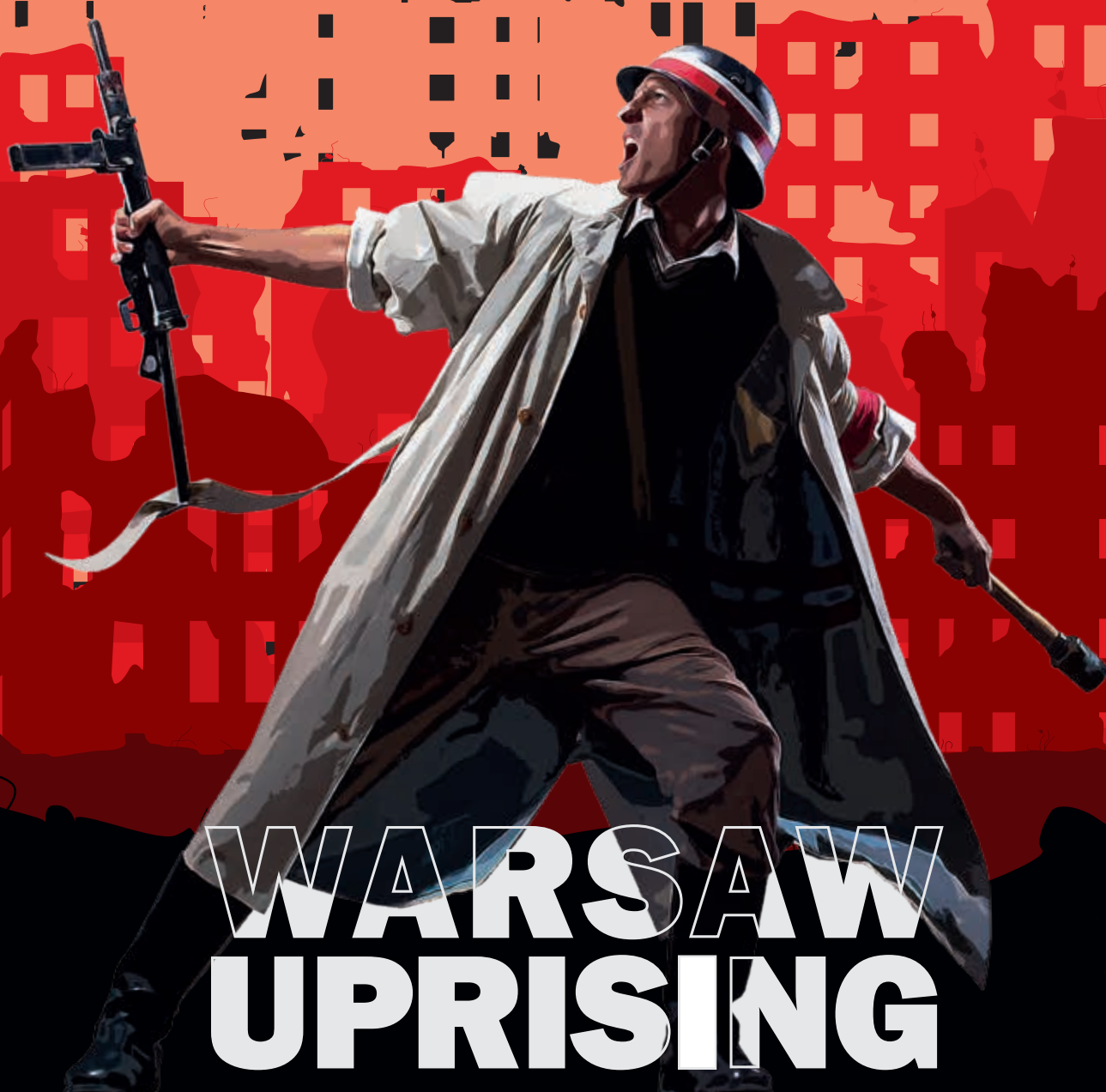


MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
REPUBLIC OF POLAND

For Freedom



WARSAW UPRISING

AUGUST 1, 1944

BETWEEN THE BLACK DEATH AND THE RED PLAGUE



Colored by Mikolaj Kaczmarek

THE OATH OF THE HOME ARMY SOLDIERS

The oath of a soldier swearing to the Home Army:

Before God Almighty
and Mary the Blessed Virgin,
Queen of the Polish Crown,
I put my hands on this Holy Cross,
The sign of the Passion and Salvation,
I pledge allegiance to my Fatherland,
the Republic of Poland.

I pledge to steadfastly guard Her honor,

**TO FIGHT FOR HER LIBERATION
WITH ALL MY STRENGTH,
EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF SACRIFICING
MY OWN LIFE.**

I pledge unconditional obedience
to the President of Poland,
the Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Poland,
and the Home Army Commander whom he
appointed.

I pledge to resolutely keep secret
whatever may happen to me.

SO HELP ME GOD

*The reply of a person accepting the oath of the newly
enlisted:*

I hereby accept you into the ranks of the Polish Army
to fight with the enemy in conspiracy
for the liberation of our Fatherland.

Your duty shall be
to fight with arms in hands.

Victory shall be your reward.

Treason shall be punished with death.



PHOTO: JAKUB SZYMCIUK



MARIUSZ BŁASZCZAK
POLISH MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Dear Readers,

In Poland, “uprising” is more than just a word. “Uprising” means strong opposition to any attempt of enslaving our nation and plundering our land. In the history of the Republic of Poland, many a time we have fought with weapons in our hands against occupiers and barbarian forces. Such was also the case in Warsaw on August 1, 1944. The capital city of Poland, after four years of brutal German occupation, rose in armed resistance against Germany. The flower of our nation, brought up with the values of true freedom, stood against the regular German army. We fought absolutely alone, courageously and sacrificially. At the same time, the Red Army, standing on the other bank of the Vistula River, was watching the Poles bleed out. We literally found ourselves between “the German black death and the Soviet red plague.”

The first days of fighting brought victory, the residents of Warsaw were recapturing their districts. However, the significant disproportion of forces and barbarian methods of the Germans, who were unscrupulously murdering civilians, made the Warsaw Uprising fall after 63 days of fighting. Although the city of Warsaw was ruined, Poles proved how much they were willing to sacrifice for their Fatherland and for independence. We inherit their ideal of freedom. After years of German occupation, and later also the Soviet communist domination in our part of Europe, we managed to rise again. Our collective Polish experience is shaped by the difficult history of fighting for independence. Today, we are a strong state and a proud nation. Tradition, modern army and determination are our strength. Our soldiers have never brought disgrace upon our country.

We, the Poles, know the price of our freedom, and we remember our heroes. Therefore, on August 1, on the day of the anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, at 5:00 p.m., the entire country stops to listen to the sound of alarming sirens and pay tribute to the Heroes of those days.

Soldiers of the Andrzej Company of the Home Army Bartkiewicz Group.

Photo by Sylwester
"Kris" Braun




63 DAYS OF GLORY, 63

The Warsaw Uprising was the greatest heroic spurt for independence in occupied Europe. For over two months of 1944, the insurgents fought fiercely with much better armed enemy forces. They fought for their freedom and dignity.

The approaching eastern front, the Allies landing in Normandy and their progress in Italy caused that in 1944 the atmosphere in occupied Poland was conducive for the ultimate decision.

The hopes for the country to be liberated by the Western Allies had vanished already many months before. The advance of the Red Army forced the Polish Government-in-Exile in London and the Home Army (Armia Krajowa, AK) command to launch Operation Storm (Burza). The operation assumed that the Polish administration and the Home Army were to help the

Soviet troops in the fight with the occupant, and take over power on the liberated territory. It soon turned out that the Soviet Union had different plans. Polish Eastern Borderlands (Kresy Wschodnie) were to be integrated into the Soviet Union, which was agreed on by the leaders of Western countries at the Tehran Conference. The future administration was to be appointed by Moscow. Those Home Army soldiers who came forward, were persecuted and by force incorporated into the army ranks, and those who did not want to cooperate were sent far into the Soviet Union or killed.



