

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/900,They-were-shot-in-the-back-of-the-head-The-Katyn-Massacre-exhibition.html>
2020-09-22, 17:01

„They were shot in the back of the head” - The Katyn Massacre exhibition

The Katyn Massacre - The massacre perpetrated by the NKVD in the spring of 1940 on about 22,000 Polish POWs and prisoners captured after 17 September 1939 left a heavy mark on the pages of Polish history. By Lavrentiy Beria's decision of March 5, 1940, all prisoners held in the prison camps of Kozelsk, Starobyelsk and Ostashkov, and prisons of western Ukraine and Belarus, were labeled "enemies of the Soviet state". Executions began in April and went on until mid-May. Officers held in Kozelsk were transported to the forest of Katyn and executed over open pits or in the neighbouring villa occupied by the NKVD. Inmates of the Starobyelsk camp were moved to Kharkov and murdered in the cellar of NKVD offices, their bodies buried in death pits in Piatykhatty forest; POWs from Ostashkov were killed in Kalinin (today's Tver) and buried in mass graves in Mednoye. Bodies of victims from the so-called "Ukrainian list" were deposited in the forest of Bykivnia. The names of about 3870 victims murdered based on the "Belarussian list" remain unknown to this day. Though there are reasons to presume they were buried in Kuropaty, the Belarussian government has been unwilling to allow research and exhumation work to be conducted in that area.

The issue of the Katyn massacres is not limited to the year they were perpetrated, but extends to its implications and actions undertaken after 1940, such as reprisals against the prisoners' families, deportations, a whole spectrum of persecutions, as well as propaganda and decades of silence regarding Soviet genocide on the part of the international community. The mass executions were only the beginning of the harsh fate of Poles under Soviet occupation. It took 50 years before the truth of the Katyn issue could be released and brought under the roof of the Katyn Museum.

By this exhibition we would like to present what Katyn is - a symbol of a genocide perpetrated on the Polish nation under Soviet occupation, of falsifications, of the conspiracy of silence and of the final victory of truth. It is a symbol of the destruction of the Polish intellectual elite, citizens of the Second Polish Republic of diverse ethnicities and faiths, a symbol of a tragedy on a human, national and state level alike.

The exhibition presented in the Museum of Occupations in Tallinn will be next available to visitors from November in the Museum of KGB cells in Tartu and in the Museum of War in Ryga, Latvia from the beginning of February 2017.

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Katyń Museum - branch of the Polish Army Museum

THEY WERE SHOT IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD

THE KATYŃ MASSACRE EXHIBITION



THE UNIFORM GROUPS

MEMBERS OF MANY MILITARY AND CIVIL UNIFORM GROUPS AND FORMATIONS WERE MURDERED IN KATYŃ MASSACRE

1. BORDER PROTECTION CORPS
2. BORDER GUARD
3. INFANTRY
4. ARTILLERY
5. AIRFORCE
6. CAVALRY
7. STATE POLICE
8. PRISON GUARD
9. NAVY
10. MILITARY POLICE

PRISONS AND THREE SPECIAL CAMPS

The system of prisons from arrested the majority of Polish soldiers were, in early 1940, Soviet administration started to be organized in the government program. The prisoners were held in the Katyn, Bialystok, and Ostashkov camps. The Katyn camp was the largest and most important. It was located in the Katyn forest near the town of Katyn. The prisoners were held in the Katyn camp from the beginning of the war until the Katyn massacre in April 1940. The Katyn camp was one of the most important camps for the Polish prisoners of war. It was located in the Katyn forest near the town of Katyn. The prisoners were held in the Katyn camp from the beginning of the war until the Katyn massacre in April 1940.

REAR VIEW OF BARRACKS USED BY PRISONERS IN KATYŃ MASSACRE

THE EXECUTIONS

In March 1940, the High Command of the German Wehrmacht prepared a list of the prisoners of war to be executed. The list included the names of the prisoners of war who were to be executed in the Katyn forest. The executions were carried out in the Katyn forest in April 1940. The prisoners were shot in the back of the head. The Katyn massacre was one of the most important events in the history of the Polish people. It was a tragedy that should not be forgotten.

DEPORTATIONS

Deportations into the Soviet Union were one of the main forms of Soviet persecution against the Polish people in the Second World War. The deportations were carried out in the Katyn forest and in other locations. The prisoners were deported to the Soviet Union in the Katyn forest and in other locations. The deportations were carried out in the Katyn forest and in other locations. The prisoners were deported to the Soviet Union in the Katyn forest and in other locations.

EXHUMATIONS OF 1943

In 1943, the Soviet Union started the exhumations of the Polish prisoners of war who were killed in the Katyn massacre. The exhumations were carried out in the Katyn forest and in other locations. The exhumations were carried out in the Katyn forest and in other locations. The exhumations were carried out in the Katyn forest and in other locations.

Katyń Przebiega Europie!

GERMAN PROPAGANDA PAPER 'KATYŃ - WARSZAWA W 1943'

THE UNKNOWN VICTIMS OF THE KATYŃ MASSACRE

Many victims of the Katyn massacre have been identified, but many others remain unknown. The unknown victims were those who were killed in the Katyn massacre but whose names were not recorded. The unknown victims were those who were killed in the Katyn massacre but whose names were not recorded.