



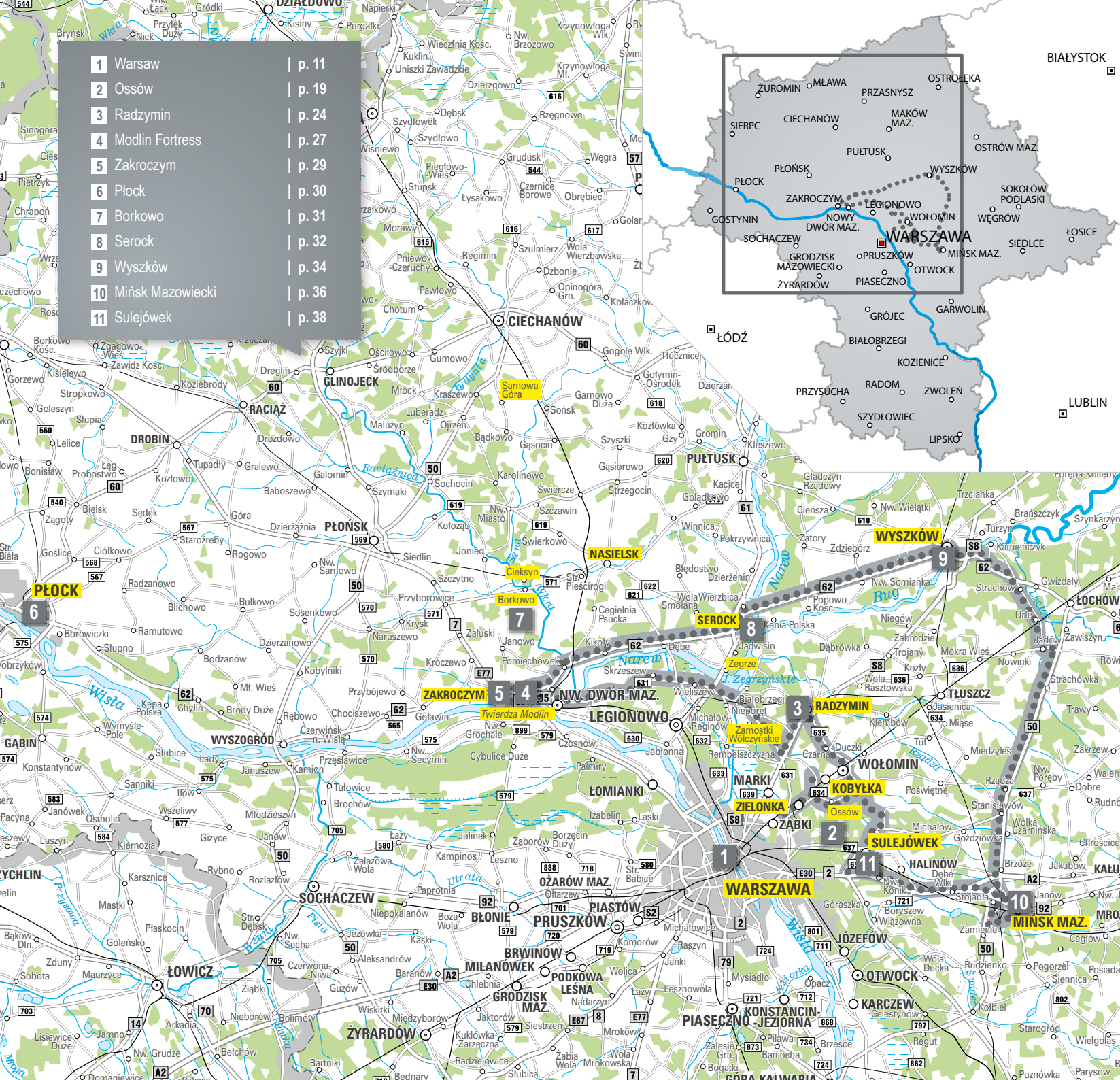
BATTLE OF WARSAW 1920 ROUTE

tourist guide



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MAZOVIA. Today, it is the heart of Poland. At the time of the formation of the Commonwealth, it was its own state for more than three centuries. The centre of the region is the bustling metropolis of Warsaw, surrounded by towns, villages and landmarks yet to be fully explored. Curious travellers will discover in the region a number of mysterious castles and manors, historic churches and quaint little towns, as well as former battlefields and diverse landscapes that have been attracting film makers to the area for many years now. Mazovia is one big reservoir of historical, cultural and natural wealth. All you have to do is stand at its boundaries and say the magic words: Mazovia, open sesame! And then enter and take the route of your choice.

