

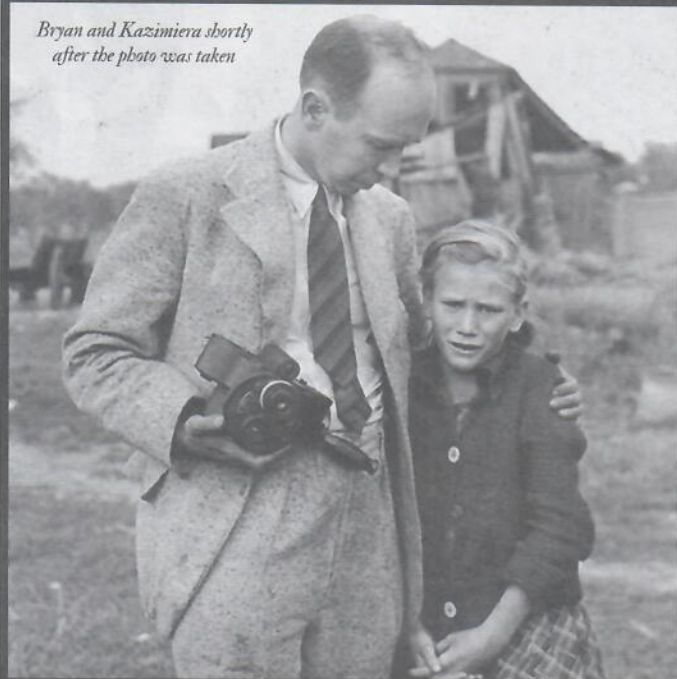
did not spare medical facilities; bombs dropped on the Holy Spirit Hospital and injured 700 patients, most of whom died. The main streets of Śródmieście district – Nowy Świat, Marszałkowska, Królewska, Chmielna streets – were set ablaze... The city was shrouded in thick clouds of smoke and dust, into which subsequent bombers dropped their deadly charge blindly. "It was dark," recalled Doctor Ludwik Hirszfeld, "from the smoke of fires and soot; the houses were shaking and collapsing. People were running from house to house, from shelter to shelter, it was pure madness. Lying on the streets – the killed and the wounded; horses next to people. This is how the end of the world may look like." This was not enough, however; as an Italian war correspondent

noted, "the air force dropped bombs on barricades and fired at barricades in the streets with their machine guns. For the first time in the history of wars – aircraft fought against barricades." On that occasion, the Luftwaffe also bombed its own infantry positions in the northwestern city suburbs, which caused such a fierce argument between the army and Luftwaffe commanders that the Führer himself had to intervene. On that Black, or Wet Monday, as the inhabitants of Warsaw called it ironically, 10,000 people died and 35,000 were wounded. In total, the siege of Warsaw brought death to 40,000 civilians, the destruction of one tenth, and the damage to two fifths of the houses of the Polish capital. ■

Piotr Korczyński

AMERICAN REPORTER IN BESIEGED WARSAW

Bryan and Kazimiera shortly after the photo was taken



Julien Bryan was a well-known American reporter who documented everyday lives of people around the world. In the summer of 1939, he stayed in Romania. When he found out about the outbreak of war, he immediately boarded a train and set off from Bucharest to Warsaw. He reached the capital of Poland at the last moment, on September 7. He stayed there for two weeks, and the result of his work was more than six hours of film tape, and 700 photos. In 1940, he edited the famous documentary, *Siege*, on the basis of the collected material. From Warsaw, on the waves of the Polish Radio, he asked U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt for aid to Warsaw inhabitants dying under German bombs. Some of his photographs were published on the covers of world newspapers at that time, becoming a permanent fixture in the history of Polish wartime photography. On September 14, during his trip to the northern suburbs of the capital, near the Powązki Cemetery, he started to photograph the bodies of people killed in the air raid. As he mentioned later,

"When I was photographing the bodies, a ten-year-old girl came running, and stood – as if paralyzed – over one of the dead. The dead woman was her older sister. The child had never seen death before, and could not understand why her sister did not speak to her.

