



SŁUŻYMY
NIEPODLEGŁEJ

M A G A Z I N E N O T O N L Y F O R S O L D I E R S

POLSKA ZBROJNA

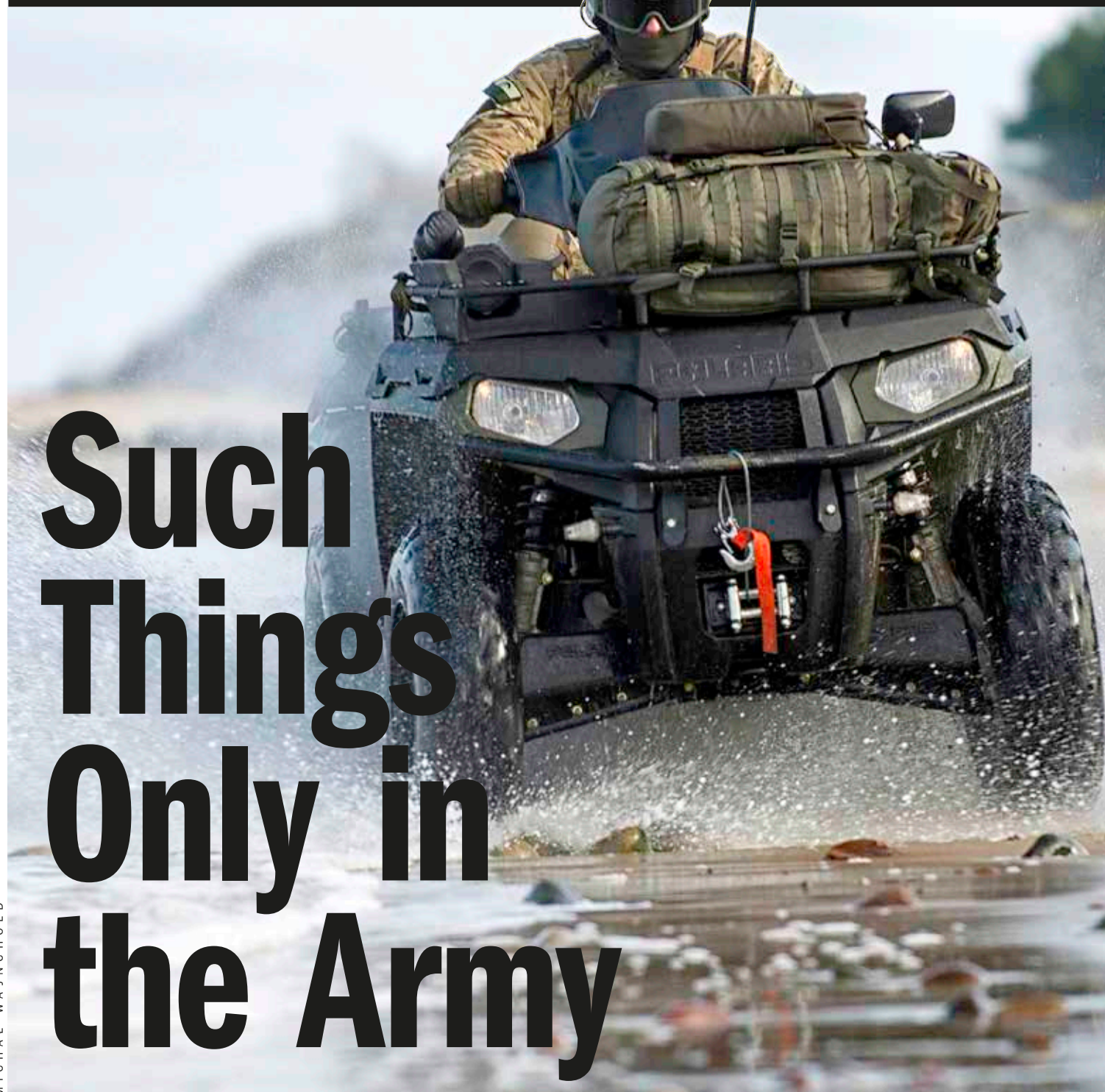
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SPECIAL EDITION

T O D A Y

The Polish Armed Forces Day

"Faithful to Poland" is a slogan for this year's military parade. Main celebrations are held in Katowice to honor the anniversary of the 1920 Battle of Warsaw, as well as the 100th anniversary of the First Silesian Uprising outbreak.



Such Things Only in the Army

A few years ago, they decided to tie their lives with the army. Today, they perform the most difficult tasks, train foreign and Polish pilots, teach hand-in-hand combat, and wish to serve Poland in time of danger.

EWA KORSAK

Rambo was first," answers Robert, a soldier from one of the special forces, when asked if he was inspired to join the army by any particular person. "I grew up in the 1980s, so I kept watching VHS movies about him. Without a doubt, he was my first soldier idol. But then I met a col-

league, Mariusz, who, as a conscript soldier, was sent on a mission to Lebanon. From there, he brought a medal, photographs, a Zippo lighter and... a lot of memories that he shared. He instilled me with thinking about service, missions, trips," Robert recalls.

"Tuff," a pilot of the 7th Special Operations

Squadron, was fascinated not by "Rambo," but by "Top Gun." "I still know every scene of that film by heart. Well, it seems that I was persuaded to serve in the Air Force by Tom Cruise," says the smiling pilot who has just returned from Afghanistan where he trained the local pilots.

Did the family have any influence on the fact that they chose the soldier's path? "I don't think so... I just loved movies about soldiers, I was an active, able-bodied boy, and the army seemed to me an obvious choice," admits Capt Tomasz Dembiński, a hand-to-hand combat instructor of the 15th Mechanized Brigade. "My dad 'vaccinated' me with the love for flying, but he was not a soldier, but a moto-glider. I met pilots when I was in elementary school, during a school trip to the air base in Powidz. I was observing them, and it was probably then that →

"The day of August 15 is now declared as the Polish Armed Forces Day," says the act on the Polish Armed Forces Day of July 30, 1992.