Here is the **BATTLE OF WARSAW 1920 ROUTE** – a journey into the not-too-distant past, just under a hundred years back, into a time when the future of Poland, and also the whole of Europe, was being decided. The British politician and diplomat Edgar D'Abernon considered the Battle of Warsaw to be the 18th most crucial battle in world history. During three days of August 1920, the Polish Army halted the Bolshevik revolution's march to the West. Looking at the battlefields of Ossów or Radzymin, memorial sites in Warsaw and the fortifications of Modlin Fortress, it is hard not to wonder what it was that decided the Poles' victory. A miracle? A brilliant strategy? The defenders' determination?

The Battle of Warsaw 1920 Route is one of three new routes that will enable you to discover the Mazovian Heritage. It is also worth exploring the other two. The Chopin Route follows in the footsteps of one of the world's foremost composers, who spent half his life in Mazovia. The Dukes of Mazovia Route is a journey into a world of mediaeval castles, valiant knights as well as wise and ambitious rulers who reigned in Mazovia as an independent state for three centuries.

You can find more information about the routes by going to www.dziedzictwomazowsza.pl

Polish-Bolshevik War

key dates

11 November 1918

End of operations on the western front; Poland gains independence.

3-5 January 1919

Fight for Wilno (Vilnius), start of the Polish-Soviet War

14 February 1919

Fighting between Polish and Bolshevik forces in Mosty on the Neman River. A 150-kilometre-long front is created from Pripyat to Grodno.

20 April 1919

Poles capture Wilno.

January 1920

An almost 700,000-strong army of the RSFSR is concentrated along the Berezina River.

5 June 1920

Budyonny's 1st Cavalry Army breaks through the Polish front in Ukraine.

6 August 1920

Commander-in-chief Józef Piłsudski draws up a plan to halt the Soviet offensive along the Vistula River, intending to fight a great battle outside Warsaw and counter-strike from the Wieprz River. General Józef Haller is appointed commander of the front defending Warsaw.

November 1918 – February 1919

Evacuation of the German army from the east; troops of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) occupy the abandoned territories, including Mińsk.

12 January 1919

The Red Army command orders operation "Vistula Shield" to start, with the intention of occupying central Poland and bringing help to the revolution in Germany.

16 April 1919

The Polish army begins its offensive.

8 August 1919

Poles occupy Mińsk

25 April – 8 May 1920

Polish and Ukrainian troops go on the offensive in Ukraine (the Kiev Offensive), ending with the capture of Kiev.

4 July 1920

The Red Army starts a general offensive in Belarus. The Polish front is broken.

8-12 August 1920

Defensive preparations get underway on the outskirts of Warsaw. The army and civilian population erect defences and organise recruitment points and field hospitals.

11 August 1920

Soviet units reach the Vistula line.

14 August 1920

Intensive fighting along the stretch from Wiązowna to Radzymin. The 5th Army under General Władysław Sikorski makes slow progress during an attack in the direction of Nasielsk. Red Army units make their most dangerous breach in the Polish defence in the region of Wólka Radzyńska; the Bolsheviks are now only 15 kilometres from the bridge on the Vistula. Start of the Battle of Ossów.

16 August 1920

Intensive fighting continues along the line of the Warsaw bridgehead's defences. The Polish 5th Army takes Nasielsk and continues its march to Serock. The Commander-in-chief orders a counter-strike from the Wieprz River. The Soviets attack Plock on the left flank of the front.

18 August 1920

From Warsaw, Piłsudski issues orders to regroup and create pursuit groups. A Polish counteroffensive is launched along the entire front line, and the Bolsheviks beat an uncoordinated retreat.

22 August 1920

Polish troops liberate Białystok.

22 September 1920

Polish army offensive at the Neman River.

18 March 1921

A peace treaty is signed in Riga. The borders between Poland and the RSFSR are demarcated.

9 August 1920

General Tadeusz Rozwadowski gives the order for a final battle plan. Modifications involve strengthening the Northern Front and the 5th Army's performing offensive tasks.

13 August 1920

In a powerful strike from the north-east, Bolshevik troops break through the Polish defensive positions and take Radzymin.

15 August 1920

Fighting continues around Wólka Radzyńska. Poles remove the most dangerous breach in their line of defence, carried out the previous day by the Red Army. The concentrated assault of Polish units allows Radzymin to be retaken. Poles capture a Soviet radio station in Ciechanów.

17 August 1920

Polish units attacking from the Wieprz River defeat the Soviet forces. Mińsk Mazowiecki is liberated.

18-19 August 1920

Defence of Plock.

31 August 1920

Battle of Komarów (near Zamość).

12 October 1920

A ceasefire is signed in Riga. The truce comes into effect on 18 October.



Historical introduction

GENESIS OF A CONFLICT

The end of World War I brought about important changes in the whole of Europe. One of them – for Poles, the most crucial one, received with incredible enthusiasm – was Poland's return to the political map of the continent, after 123 years of partitions. The most urgent challenge facing the reborn state was to mark out its borders, including with Soviet Russia.

