

Institute of National Remembrance

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Exhibitions on Polish heroes in the Western Australian Parliament in Perth - 6-15 November 2018

Two of the presented exhibitions, prepared entirely by the IPN, show the story of Polish help offered to Jewish neighbors during the Second World War. The first presents the history of the "Żegota" Council for Aid to Jews, the only institution in German-occupied Europe trying to save the Jewish population from extermination, while the second is entitled "The Good Samaritans from Markowa" and is devoted to the Ulma family, who saved Jews at the cost of their own lives.





























An official Gala on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of

Poland regaining its independence, Perth

On 8 November 2018, on the eve of the opening of an exhibition on Polish heroes in the Parliament of Western Australia, a gala celebrating the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence was held in Perth. It was organized by the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Australia, Michał Kołodziejcki, and was attended by representatives of the Polish diaspora, Australian politicians and members of the diplomatic corps from around the world.

The delegation of the Institute of National Remembrance, headed by Deputy President Jan Baster, also attended the ceremony. During the gala, President Jan Baster awarded Edward Włodarski, a member of the Polish Political Prisoners Association in Australia, with the Cross of Freedom and Solidarity. Henryk Sawicki, the Deputy President of the Polish Political Prisoners Association in Australia was honored with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta

As part of celebrations of the 100th anniversary of Poland's independence, three veterans fighting in the Warsaw Uprising, currently living in Perth, were also honored.

In a speech addressed to the participants of the ceremony, President Jan Baster emphasized that:

Today we have the privilege and the pleasure of the company of the heroes of the 1980s. As activists of the "Solidarity" movement, they were continuators of that struggle. At that historic moment they were able to stand on the right side and choose the same values that had guided their great predecessors, showing us that the Homeland is a great cause[...] I would like this exceptional sense of inner freedom that was guiding you and giving you strength, and your power of spirit and will to be present in the heart of every young Pole. Because only internal freedom and strong spirituality can enable you to understand what it means to be a citizen of a sovereign nation, living in an independent state.

The opening of the "Time for Heroes" exhibition

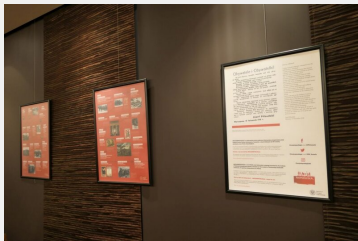
On 9 November, at the Parliament of Western Australia, the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Canberra Michał Kołodziejcki and the Deputy President of the IPN Jan Baster, solemnly opened the exhibition "Time of the Heroes", which consists of four exhibitions devoted respectively to Captain Witold Pilecki, the Warsaw Uprising, the "Żegota" Council for Aid to Jews and the Ulma Family from Markowa. The first two exhibitions are prepared by the Board of the Pilecki Projekt Committee, the latter two have been produced by the

Institute of National Remembrance. The celebrations were attended by the Governor of Western Australia Kim Beazley and the Chairman of the Legislative Council of the Western Australian Parliament Catherine Esther Doust and representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited in Perth. In his speech, Jan Baster said:

The exhibition tells the story of patriotism, sacrifice and willingness to help others. These values have no boundaries, they are universal, so every opportunity and every form seems appropriate to emphasize their significance. What is perhaps of major importance in the modern world, is directing this message to young generations. The display portrays events and figures of particular importance for Poles, a testimony to the tragedy of Poland's fate in the 20th century. We Poles were able to sacrifice a lot for the freedom and full sovereignty of our country. Some of the examples of the heroism of our citizens are part of the exhibition which is about to be presented today.

President Jan Baster also emphasized the special commitment of Andrzej Nowak and Jacek Glinka from the Board of the Pilecki Projekt Committee - the initiators of the project , as well as the involvement of Hubert Błaszczyk and Henryk Sawicki representing the Association of Political Prisoners in Australia.

