

Institute of National Remembrance

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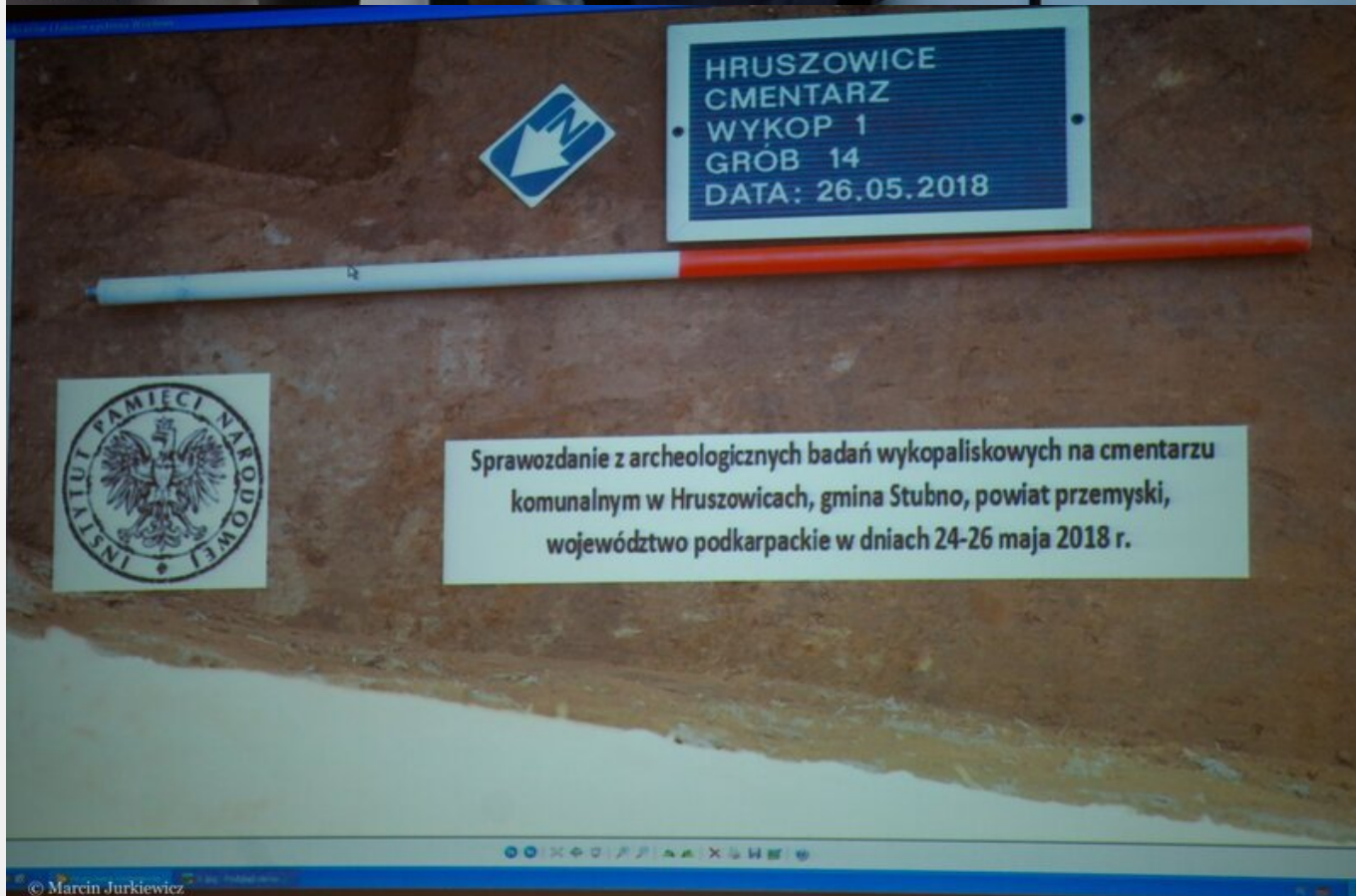
Undisputable results of the IPN's research: no UPA graves in the place of IPN's archeological works

„We haven't found any scientific base to claim that there are individual or mass graves of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army members in the place of our archaeological works at the Communal Cemetery in Hruszowice,“ announced the Deputy President of the IPN and acting Director of the Office of Search and Identification Prof. Krzysztof Szwagrzyk.





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The Ukrainian side claims that there are remains of members of the UPA at the monument dedicated to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) soldiers, illegally erected in 1994 and dismantled in April 2017.

Research by experts from the IPN's Office of Search and Identification has ruled out this version.

The most important piece of evidence presented by the Ukrainians is one of the documents sent by the Deputy Minister of the Regional Development of Ukraine in 2013, containing the information that 12 UPA members had been buried in the place of the monument. Dmitri Kiver born in 1924 in Hruszowice was the witness to this event. In 1995 the man filed a statement at the legal office in Przemyśl that reads: 'I was an eyewitness to burying the bodies of 12 soldiers of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army at the cemetery in Hruszowice at the place where the UPA soldiers' monument stands today. I participated twice in the burials, which took place in 1946. They took place at night. 12 people were buried in the grave, 6 in each row. Of these, two of them I knew by their pseudonyms - they were Marko and Honta from Kruk's unit. An officer was also buried there, but I do not know the pseudonym. A small, one-meter high mound was built on the grave. No cross was placed there. The grave remained like this up to May 1947, when I was forced to leave Hruszowice.' This statement was read out at the conference by prof. Szwagrzyk, while presenting the story associated with the monument.