Germany's capitulation saw the withdrawal of German troops from lands belonging to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth before the partitions – including Courland, Wilno and Białystok. Already on 16 November 1918, the Bolshevik army command formed the Western Army, whose tasks included taking over land abandoned by the Germans. At the same time, self-defence units were spontaneously formed there against the Bolsheviks. These were voluntary military formations whose purpose was to incorporate the borderlands into the Polish state. On 29 December 1918 these units were incorporated into the Polish Army.

The Poles aspired to mark out the eastern border, at the same time intending, in keeping with Józef Piłsudski's federal conception, to create an international anti-Bolshevik front. At this same time, the Communists intensified their operations not only ideologically and politically, but also militarily. The revolution in Germany was continuing, and in the spring of 1919 the Hungarian Soviet Republic and the Munich Soviet Republic

were proclaimed. There is no doubt that Soviet imperial plans assumed a further expansion of the Communist revolution westwards, but Poland stood in the way of their implementation. A conflict was inevitable.

WAR

On 14 February 1919 the first clashes broke out in Mosty between the Red Army and Polish units. In April the Polish Army launched a counteroffensive, recapturing Wilno and Nowogródek (Navahrudak), and, in August, Mińsk. In autumn 1919, Polish troops halted at the Berezina line. At the same time, Polish-Bolshevik peace negotiations had been in progress since July 1919, but ended in failure in December that same year. On 25 April 1920 a Polish preventive strike was launched, known as the Kiev Offensive. Its purpose was to interrupt and paralyse Soviet war preparations, preserve Poland's independence and pave the way for an independent Ukraine to be proclaimed. Despite initial success – the seizure of Kiev (7 May 1920) – the operation failed. A counter-strike by the Bolsheviks on 14 May strongly engaged the Polish forces and created conditions for a decisive Soviet counter-attack in the south. On 5 June 1920 the Polish forces started retreating.

! THE BALANCE OF FORCES

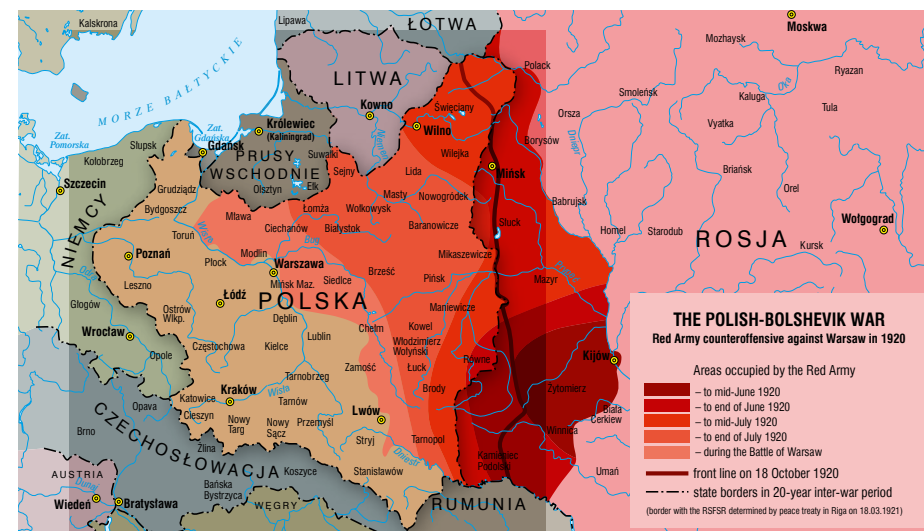
On the Bolshevik side the troops were grouped into two big organisational units: Mikhail Tukhachevsky's Western Front and Alexander Yegorov's South-Western Front. Each front was composed of several armies. The Polish forces were divided into the Northern Front commanded by General Józef Haller, the Central Front under Edward Rydz-Śmigły and the Southern Front commanded by General Waław Iwaszkiewicz-Rudoszański.

On 4 July 1920 a general offensive of the Soviet Western Front began, which took the Bolsheviks to the outskirts of Warsaw from the northern side. The South-Western Front conducted war operations in the south. The Soviet plan to take Warsaw assumed that the Vistula would be forced by the main forces from the north and one army from the south. After crossing the river, the combined forces were to attack the capital from the north- and south-west. On 10 August, after an offensive lasting six weeks, the Soviets reached the Mława – Przasnysz – Wyszaków – Węgrów – Siedlce line. However, the Warsaw bridgehead was the main thrust of the operations.

Mikhail Tukhachevsky's attacking troops advanced at an average rate of 20 kilometres daily. The commander had ordered Warsaw to be taken on 12 August. On that day, marching in close-order columns, the Bolsheviks approached the Poles' second line of defence.