The exhibition has received the honorary patronage of the Polish Ambassador in Canberra and the President of the Institute of National Remembrance Dr. Jarosław Szarek. Both the Polish community and the Australian community were interested in viewing the display. The first groups of youth from Australian schools had the opportunity of seeing the exhibition on the opening day.



Celebrations of
the 100th
anniversary of
Poland's
independence -
Sydney, 12
November 2018



On the right, the
governor of

Western Australia,
Kim Beazley. The
opening of the
“Time for Heroes”
exhibition in the
Western
Australian
Parliament in
Perth - 9
November 2018



From the left:
Jacek Glinka and
Andrzej Nowak,
the authors of the
exhibition about
Captain Pilecki.
The opening of
the “Time for
Heroes” exhibition
in the Western
Australian
Parliament in

Perth - 9

November 2018

Celebrations at the General Sikorski Club in Perth

On 10 November the representatives of the Institute of National Remembrance took part in the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the regaining of independence by Poland in the General Władysław Sikorski Club in Perth.

During the ceremony, commemorative speeches were delivered by the honorary consul of the Republic of Poland Paul Bitdorf and the President of the General Władysław Sikorski Club Władysław Bilski.

Dr Rafał Leśkiewicz from the Institute of National Remembrance gave a lecture dedicated to Poland's struggle for independence, mentioning the Polish-Bolshevik war, the Enduring Soldiers and the anti-communist opposition of the 1980s, with particular emphasis on the "Solidarity" movement.

During the event, materials sent to Perth by the Institute of National Remembrance, including English-language editions of the *Report W* by Witold Pilecki, catalogs of exhibitions devoted to the Council for Aid to Jews "Żegota" and the Ulma family, were distributed. In addition, the participants of the meeting received commemorative pins marking the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining independence.



Paul Bitdorf, the
Honorary Consul
of the Republic of
Poland in Perth
during the
ceremony in the
General
Władysław
Sikorski Club in
Perth - 10
November 2018



Dr Rafał
Leśkiewicz during
the ceremony in
the General
Władysław Sikorki

Club in Perth - 10

November 2018

A meeting with the Polish community in Bankstown

On 11 November the IPN delegation met with representatives of the Polish community at the Polish Club in Bankstown, Sydney. The historical policy of the Institute of National Remembrance was the theme of the meeting. Dr Rafał Leśkiewicz delivered a lecture on projects carried out by individual departments of the Institute of National Remembrance. Representatives of the Institute responded, among others, to questions regarding the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance, decommunization processes, cutting pensions for communist-era security officers, responding to defamations regarding Polish history, and strengthening cooperation between the Institute of National Remembrance and representatives of the Polish community abroad in terms of popularizing the latest Polish history.

The Ceremony of decorations with the Cross of Freedom and Solidarity

On 12 November the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Sydney represented by Consul General Irena Juszczuk, organized an official commemorative ceremony on the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining independence. The meeting was attended by representatives of Polish organizations from the state of New South Wales and a delegation of the Institute of National Remembrance headed by the

Deputy President Jan Baster. The event was opened by the Consul General who gave a special speech.

During the gala, anti-communist opposition activists currently living in Australia were decorated with the Cross of Freedom and Solidarity. Jan Baster, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance decorated the awarded on behalf of the President of the Republic of Poland.

The Cross of Freedom and Solidarity was awarded to Adam Marian Gajkowski, Bogdan Lisowski, Jan Andrzej Michalak, Wiesław Pastuszka and posthumously Mirosława Anna Zgirska.

Reading the letter from the President of the Institute of National Remembrance, Dr. Jarosław Szarek, Jan Baster said:

You fought for free Poland, just like our great predecessors from the beginning of the century, and have lived to see it. This struggle meant very hard work, then days and nights spent in prisons and internment centers, fear for your own families, degraded health, loss of employment, and finally emigration [...]

"Solidarity" was a great victory for which John Paul II had prayed a year earlier. Thanks to you it has become reality, the experience that was your participation directly contributed to the fall of communism in Poland and throughout Europe.