Meanwhile, in the first half of 1944, the German forces were withdrawing along the entire frontline, and the Red Army was rapidly advancing into the West. It seemed that it was only a matter of weeks before it crossed the Vistula River to occupy Poland. When in July the Soviet forces broke German lines in Byelorussia, a decision was made to also include Warsaw in Operation Storm.

The Uprising was to start on August 1. The plan was clear: armed attack against the withdrawing Germans, occupation of Warsaw abandoned by the Germans and fight against the Red Army as its rightful host.

The Outbreak of the Uprising

At 17:00 (5:00 p.m.), codenamed the "W" hour, the units of the Home Army joined the fight. About 35,000 soldiers with white-and-red bands faced the enemy army of almost 20,000. Although occupational forces were made up of mostly police and garrison units, they were much better armed, occupied fortified positions and at any given time could count on the support of the front troops.

At the moment of the outbreak, in the Home Army arsenal there were: about 100 heavy and light machine guns; 400 submachine guns; 1,500 carbines; 2,500 handguns; and several dozen thousand of grenades (mostly produced underground)

Tragic Balance

Until August 4, the offensive part of the Warsaw Uprising was ongoing. The Home Army would manage to increase their arsenal. Meanwhile, the German forces were regrouping for counterattack. On the next day, the enemy started implementing the plan to suppress the rebellion. The first stage was to obtain a safe connection with the right bank of the Vistula River and permanent separation of individual city districts. In the second part of August, the next phase was launched – systematic elimination of insurgent enclaves.

The fact that no help was received from the Red Army doomed the Uprising. The heroic attitude of the Home Army soldiers and the enormous devotion of local civilians could only postpone the inevitable end. After two months of fighting, further resistance made no sense. On October 3, the Home Army capitulated. The city was ruined. Constant bombardments and raging fires transformed large areas of Warsaw into piles of debris and rubble. About 500,000 residents were taken to transit camps, the largest one of which was located in Pruszków. 60,000 people were sent to concentration camps, and about 90,000 were transported to Germany for forced labor. Before Warsaw was finally occupied by the Soviet forces in January 1945, the occupants had conducted the

DAYS OF TRAGEDY

and bottles with gasoline. There were no heavy weapons and very little ammunition. With time, the insurgents complemented their arsenal with weapons seized in the fight or taken over from air-drops, they also would produce their own arms.

On the very first day of the fight, the weak points, with which the insurgents had to deal with to the very end, revealed themselves. The insurgent units were very poorly armed and not very well trained, they also lacked proper supplies, communication and coordination. For these reasons, the successes in the initial days of the Warsaw Uprising were moderate. They did manage to occupy large parts of the city (mostly in the Śródmieście and Old Town), but strategic points were still controlled by German forces. The Home Army did not seize bridges on the Vistula river, railway stations, airports, military barracks or the Warsaw Citadel. In many parts of Warsaw, the insurgents managed only to isolate strong enemy positions.

operation of demolishing the empty city, destroying about 30% of buildings in Warsaw.

When Adolf Hitler found out about the Uprising, he issued an order, by force of which every Pole, regardless of whether or not they participated in the Uprising, was to be killed. Mass executions and robberies happened on a daily basis. People were being murdered: the captivated insurgents, the wounded in hospitals and the locals hiding in their basements. Enemy soldiers would many a time use the tactic of "live shields," pushing groups of defenseless civilians ahead of attacking columns. The tragic balance of the Warsaw Uprising amounts to 150,000–200,000 killed Warsaw residents and about 16,000 killed insurgents. The German losses are estimated at about 2,000 to 10,000 soldiers.

Maciej Chilczuk, Joanna Tańska



THE WARSAW UPRISING

1 SCOUTING POSTAL SERVICE PLAQUE WILCZA 35/41

The Scouting Postal Service was established on August 2 following the initiative of Scoutmaster Kazimierz "Granica" Grenda. The postmen included Zawiszacy [after Zawisza Czarny, a legendary Polish knight], boys, mostly aged 12–15. After the capitulation, the entire postal service archive was buried at night in the courtyard at Wilcza 41. After the war, it was retrieved by the communist Security Service [SB]. The archive's fate remains unknown. †

2 ANTEK THE SPRAYER – PLACE OF DEATH ALEJE JEROZOLIMSKIE 11/19

Corporal Antoni "Antek the Sprayer" Szczesny Godlewski fought in Sokół Battalion. He got his pseudonym from a STEN sub-machine gun, known as "the sprayer" [Polish: rozpylacz] during the Uprising, which he owned as one of very few soldiers in the unit. The courageous "Antek the Sprayer" died on August 8, 1944. He was shot during the attack on a German outpost located at Aleje Jerozolimskie 25 (known as Sikorskiego avenue during the Warsaw Uprising). He took a series from a machine gun. His fiancée pulled his corps out of gunfire area.



3 LITTLE INSURRECTIONIST MONUMENT CORNER OF PODWALE AND WĄSKI DUNAJ

The first design of the sculpture was drawn up in 1946. Its creator Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz claimed that it was "an expression of his feelings, a form of homage to the children fallen in the fighting." The idea of commemorating the children fighting in the Uprising emerged among the scouts from the Heroes of Warsaw Capital Region of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHP). The monument was unveiled in the presence of hundreds of scouts from all over Poland on October 1, 1983.



joined in the form of an anchor - the symbol of hope, the letters PW [Polska Walcząca - Fighting Poland], signifying the underground resistance of the Poles against occupants



memorial plaques in the field cathedral (Długa street 13/15)

WOLA



city districts

selected railway stations

selected subway stations

the grave of Antek the Sprayer on Powązki Military Cemetery (plot A 17, row 1, grave 17)

ŻOLIBORZ

WOLA

OLD TOWN

ŚRÓDMIEŚCIE

MEMORIAL SITES

4 MINE CARRIER EXPLOSION KILIŃSKIEGO 3

It was exceptionally quiet in Stare Miasto [Old Town] on August 13, 1944. Two tanks – as it was believed at that time seized from the Germans – were approaching the barricade near Podwale. These were probably the StuG 40 self-propelled assault gun and the Borgward B IV heavy explosive carrier. At 6.05 p.m., a box with a load of about 500 kg of explosives was released by an unaware driver, causing an explosion. It killed nearly 300 people, and wounded twice as many. A fragment of the caterpillar track of one of the vehicles is instilled in the wall of St. John's Archcathedral in the Old Town (erroneously described as the caterpillar track of the Goliath self-propelled tracked mine).

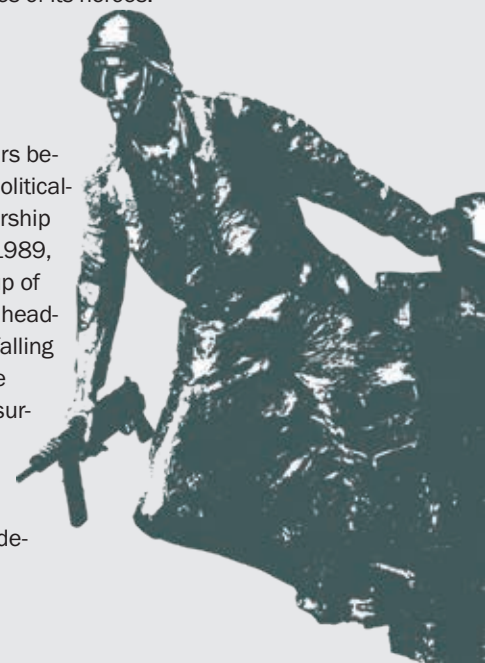
5 WIGRY BATTALION PLAQUE PODWALE 23

The scout Battalion "Wigry" was formed by scout instructors gathered around Scoutmaster Władysław Ludwig and Scoutmaster Roman Kaczorowski. Throughout the entire occupation period, and especially during the Uprising, the battalion showed its bravery, suffered many casualties, and many places in Warsaw – such as Rondo "Radosława" (a roundabout) – bear the names of its heroes.



6 WARSAW UPRISING MONUMENT PLAC KRAŚIŃSKICH

The monument whose history lasted 44 years before it was unveiled. The Warsaw Uprising, politically directed against Russia, was under censorship in Poland under Soviet occupation. Only in 1989, this superb monument was unveiled. A group of soldiers, running away from a falling wall, is heading for the sewer manhole to get out of the falling Old Town. On September 2, 1944, under the shelling of German artillery, about 5,000 insurgents got through to Śródmieście using this passageway. The wounded, but still alive insurgents and civilians were murdered by German SS-units, which seized the entirely destroyed district.