! ANTI-POLISH SENTIMENTS IN EUROPE

The political atmosphere in a Europe caught up with revolutionary fervour did not favour Poland's cause. Under the *Hands off Russia* campaign, strikes were held in many countries, including the United Kingdom, France, Czechoslovakia and Germany, organised by the Communist International. The protests led to ammunition supplies to Poland being blocked. Among the best known actions were the London dockers' strike on the "Jolly George" ship in May 1920. Also, in July, Gdańsk (Danzig) dockers refused to unload the Dutch steamboat the "Triton" carrying ammunition for the Polish forces. This cargo had reached Gdańsk 11 days after the agreed date, because British dockers, in an expression of solidarity with Bolshevik Russia, had delayed loading it.



THE POSITIONS OF THE POLISH FORCES

The Northern Front commanded by Józef Haller operated along the stretch from the border with East Prussia to the mouth of the Wieprz River by Dęblin. The troops grouped along it were to engage the Soviet forces in long-lasting defensive fighting and prevent them from controlling Warsaw. General Władysław Sikorski's 5th Army was positioned on the northern stretch of that front, along the Wkra River to Pomiechówek. Warsaw's outskirts – the central stretch of the front – were being defended by General Franciszek Latinik's 1st Army, spread out from Zegrze to Karczew. Its main task was the direct defence of the capital and its eastern bridgehead.

The southern stretch of the front, from Góra Kalwaria to Dęblin, along the Vistula's western bank, was occupied by General Bolesław Roja's 2nd Army.

General Edward Rydz-Śmigły's Central Front, positioned from Dęblin to Brody along the Wieprz River, was to attack the flank and rear of Tukhachevsky's forces when they engaged in battle with General Haller's troops. This front was composed of the lower Wieprz force comprising General Leonard Skierski's 4th Army and the upper Wieprz force personally commanded by Rydz-Śmigły, concentrating part of General Zygmunt Zieliński's 3rd Army. The Polish Southern Front headed by General Wacław Iwaszkiewicz was spread out to the south of Brody as far as the Dniester River.

The Polish forces intended for the decisive battle with Tukhachevsky's troops comprised, in five armies, about 120,000 infantry and artillery units, 9,000 cavalry and 630 cannons.

! THE FRONT

In military language the word "front" specifies not only the location of one's own units that are closest to the enemy, but also the greatest operational union, usually consisting of several armies and many other tactical formations. At present this word is rarely used, supplanted by and at the same time identical to the term "army group".

! THE WARSAW BRIDGEHEAD

In war terminology the word "bridgehead" means a fortified region maintained by one's own troops to defend a bridge crossing. During the Polish-Bolshevik war, the operations on the so-called Warsaw Bridgehead – protecting the crossings over the Narew and Vistula rivers in the area of Warsaw and Modlin – were of enormous military importance. The system of bridgehead fortifications was taken over from the Germans, who had erected it in 1915-1916 to provide a defence against an expected Russian counteroffensive. The line of fortifications ran from Rynia on the Narew, through Struga, Zielonka, Stara Miłosna, Wiązowna and Józefów as far as the Vistula.

THE BATTLE OF WARSAW

On the morning of 13 August 1920 the Red Army's strike on Polish positions near Radzymin was the start of the battle for Warsaw. The attack was repelled, but in the afternoon Bolshevik units launched a coordinated attack on the defensive positions at Radzymin, Wolomin and Ossów. Radzymin fell that same evening, as did Ossów the following day. The Soviets broke through the first defensive line of the Praga bridgehead and headed in the direction of Praga. In order not to allow enemy units to surge through the breach in the Polish defence, generals Rozwadowski and Haller ordered an immediate offensive by General Sikorski's 5th Army from the Wkra River. Its purpose was to stop the Red Army at the positions it was occupying and to prepare conditions to form the Polish defence at the Praga bridgehead. At noon on 14 August the 5th Army attacked from the Wkra line in the direction of Nasielsk as well as Nowe Miasto and Płońsk. The attacks in the first two directions ended in a fiasco. On the morning of 15 August the Soviets broke through the front in the region of Borków, with the Poles suffering great losses. In the north, in the direction of Płońsk, the situation of the Polish forces was much better. Intense fighting by the Wkra River on 14 and 16 August failed to produce any significant breakthroughs on the northern flank of General