President Jan Baster received a commemorative Rally plaque from the organizers of the Katyn Rally 1940 - Smolensk 2010.

The meeting at the Consulate was accompanied by the opening of the exhibition "Fathers of Independence", prepared by the Institute of National Remembrance and a piano concert with a repertoire of works by Fryderyk Chopin.



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Independence."

The central exhibition portraying Captain Witold Pilecki, has been already on display in locations such as the Jewish Holocaust Center, the "Kadimah" Jewish Cultural Center in Melbourne and Atrium on Federation Square. It is a result of the initiative and the work of the Board of the Pilecki Project Committee in Melbourne, which together with the Polish Home Army Ex-servicemen Association, based on materials from the archival resources of the Institute of National Remembrance, prepared the exhibition design, as well as books, posters and booklets. They were able to bring together several

institutions, organizations and people who selflessly helped to make the project exist in the indicated places. During the event in the Victorian Parliament in Melbourne, the display was complemented by the two above mentioned IPN exhibitions.

POLAND 1918-2018
100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF REGAINING INDEPENDENCE
EXHIBITION
"Time For Heroes"

This exhibition is in memory of Polish and Australian soldiers who sacrificed their lives in fighting to liberate Warsaw. It presents acts of extraordinary goodness in the face of evil.

Our exhibition is in memory of the Warsaw Uprising 1944 and in honour of 250 000 civilians and insurgents murdered during the 63 day struggle to liberate Warsaw from German Nazi occupation.

The Association of the Polish Political Prisoners in Australia together with The Pilecki Project Committee under the patronage of His Excellency Mr Michał Kołodziejcki, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, cordially invite you to attend this Special Exhibition "TIME FOR HEROES"

Friday, November 09, 2018
The official opening of the event at 11:00 am
Open hours 8:30 – 17:00 Mon – Fri, 06 – 15 November 2018
Where: Parliament House, Harvest Terrace, West Perth WA 6005, Phone: (08) 9222 7222
Contact: Henryk Sawicki Phone: 0402 427 688 Email: krys@iinet.net.au

Our exhibition commemorates sacrifice and courage of Poles saving Jews and tells an extraordinary story of Captain Witold Pilecki the only volunteer prisoner of Auschwitz-Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp.

Our project is co-financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw

Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Canberra
Institute of National Remembrance
Pilecki Project Committee

With the exhibition about Captain Witold Pilecki, boards on the Warsaw Uprising, in which the Captain took part, were also composed. The Uprising was also joined by the Australian Walter Edward Smith, who after the outbreak of the war fought in Europe and in 1941 found himself in German captivity. He was in a POW camp in the territory of occupied Poland. After escaping from the camp, he was taken under the protection of the Home Army and fought in the Uprising. After the

war he returned to Australia. For his heroism, he was awarded the Uprising Cross.

The exhibition is complemented by the *Report W*, i.e. a report by Witold Pilecki from the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, describing the conditions in the camp, translated into English, leaflets regarding Captain Witold Pilecki, the Warsaw Uprising and the participation of Australian soldiers in it, and catalogues of "Żegota" and "Good Samaritans from Markowa".

The opening ceremony in Perth will take place on 9 November 2018 with the participation of the IPN delegation including Deputy President of the IPN Jan Baster, Dr. Rafał Leśkiewicz and Agnieszka Jędrzak, head of the Division of International Relations at the Office of the President of the Institute of National Remembrance. During the opening, the President Jan Baster will read out the letter by the President of the Institute of National Remembrance Dr. Jarosław Szarek addressed to the participants. The day before ceremonial celebrations of the centenary of independence are planned at the Polish Embassy. During this event, there will also be a ceremony of awarding the Cross of Freedom and Solidarity and the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta. On behalf of the President of the Republic of Poland, the awards will be presented by President Jan Baster.

The main organizer of the following event is the Association of Polish Political Prisoners in Australia, with the support of the Institute of

National Remembrance, the Polish Embassy in Canberra, the Consulate General in Sydney and the Pilecki Projekt Committee, which is the author of the flagship exhibition.