The tradition of celebrating the Polish Armed Forces Day on August 15, being the anniversary of the 1920 Battle of Warsaw, dates back to the Second Republic of Poland. In the armies of the European states, the celebrations of the army day were first introduced in the second half of the 19th century, but at that time, Poland remained partitioned. Poland started to celebrate its army's day only after regaining independence, in 1919. In the first years, it was celebrated on August 6, which was the anniversary of starting off for fight of the First Cadre Company under the leadership of the Commandant Józef Piłsudski in 1914. However, this anniversary was clouded by the events of the victorious Polish-Bolshevik War. For that reason, on August 4, 1923, the day of August 15 was declared as the Soldier's Day. The date was selected to commemorate the launch of counter-offensive during the 1920 Battle of Warsaw, as a result of which the Russian forces of Mikhail Tukhachevsky's Western Front were disrupted.

The Soldier's Day was celebrated annually, also in August of 1939 on the eve of the World War II outbreak. The celebrations were also held during the war in the Polish Armed Forces in the west and in the Home Army units in occupied Poland, as well as in the first postwar years in Poland. Later on, the communist authorities did not want this holiday for ideological reasons, and in place of the prewar Soldier's Day, the Polish Army Day, by the decree of the Council of Ministers of 1950, was declared to be celebrated on October 12. The date was to commemorate a combat baptism of the 1st Tadeusz Kościuszko Infantry Division in the Battle of Lenino. After the political system changed in 1989, the government decided to bring back the tradition of the Second Republic of Poland. In the meantime, during 1990–1992, the Polish Army celebrated on May 3, the anniversary of 1791 Polish Constitution. In 1992, the Polish Sejm declared the return of the celebrations commemorating the Battle of Warsaw. ■



MICHAŁ WAJNCHOLD

ARMY FULFILLED THEIR DREAMS OF ADVENTURE AND OF TRAVELS INTO THE UNKNOWN

I first thought about joining the Air Force... And so it happened, I went to the aviation high school in Dęblin,” says Lt Adrian Chudzyński, a pilot instructor of the Bielik aircraft in the 41st Air Training Base. One of the soldiers admits that maintaining family traditions was not the fulfillment of his dreams. “My grandfather served in the army, my father served in the army, my uncle served in the army, and now my brother is a professional soldier. I decided not to get professionally involved with the army. I had completely different plans, dreams. Somewhere, however, there was a need to serve my homeland. The doors opened for me when the territorial defense forces were established,” says Pvt Ireneusz Kalita, a soldier of the Territorial Defense Forces (TDF).

“As to my TV-related inspiration, I will tell you one more story, because it happened to be crucial,” Robert says. “It was a cold Sunday morning in March 2003. I watched on TVP2 channel a show called ‘Not Only For Commanders.’ The episode was about the elite 18th Bielski Air Assault Battalion. I got very excited, I have no idea how that happened, but as early as in June, I started the greatest adventure of my life: the army,” Robert recalls.



2ND LT MONIKA DUDEK

- tank platoon commander in the 1st Panzer Brigade
- graduate in national security of Akademia Sztuki Wojennej [War Studies University], officer school of Akademia Wojsk Lądowych [Land Forces University], PhD student

Why did I decide to join the army? There is no single answer. I simply knew I should do it. To say the truth, when I was taking the position of a platoon commander, my chief had doubts whether I would manage, and my subordinates wondered how it's going to

be under a woman's command. I was sure, though, that all would be fine. After all, the army is very well organized – first, we do specialist trainings, then we learn to operate equipment, then align teams. Next, it's time for practice. Many hours of trainings, joint trips

to a training field. Today, I can say with my full responsibility that we're like a family – we respect and trust each other. It's the key to success. After all – not only do we carry out orders together, but also we have to be ready to save each other's lives some day. MM ■

GOOD PLACE

“The army was the fulfillment of my dreams of adventure, of traveling into the unknown. However, the first thing I remember from the be-

ginning of my service is the appreciation of what my home gave me. My parents, care, sense of security. In the army, you have to take care of yourself, but you can learn that quite quickly

here,” says Robert. Soldiers admit that the army is not a perfect world. “Love for the army is a difficult feeling,” says “Tuff.” “You give up your predictable life. Today you can plan your holiday, and tomorrow you will be ordered to depart. It is difficult not only for soldiers, but also for their families. Because the whole family lives in the army, not only the soldier,” adds the pilot.

On the other hand, soldiers admit that here, in the army, they fulfil themselves in professional terms. “The army has offered me space to teach others how to engage in hand-in-hand combat. The coolest thing is when I see my students' progress, and how they continue to master their skills, how they win medals in competitions,” says Capt Dembiński. The lucky ones have the opportunity to do things the average person finds extraordinary. “Where else could I fly a machine that in a few minutes accelerates to a speed of Mach 0.9?” laughs Lt Adrian Chudzyński. “Seriously, when I was assigned to serve in the 41st Air Training Base, I regretted that it wasn't the base in Łask or Krzesiny. But now I know that it was a good decision. I fly the most modern aircraft in the Polish Air Force, and my students will become F-16 pilots. This



MICHAŁ WAJNCHOLD



LESZEK KUJAWSKI



CAPT MICHAŁ WILCZYŃSKI

- chief of a ground liaison section in the 12th Mechanized Brigade
- earlier served in the 6th Panzer Cavalry Brigade
- veteran of the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan
- graduate of Wyższa Szkoła Oficerska Wojsk Pancernych [Panzer Forces Officer School]

Every day, I am being convinced that in the army you can achieve a lot, if only you really want that. When I was a company commander, for example, I managed to perfectly align my team. I felt incredibly

satisfied when new volunteers were coming to be part of my team. In the army, I appreciate not only the stability of employment, but also the fact that on a daily basis, I can do things for which others had to pay big

money. Training fields, shooting ranges – I like to operate in these conditions. Now, I’m working on the implementation of my own projects: it’s time to give something from myself to the army. EK, MM



LT KAROL WIJATA

- air-traffic controller in the 31st Tactical Air Base
- graduate of Wyższa Szkoła Oficerska Sił Powietrznych in Dęblin, today: Lotnicza Akademia Wojskowa [Polish Air Force University]

I consider two events as my professional success – completing a long and difficult course for air-traffic controllers, and controlling airspace over the airport in Krzesiny during

2018 NATO Tiger Meet Exercise. During the exercise, the aircraft of all NATO states were carrying out many complex tasks. Controlling air traffic at the time was quite a challenge.