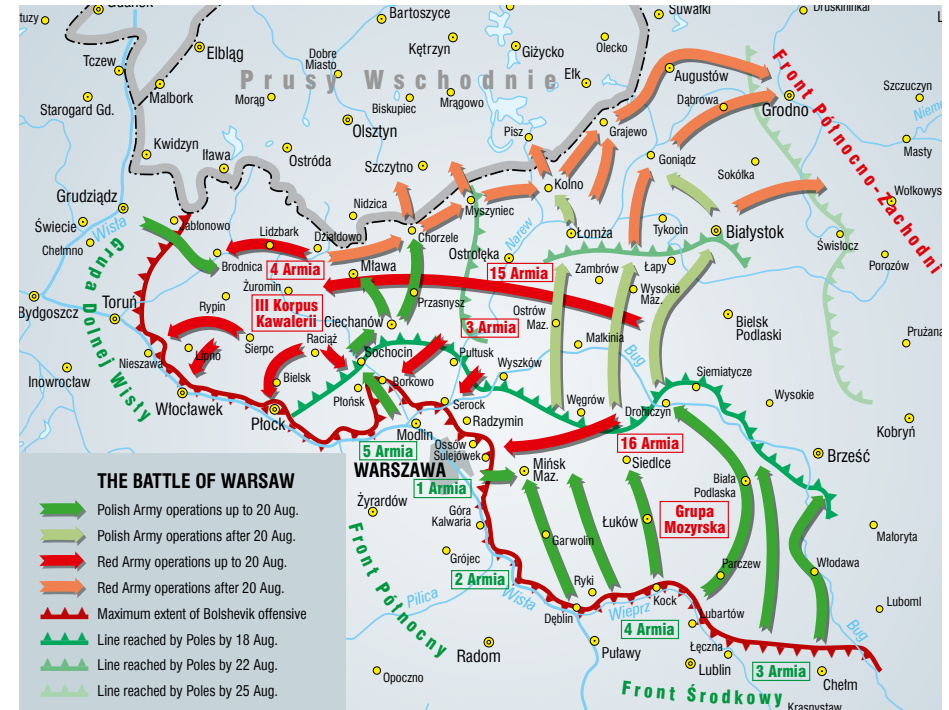
! PIŁSUDSKI'S STRATEGY

Piłsudski planned to group the troops needed to ward off a Soviet attack in the north of Warsaw, while the forces which were to be used in a counterattack were to be positioned in the south, behind the Wieprz line. This dislocation was intended to make a broad flanking manoeuvre possible, which would seal a victory. The conception underwent several minor modifications, mainly concerning a strengthening of the northern flank, and on 10 August the Commander-in-chief approved it as an obligatory operational directive.

Haller's front. The 5th Army maintained its positions and even pushed them eastwards, at the level of Nasielsk. However, important changes were taking place at the Praga bridgehead. On 14 August the Poles retook Ossów. The symbol of this battle was Father Ignacy Skorupka, the heroic chaplain of the 236th Volunteer Army Infantry

Regiment. On the evening of 15 August the Poles regained Radzymin as well as their lost defensive positions. Three days earlier Józef Piłsudski had left Warsaw to take direct command of a manoeuvre strike force by the Wieprz River. The Marshal had planned to start the offensive on 17 August, but after hearing about the defeats near Radzymin he decided – despite his doubts – to move the date for starting the offensive turnabout forward to 16 August. For the planned manoeuvre to succeed, rapid action was necessary, as was using the element of surprise against the enemy. Early on the morning of 16 August a Polish counter-strike was launched against the flank and rear of the Red Army forces fighting for Warsaw.

Between the evening of 17 and 18 August, units of the Polish strike force reached the Warsaw – Mińsk Mazowiecki – Brześć (Brest) highway, breaking through the Bolshevik forces' main line of communication. The Soviets' orderly retreat soon became a chaotic flight of panic. Soldiers ditched their heavy equipment and many of them broke away from their ranks to form marauding groups. The Bolshevik forces were definitively broken up at the





LOSSES

The losses suffered in the Battle of Warsaw, both by the Poles and the Soviets, have still not yet been precisely stated. It is estimated that the Bolsheviks lost about 25,000 killed in battle, about 70,000 taken prisoner, 200 cannons, 1,000 heavy machine guns and tens of thousands who were interned in East Prussia. The Poles' losses were about 4,500 killed, 22,000 wounded and about 10,000 missing.

Neman River. From 20 to 28 September the Poles attacked the Soviets along the entire front. The fiercest combats occurred around Grodno, Brzostowice and Wolkowsk. The fighting ended with a pursuit after the enemy.



MIRACLE ON THE VISTULA

The legend of the defence of Jasna Góra in November 1655 during the Swedish Deluge lives on in the Polish tradition. The Jasna Góra fortress was at that time besieged by enemy forces ten times as strong, but the Swedes declined to storm it – a fact ascribed to the intercession of the Madonna of Częstochowa. Echoes of these events were evoked on the eve of the Battle of Warsaw. Stanisław Stroński, editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper "Rzeczpospolita", in an article critically assessing the military and political situation, also referred to the famous first Battle of the Marne in September 1914 (known in France as the "Miracle of the Marne"). *Only a miracle can rescue us today outside Warsaw*, was how he summed it up. His fellow editor Adam Grzymała-Siedlecki, in an essay published later entitled the "Miracle of the Vistula", wrote: *And that miracle did occur*. From the columns of "Rzeczpospolita", the Miracle of the Vistula, soon transformed into the "Miracle on the Vistula", made its way into the Polish and foreign press, literature, the rostrum in the Sejm (Polish parliament) and church pulpits, and into the general public consciousness.