"We cannot find any scientific evidence on the basis of the results of the activities carried out in Hruszowice to claim that there were mass

or individual graves of the UPA members in the place where we carried out the work," said Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, presenting the archaeological results of the work of the Office of Search and Identification, carried out on 24-26 May 2018 at the cemetery in Hruszowice.

Under the foundation of the monument (area of 3.3 m x 3.2 m, enlarged during the works up to 4 m x 4.70 m) 31 death pits were revealed, and the remains of 16 people were subject to forensic-medical examination. The remains were not exhumed, which was in accordance with the concept of the works. Professor Krzysztof Szwagrzyk proposed the collection of genetic material to the Ukrainian side, but the Ukrainians were not interested.

"If it were not for the steps we took in Hruszowice, we would argue who is right for a long time. Only archaeological and scientific research could give an answer as to what the truth about the monument in Hruszowice is," prof. Szwagrzyk emphasised.

All activities of the Office of Search and Identification, within three days of work, took place in the presence of observers from the Ukrainian side, with five Ukrainian specialists present on the spot including Svyatoslav Szeremet. "They had absolute freedom to observe our activities, produce documentation, go to the excavation pit or examine the remains," emphasized prof. Krzysztof Szwagrzyk. An anthropologist and a forensic doctor also took part in the work of the Office of Search and Identification.

The Deputy President of the IPN explained that the Ukrainian side was

mainly interested in the remains of two or three people who, in their opinion, might have belonged to the UPA. In one grave, shallower than the others, a button of the kind used by German soldiers during World War II was found. The second case which aroused the emotions of the Ukrainian side was a skeleton in which an orifice was found in the eye socket. The forensic-medical opinion, commissioned by the IPN, ruled out that it was a bullet mark - it was clearly stated that the cause of the orifice was erosion. A lack of characteristic cracks diverging from the place where a shot would supposedly enter the skull was noted. According to the Polish side, the destruction of the skull indicates that the person buried in the grave could have been a victim of a traffic accident.

The works at the cemetery in Hruszowice are summed up in two documents - forensic-medical and archaeological reports. The conclusion of the medical opinion leaves no doubt: the results of the examination do not give grounds for accepting that the remains of the UPA members are located in the place of the monument. The archaeological report is entirely consistent with the medical opinion

The demands of the Ukrainian side to rebuild the monument in this particular place are hardly justified. In Poland, each and every member of the UPA has the right to a grave (...), and so does everybody else," emphasized the Deputy President of the IPN. Professor Szwagrzyk reminded the audience that at the cemetery in Hruszowice there are graves of members of the UPA and the Sich Riflemen. "Nobody destroys them, they have been there and they will stay there. There is

also an important monument dedicated to members of the UPA who were buried at this cemetery. The content on the plaque indicates that it is dedicated to "Ukrainian insurgents who died in November 1945 in the village of Hruszowice. This is Pavlo Koncik alias Sirko, Oleg Babiak, and Nykola Babiak, the UPA members "- the Deputy President of the IPN explained.

"What is different, however, is the right to burial and to a grave, and it is another thing to build a monument in honor of the UPA. There will be no consent for this in Poland," prof. Szwagrzyk emphasized.

"We showed in Hruszowice that we are open to cooperation"

"We have shown in Hruszowice that, although for over a year now we have been banned from working in Ukraine, we are open to cooperation. In difficult Polish-Ukrainian relations, there is a chance to go further - for this, however, we need truth, objectivity and reliable scientific research. We cannot build this future on the assumptions of those who had erected the monument in Hruszowice. We will reach the truth in small steps. I hope that Hruszowice is the first small step in the right direction," said the Deputy President of the IPN.

The Deputy President of the IPN also reminded the audience that at the beginning of that week the Institute sent the two abovementioned reports on the work in Hruszowice to the Ukrainian side. They were sent to the following institutions: the State Inter-Ministerial Commission on Commemorations of Victims of War and Political Repressions, the Ministry of Culture, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance,

the Embassy of Ukraine in Poland and the Union of Ukrainians in Poland.

Prof. Szwagrzyk reminded the participants that when a year ago work was being carried out at the prison in Lutsk, the Polish side was not informed about it, which was contrary to the provisions of the Polish-Ukrainian agreement.

“When we asked the Ukrainian side a question, we heard that we should present documents that would justify our suspicions that Polish remains may be located there,” said prof. Szwagrzyk. He added that Poland expects cooperation and reciprocity from the Ukrainian, so that Polish experts could freely examine the graves of their compatriots in Ukraine.

In mid-May, the IPN reiterated the request that the Ukrainian party should agree for their conducting exploration work in Ukraine. In the request, a dozen or so places where explorations could be carried out, including in the vicinity of Lviv, where there are graves of Polish soldiers from September 1939, were indicated. Other places are, for example, Huta Pieniacka, Ostrówki and Wola Ostrowiecka, where the remains of the victims of the Volyn massacre lie.

In spring 2017 a controversy arose between Warsaw and Kiev around the ban on seeking and exhuming the remains of Polish victims of wars and conflicts on the territory of Ukraine, introduced by the Ukrainian IPN. The ban was issued after the dismantling the abovementioned UPA monument in Hruszowice. The solution to the dispute is to be dealt

with by the Polish-Ukrainian commission for historical issues, headed by the Deputy Prime Ministers of both countries, Piotr Gliński and Pavlo Rozenko.

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