In the future, I would like to become an instructor, so I could pass my knowledge and experience to the candidates for air-traffic controllers. EK

awareness of how important your trainees are gives you strength,” says the Bielik pilot instructor. “Passing your knowledge gives a lot of satisfaction,” confirms Tuff. “I’ve been training the Afghan Mi-17 pilots for a couple of months. It was nice to feel that you are an authority to someone. Besides, it is a great pleasure to be appreciated for my work. I was lucky, because the Americans honored me with an Army Commendation medal. A great feeling that I couldn’t have experienced if it hadn’t been for the army,” says “Tuff.”

On the one hand, soldiers warn that the army invades one’s private life; on the other hand, they appreciate it. “My service means traveling a lot. I can’t talk about the details of what I do, but thanks to the army I have visited half of Europe, the United States, Canada and several other places. Such things – only in the army...,” Robert admits with a smile. For many soldiers, the army is also a place where they can serve others. “The Territorial Defense Forces give me an opportunity to serve my Homeland. I always stood up for others. I support those who need help. I am like that by nature. The army allowed me to fulfill myself in this respect thanks to the service in the TDF, and this is a really great experience,” admits Pvt Ireneusz Kalita.

THAT’S A LIFESTYLE

Is the army a lifetime option? “Definitely so. But you have to be the right person in the right place. I’ve been working with unwavering enthusiasm for all my years of service. I have met fantastic people; the army invests in my training; I explore the world. Sounds like lame propaganda? Maybe it does, but for me, these are huge advantages,” says Robert. For “Tuff,”



SGT MARIUSZ KOWALCZYK



- staff warrant officer of the Multinational Division North East command
- earlier served in the 7th Coastal Defense Brigade
- graduate of Szkoła Podoficerska Wojsk Lądowych [The Land Forces Non-Commissioned Officer School]

The army for me means a constant personal and career growth, and mastering my skills. I have been a crew and a team commander, and a deputy platoon commander. My fluency in English, French, Spanish and Russian was my asset to help me get the position in the command of the Multinational Division North East. I had my share in forming this unit, and today I serve shoulder to shoulder with our allies. I consider it my great success, but I’m not going to rest on my laurels. I’m doing my best, and in the future I would like to represent Poland in allied institutions abroad.

ARMY CHANGES LIFE OF SOLDIER'S ENTIRE FAMILY

the army is a lifestyle. “I am interested in everything related to the army. I read about the military, I follow the news about conflicts all over the world. I live it every day,” admits the 7th Special Operations Squadron’s pilot. But it’s certainly not the place for everyone. “I don’t really see people here who can’t work as a team. Here, all the tasks or the vast majority of them require cooperation,” says Lt Chudzyński. People looking for a job from 7 to 15 will not find their place here either: “Training fields, trips, exercises, missions. All this means that, unfortunately, you can’t do a 9am – 5pm job,” laughs “Tuff.” “In return, you get experience, development and learning. You are getting better and better in what you do,” adds the pilot.

Each soldier thinks about his or her service in the perspective of a few years. Most of them already know what they will be doing in the army not only tomorrow, but also in the future. “I want to change the face of the army,” says Robert. “Seriously! We need training to prepare a soldier for a battle at every stage, both a private and an officer. I’m a big enough boy to realize that in order to change something, you have to be personally responsible for it. So I’m just doing it. I have made a few such changes,

and they bear a certain risk. But the army is not a playground, that’s it, nobody comes here to play,” adds the commando. Everyone agrees that first you must transform yourself. “I intend to change the mentality of soldiers. It’s about us in the army – trusting each other, playing open cards, so that we don’t consider it bad that someone is better than us. I dream of being protected not by documents – though by no means they are important – but by our knowledge and experience,” adds “Tuff.” Tomasz Dembiński talks about the need for changes in the system of physical education. “These must be small steps, not a revolution. I want the hand-to-hand combat to be present in every unit, and known by every soldier,” admits Capt Dembiński.

Working on a system and a way of functioning in the army is one thing. But their plans are also very individual and specific. They know exactly what they want. “It would be great to train F-35 pilots. It would certainly require a lot of work, but it would bring exceptional satisfaction,” admits Lt Chudzyński. As he says, “In the near future? It would be great to meet your student in Łask or Krzesiny, and hear: “Thanks, ‘Chudy’! You did a great job.”

Wishes on the Armed Forces Day



Andrzej Duda

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE POLISH ARMED FORCES

Soldiers and Civilian Workers of the Armed Forces, Dear Readers of the “Polska Zbrojna” magazine,

As every year on August 15, on the anniversary of the victorious Battle of Warsaw, the Armed Forces Day is celebrated. Let me use this opportunity and extend to you my congratulations and wish you satisfaction and every success in your honorable service as Soldiers of the Republic of Poland. I hereby express my acknowledgement and gratitude to all those who strengthen the independence of our Homeland with their daily diligent work. I also think warmly about the military families whose invaluable support for their loved ones contributes to the building of the strength and security of the Republic of Poland.