On 12 October 1920 a ceasefire was signed, and on 18 March 1921 a peace treaty was concluded establishing the borders between Poland and Soviet Russia and regulating relations between the two countries.

PROBLEMS WITH THE NAME

Battle of Warsaw, battle on the outskirts of Warsaw, or perhaps Miracle on the Vistula? The first and most frequently used name by historians is favoured on account of the fact that conquering Warsaw was one of the Bolsheviks' more important aims, both strategically and ideologically. On 2 July Mikhail Tukhachevsky, commander of the Soviet Western Front, gave the order to start the offensive in the north, saying "... the road to a general universal conflagration leads over the corpse of Poland. To Wilno, Mińsk, Warsaw – march!". However, some historians recommend using the name "battle on the outskirts of Warsaw", recalling that military operations in this battle were conducted as far away as 400 kilometres from Warsaw, and that the capital itself saw no fighting. In the public mind, the name "Miracle on the Vistula" is used.



Polish positions near Miłosna in August 1920

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Józef Piłsudski

COMMANDERS OF THE POLISH FORCES

Marshal Józef Klemens Piłsudski (1867-1935)

Commander-in-chief of the Polish Armed Forces. Together with generals Sosnkowski, Rozwadowski and Weygand, the author of the battle conception (Order No. 8358/III), assuming the concentration of troops and a counteroffensive from the Wieprz River. On 16 August the Strike Force he commanded attacked the rear of the Red Army's unprotected flank, striking a blow that decided the outcome of the entire battle.

General Tadeusz Jordan Rozwadowski (1866-1928)

Chief of Staff of the Polish Army as of 22 July 1920. After assuming this position he proceeded to regroup the retreating Polish troops. He was the joint creator of the counter-strike conception. On 9 August he gave his famous Order No. 10,000 – the final battle plan. Modifications were introduced to the initial conception, which involved strengthening the Northern Front and the 5th Army's performing offensive tasks.

General Władysław Eugeniusz Sikorski (1881-1943)

Commander of the 5th Army, which played an important role in the Battle of Warsaw during the fighting by the Wkra River, north of Warsaw.

General Józef Haller von Hallenburg (1873-1960)

Member of the State Defence Council (July-August 1920); on 8 July he became General Inspector of the Volunteer Army. In August he was appointed commander of the Northern Front, consisting of the 5th Army defending the position north of Warsaw, the 1st Army covering the Warsaw bridgehead and the 2nd Army spread out along the Vistula line in the direction of Dęblin. During the Battle of Warsaw the Northern Front took the main strike of the Bolshevik forces upon itself.

General Edward Śmigły-Rydz (1886-1941)

During the Battle of Warsaw, the commander of the right flank of the Strike Force operating from the Wieprz River; subsequently commander of the 2nd Army which pushed back two Bolshevik armies and Hayk Bzhishkyan's 3rd Cavalry Corps to East Prussia. His troops played the deciding role in the Neman battle at the end of September 1920.

General Franciszek Latinik (1864-1949)

