

Institute of National Remembrance

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Funeral ceremonies of the soldiers of September '39 killed at Iłża - Grabowiec, 8 September 2018

















The funeral ceremonies of soldiers of the 12th Infantry Division of the Polish Army who died on 9 September 1939 near Iłża and the blessing of the monument to the Fallen in Combat were held on 8 September 2018 in Grabowiec (Rzeczniów, Lipski county). The funeral was organized by the Institute of National Remembrance together with the Mayor of the borough of Rzeczniów, Karol Burek and Fr. Zbigniew Wypchła of Saint Nicholas parish in Grabowiec.

In July and September this year the Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom carried out works in the areas of the Aleksandrowski / Rzechowski Forest, the boroughs of Brody, Iłża and Rzeczniów, as a result of which some 150 soldiers of the Polish Army, killed in the battle of Iłża, were exhumed. Many items belonging to soldiers were also found, including shoes, medallions, water bottles, a

gas mask and military identification tags- enabling the identification of many of the dead. The artifacts are on display at the Regional Museum in Iłża.

The ceremony began with a holy mass in the church of Saint Nicholas in Grabowiec celebrated by Bishop Piotr Turzyński, and ended with the laying of flowers at the monument to the Fallen. Representatives of the borderlands, related to, among others, Brzeżany, where the 51st Rifle Regiment under the command of Colonel Emil Fieldorf was stationed were also present. The soldiers of this regiment also died in the battle of Iłża.

At the funeral ceremony, the Institute of National Remembrance was represented by Renata Soszyńska (Deputy Director of the Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom) and Marcin Krzysztofik (Director of the IPN Branch in Lublin. A letter from the President of the Institute of National Remembrance was also read out. Dr Jarosław Szarek stressed the fact that it is the duty of our state to organize the funerals of soldiers who fought for our country and have not yet received a worthy burial.

The honorary patronage over the celebrations was held by Zdzisław Szipiera, Governor of the Mazowsze voivodship.

1. The first stage of work in the Aleksandrowski Forest, Old Rzechów (Rzeczniów borough, Lipski county, Mazowieckie voivodship) was carried out by the Office for Commemorating the

Struggle and Martyrdom of the Institute of National Remembrance and began on 2 July 2018. The work was headed by Piotr Kędziora-Babiński. It was aimed at the exhumation of the remains of 139 soldiers of the Polish Army who died in the battle of Iłża on 9 September 1939 in the fight against the German aggressor.

2. On the third day during the exhumation works, more remains of the soldiers of the Polish Army from September 1939 were revealed. Spurs, buttons, a razor, a large number of soldiers' boots and further identification tags were found.

3. The fourth day of works in Old Rzechów consisted primarily of cleaning after finishing exhumation works in the Aleksandrowski / Rzechowski Forest. This is also when exhumation work began at the lot of the soldiers of the Polish Army from September 1939 - at the cemetery of the parish of Saint. Nicholas in Grabowiec. They were aimed at establishing the number of soldiers transferred from the Aleksandrowski / Rzechowski Forest during previous exhumations, and preparing an appropriate place to bury the remains which have been found.

During the work, which is generating more and more interest, a significant number of shoes, helmets, fragments of uniforms, pouches and a gas mask were revealed.

4. On 6 July 2018, the exhumations at the parish cemetery in Grabowiec and in the Aleksandrowski / Rzechowski Forest were completed. During the works the remains of about 139 soldiers of

the Polish Army who died on 9 September 1939 were found. The works were attended by the Mayor of the borough of Rzecznów, Karol Burek, and and Fr.Zbigniew Wypchła of Saint Nicholas parish in Grabowiec, without whose kindness and support, the works could not have taken place.

The artefacts found during the works will be available on display at the Regional Museum in Iłża. During the exhumation work, military identification tags belonging to the following soldiers were found:

Marcin Barylski, born in 1917,

Józef Moroziński born in 1901,

Józef Kosiński, born in 1917,

Leon Szymków, a Greek Catholic from Brzezno,

Józef Kozłowski,

Józef Galiski,

Kierniew (?), Illegible name.

We also received information about identification tags found earlier, belonging to the following soldiers:

Tadeusz Barylski

Leon Szwec, born in 1917,

Leon Żornak, born on 1917,

Michał Buczyński,

Jan Chruszcz, born in 1907, 54 Infantry Regiment,

Jan Dus,

Józef Krupa, born in 1910, 54 Infantry Regiment,

Michał Diakowicz

The remaining identification tags were heavily corroded and illegible.

5. The second stage of exhumation works related to the battle of Iłża on September 8-9, 1939, conducted by the Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom of the Institute of National Remembrance took place on 20-21 July 2018. The works resulted in the finding of the identification tag of Piotr Rygiel (born 1912) from RKU Tarnopol, serving in the 54th Infantry Regiment or the 12th Regiment of Light Artillery.

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