

Institute of National Remembrance

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Remembering Władysław Anders – an outstanding Pole – a great commander and politician on the 130th anniversary of his birth

He is mostly remembered as the commander of the 2 Polish Corps, formed in the USSR, mostly out of Polish POWs released after 1941 the Sikorski-Mayski agreement. The corps became famous for its involvement in the Italian Campaign capturing Monte Cassino and liberating cities like Ancona and Bologna.



Between 26 February and 28 May 1945, Anders became the Acting Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces. After the 1945 Yalta conference, General Anders cabled President of the Republic of Poland Władysław Raczkiewicz, "In view of the tragic message of the last conference, I report that the 2nd Corps does not recognize the unilateral decision of leaving Poland and the Polish nation to the Bolsheviks."

After the war, he stayed in exile "to fight for Poland and to return to Poland." He lived in Great Britain and participated in the political life of the Polish diaspora. Władysław Anders opposed the communist rule in the country and its Sovietisation. In September 1946, a resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Warsaw government deprived him of his Polish citizenship.

He remained the undisputed authority for his subordinates, a symbol of patriotism and an uncompromising attitude towards communism. He died on 12 May 1970, and nine days later was laid to rest with his men of the 2nd Corps in the Monte Cassino cemetery, as was his last will, mourned by relatives and faithful soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces.

On the eve of the 130th anniversary of the birth of Gen. Anders, a ceremony was held in Cracow. The IPN was represented by Deputy President Mateusz Szpytma and Deputy Director of the IPN Cracow Branch, Cecylia Radoń. The event was also attended by Gen. Anders' daughter Anna Maria Anders.

In her speech Anna Maria Anders, the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the Republic of Italy and San Marino thanked IPN for launching educational projects in memory of her father. "Trails of Hope. The Odyssey of Freedom" will cover more than 50 countries around the world.

The IPN created this project so that the memory of the soldiers of Anders' Army and of their contribution to the victory over Germany were not forgotten. In this way, we want to honour the military effort of the Polish Armed Forces and the fate of civilians evacuated from the USSR with General Anders' Army in 1942.

In his speech, Mateusz Szpytma recalled the merits of General Anders in rescuing more than one hundred thousand Polish citizens from Soviet gulags and prisons. He also declared the IPN's support for the idea of erecting a monument to General Anders in Warsaw.

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