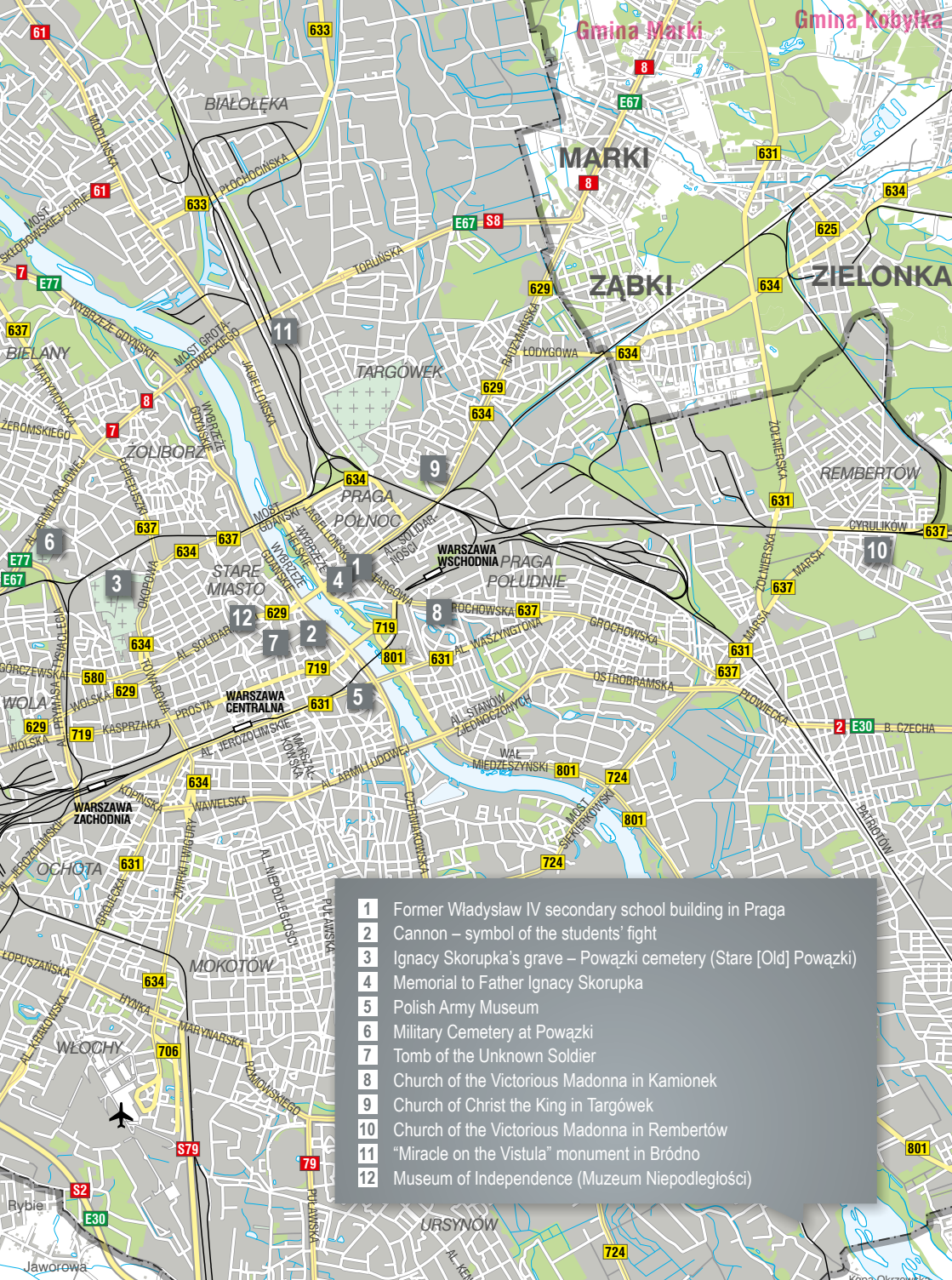
During the Battle of Warsaw, the capital's military governor and commander of the 1st Army of the Northern Front, repelling the Soviet strike on Warsaw. He conducted the operation in the region of Zegrze and Radzymin. During the pursuit operations he commanded the Operational Force in the 6th Army.

General Leonard Wilhelm Skierski (1866-1940)

Commander of the 4th Army comprising the Central Front. He directed the strike on the flank of the enemy troops to break them up and make their retreat impossible.

General Zygmunt Zieliński (1858-1925)

Commander of the 3rd Army, which was to cover the Lublin region and attack (together with the 4th Army) the flank of the enemy troops.



Warsaw 1920

Warsaw was at the centre of the events being played out in Poland in 1920. It was where the most important political, military and social decisions were made, and it was the seizure of the capital by the Bolsheviks that was to be the key to the victory over Poland. The city was the direct base for war operations, an important road and rail hub, a supply centre and at the same time a strategic target for invaders.

At the turn of June and July Poland's military situation seemed catastrophic. Money was lacking to equip the troops and deliveries of equipment were delayed. Political tension increased in Warsaw and some sections of public opinion were speaking openly about the war being lost.

Some political parties blatantly accused Piłsudski of leading Poland to the brink of collapse. A coup was in the air, and so Piłsudski, on leaving for his quarters in Puławy on 12 August, ordered General Sosnkowski to be particularly vigilant, and at the same time – in the event of an unsuccessful Polish counteroffensive – left a written letter of resignation from his post of Chief of State and Commander-in-chief with Prime Minister Witos.

Most foreign diplomats left Warsaw. One of the few who remained was the papal nuncio, Ambrogio Achille Ratti, who later became Pope Pius XI.

The mood of pessimism was heightened by information reaching the capital about the Bolsheviks' successes. In the great Red Army offensive begun on 4 July, Tukhachevsky's troops were breaking through further Polish defensive positions. On 14 July they took Wilno, on 23 July Grodno, and on 28 July Białystok. It was there, on 30 July, that a Provisional Polish Revolutionary Committee was set up, headed by Julian Marchlewski, Feliks Dzierżyński (Felix Dzerzhinsky) and Feliks Kon. The Committee was to have been the embryonic future government of the Polish Soviet Republic.

www.warsawtour.pl

Warsaw Tourist Information Centres

- Palace of Culture and Science (entrance from ul. Emilii Plater)
- Rynek Starego Miasta (Old Town Market Square) 19/21/21a
- Chopin Airport, terminal A, entrance 2

MOBILISATION IN POLAND

On 1 July the State Defence Council was appointed, which was to make decisions on all matters concerning the war. Those representatives of government, parliament and the more important political parties who were on the council regarded voluntary enlistment to the army as one of the most crucial issues.