The visit to Perth will be concluded with the participation of the delegation in the patriotic picnic on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of independence and in a ceremonial gala, during which Dr. Rafał Leśkiewicz will deliver a lecture entitled "Fathers of Independence".

In Sydney on 12 November, meetings with representatives of the Polish Consulate and the Polish community in connection with the celebration of the anniversary of Independence are planned. The agenda also includes occasional speeches and the presentation of the exhibition "Fathers of Independence" prepared by the Institute of National Remembrance, showing the profiles of statesmen from the interwar period. The event will also be an opportunity to present the Crosses of Freedom and Solidarity to meritorious representatives of the Polish community in Australia, which they will receive from President Jan Baster.

On the eve, on 11 November, the delegation will meet with the Polish community from Sydney and representatives of the Federation of Polish Organizations in South Australia. The theme of the talks will be the celebration of the Independence anniversary and commemoration of the victims of the totalitarian regime, and the search for the remains of the heroes of the struggle for independent Poland.

An article about Captain Witold Pilecki published in The Weekend West, a popular Australian newspaper

Exhibition pays tribute to selfless acts of courage

William Yeoman

As Remembrance Day approaches, it's good to be reminded of the heroes and sacrifices of other nations and other times.

Starting on Monday at Parliament House is the historical photographic exhibition *Time for Heroes*, which tells of the triumphs and tragedies of the Polish resistance to the 1939-1945 Nazi occupation.

More specifically, it focuses on two powerful stories.

One concerns the activities of the Polish Home Army, or *Armia Krajowa*, during the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. The other relates to the extraordinary escapades of one AK member, Capt. Witold Pilecki who in 1940 allowed himself to be incarcerated in the Auschwitz concentration camp in order to help inmates and file clandestine reports on the camp's activities.

Pilecki (1901-1948) was a veteran of World War I (as a young scout) and the Polish-Soviet war of 1919-21. During World War II, he served as a platoon commander before, in 1939, helping establish the Secret Polish Army, which would eventually become part of the AK.

In September 1940, Pilecki assumed the name of Tomasz Serafinski and deliberately joined a group of Poles being rounded up in the street by Nazis. Once in Auschwitz, Pilecki formed the underground Union of Military Organisations, which supported inmates, helped get information about the camp to the outside world and prepared for a possible uprising.



Capt. Witold Pilecki

His reports on the atrocities taking place at the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp were sent to Warsaw, then passed on to the allied powers, who ignored them. Pilecki was able to escape from the camp in 1943.

He also survived the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 — only to be unlawfully executed by the communists in 1948.

There were many other such instances of heroism by AK members and their allies leading up to and during the Warsaw Uprising, which saw ordinary men, women and children join the AK in an attempt to throw off the yoke of the occupying Nazi forces after enduring years of brutality.

Some were Australians, like Sydney-born soldier Walter Edward Smith, whom the Germans took prisoner when they invaded Crete in 1941.

Smith subsequently escaped from occupied Poland's Stalag XX-A, was captured again and escaped again, after which he promptly joined the AK and the ill-fated Warsaw Uprising.

Australian RAAF pilots also supported the AK from the skies. One such pilot was Sgt Keith Bruce Chisholm, who was shot down over Poland and, like Smith, escaped from a prison camp. Making his way to Warsaw, he was concealed by the family of lawyer Halina Kozubowska. Chisholm lived with them for 18 months, which meant the family also lived for 18 months with the constant fear of being found out and executed by the Gestapo for hiding an escaped enemy prisoner.

So many lives, so many stories — so many heroes.

Time for Heroes is on from Monday until November 15 at Parliament House. Entry is free. The exhibition's organising committee will present the WA Parliament with a new edition of Pilecki's Report W KL Auschwitz 1940-1943

Exhibitions prepared by the Institute of National Remembrance in Australia - a historical outline

The Institute of National Remembrance participated in a project which in recent years has resulted in a large number of events popularizing the history of Poland in Australia. The project was initiated by Andrzej Nowak at the turn of 2011/2012, and in 2013 the Pilecki Projekt Committee, together with the Association of Political Prisoners in Australia, asked the Institute of National Remembrance for access to archival materials concerning Captain Witold Pilecki, which were later transformed into informational materials such as books and brochures by the Pilecki Project Committee.