7 WARSAW RISING MUSEUM GRZYBOWSKA 79

An ultra-modern museum for "grandparents and grandchildren," located in the building of a former Municipal Power Plant. The combination of images and sounds opens up the possibility of discovering the Warsaw Uprising in various aspects. There are exhibitions, photos, audiovisual rooms, an insurgent cinema, and many other points of interest inside. The little ones will particularly enjoy the Little Insurgent Room.



84% of left-bank Warsaw was destroyed. The map displays a contemporary city plan



PRAGA

ŚRÓDMIEŚCIE

AUGUST 1

"Soldiers of Warsaw! Today, I have issued the order you have all been waiting for, to fight the eternal enemy of Poland, the German invader. After almost five years of uninterrupted and fierce underground fighting, you now stand openly against the enemy with a weapon in your hand, to bring back Freedom to your Fatherland, and to punish German criminals for the terror and crimes committed on the Polish land."

The order of the Home Army commander, Major General Tadeusz "Bór" Komorowski

Unfortunately, it soon turns out that the plans significantly exceed the actual capabilities of Polish soldiers. On the first day of the uprising, the insurgents manage to seize only a few city buildings, among them: warehouses with food and uniforms at Stawki street; garrison buildings in the St. Kinga school building at Okopowa street; Military Geographical Institute (WIG) at Aleje Jerozolimskie; the building of Urban Communication Facility (MZK) on the corner of Świętokrzyska and Marszałkowska; the highest building in the city – Prudential, at the Plac Napoleona; and the building of Railway Directorate at the crossing of Targowa and Wileńska in the Praga district. Larger areas are seized only in the Old Town and in the Śródmieście district. Capturing Prudential building becomes symbolic, and the white-and-red flag put on its top by the soldiers of the Kiliński Battalion is the proof for the liberation of this part of the city.

Unfortunately, the element of surprise does not work. The Germans know about the plans of the Home Army. At the last moment, they fetch reinforcements for the most important buildings, and as early as at 16:30 hour, the military commander for Warsaw, General Reiner Stahel, declares an alarm for the Warsaw Garrison.

AUGUST 11

"The third battle of Warsaw, fought without Allies, without even the material aid that might well have been expected, is still going on. The situation is desperate, but it can yet be saved, though the citizens – men, women and children – facing the extremities of vicious reprisals, rightly demand 'where are our friends?'"

The beginning of the article "Warsaw Tragedy" in The Daily Mirror (Friday, August 11, 1944)

WARSAW UPRISING
INSURGENT
RADOŚLAW GROUP

At the beginning of August 1944, during the fights in the Wola district, the Radosław Group soldiers captured German uniform storage rooms on Stawki street. They found there, i.e., hundreds of camouflage jackets used by SS units. The jackets soon became a common element of an insurgent outfit, and were referred to as "panterki" [leopards]. Scouts of the Zośka and Parasol battalions wore white and red armbands with a Scouts Cross. Warsaw insurgents were armed with 9-mm Błyskawica machine guns, produced in underground armament factories, which were a Polish version of the English Sten MK.2 machine gun and the German MP-40. To carry ammunition, they used a German ammo pouch holding three magazines.

Text: Paweł

Rozdżestwieński,

Drawing: Jarosław Wróbel



POWSTANIEC WARSZAWSKI
1944

Insurgents at their post in a town house gate at Aleje Jerozolimskie 22.

Photo by Sylwester "Kris" Braun

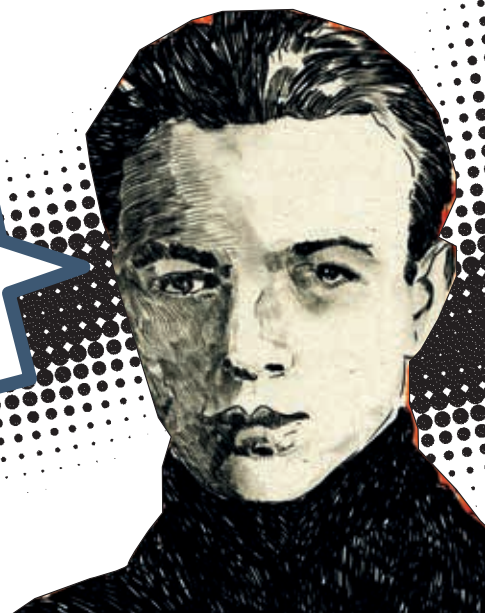
LONG LIVE POLAND!

"Rom" [Cpl Roman Marchel] approached me – because, along with my pistol, I also had two bottles with the Molotov cocktail – and whispered: "Julek, bottles into the second window." I hesitated for a second, felt a tiny prick of fear, because that meant running past the first window. Today I know that they wouldn't have managed to shoot at me, but then, for a fraction of a second, my heart trembled. However, I had already been so used to shooting that I just jumped and threw both bottles right into the second window. Instantly, a sea of fire flooded the inside, I snatched the pistol from under my belt, and right after me my mates jumped with a loud: "Hurrah!". At that moment, all the historical books I had ever read came to my mind – Przyborowski, Sienkiewicz, Żeromski – and I shouted with all my might: "Long live Poland!" – as if I were in some theatre. I thought perhaps no one noticed, considering the turmoil, but they did... Long after the war was over, my friends, who were there with me then, would shout at me every time they saw me: "Long live Poland!". For many years I even felt ashamed that I had been so filled with exaltation, but now I no longer do. My story proves how much enthusiasm we all felt at the time.

Juliusz Kulesza, the last living defender of Polska Wytwórnia Papierów Wartościowych [Polish Security Printing Works] during the Warsaw Uprising

We stood on a German flag with a swastika, lying on the floor, to take our oath. I took mine with three boys and one girl. We received Polish Scout's Crosses, which we swore to guard even at the cost of our lives.

Czesław "Bystry" Lewandowski, the 227 Assault Platoon of the Grey Ranks Combat School





Prisoners from the liberated Gęsiówka camp

MYSTERIES OF GĘSIÓWKA

The camp covered a vast area of the city center, and was colloquially called Gęsiówka.

This is all that is left of KL Warschau – a German concentration camp in the capital of Poland.

The camp covered a vast area in the city center, and was commonly referred to as Gęsiówka. The name came from the former military barracks located in Gęsia street in Warsaw, which was renamed after the war as Mordechaja Anielewicz street. Anielewicz was one of the leaders of the 1943 Jewish uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. The Ghetto was organized for Jews by the Germans in 1940, concentrating 400,000 Jews from Warsaw and neighboring areas in inhuman conditions.

The genocide against Jews from all German-occupied European countries was initiated by the Germans in 1942 on the Polish soil. Most of the Ghetto residents were transported to the Treblinka death camp. It was not until January 1943 that the first unrest among the remaining Jewish population began. SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler noted that a Konzentrationslager – a concentration camp, would be “of use” there. The preparations for its creation were interrupted by a desperate Jewish uprising. The last sentence of SS General Jürgen Stroop’s report documenting the extermination of the Ghetto reflects the “need” to establish such a camp in Warsaw. After the suppression of the Uprising, on June 11, Himmler gave an order to set up a camp in the Ghetto, which by then had turned into a sea of ruins in the

When **RICHARD NIXON, THE US VICE-PRESIDENT**, visited Poland for the first time in 1959, he laid flowers at the Ghetto Heroes monument in the square of the same name, near the place where the chimney of the German crematorium had fumed during the war. Then, to everyone’s surprise, he turned around and went towards a building in Gęsiówka, where he placed another wreath. This is documented on the photographs in Life magazine. The memory of the German crimes was still alive. He was probably the last foreign politician who commemorated the existence of KL Warschau in that place.



heart of Warsaw. In July, three hundred German kapos – supervisors, criminal prisoners from the camp in Buchenwald in German Thuringia – arrived in Gęsiówka. On August 15, the first transport of Jews from the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, founded by the Germans on Polish territories incorporated into the Reich, arrived. Those prisoners were looked after as much as possible by a Polish doctor, a political prisoner from the nearby Pawiak prison, Dr. Felicjan Loth. The concentration camp was named KL Warschau. Although located in the center of a big city, the capital of Poland, it was isolated from the outside world. Hans Kammler was the chief engineer – he was the same man who had built the gas chambers and crematoria in Auschwitz.