The centenary of the rebirth, defence and reconstruction of the sovereign Polish state often makes us think of the services rendered on the battlefield by our forefathers and predecessors. A young army made up of people with courageous, bold and patriotic hearts was among the first institutions and foundations of the free Republic of Poland. From the very outset of its independence the Armed Forces stood guard over the state borders and liberties regained

by our nation. Through their fight on many fronts were they able to defend the right of belonging of their compatriots from the regions of Wielkopolska, Silesia and Borderlands to Motherland. And finally, they repelled the Bolshevik onslaught, and in a tough heroic battle managed to ensure a lasting and permanent existence to the reborn Poland.

Today it is you who are continuing those splendid traditions by guarding the integrity and inviolability of the territory of the Republic of Poland as well as the peace and security of your fellow citizens. I wish to stress that we, Poles, highly value the honour of the military uniform, and deeply respect soldiers who wear it. The Armed Forces are the guarantor of independence and the reason of national pride. As Supreme Commander in Chief, I thank each and every one of you, in particular for your contribution to the modernization of the Polish Armed Forces and for developing cooperation with our partners in NATO. I believe that thanks to the mutual support Poland will become an increasingly stronger point of the Alliance on its Eastern flank as well as an element of the peace and security architecture in Europe and across the world.



Mateusz Morawiecki

PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Dear Soldiers and Military Workers,

The Polish Armed Forces Day is a joyful time. We express our pride in the heritage of the Polish army and its contemporary aspect. We thank you – those who every day guard our borders and our security – for all your hard work. We are indebted for your professionalism, dedication to excellence, and willingness to act for the common good.

Just as – almost a century ago – the triumph of a Polish soldier saved our country, also today the army remains one of the guarantors of our statehood. Thanks to the stability and security provided by you and to the support of our allies, we can together work on the advancement of Poland. We,

the Poles, need the strong Polish Armed Forces. Therefore, we are increasing their size, modernizing their equipment, strengthening their combat potential, and actively operating in NATO. All this for the Polish families to be confident about their future.

On the occasion of your holiday – on behalf of myself and the Council of Ministers – I would like to wish you all the satisfaction arising from playing an important role in our society, fulfilling your ambitions, and achieving success. While serving in Poland and wherever the national interest requires you to follow, be sure that your fellow countrymen appreciate and admire you.



Mariusz Błaszczak

POLISH MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

The Polish Armed Forces Day is a great opportunity not only to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Warsaw – a great victory that halted the Bolshevik invasion – but also to thank both your heroic ancestors and you, the present-day soldiers; to thank you, and express our appreciation for your patriotism, professionalism, devotion, and service to our Homeland. Today it is you, the soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces, who, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, guard the security of Poland and the citizens of our country.

Our common wish and goal are the strong, well-equipped, and effectively commanded Polish Armed Forces. I strive to provide decent, ever better conditions for your service and work. It is your merit, above all, that the armed forces today enjoy the trust of the Poles, and make them proud.

Thank you for your service, work, commitment, and your effort. Thank you for your attitude and professionalism appreciated by the Poles and by our allies, which adds to the strengthening of international position of Poland.

Of the eight brothers, six are in the service. Four of them serve in the battalion of the Territorial Defense Forces (TDF) in Siedlce. The youngest is 23 years old, the oldest is 38.

MAŁGORZATA
SCHWARZGRUBER

Lukasz, Jan, Mateusz and Marek Niedziółka serve in the 5th Mazovian Territorial Defense Brigade. Their older brothers, Wojtek and Piotr, wear uniforms of different colors. The first one serves in the Police as a junior aspirant, the second one is a captain in the Prison Service. “Only two sons, Tomek and Paweł, remained civilians, but the family tradition obliges, so Tomek studies at Akademia Wojsk Lądowych [Land Forces Military University],” says their mother, Urszula Niedziółka, as she shows family photos. The photograph shows laughing faces of more than forty people: two daughters and eight sons, most of them with their families – that is with her twenty grandchildren. Three of those grandchildren are active scouts.

ICE SWIMMER SETS AN EXAMPLE

It all started with Łukasz (38), who is an electronics engineer by profession, and a “mors” [Polish for “walrus,” an ice swimmer] by avocation. He was encouraged by another “mors,” his colleague, to join the Territorial Defense Forces (TDF). Łukasz made a quick decision. He volunteered for the military draft service, and a month later he was called up. He set off on a sixteen-day basic training course, commonly known as “the sixteen,” in February 2018. He talked about his impressions when, after his return, he met his younger brothers at a family dinner at his parents’ house in Grabianów near Siedlce. He recounted how they had practiced tactics, drill and shooting with their friends. He admitted it had not been easy, because they had slept in tents, and the temperatures would fall much below zero.

The stories about water freezing in bottles did not discourage younger brothers to join the TDF, though. “Łukasz encouraged us to take this step. He said it was a real-man adventure, but also that you had to be ready to defend your country. We are drawn to challenges,” Mateusz and Marek admit. The first one is 24 years old, and is a psychology student who works in a real-estate agency. The second one, a year younger, is a student of economics, and works in marketing. “They simply followed Łukasz,” admits Urszula Niedziółka.

In July 2018, the two youngest brothers found their way to the Orzysz training field for “the sixteen.” The heat was plaguing the soldiers that time. Long hours of training and drills hurt their legs. “We would fall asleep around 11:00 p.m., and at 3:30 a.m. there was a wake-up call, and we had to leave for exercises. If one has never worn a helmet, they don’t realize how heavy it can be, not to mention a backpack,” Mateusz recalls with a smile. “It was a school of life. At times we complained that it was hard, but we never thought of giving up,” adds Marek. He emphasizes that early wake-up calls also had good sides: seeing the sunrise at 4.00 in the morning was an unforgettable experience.