In 2014, the "Report X" exhibition was created based on the materials made available by the Archive of the IPN. The exhibition presents the figure of Captain Witold Pilecki, special attention being paid to the time he spent in the Auschwitz-Birkenau German concentration camp and the preparation of *Report W*. It also touches upon topics such as his arrest after the war by the Security Office, a violent investigation and murder by the communist authorities. Moreover, the exhibition is devoted to the Warsaw Uprising and the participation of Australian Edward Walter Smith in it.

The Board of the Pilecki Projekt Committee in Melbourne, which together with the Polish Home Army Ex-servicemen Association, created the exhibition, books (including the English version of the *Report*), posters and bulletins, managed to bring together several institutions, organizations and people who contributed to the display of the project in such places as the Jewish Holocaust Center in Melbourne, Monash University, Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem, Auschwitz Museum, Polin Museum or Atrium Federation Square.

On 5 November 2017, the exhibition was shown in the in the "Kadimah" Jewish cultural center in Melbourne. The opening ceremony also included the presentation of the second, expanded and improved English-language edition of *Report W* translated by Ewa Hussain.

The IPN delegation, present at the inauguration included Deputy President of the Institute Dr. Mateusz Szpytma, Dr. Rafał Leśkiewicz and Agnieszka Jędrzak, head of the IPN's Division of International Relations. The exhibition was opened by the speeches of Piotr Buszta -

chargé d'affaire from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Canberra - and Dr Mateusz Szpytma. Dr Szpytma also read out a letter from the President of the IPN, Dr Jaroslaw Szarek addressed to the participants of the ceremony, which stressed the need to present the complex fate of Poland and Poles in the 20th century. In his letter, President Szarek stressed that Pilecki, "as a volunteer, undertook a risky game in order to collect the most reliable and accurate information about the Nazi extermination policy of the Jewish Nation." A symbolic speech was also given by Zbigniew Leman, a participant of the Warsaw Uprising, a soldier of the "Ruczaj" Battalion.

The undertaking was carried out as part of the celebration of the 99th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence. The IPN delegation laid flowers at a monument in the form of a cross commemorating the victims of the Katyń Massacre. In the same place, the IPN's Deputy President, Dr Mateusz Szpytma delivered a speech during which he emphasized that without sacrifice, often the sacrifice of one's life, there is no freedom or independence - because freedom can often be measured in crosses, said Dr Szpytma. These crosses are frequently present in the history of Poland: they often mark the burial places of soldiers, but there are still places where those crosses are missing: for example, on the grave of a great hero, Captain Witold Pilecki, because those who opposed the independence of Poland feared him even after death and threw his body into a nameless pit. The freedom of Australia can also be measured in crosses. Yes - this peaceful and beautiful country has experienced great bloodshed during World War I and II and, like the Poles, inspired by Tadeusz Kosciuszko, was ready to fight

for our freedom and yours.

The Deputy President of the IPN, Dr Mateusz Szpytma decorated Ms Zofia Dublaszewska, an outstanding oppositionist from Tri-City with the Cross of Freedom and Solidarity, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Poland.

On 8-10 May 2018, the exhibition was opened in the state Parliament of Victoria in Melbourne. The exhibition devoted to Captain Witold Pilecki and the participation of Australian soldiers in the Warsaw Uprising, created on the basis of materials from the archival resources of the IPN, was accompanied for the first time by two thematic exhibitions of the IPN concerning the "Żegota" Council for Aid to Jews and the Ulma family from Markowa ("Good Samaritans from Markowa"). In connection with the event, the Institute of National Remembrance sent 1,700 copies of catalogs for thematic exhibitions to Australia.