The German discovery in 1943 in Katyń near Smolensk of thousands of corpses of Polish officers, whom the Russians had methodically murdered three years earlier, made the Nazi realize that the traces of their own crimes must be erased. In the still active German camps, the bodies of the murdered were dug up and burned. Such repeated “burials” were part of the German action Sonderkommando 1005, whose aim was to remove evidence of genocide in the East. The action was led by SS Colonel Paul Blobel, who was responsible for the murder of 34,000 Jews in Babi Yar near Kyiv in September 1941.

At the same time, during a few months at the turn of 1943 and 1944, the Germans murdered about 10,000 Poles in Warsaw in mass street executions, in the intention of terrorizing the capital's residents. However, as a precaution, they found it necessary to hide the evidence of their crime; moreover, the occupants feared the outbreak of a potential epidemic caused by the decay of corpses. The bodies of the executed were collected from the streets and transported to the area of Gęsiówka by the prisoners of the camp. The Auschwitz “death commandos,” a group made up of Jewish prisoners who had previously worked in gas chambers and crematoria in Auschwitz-Birkenau, were employed for this purpose. Poles from the nearby Pawiak prison were also killed in Gęsiówka.

In KL Warschau, the bodies of Polish victims transported from all over the city were ground to pulp, and burnt in a crematorium erected on the camp grounds. However, tons of human ashes remained after the combustion process. They were discharged into concrete wells located in the first courtyard of the camp – and they will rest in there for eternity.

After the war, Poland found itself under the new – Russian – occupation. On the territory of the former KL Warschau, a communist “labor camp” was established in the Stalin era. After 1956, the buildings were empty and partly burnt.

Bogusław Kopka

Reduta Wawelska has now been lost, the last defense point in the Ochota district. The insurgent units commanded by 2nd Lt Jerzy “Stach” Gołembiewski go through the underground channels to the districts of Śródmieście and Mokotów. The German troops are heading towards Plac Starynkiewicza.

* * *

In the fights around Okopowa street, Jan “Radosław” Mazurkiewicz is seriously wounded. On his position as a group commander, he is replaced by Maj Wacław “Bolek” Janaszek, who had been so far the chief of staff. The positions of the group are constantly under attack. In fear of being surrounded, the units withdraw towards the Old Town. The attack of the German forces is stopped with a counterattack at Stawki street.

* * *

The first Virtuti Militari crosses are awarded for the participation in the Warsaw Uprising. Among the awarded soldiers are: LtCol Jan “Radosław” Mazurkiewicz, Capt Jan “Jan” Andrzejewski (commander of Broda regiment) and Capt Franciszek “Niebora” Mazurkiewicz (commander of Miotła battalion, brother of “Radosław”). The first woman also is awarded – Ludmiła “Mila” Krajewska, a messenger, receives the Cross of Valor.

* * *

The Old Town is being shelled by a German armored train and artillery. The attacks on insurgents are supported by aviation. The unit of Capt Tadeusz “Zdan” Majcherczyk has just participated in fierce fights for the Bank of Poland at Bielańska street.

AUGUST 17

“The Uprising constitutes one phase of the fight which has been going on continuously since 1939. Poland's lone struggle in the first September period of war stemmed from the fact the Allies had not been prepared. But today, abandoning Poland would make the West responsible for a catastrophe. Europe is looking at Warsaw: its fate will determine the standpoint of many countries for many years to come.”

“Help for Warsaw,” Komunikat Informacyjny, London



THE WARSAW UPRISING

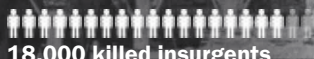
IN NUMBERS

1944

POLES



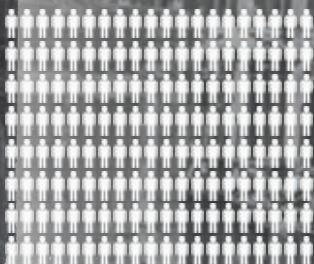
45,000 fighting people
(36,500 called up on August 1, 1944)



18,000 killed insurgents



25,000 wounded insurgents

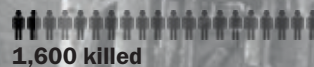


180,000 killed civilians

GERMANS



50,000 fighting people



1,600 killed



7,500 wounded

63



AUGUST 1 – OCTOBER 3

DAYS OF FIGHTING

Graphics: Jarosław Malarowski

Based on the infographics of the Institute of National Remembrance in Poland

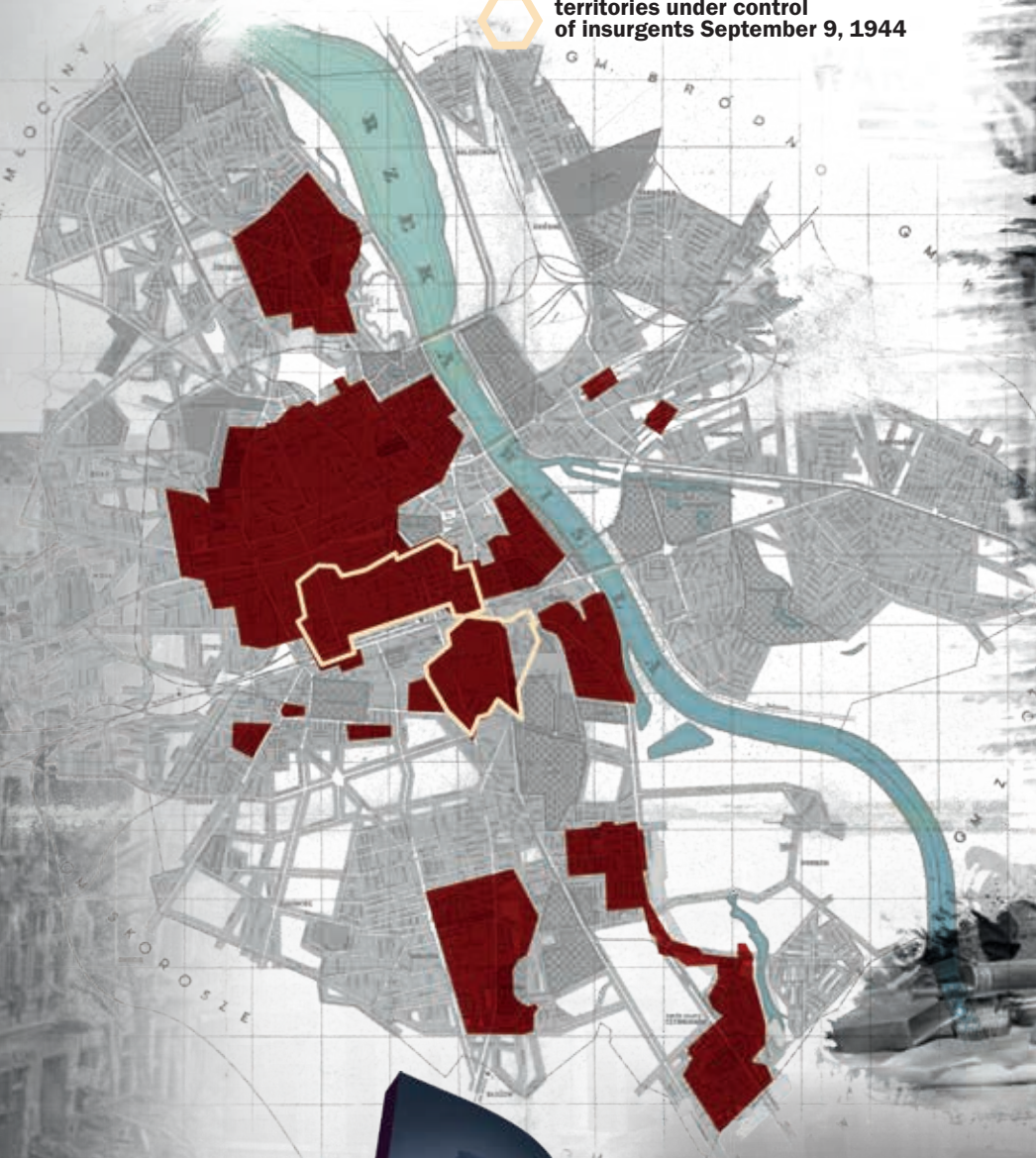
TERRITORIES SEIZED BY THE INSURGENTS



territories under control
of insurgents August 4, 1944



territories under control
of insurgents September 9, 1944



STARÓWKA and **MURANÓW** were the two districts of Warsaw
most destroyed as a result of the fights – they were damaged
in their entirety

losses

The total material losses of Warsaw according to the value from 2004 amounted to

45.3 billion dollars

- more than the entire external debt of Poland in 1989





Intense shelling of the Old Town, also from air. Hundreds of bombs and shells fall on the district. Among the buildings on fire are: St. John's Cathedral; the oldest church in Warsaw – St. Mary's church in Nowe Miasto; the Town Hall at Plac Teatralny. The houses at the streets of Konwiktorska, Franciszkańska, Świętojerska and Długa are turning into rubble. The German forces are attacking insurgent positions in the districts of Śródmieście and Mokotów.