The basic training stage ended with a test, the so-called “tactical loop.” Both brothers, who are students, compare it to an exam ses-



MICHAŁ NIWICZ

Family Service

sion. The instructors tested how the candidates for soldiers moved on the battlefield, whether they were able to shoot and establish communication, whether they knew topography, and were able to provide first aid. Marek and Mateusz without much problems scored points needed to pass “the sixteen.” The latter emphasizes that some of the skills acquired during the training courses are also useful in everyday life and work, such as first aid.

That training was only the beginning. Both brothers know that there are months of intensive training awaiting them: exercises to teach them to survive on the battlefield and train them in their specialties, so they can ultimately be tested in tactical alignment and go through certification at the platoon and company level.

FOURTH OATH

Łukasz, Mateusz and Marek were followed by another brother, Jan. On the last Sunday of November 2018, the representatives of the local government, veterans and numerous residents of the city gathered in the market square in Węgrów. The new soldiers of the 5th Mazovian Territorial Defense Brigade took their military oath. Jan Niedziółka was among the speakers of the “rota” [Polish for “oath,” an early 20th-century poem], and his rela-

tives were among the guests. “The awarding of Urszula and Albin Niedziółka with a silver medal – The Medal of Merit for Country Defense – by the Polish Minister of National Defense, was a very special moment during that ceremony,” says Aneta Szczepaniak, Press Officer for the 5th Brigade.

Jan admits that he feared whether he would be able to reconcile the shift work of a locksmith with the TDF training. He did not know if his boss would accept his absence from work when he had to go to training. However, he really wanted to become a soldier, because, as he says, there is a need to protect the country and help people. He recalls his former fascination with the army when, as a twelve-year-old boy, he collected shells at the nearby shooting range in Gołoborz. Sometimes one of the soldiers even allowed him to touch the gun.

Today, Jan has already undergone basic training. Like his younger brothers, he admits that it was difficult at times, but he survived it. “I’ve already run some marathons that were more difficult than our

training,” says Jan. He was most interested in rescue, because the skills he acquired will be useful in everyday life; for example, he will be able to help someone who suddenly faints. Jan is supported in his soldierly passion by his wife Magda. “I am glad

ŁUKASZ TOLD HIS YOUNGER BROTHERS THAT ARMY WAS A REAL-MAN ADVENTURE



WOT

From left in upper row: Wojtek (policeman), Jan, Mateusz, Piotr (prison guard). From left in bottom row: Łukasz, their parents – Urszula and Albin, and Marek Niedziółko

that my husband has the opportunity to master his skills, that he is satisfied with what he does, although his leaves for the trainings mean more family duties for me, as my daughter and me stay at home alone.” She emphasizes, however, that she cheers on her husband. and little Gabrysia sings Polish national anthem for her father.

COMMON HOBBIES

The Niedziółka brothers are strongly tied to each other and share common passions. Łukasz introduced the younger siblings to ice swimming, and the oldest of the brothers, 43-year-old Tomek – to long-distance running. He first ran in a 2009 marathon, and five years later, eight brothers took part in the Orlen Warsaw Marathon. “He wanted to break the three-hour time of the race. He almost made it, because he crossed 42 kilometers in three hours and one minute,” recalls Mateusz. He and Marek run marathons at least twice a year. “After 32 kilometers your head refuses to cooperate with your body and says: stop. Then you have the impression that you have reached the wall. But you have to make it to the finish line,” adds Mateusz.

Cycling pilgrimage from Siedlce to Częstochowa has also become a family tradition of the Niedziółka brothers. “Since 2012, we would every year complete the 420-kilometer long route in three days,” stresses Marek. During the TDF training and exercises, the brothers support each other, which however does not exclude competition. All four of them have been assigned to the 53rd Light Infantry Battalion in Siedlce and serve in the 4th company, although in different platoons. Marek, Mateusz and Łukasz are radio operators because, as they joke, they fancy talking a lot. Jan is mastering his shooting skills. They asked the commanders for the possibility of serving together, because they did not want to miss each other during training courses. “Thanks to the service, we can meet more often. Each of us has our own life, family, work and, like everyone else, we often run short of time,” says Marek.

They are a support to each other during exercises, but everyone wants to do the best they can. Mateusz admits that Marek is better at crawling and at dragging a 20-kg locker, because he uses a better technique. The younger brother emphasizes that the older brother runs faster, especially longer distances. He is also more resistant; he is not afraid of a 14-hour run in the Bieszczady Mountains. Marek, on the other hand, is better at sprinting and shooting.

Łukasz and Jan live a few kilometers from their family home; Marek and Mateusz study and work in Warsaw, so they have to commute for the weekend training of the battalion. “On Friday, we get on the train and go to our parents’,” say the two youngest brothers. On Saturday, they report early in the morning to the unit. The brothers assure us that the service does not interfere with their professional work. Mateusz only once failed to reconcile training with his work and studies.

FAMILY POWER

When asked about the origin of such love to the uniform service in her family, Urszula Niedziółka takes a moment to reflect and then answers: “Only a half-hour walk separates our house from the Gołoborz training ground, which is now used for training of the TDF soldiers in Siedlce. For years, my sons would observe soldiers marching from their unit to a firing range. They were always fascinated by it, and we tried to educate them in the spirit of patriotism and readiness to make sacrifices for their Homeland.”

As little boys, they sometimes talked with their father about the army. Albin Niedziółka spoke to them about his primary military service. It is difficult to compare the service in the communist Polish Army in the late 1960s with today’s military service, but the father told his sons about his experiences when, as a driver, he had been sent to a unit in Białobrzegi. He would talk about discipline, and would tell them that every young man should experience the army life. Today, when he looks at his sons in soldier’s uniforms, he feels proud.