"What happened!," she screamed. She leaned over, touched the dead girl's face, and stepped back in horror. "Oh, my beautiful sister!," she sobbed, "What have they done to you! You are so ugly!" Then, after a few seconds, "Please, talk to me! Please, please! What will happen to me without you!" The child looked at us stunned. I held her shoulder and hugged her tightly, trying to comfort her. She cried. I cried, the two officers who were with me cried too. What could we, or anyone else, tell this child?"

The girl who, as it turned out, survived the war, was Kazimiera Kostewicz. They found each other after the war, as she answered Bryan's advertisement which he placed in 1958 in Warsaw's "Express Wieczorny," looking for heroes of his photographs taken during the siege of Warsaw. ■ *zur*

Crushing the

The Germans were sure of their technical advantage, which was confirmed already in the first days of the war, but they were afraid of bayonet attack of Polish soldiers. Once Poles managed to break through the firewall of machine guns and artillery, nothing could stop them.

These kind of attacks were even more dangerous when enemy was taken by surprise, as experienced by the SS-men from the SS-Standarte "Germania" Regiment, assigned to the Wehrmacht units, which were blocking General Kazimierz Sosnkowski's "Małopolska" Army divisions the way to besieged by the Germans Lviv, the capital of the Little Poland [Małopolska] region.

In the actions of Hitler's elite mechanized guard regiment, the "Germania" soldiers had more executions than combat achievements to their credit. During the first three days of the war, the regiment stationed in Gliwice, in the German Upper Silesia; on September 4, it moved to Sosnowiec in the Dąbrowa Basin, abandoned by the Polish Army, where it immediately became involved in the arrests and executions carried out by the German Operational Group (Einsatzgruppe I). The SS-men from "Germania" participated in mass executions in the Panewicki Forest near Katowice, the capital

of Upper Silesia, where over 150 people were murdered. For those and similar combat deeds, part of the regiment paid a high price, and indeed paid quite soon, already in the night of September 15/16, 1939, in Muzyłowice in Małopolska. It was this town that became the arena for Nemesis on that fatal for the Germans night.

Fix Bayonets!

At his briefing on September 15 in Sądowa Wisznia, currently located in Ukraine, General Sosnkowski decided to break through with his army to Lviv. For the commanders of his subordinate divisions, this meant giving orders to attack the German units blocking their way. In the evening of that day, the regiments of the 11th Carpathian Infantry Division led by Colonel Bronisław Prugar-Ketling and the 38th Reserve Infantry Division led by Colonel Alojzy Wir-Konas set off for battle. The German mountain riflemen and motorized SS-men were struck by waves of Polish infantry. The greatest battle credit in that clash fell to the 49th



COL BRONISŁAW PRUGAR-KETLING

Col Bronisław Prugar-Ketling (1891–1948), the Commander of the 11th Carpathian Infantry Division, whose soldiers smashed the German SS "Germania" Regiment near Muzyłowice in Eastern Little Poland region; then the Commander of the Polish 2nd Infantry Rifle Division which he led in the French campaign in 1940; unwilling to capitulate before the Germans, he crossed the Swiss border; in 1945, he returned to Poland.

Photo: early 1930s

They Bore Witness to the Russian Crime

The participants of delegations organized by the Germans in 1943, which were to certify the responsibility of the Russians for the murder of Polish officers in Katyn, became inconvenient witnesses to the authorities of the Soviet Union.

After the war, they were accused of collaborating with the Germans, hunted by way of wanted persons lists, and imprisoned in their native countries that fell under Russian occupation; some of them died in unexplained circumstances," says Tadeusz Wolsza, a historian specializing in modern history.

After discovering the graves of Polish officers in Katyn in the spring of 1943, German authorities organized delegations that visited the crime scene. What was their purpose?

The Germans wanted to exploit the murder of Polish officers by the Soviets to provoke a conflict between the Western Allies and the allied Soviet Union. In order to