* * *

Walls are covered with posters with the decision of the district delegate of the Polish government for the Capital City of Warsaw, ordering the civilians to form domestic self-defense committees. Their tasks include extinguishing fires, keeping order in the inhabited buildings and shelters, organizing social self-help and taking care of the refugees.

AUGUST 19

"An utter indifference towards material values. Only life is worth something here, however not more than keeping the post."

Report of Col Karol "Wachnowski" Ziemiński to Col Antoni "Monter" Chruściel

At night, the insurgents attack Wilanów and Wolica from Sadyba. They want to meet the units commanded by LtCol Mieczysław "Grzymała" Sokołowski, who are heading towards them from the Chojnowski Park and Kabacki Forest. The attack breaks, the Poles suffer heavy losses. Ultimately, about 370 well-armed people get through to Sadyba, the rest of the group withdraws. The following night, a few more platoons reach the insurgents' positions from the Kabacki Forest.

* * *

A combat group of General Heinz Reinefarth launches general attack on the insurgents' positions in the Old Town. The Germans have enormous fire superiority with the support of artillery and aviation. In the operation participate ten infantry battalions and two assault sapper battalions, assisted with panzer weapons as well as fire from an armored train and a river gunboat on the Vistula.



A Warsaw Uprising insurgent.

Colored by Mikołaj Kaczmarek

A POLISH SNIPER SLAYER

In 1944, Antoni Godlewski was only 21. However, like many of his peers, he joined the Warsaw Uprising without a moment of hesitation.

He wanted to free the capital, his beloved city, from invaders. Although he was killed by an enemy bullet on the eighth day of fighting, he managed to become a legend of the Uprising, for Antek Rozpylacz was "a great guy, an extraordinary friend, a brave soldier".

When the Warsaw Uprising broke out on August 1, 1944, the whole city became a battlefield for Polish insurgents and German occupiers. They fought for every house, every street. The positions of both sides of the conflict were very often only meters apart and death was lurking around every corner. Young people, inexperienced and underarmed, but at the same time full of patriotic zeal and will to fight, tried to snatch their freedom from the violent hands of the overwhelming German force.

For Polish insurgents, the most notorious German soldiers were the snipers, lying in wait on last floors of tenement houses, roofs, in attics, lofts, hidden behind chimneys or makeshift screens. They were usually German

Insurgents at a firing post on Wojciecha Górskiego street.

Photo by Sylwester "Kris" Bradu



soldiers or policemen, tirelessly looking down to the streets in search of creeping insurgents, who they would shoot without a second thought. Since snipers usually worked alone and often changed posts, they were very hard to spot or locate.

Antoni Godlewski was one of the people who dealt with hunting and eliminating snipers. During the occupation he was a student at the underground Warsaw University of Technology. Warsaw's native son, he was always the

first in line to fight for it. As one of the few lucky ones in the insurgent unit, he had a gun acquired from an Allied arms drop. It was a Sten submachine gun, called "rozpylacz" (sprayer) by the insurgents. The gun gave rise to Godlewski's nom de guerre – Antek Rozpylacz.

"Very energetic, like a spark, resistant like steel and braver than anyone, he and his Sten were everywhere. Antek was particularly famous for his exceptional military imagination and courage," wrote the insurgent press. "A great guy, a very good friend, a brave soldier," said his colleagues from the insurgent group, as well as girls from the resistance movement, who often had a crush on this extremely handsome boy.

Antek Rozpylacz took on the hardest tasks. He did not think about his safety, he believed in his lucky star, sure that everything was going to be fine. He was particularly good at dealing with snipers, although it was one of the hardest tasks. The first thing to do was to locate the well-hidden shooter, sneak up to the building where he was, go up to the top floor, and there, risking your life, fight him eye to eye. Antek Rozpylacz was indeed a very lucky guy. Within just a few days of the Warsaw Uprising he managed to find and do away with as many as eighteen snipers.

During the missions, he was always supported by a small group of insurgents, which included his fiancée (nom de guerre Nina) and a 13-year-old Jewish orphan boy, called Miki Bandyta (Mickey the Bandit). Nina cleaned guns, loaded them, and took care of ammunition, while Miki Bandyta ran around the city as a liaison. "Those three, always in a good mood, always full of energy and never tired, were the apple of the eye for the whole assault group," wrote Antek's friends in his obituary.

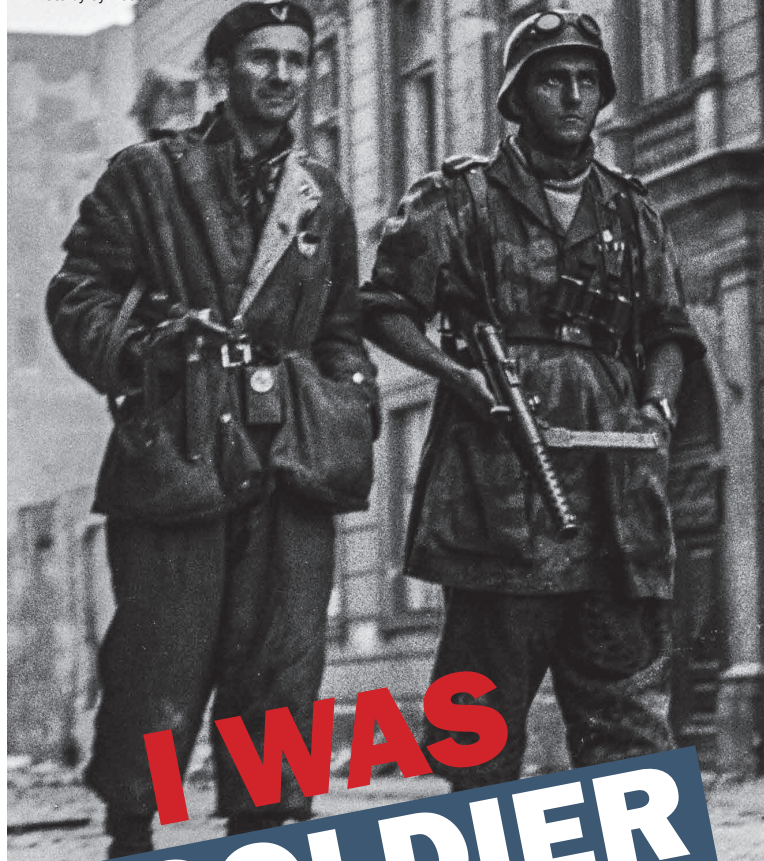
Robert Sendek

I went to the Mail Station and was accepted in the unit, probably because I owned a small "Belgian six" ["Browning baby" pistol]. With this little 'toy' and bottle bombs I literally went to fight with the tanks.

Jerzy "Jur" Mindziukiewicz, Miotła Battalion

An insurgent patrol on Jasna street.

Photo by Sylwester "Kris" Braun



I WAS A SOLDIER

I remember I was going down the avenue to join the Uprising, when suddenly I saw my mother coming from the other direction! She asked: "Son, where are you going?" She begged me with tears in her eyes: "Don't go, don't go. Your father is dead, and you want to die like him..." I explained I was a soldier, I received an order. That must have convinced her, because she let me go. When I went on some 200-300 meters, I turned around, and she was still standing where I left her, watching me go.