“The Niedziółka family shows us what patriotism and responsibility for Poland are. Four sons in the military service is a beautiful thing, and the only such case in our brigade. We have married couples in our ranks; it sometimes happens that a father and son, or a mother and daughter joins the Territorial Defense Forces, but the Niedziółka brothers are unique,” emphasizes the commander of the 5th Mazovian TD Brigade, Col Andrzej Wasielewski. As he says, those who understand that their task is to defend and support local communities, join the ranks of this formation. In peacetime, they help to combat the effects of natural disasters or carry out rescue operations in crisis situations; in wartime, they will provide support for operational troops.

Mateusz and Marek wonder if they should persuade one more brother to join the ranks of the Territorial Defense Forces. ■



A group of Polish soldiers in the trench during the Polish-Bolshevik War. The Schwarzlose M.07/12 heavy machine-gun in the foreground.

It Doesn't Take Array of Spies

What had Józef Piłsudski not known before the Battle of Warsaw?

GRZEGORZ NOWIK



The year 1920 was the culmination period of Poland's war with Bolshevik Russia. In November 1918, the Red Army launched an operation code-named "Wisła" [Vistula] aimed at capturing the Baltic states, Belarus and Ukraine in the first stage. The Republic of Poland, being reborn after the First World War, was to be the next goal. After its communization, the Bolsheviks intended to start a proletarian revolution in Europe.

RED PITCHFORK

The Battle of Warsaw was a breakthrough in that war, as the Polish Army inflicted a decisive blow on the opponent, thus cancelling the plan to export the revolution with Red Army bayonets.

The Soviet war plan assumed that after reaching the line of Nemunas and Bug rivers, after avoiding the marshes of Polesie (separating the Red Army), there would be a merger of armies coming from Belarus and Ukraine. Two Russian fronts, Western and Southwestern, were to strike Warsaw in the shape of a spearhead. However, this did not happen. Lenin was reached by the triumphant, although untrue, reports of the commanders of both Soviet fronts, informing about the complete dismemberment of the Polish Army. He also took into account the reports of the Bolshevik diplomats that the Entente Powers would not help Poland, and the enthusiasm of the Communist International that predicted an imminent outbreak of revolution in Europe and on this basis changed the war plan: he divided the tasks of the fronts. The Western Front (at-

tacking from Belarus) was to carry the flame of the revolution through Warsaw to Berlin and Paris, while the Southwestern Front (attacking from Ukraine) was directed to Lviv and the passes in the Carpathians, and from there to Budapest and Vienna, the Balkans, and Italy. The attack of Bolshevik armies took the shape of a fork with bent teeth instead of a spearhead. Józef Piłsudski learnt about the changes in Soviet plans, because he was being informed by his radio-intelligence officers.

GREAT COMBINATION

The Commander-in-Chief believed that the key to fighting the war with Russia was the access to

road and railway lines that cross the Polesie swamps and the possibility of – here he used the chess term – the castling of the Polish Army troops via Polesie area. This castling was about deploying Polish troops from Belarus to Ukraine, and vice versa, thus gaining local advantage. He

applied it in 1919 and 1920, and his plan for fighting the great battle, known as the "Great Combination," was based on the following assumptions: "The Northern Front wins only time" (it was to defend itself on the line of Narew and Bug with maintaining the bridgehead in the region of Brest), "the vigorous preparation of reserves in the

RADIO-INTELLIGENCE PROVIDED JÓZEF PIŁSUDSKI WITH INFORMATION ABOUT ENEMY'S EVERY STEP

THREE STEPS TO INDEPENDENCE



Professor Ryszard Kaczmarek – about the phenomenon of Silesian uprisings – talks to Piotr Korczyński

The Second Silesian Uprising is believed to be one of the few victorious national uprisings.

The uprising in question is indeed a phenomenon in our history. If we want to understand the reason for this, we need to go back to the beginning of 1920. At that time, German troops withdrew completely from Upper Silesia which was to be included in the plebiscite. Allied troops, mainly French, Italian and British in smaller numbers, were stationing there. The Germans in Upper Silesia had to be satisfied with the police – Sicherheitspolizei, the so-called Sipo [called zicherka by the Silesians], which theoretically was under the control of the allies.

In the first half of 1920, there were many incidents of various kinds in Upper Silesia, caused by a growing conflict of nationalities. Two of the most famous were: the first one in Opole, when French soldiers killed a German citizen during a demonstration, and the second

one in Bytom, when the seat of the Polish Plebiscite Commission was raided after German demonstrations. Those events echoed loudly in Upper Silesia, but we have to look at them from a broader perspective, in the context of what was happening at the time in the Republic of Poland. First, after the Polish and Ukrainian troops entered Kiev, there were great hopes and triumphs, and then the situation on the front of the Polish-Bolshevik War deteriorated rapidly. In the summer of 1920, the news of the Red Army reaching the line of the Vistula River sparked a real fear. At that time, the Germans signed an agreement with the Soviets to prevent the possible entry of the Soviet army into their territory. It did not include the border between Upper Silesia and Poland. Theoretically, the Red Army could enter here and this would not have implied breaking the agreement with Berlin. This issue became a pretext for German protests in Upper Silesia. They proclaimed that it was necessary



A group of insurgents with the Mauser C96 pistols, the Mauser M.98 rifle, and the MG 08/15 light machine guns



The YB1 mobile radiostation was in the early 1920s a modern design developed by the British company of Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Co. In Poland, it was designated as RKA [Polish acr. for 'army correspondence radiostation'], and was used for communication at the level of division and army. Its range was up to 250 km.

country,” and in the south “the end of Budionny” (near Brody at the turn of July and August, the Horse Army was surrounded, beaten and forced to retreat). Piłsudski decided to draw more forces from the south in order to counter-attack, which he was planning to do from the vicinity of Brześć. It was to come out onto the wing and back of the Western Front, attacking Warsaw. The fall of Brest caused, however, that the counter-attack from there turned out to be impossible. The new battle plan prepared by the Marshal was included in Order No. 8358/III of August 6, 1920. The plan of the Battle of Warsaw was based on the assumptions of the “Great Combination,” and provided that the Northern Front, commanded by General Józef Haller, was to defend Warsaw and Modlin from the attack of the northern tooth of the Soviet forks. The Southern Front (just as the Northern

Front), commanded by General Robert Lamezan de Salins, was supposed to defend Lviv, the Borislav Oil Field, and railway connections with Romania against the attack of the southern tooth. The Central Front, commanded by General Edward Rydz-Śmigły, concentrated not in Brest, but on the line of the Wieprz and the central Bug, was to hit the wing and rear of the northern tooth of the Russian forks, encircle the Soviet army, support them to the Prussian border, and destroy.

