



Summary of Zygmunt Josef Minkler's life story
as told by Richard Gregory Minkler
in an interview with Adrian O'dell (NPHG) January 2017

Zygmunt Josef Minkler was born in eastern Poland in 1923 and he and his family were deported to northern Siberia in 1940. They lived and laboured in a Soviet internment camp.

At the end of World War II, Churchill convinced Stalin to release and allow the Poles to go to Britain but no arrangements were made for their departure. His family travelled to Iran by train with many others walking. Some died en route. Zygmunt's parents subsequently died and the children had to fend for themselves.

When he arrived in Britain, Zygmunt was offered in the Polish 300 Squadron and he flew on many sorties as a rear gunner in Lancaster bombers. His last airbase was Faldingworth in Lincolnshire but in 1945 he was shot down over Dresden and taken as a POW.

Six months later he was released and joined the RAF and about that time he met and married Dorothy Bragg and they moved to east London and opened a confectionary shop. He had been trained as a baker in the RAF and they moved to Downham Market in 1962 and bought a bakery. When that business failed they moved to Norwich where the couple divorced when their son Richard was eight years old.

Zygmunt then joined the Betabake Company which became Sunblest and worked as a supervisor and production officer.

He died in 1990.

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