Zbigniew "Czekolada" Piasecki, Ruczaj and Miłosz Battalions



“YOUR FEAR WILL SUBSIDE AND YOU WILL STAY CALM”

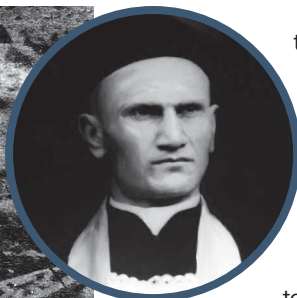


A statue of Christ torn down during the Warsaw Uprising

Before the execution, the SS-men take his shoes off, then hang him on his own stole. Such was the death of Józef “Rudy” Stanek, a steadfast chaplain of the Warsaw Uprising.

A Pallottine, Józef “Rudy” Stanek, was one of the 40 chaplains killed in the Warsaw Uprising. John Paul II beatified him as one of the 108 martyrs of the Second World War.

The Uprising breaks out when Father Józef Stanek is in Śródmieście. He cannot get across the fighting Warsaw to



the position where he was allocated. He goes to Hoża street, where the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary established the hospital for insurgents. Father Stanek holds masses, and administers anointing of the sick. Mother Matylda Getter, at the time the superior of the Warsaw province of the Franciscan Sisters, recalled: “With the greatest zeal, three times a day, he would visit the sick, always ready to go when called for, night or day.”

In the hospital at Hoża there are three priests, while in Czerniaków there are none. The chief chaplain of the Uprising, Father Stefan “Biblia” Kowalczyk, shifts Father Stanek to Czerniaków.

The Priest Who Carries Water

At the Czerniaków Bridgehead, “Rudy” is the front-line chaplain: apart from holding masses and hearing confessions, he carries the wounded to hospitals, assists in getting out people buried in debris. Cpl Wojciech “Derkacz” Zabłocki, lying wounded in the street under fire, will owe him life. Father Stanek carries him on his own back.

He also tries to raise the morale of the fighters. In one of his sermons, he says: “My Dear Friends, we all must die... But once you understand it’s inevitable, your fear will subside, and you will stay calm.”

The situation in the districts is getting worse. There is hunger, there is no water – people carry it from the

“WE HAVE OUR FREEDOM, SO IT’S WORTH IT”

The Warsaw Uprising cost the lives of 16,000 soldiers. One of them was PIL dr Ewa “Mewa” Matuszewska, a war nurse in the the Home Army Baszta Regiment.

Warsaw, the morning of September 26, 1944. A German attack on insurgent positions in Mokotów is ongoing, one of them is at Aleja Niepodległości 117. Many defenders have already been wounded, ammunition is scarce. At about 18:00 (6:00 p.m.), a defense commander CCPL Antoni “Ładzki” Łukawski from the Baszta Regiment gives an order to leave the building.

Unfortunately, the most gravely injured must stay in the basement sanitary point. “For that reason, the order will not be obeyed by “Mewa,” who, as a war nurse, decides to stay with the wounded,” says Katarzyna Utracka, a historian from the Warsaw Uprising Museum,



telling Ewa Matuszewska’s story. When the Germans capture the town house, the girl and her patients are murdered. She studied medicine, she was an active scout and a patrol leader in the 3rd Warsaw Female Scout Team. She was also into gliding and skiing, she played volleyball. “She was an incredible woman; strong, wise, energetic and passionate about helping others,” says Utracka. Matuszewska was active in conspiracy.

First, she served in the sanitary service in Szaregi (Grey Ranks), and since 1943, she was a soldier and a war nurse in the 3rd Company of the AGAT unit, which later became the Home Army Parasol Battalion. After the Uprising broke out, “Mewa” did not manage

Vistula under fire. Father Stanek does too. Czerniaków falls on September 23.

Pfaffe Means Shaveling

"Those in black dresses are the worst! They are the devils!," shouts the SS-man. "Rudy" has been beaten up, his soutane is ragged, and he's barefoot.

"Dieser Pfaffe!," the SS-man shouts again. Father Stanek has been arrested during the pacification of the district. Now, they are dragging people out from the crowd of captives, pulling them, beating up, calling them names. The Germans take their boots off. Leopold Perłowski, one of the Radosław Group soldiers," recalls: He would bear all the insults and harassment with great dignity and the attitude of a soldier and a chaplain. The SS-men ordered him to take his white-and-red band off. He refused."

There is a floor beam sticking out of one of the building's walls. They take Father Stanek's stole and hang him on it.

The execution is obligatorily seen by the captured insurgents and civilians brought by the Germans. Some of them will later recall that before death the priest blessed them all.

Stanisława Żóławska, a resident of the Czerniaków district, said: "He was saying goodbye to all who watched this tragedy by making a sign of the cross. He could have saved himself. Three days before Czerniaków's capitulation, the last pontoon with the wounded was leaving. There was also one seat for Father Stanek. But he didn't want to leave. Instead, he gave his seat on the pontoon to an injured soldier."

At the spot where he was murdered, a wooden cross of several meters was erected. On the white obelisk, there is a symbol of Fighting Poland, and on the stone, there is the name, surname and underground nickname of the Blessed Father Józef Stanek.

Stanisław Zasada

to get to her unit. "She fought in Mokotów as a commandant of the sanitary point in the Baszta Regiment," says the historian. The girl organized a field hospital in the back of Alkazar, an insurgents' building on the corner of Aleja Niepodległości and Odyńca street. When the insurgent lines shifted to the Szustra street, she moved her sanitary point there. "She was always calm, smiling and patient, always caring for the injured. Using her own ways, she would always obtain necessary medicaments and medical instruments. She trained other girls, she was everywhere" – Tadeusz "Zbroja" Kubalski described Ewa in The Polish Underground Movement Study Trust published in London. "What we are now going through in Mokotów is hell, but we still have our freedom, so it's worth it," Ewa wrote in a letter to her relatives, which she sent via field mail. When in January 1945 Ewa's mother, who also participated in the Uprising, reached Aleja Niepodległości, the body of her daughter was still lying on the basement stairs. In her hand, the dead girl was holding an unused bandage for dressing wounds.

Anna Dąbrowska

AUGUST 24

"When it comes to the value of combat spirit, the Plac Krasińskich can be compared to Stalingrad, and capturing the building of PAST [Polska Akcyjna Spółka Telefoniczna – a Polish telephone operator] to Monte Cassino."

Biuletyn Informacyjny, no. 61 [underground weekly] Many hours of fights inside the Jan Boży Hospital at Bonifraterska street. The building's wings, floor spaces and individual rooms are seized, lost, seized again. Insurgent units eliminate the German salient between the Bank of Poland and Pasaż Simonsa [a shopping center]. The enemy troops are now occupying the school at Rybaki street and the residential building in the area of Polska Wytwórnia Papierów Wartościowych [Polish Security Printing Works]. In the ruins at Długa 27/29, defense positions are being created, which in the future will go down in history as Reduta Matki Boskiej [Holy Mother's Redoubt].

SEPTEMBER 3

"If Poland has been called in the USA in time of this war 'the world's inspiration,' than about Warsaw one should say that it is the world's conscience of today."

"World's Conscience," Rzeczpospolita Polska, no. 46

After capturing the Old Town and Sadyba districts, Warsaw has three insurgent resistance points: the districts of Śródmieście, Żoliborz and Mokotów. The Germans are now starting to implement their plan of encircling and cutting off Polish positions from the Vistula. The main direction of attack: Powiśle and Northern Śródmieście. Fierce bombardment is ongoing in preparation for a major/the main assault. The city is on fire, which is now impossible to extinguish.

The German press agency announces that the combatant rights of the Home Army soldiers are recognized by the Third Reich: "Polish patriots, who surrender in Warsaw, will be treated as prisoners of war."

SEPTEMBER 5

"Yesterday morning, my attack on the southern part of Śródmieście began. Unfortunately, it is not going well. Poles fight like heroes. Time is pressing because of the Bolsheviks, but it's hard to speed up."