Giving an order with a plan to regroup the troops for a battle did not determine victory.

There were too many uncertainties that could have determined the scale of success or defeat. Will the armies of the Western Front hit Warsaw from the east like General Ivan Dybicz during the November Uprising and fight the Battle of Grochów? Or perhaps they will go around the capital from the north, and after crossing the Vistula River attack the city from the west, like General Ivan Paskevich during the November Uprising? Finally, the enemy decided to implement both variants: two armies and a horse corps approached the capital from the north, while two armies and the Mozyr Group were to storm Warsaw and traverse the Vistula river directly to the south and north of Warsaw. Will the Soviets concentrate the reserve army in the Brest region, as the commander of the Mozyr Group, who was active there, demanded on the radio? Will the Polish divisions manage to concentrate on the Wieprz River? Will the concentration area be kept secret? When and in what direction will the Horse Army strike? The orders of Joseph Stalin directed it to Lviv, and different orders of Leon Trotsky redirected it to Lublin, to the rear of the Polish Central Front. Polish radio-intelligence observed that the orders were changing in this matter. Open was the question whether the ammunition being imported from Hungary through Romania would arrive in time. The troop strength of the Polish

armies defending Warsaw and Modlin, but also Lviv, the oil field, and the connections with Romania, was unknown.

POWER OF INFORMATION

From the first days of August, however, they would receive information which helped to clarify many uncertainties. For example, the radio-intelligence officers read out orders concerning the assault on Warsaw. But there were also some surprises, as it became clear quite late that the enemy did not concentrate the reserve army, as the Marshal expected. What's interesting, the Soviets also received two orders concerning Polish concentration. However, they did not take them seriously, considering them to be disinformation.

Radio-intelligence made it possible for Józef Piłsudski to follow his enemy's knowledge level and decisions taken to much greater extent than dozen of spies would. If Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin had been the agents of Polish military intelligence, they would never have so quickly provided such reliable, timely and broad-spectrum information as Polish radio-intelligence did. ■

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HE DECIPHERED THE BOLSHEVIKS



Lieutenant Jan Kowalewski was in the Second Republic of Poland recruited to establish radio-intelligence. He was aware of the importance of the task entrusted to him, so he brought outstanding mathematicians from Warsaw and Lviv universities to the team. Other cryptologists, officers and soldiers from all the former partitioning armies were also sent to help him break the Bolshevik

codes. In the summer of 1919, together, they were able to decipher the Red Army's orders and telegrams. Their work contributed to the stopping of the Bolshevik invasion by the Polish Army in August 1920. After winning the war, Jan Kowalewski was sent to Upper Silesia, where the Third Silesian Uprising lasted. There, he also broke the codes, this time the German ones. ■

to take precautions against the entry of Soviet troops, that Poland had already in principle suffered a defeat. Wojciech Korfanty answered those demonstrations with his call for the uprising outbreak.

Why was this very uprising victorious?

First of all, because the Polish Military Organization of Upper Silesia had prepared well for it, and the Sipo was the only opponent. The fact that most of the cities in the plebiscite area were under French control was also an important factor. Therefore, we could count on the sympathy of the French, but most of all on the lack of their actions against the Polish insurgents. The success of the Second Silesian Uprising resulted from a clearly defined political goal, which was the liquidation of the Sicherheitsnadel hated by the Polish population. And it was successful. It is worth noting that the uprising was carried out in an excellent fashion thanks to rapid military action, i.e. the use of an element of surprise, which is so important in uprising activities, and the fact that the fighting was not prolonged. Indeed, Wojciech Korfanty's organizational and political mastery, which efficiently combined political goals with military actions, emerged during the Second Silesian Uprising.

Why did the Polish government not want to officially support the Third Silesian Uprising until its very end?

Let's start with the fact that the German Government also officially did not support Selbstschutz, that is, the formation that fought against the insurgent forces. Both sides, German and Polish, signed the Treaty of Versailles

PART OF POLAND, AT ALL COSTS

● First Silesian Uprising

(August 16–26, 1919) broke out in response to the arrests of Polish political activists and terror aimed at suppressing the desire to join Poland. It covered the eastern edge of Upper Silesia. It was concluded with a defeat.

● Second Silesian Uprising

(August 19/20–25, 1920) was a reaction to German terror during the campaign before a plebiscite, and covered the entire industrial Upper Silesia. It ceased as a result of pressure from the Entente Powers. In effect, a mixed Polish-German Police Force was

formed in the plebiscite area in place of the former German one, oppressive towards Poles.

● Third Silesian Uprising

(May 2/3 to July 5, 1921) was a response to the unfavorable for Poland results of the plebiscite. It was about

the incorporation of Upper Silesia into Poland. Plebiscite covered two thirds of the disputed territory. In terms of the intensity of fights and their range, it was the largest of Silesian uprisings. As a result, the area incorporated into Poland was enlarged, and included valuable industrial regions. ■

and decided that territorial decisions in Upper Silesia would be made by means of a plebiscite. An official declaration that we support the uprising would have, in principle, meant the termination of the Treaty, with all the consequences. Instead, we could defend the Polish population in the plebiscite area, and protest against the German repressions.

