 3rd Army Polish Driving and Auto Mechanics School – Mannheim- Kafertal, Germany under the US Army. The school was established to provide trained drivers and mechanics for Polish Guard companies, its objective being the training of Polish soldiers into dependable and efficient civilian guard units.

Stanisław entered the UK at Harwich in March 1948 and was demobbed in Scotland. He never went back to Poland or saw his family again. He eventually settled in Rotherham where he met my mother Mary Hale at Moorgate hospital where they both worked. Mum and dad married in March 1955. They had two daughters, me, and my sister Rosemary. He later worked for Rotherham Steel Works and finally for Rotherham Transport. Like his fellow compatriots, he was a regular at Grabowski's Polish club on Doncaster Road.

After the war, my father wrote regularly to his mother saying how much he missed his country and sent food and medicines which were in short supply in Poland. When his mother died he kept in touch with his sister Janina. When my father passed away in 1989, I wrote to my Auntie Janina and then to my cousin Krystyna. I was lucky enough to meet the Polish side of my family in Gdańsk in Northern Poland in May 2013.

This account was pieced together through collaboration with Stanisław's daughter Christine Ward and from research from documents.



The front cover of Stanisław's personalised album (the surname is missing an "i" and should be Kuźnicki) from his time with the US Army.



Just after the war, Stanisław in the US 3rd Army Polish Driving and Auto Mechanic School, @1946.



Just after the war Stanisław, (second from right) in the US 3rd Army Polish Driving and Auto Mechanic School in Germany @1946.



Just after the war, Stanisław is second on the right on the army truck, in the US 3rd Army Polish Driving and Auto Mechanic School, @1946.



Stanisław and Mary Kuźnicki at the baptism of Christine's nephew and their first grandchild in 1984.