From a journal of General Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski



The Powiśle district is being attacked from all sides. German troops seize the building of Państwowy Zakład Ubezpieczeń Wzajemnych [insurance company] at Kopernika street, as well as defense positions along the streets of Sewerynow, Obożna and Leszczyńska. They murder there about 150 insurgents taken captive. Insurgents from Powiśle are ordered to create new connections with Śródmieście to enable the evacuation of civilians.

* * *

In the evening, the insurgents withdraw from the ruins of the power plant in Powiśle. They no longer have ammunition to repel the wave attacks of the enemy.

SEPTEMBER 19

"The fight with the Germans in Warsaw is coming to an end. What seemed impossible is becoming a fact. We have managed to fight for seven weeks, and we will continue until the victorious Red Army enters our capital. Poland in its eternal memory will keep the heroism of soldiers and people of Warsaw."

From an order of General Tadeusz "Bór" Komorowski

Facing the cease of help from the other bank of the river and the enormous superiority of the enemy, Col "Radosław" decides on transferring some of the insurgent units to Mokotów through the sewers. The remaining insurgents and the soldiers of the 1st Army of the Polish Army, who have tried to provide help to the insurgents from the Praga district they had managed to seize on the right-bank side of the city, are still fighting on their shrinking positions. They cover the wounded who are being transported to the other bank of the river.

* * *

The Germans keep fiercely attacking the last bastions of the insurgents and the 1st Army soldiers defending the Czerniaków district. The last defenders of this redoubt are killed or taken captive – only a few of them manage to get through to Śródmieście.

SEPTEMBER 29

"Further fight in isolated spaces may become impossible. Hunger. If we don't get more effective help in the form of a Soviet attack until October 1, we will be forced to stop the fight."

Message of General Tadeusz "Bór" Komorowski to General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces



WARSAW WAS FIGHTING

Soldiers of the Home Army,

For the past 5 years the Home Army has been fighting against the Germans without respite, in conditions so appalling that they surpass the limits of comprehension by the Western world, and will only be adequately understood and appreciated in the future.

The Home Army does not pause to count its wounds, its sacrifices and its graves.

The Home Army is the only military force in Poland which can be taken into account. The balance sheet of its battles, its achievements and victories is crystal clear. That is the truth which has been long concealed, lest somewhere, someone strong and powerful should frown in anger. This truth is nevertheless finding its way to the surface, and no cunning hand is now able to conceal the light thrown by the burning city of Warsaw.

Warsaw is waiting. Not for empty words of praise, not for approval, not for assurances of pity and sympathy. She is waiting for arms and ammunition. She does not ask, in the manner of a poor relative, for crumbs from the lordly table; she demands the means to fight – in the knowledge of the provisions of the Alliance and the obligations contained therein.

Warsaw is fighting and waiting. The soldiers of the Home Army, the workmen and intellectuals, girls and children – all. The whole nation is fighting, having, in its passionate yearning for the truth, liberty and victory, achieved the miracle of complete unity.





From the left: generals Władysław Anders, Harold Alexander, Kazimierz Sosnkowski, Jacob Loucks Devers (commander of the US forces in Italy) at the ceremony of awarding an American Legion of Merit medal to General Anders, Rome, August 1, 1944

TING AND WAITING

If the population of Warsaw were to perish for the lack of adequate aid under the ruins of houses – if it were to be abandoned to mass slaughter through passivity, indifference or cold calculation – then the world's conscience would be burdened with a frightful wrong, a wrong unprecedented in history. There are qualms of conscience which kill.

Your heroic Commander is accused of a lack of foresight in not having anticipated a sudden halt of the Soviet offensive at the gates of Warsaw. No other tribunal but that of history will pass judgment on this question. We are confident of the ultimate sentence. Reproach is made to the Poles for their alleged lack of co-ordination, in their fight, with the general operational plans in Eastern Europe. If needed, we will prove how many of our endeavors to achieve such co-ordination were in vain. For five years the Home Army has been systematically accused of passivity and of feigning combat against the Germans. Today, it is being accused of fighting too much and too well.

Know that no sacrifice, conceived from a clear heart, can be in vain, and that your struggle is rendering the Polish cause great and indisputable services.

London, 1 September 1944

Commander-in-Chief

Kazimierz Sosnkowski

After the Uprising broke out on August 1, I could finally feel truly free. Unmarked. I remember the enthusiasm, white-and-red flags in the windows and this hope that liberation would come soon.

Krystyna Budnicka (Hena Kuczer), a survivor of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto



Through the nightmare, pushing its way out, was the feeling of euphoria, when we felt free again and when this horrible terror ended.

Janina Kin, a war nurse, Bończa Battalion

FEELING OF EUPHORIA



Czata Battalion with PIAT guns

OUR FIGHTING WAS DRIVEN BY FAITH

With Lieutenant Daniela “Pszczola” Ogińska, a soldier of the 7th Home Army Garłuch Infantry Regiment, talks Jakub Nawrocki.

Today, just like 75 years ago, we are in the middle of summer, and Warsaw is full of young people...

It was a hot summer. The enormous tension was in the air. We knew something huge was about to happen. We saw Germans withdrawing to the other side of the Vistula River. You could feel the panic. If I had commanded the Uprising, I would have started it three days earlier. At that time in Warsaw, there were only Germans who protected their buildings and institutions.

However, the commanders decided otherwise, which affected the life of your generation. Why did you join the Uprising? Was that an order, a necessity, an impulse?

For us, the young people of that time, it was a great privilege to join the military conspiracy. We all thought it was an honor. We were given a chance to settle accounts with the Germans. There was no order for that. We all considered it our duty, and it was a matter of course. To such an extent that I still regret that my friend and I were ordered to pull back from Okęcie, so we could not help our boys wounded during fights for the airport. We felt like it was a dishonor.

A dishonor? You were following orders.

We were hoping we could get out to help our wounded. However, in the night of August 1 to 2, an order to pull back arrived. But we thought it was our duty to come to the aid of the wounded.

At sixteen, does one think about death? Are they aware they might die?

No, it was absolutely out of the question. We really didn't think we could die when we went out to fight. Young people underestimate the horror of death. Our fighting was faith-driven, we didn't think about death.

Which of the heroes of those uprising days you remember best?

It is, of course, the commander of my regiment, that is Garłuch Regiment, Major Stanisław “Wysocki”

Babiarz. In retrospect, when I look at his figure, I held a completely different view of him back then. I was 16 at the time, and he was a great figure of authority to me. Similar was the case with Ms. Alicja, with whom I took my military oath. As an adult, I have a completely different judgment perspective. When we retreated from Okęcie, I was garrisoned with Major Babiarz together in one house. I felt honored to see him every time we met. Privately, he was a very nice man.



Sixty-three days passed, and...?

And there was despair. A huge despair. We believed to the very end that those airdrops would help us, that the Russians would eventually cross the Vistula River and support us. We did believe them.

What did you do after the war?

I managed to get into university, but with a lot of obstacles. I received no extra points for my background, and my conspiracy past was unwelcome. I finally got on the extra list and completed a pharmacy course. Many times they would try to drag me into various organizations and associations of strictly political nature, but I always said that I belonged only to scouts. After all, I had 120 girls under my command!

What would you like to share today – looking through the prism of your life experience – with the young generation, especially with those young people for whom the Warsaw Uprising is just a date and a brief information from a history textbook?

First of all, I would like them to remember that Poland is our homeland, and we have to respect it. Regardless of our internal quarrels, the good of Poland should be a priority to all Poles. I would like the young generation to always know that this is our country, our land.

Finally, a short question, which I'm sure you've heard more than once – was it worth it?

Freedom is always worth fighting for.

Ruins of buildings
at Jasna street.

Photo by Sylwester "Kris" Braun

TO THE LAST DAYS

We defended the redoubt to the last days of the Uprising, and we laid our weapons only after capitulation. For 63 days we managed to keep our positions, although the Germans would attack in many different ways – with their tanks, aircraft and Goliath tracked mines.

Jerzy "Jurny" Substyk, Bartkiewicz Group, a defender of the never captured insurgents' redoubt at the corner of Kredytowa and Mazowiecka streets

We went up to the first floor in one of the buildings and threw grenades and Molotov cocktail bottles down at the tanks. We shelled the infantry soldiers from our machine guns. Completely surprised German troops withdrew. For this operation, I was promoted to the rank of a senior rifleman.

