

Institute of National Remembrance

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We would like to recommend the new IPN publication: "White Legions 1914-1918. From the Puławy Legion to the First Polish Corps "

The publishing house of the Institute of National Remembrance has published an album by Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński "White Legions 1914-1918. From the Puławy Legion to the First Polish Corps "(Polish military units in Russia during World War I).

D O P A L A N I E K R E S Ó W

Białe Legiony

1914–1918

Od Legionu Puławskiego do I Korpusu Polskiego



When the First World War erupted, many Poles decided that a free Poland reconstituted from the lands annexed by the three partitioning powers was possible only after the defeat of Germany. In 1914,

volunteers stepped forward determined to fight for Poland's independence – in Russian uniforms but under the Polish banner – against the Kaiser's armies. The nucleus of these formations was the small Puławy Legion – which numbered a little over one thousand men – and which later evolved into a Polish Sharpshooters Brigade and Division. The following album recounts the history of these armed units.

The aforementioned Polish formations fought in the fields of Congress Poland, the Nowogródek area, and Eastern Little Poland. With the passage of time, the small Legion expanded into the thirty-thousand-strong First Polish Corps. The soldiers and ulhans of Gen. Józef Dowbór-Muśnicki – like the heroes of Eastern Borderland epics – fought against the Bolsheviks for Bobrujsk and liberated Minsk and Mohylów. They thus created a sliver of free Poland in the eastern borderlands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In spite of being eventually forced to put down their weapons and surrender, in the summer of 1918, to the German army – which was taking over the Minsk region, the story of Gen. Dowbór's soldiers did not come to an end with the capitulation of Bobrujsk. They would once again fight for resurrected Poland on all of its fronts – from Greater Poland to the distant Eastern Borderlands – during subsequent years.

The following book, which we are hereby presenting to the reader, is the first album dedicated to Polish military formations in Russia during the years 1914 – 1918. The history of these forgotten formations known as the “White Legions,” the officers and soldiers in their ranks,

and the battles in which many of them gave their lives for Poland, constitutes a little-known chapter of the struggles for independence. The album contains over 500 photographs, documents, medals/awards, and drawings of uniforms. The entirety of the publication is complemented by five large-scale maps of the battlegrounds and areas of operation of the Polish units. The album thus fills a void in the historiography of the Polish armed efforts during the heroic period of the struggle for independence.

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