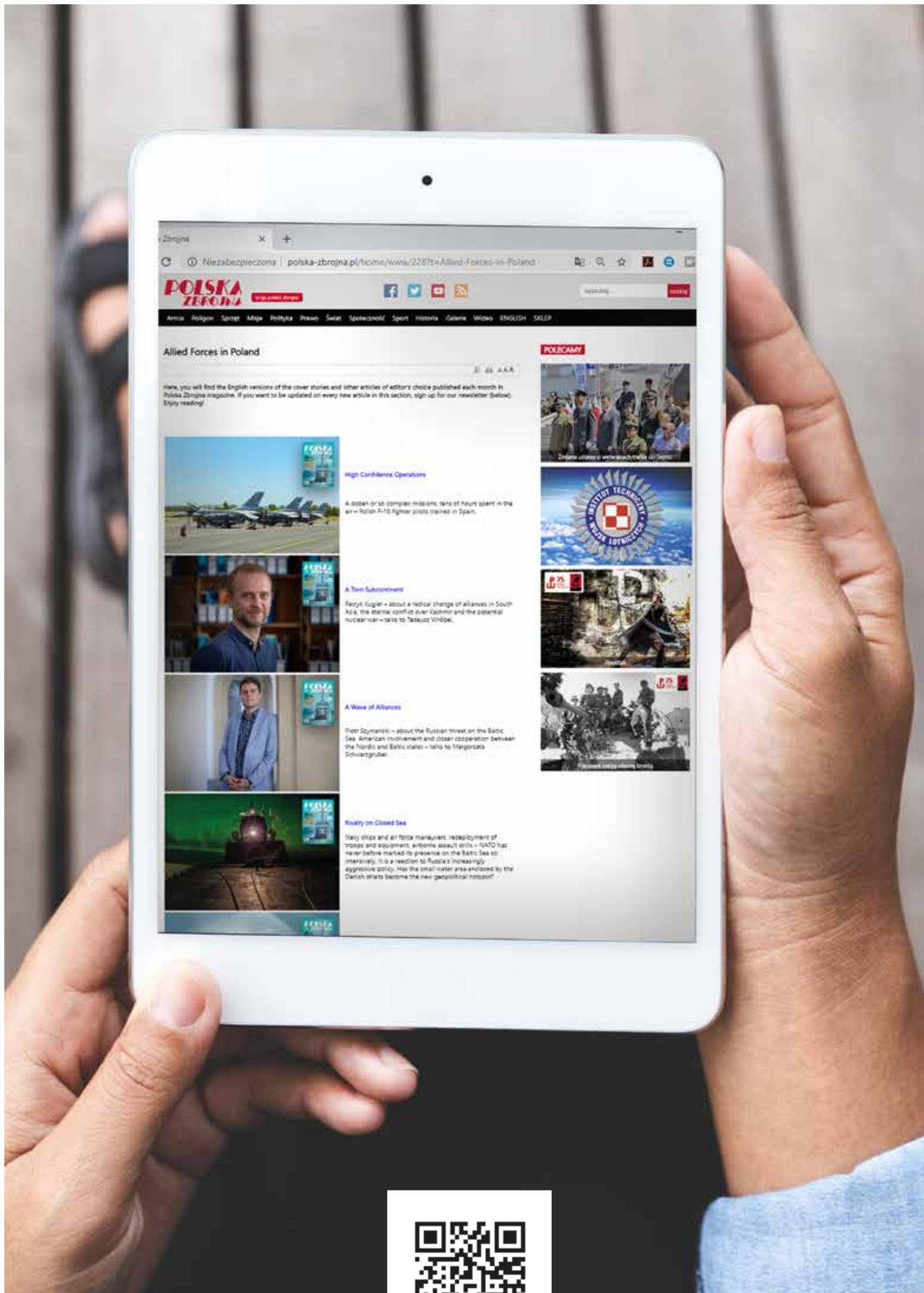
Therefore, military aid for the uprising could be provided by the Republic of Poland only off the record...

That's how it happened. When the Second Silesian Uprising was over, intensive changes in the structure of the military conspiracy in

Upper Silesia began. They consisted in including Polish professional officers, to a large extent associated with intelligence and counter-intelligence. They formed forces capable of taking up positional combat on a stretched front. In both earlier uprisings, fights were fought with rather small units, in the power of a company. However, no battles were fought at that time. It was a series of small clashes, in which small towns passed from hand to hand several times in a short period. However, in the Third Silesian Uprising, a battle took place each time either side tried to break through. There were two great clashes – for St. Anne's Mountain and for Kędzierzyn. The first one

was of particular strategic importance. In military terms, it was won by the Germans, but they did not achieve the strategic goal, i.e. they did not capture the industrial region. The Poles lost that phase of the uprising in the military aspect, but despite that, the battle gave rise to a later political success, i.e. a division of Upper Silesia that was more favorable to Poland. ■

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THE “ZWIASTUN” PROGRAM

For over two years now, the Polish National Foundation (PNF) has been implementing the “Zwiastun” (“Herald”) educational program for NATO soldiers stationing in Poland. “The program is to present Poland as a modern, safe country which is developing all the time, but which also remembers its history,” assures Cezary Andrzej Jurkiewicz, member of the Board of the PNF. Within the program, the Foundation organised numerous lectures and educational trips. A few thousand soldiers participated in them, and they all emphasise that it helped them to know Poland from various perspectives. “This is a valuable opinion, because after they return to their homes, they will be natural ambassadors of Poland,” he adds.

The PNF continues to develop the program. In the following months, the Foundation plans to organise a Moniuszko concert or lectures devoted to the indomitable soldiers. There are also plans to engage soldiers from other garrisons, not only in Orzysz.



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