Janusz "Janosz" Maksymowicz,
P-20 Assault Company,
Sosna Group

Armed assault on Żoliborz is ongoing. The enemy's enormous dominance pushes the insurgents, suffering great losses, back on most of the directions of attack. Teams of the Żniwiarz Group surrender the Opel factory and the market hall at Słowackiego street. The insurgents from the Żyrafa Group withdraw from the Sisters of the Resurrection monastery at Krasieńskiego street.

In Śródmieście, the enemy attempts to seize by surprise the streets of Nowy Świat and Książęca, and the Plac Trzech Krzyży. After three hours of fighting, the attacks are repelled.

The insurgents hidden in the Kampinos National Park's forests are surrounded by the enemy, and make an attempt to get out. In the lost battle of Jaktorowo, the Kampinos Group loses about 150 soldiers, and its commander, Maj Alfons "Okon" Kotowski, is killed. The same number of soldiers is taken captive. Only very few Home Army soldiers manage to get through the German cordon.

OCTOBER 3

"Heroic defenders of Warsaw, heroic people of our capital: as the Head of State and the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces I declare to the entire world that you have fulfilled to the very end your duty of a soldier and of a citizen by proving your valor, devotion and determination beyond measure."

*A radio speech of Władysław Raczkiewicz,
President of the Republic of Poland*

The residents of Warsaw are being moved to the transit camp in Pruszków. In the city, the barricades are being dismantled. The insurgent units are preparing to ground their arms. The commanders pay soldiers their due military pay.

Because of the capitulation of the Uprising, General Marian Kukiel, a national defense minister in the Polish Government-in-Exile, declares a two-week mourning in the Polish Armed Forces.

Maciej Chilczuk

THE WARSAW UPRISING CALENDAR





LANDSCAPE AFTER THE BATTLE

When in the fall of 1944, Polish soldiers, shoulder to shoulder with their allies, were liberating France, Belgium and the Netherlands, the Warsaw Uprising was falling at the same time. The end of this longest battle of the Second World War came with the capitulation of the Poles. Prolonging this solitarily fought battle no longer made sense.

If you had taken a look at the bleeding Warsaw from the bird's eye view, you would have noticed some symbolic phenomena – the noble and steadfast attitude of the Polish youth, joining the ranks of the Home Army to fight for the freedom of their Fatherland. On the other side, you would have witnessed unprecedented sadism of German slaughterers, who had no pity even for little babies. Polish history will remember forever the massacre in the Wola district, pacified by the Waffen SS unit of criminals commanded by Oskar Dirlewanger. On the third side, right on the bank of the Vistula River, there were the Red Army forces, passively waiting for Warsaw to bleed out.

Warsaw became deserted. People were expelled from the city. Those, who had not been killed, were sent to the transit camp in Pruszków (Dulag) – almost 650,000 residents of Warsaw were ultimately placed there. 20,000 insurgents were exiled to concentration camps, where they suffered particularly inhuman repressions. Many of them did not survive. Those capable of working were sent to forced labor in Germany. The desolate city was being robbed and demolished.

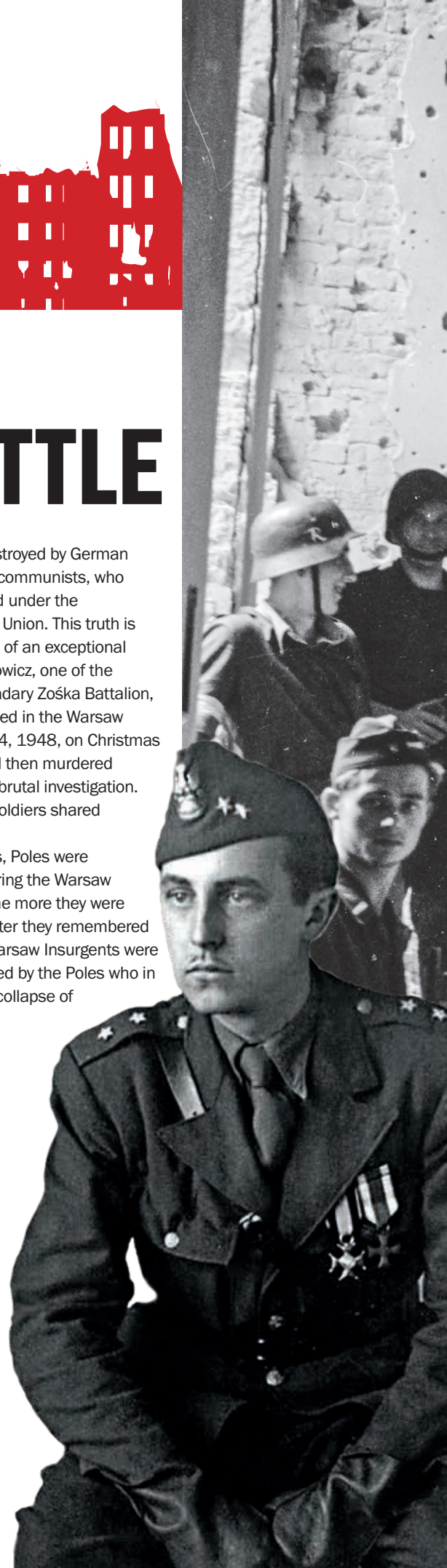
What had not been destroyed by German forces, was destroyed by communists, who after the war ruled Poland under the protectorate of the Soviet Union. This truth is well illustrated by the fate of an exceptional soldier, Jan "Anoda" Rodowicz, one of the commanders of the legendary Zośka Battalion, who was seriously wounded in the Warsaw Uprising. On December 24, 1948, on Christmas Eve, he was arrested, and then murdered several days later after a brutal investigation. Many other Home Army soldiers shared a similar fate.

For several dozen years, Poles were persecuted for remembering the Warsaw Uprising. Nevertheless, the more they were forced to forget it, the better they remembered it. The traditions of the Warsaw Insurgents were some of the values invoked by the Poles who in 1989 brought about the collapse of communism in Europe.

Anna Putkiewicz

Jan "Anoda" Rodowicz, as a soldier of Zośka Battalion, took part in heavy fights at the Protestant Cemetery in the Wola district, where the insurgents inflicted serious losses on the Germans and managed to obtain a lot of armament.

He was gravely wounded on August 9, 1944.



Insurgents on the stairs
of Staszic Palace.

Photo by Sylwester "Kris" Braun



GLORY TO THE HEROES



Managing Editor: Anna Putkiewicz, Robert Sendek

Graphic design: Marcin Izdebski, Jarosław Malarowski,
Marcin Dmowski (consultation)

Infographics and maps: Jarosław Malarowski,
Paweł Kępka

Drawings: Piotr Korczyński, Jarosław Wróbel

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Paweł Rozdżestwieński, Joanna Tańska,
Stanisław Zasada, Maria Żurek (review),
Beata Stadryniak-Saracyn (review)

Compilation of memoirs and reports: Piotr Korczyński

Translated from Polish, revised, edited and proofread by:
Dorota Aszoff, Anita Kwaterowska

The texts and articles were originally published
in *Polska Zbrojna*
(in 2019–2022, special editions in 2017, 2018, 2019),
in *Polska Zbrojna. Historia* (special edition in 2019),
and on polska-zbrojna.pl. General Kazimierz Sosnkowski's
Order of the Day No. 19 was originally published
in the book *All For Freedom: The Warsaw Epic, 1946*,
ed. Wanda Dynowska

Photo source:
Adobe Stock, Institute of National Remembrance (IPN),
Muzeum Warszawy (MW, Museum of Warsaw),
Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego (MPW,
Warsaw Rising Museum), National Digital Archive (NAC),
Cezary Pomykało, Gość Niedzielny, public domain

Advertising and promotion:
Marketing and Promotion Department

Wojskowy Instytut Wydawniczy /
Military Publishing Institute
Second Revised Edition
Warsaw 2023

Print:
Drukarnia Kolumb
ul. Kaliny 7, 41–506 Chorzów



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**POLSKA
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**HISTORIA
POLSKA
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Forget?
Never.