The organization of the exhibition in such a dignified and distinguished place as the State Parliament allowed for its popularization not only among representatives of the Polish diaspora, but also of parliamentarians. Above all, it could be seen by students of educational institutions - young people, for whom the essential aspect of their identity is the knowledge of their roots and the history of their own nation.

On 20 June the Deputy President of the IPN, Prof. Krzysztof Szwagrzyk hosted representatives of the management of the Australian Society of

Polish Jews and their Descendants: President Izydor Marmur and Deputy Presidents Eva Hussain, Ezra May and a representative of the Society in Sydney, Estelle Rozinski. President Szwagrzyk thanked the guests for the ongoing lively cooperation between the Institute of National Remembrance and Australian organizations, which resulted in exhibitions in Australia. The Association is also trying to organize a study visit to Poland for Australian parliamentarians. Willingness to continue cooperation was expressed by all of the participants of the meeting.

President Szwagrzyk pointed out that the Polish-Jewish difficult history is, nonetheless, linked by such figures as Captain Witold Pilecki, a "volunteer to Auschwitz" who - as he emphasized - was an important figure not only for Poles but for the whole world. As the Director of the Office of Search and Identification, he discussed the activities of this department, with particular emphasis on the work carried out at lot "Ł" of the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw. It is a bitter irony that in the place where there are nameless mass graves of Polish heroes who were murdered or tortured in Stalinist prisons, communist officials, judges and prosecutors were buried with honors in the eighties of the twentieth century, in essence - their executioners. Until now, 60 Stalinist prisoners have been identified on the basis of genetic material collected from families. Professor Szwagrzyk expressed deep hope that among the remains discovered in this area there are the remains of Captain Pilecki.

Both sides emphasized the need to conduct Polish-Jewish dialogue in

an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding of national sensitivity, pointing to the suffering of both nations during the Second World War. It was stressed that education is a key issue in improving mutual relations. There is a lot of hope in the younger generation which, thanks to in-depth knowledge and rejection of stereotypes, will be able to build bridges between nations.

On 14 September 2018 representatives of veterans' organizations from Australia visited the IPN. Bogdan Płatek, secretary of the Polish Ex-Servicemen Association Sub - Branch No. 3 in Victoria and a member of the Pilecki Committee and Zygmunt Świstak "Minoga", a representative of the Home Army Soldiers' Association in Melbourne, visited the IPN as part of the General Assembly of the World Veterans Federation organized by the Office for War Veterans and Victims of Oppression.

At the Institute they met with Prof Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance, with whom they discussed further educational cooperation in Australia. The President presented the guests with commemorative gorgets from the funeral of the Commanders whose remains were found in the lot "Ł" in Powązki. Later, the veterans visited the IPN Archive, where they viewed archival materials about Australia. Zygmunt Świstak was touched as his identification card from KL Dachau was found in the Institute's archival resources.

On 18-19 September 2018 Marian Pawlik, President of the Polish Community Council of Victoria, and his wife paid a visit to the Institute

of National Remembrance and met with Dr Jarosław Szarek, President of the Institute, and Dr Mateusz Szpytma, Deputy President of the Institute. The guests also visited the Archive, where they got to know the main tasks and activities of the Center for Information on the Victims of World War II, visited the warehouse with military documentation, got acquainted with the functionalities of the video-comparator and had the opportunity to look at the work carried out in the Conservation Workshop. Another point in the agenda was the Museum of Cursed Soldiers and Political Prisoners of the Polish People's Republic, where the guests were presented a temporary exhibition entitled *Evidence of Crime. Objects from Lot "Ł" in pavilion X of the Rakowiecka prison*. In addition, at the Janusz Kurtyka Educational Center "History Point", representatives of Polish community institutions in Australia saw an exhibition entitled *Institute of Józef Piłsudski in America - history and collections of the Polish institution in New York*, prepared by the IPN's National Education Office. On 19 September 2018 Prof. Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance, invited President Pawlik and his wife to visit the lot "Ł" at the Powązki Military Cemetery.

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