Poster propagating enlistment to the army

On 24 July Prime Minister Władysław Grabski stepped down after a month of government. The coalition government set up after his resignation, headed by Wincenty Witos and Ignacy Daszyński, appointed a Volunteer Army Inspectorate with General Józef Haller as commander. Voluntary enlistment to the army was announced.

GRABSKI'S DIPLOMATIC DEFEAT

On 10 July 1920 at a world powers conference in the Belgian town of Spa, Prime Minister Władysław Grabski, in exchange for a promise of mediation with the Bolsheviks, agreed to humiliating conditions for Poland. He agreed to withdraw Polish troops to the Curzon Line, to hand Wilno to Lithuania, and to disadvantageous decisions concerning the division of Cieszyn Silesia (Těšín Silesia), Orawa (Orava) and Spisz (Spiš) and control of Gdańsk. In exchange, he received a promise that a military and diplomatic mission would be sent to Warsaw, as well as supplies of ammunition from the West.

THE ATTITUDE OF CITIZENS

Citizens of Warsaw, understanding the gravity of the situation, strengthened the soldiers' ranks and declared themselves ready to engage in all other operations designed to repel the enemy. Public notices and posters appeared on the walls of the capital, urging people to join the Volunteer Army, and patriotic meetings and rallies were organised. The Polish Episcopate, with its fervent support of the civil and military authorities' operations, called for the country to be defended and masses to be said in churches for the fatherland.

Students were among the first to respond to the City Council's appeal to join the army voluntarily. On 7 July the Academic League for the Defence of the State was called into being at a meeting at the University of Warsaw, and a decision was made to suspend classes and join the army. Volunteers able to fight at the front were sent in groups to the training camp in Rembertów.

On 13 August Edgar Vincent d'Abernon, a British politician and diplomat and head of the Interallied Mission to Poland, wrote: *The absence of any panic among the broad masses of the population is highly unusual. ... Warsaw has already been occupied so many times by foreign armies that the danger facing it today does not evoke, among the residents, any excitement or panic encountered in cities which have not yet experienced armed conquests by an enemy.*

Initiatives were also undertaken by the Polish Youth League, Warsaw units of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association, the "Sokół" (Falcon) Society and many other organisations. An expression of the commitment of Warsaw artists was the establishment of the Mobilisation Commission of Artistic and Literary Associations for the Defence of the State. Many artists, such as Stefan Żeromski, Kornel Makuszyński and Ludwik Solski, were referred to the unit responsible for propaganda.

On 8 July the representatives of 216 social organisations meeting in the Namiestnikowski (Presidential) Palace

appointed the State Defence Civic Executive Committee under the leadership of General Józef Haller.

In the first half of July the city authorities started to form the Civic Guard, which numbered 4,000 people at the end of the month. Its operations were focused on ensuring public order, care of the wounded and collecting gifts and donations for soldiers at the front.

The Warsaw Defence Council dealt with organising operations to defend the country. On 6 August General Franciszek Latinik, Warsaw's military governor, summoned the population to absolutely obey orders issued by the authorities, and on 10 August he declared a state of siege of the capital.

On 16 August the Polish counteroffensive from the Wieprz River began, which soon decided the outcome of the Battle of Warsaw.

Józef Piłsudski appreciated the attitude of the capital's residents. In May 1921, in a comment for the newspaper "Kurier Poranny", he expressed it in these words: *By its attitude, calmness and faith, Warsaw facilitated the soldier's task and helped in the victory. The battle for Warsaw, for the city, was the hardest thing, because it was the behaviour of the citizens which determined victory. And Warsaw rose to the occasion.*

MEMORIAL SITES

1 The former secondary school building in Praga

The building, currently housing School Complex No. 15 (ul. Jagiellońska 38), was erected in 1907 as the new seat of Praga Secondary School for boys. In 1915 the school was named after Władysław IV. Between June and August 1920 it housed an enlistment centre where the 1st Battalion of the 236th Volunteer Army Infantry Regiment was formed, which was later incorporated into the 36th Academic League Infantry Regiment. It is from here that units commanded by Second Lieutenant Stanisław Matarewicz with Father Ignacy Skorupka as chaplain departed for the victorious battle at Ossów.



Memorial plaque on school building

A plaque on the front of the building commemorates this event.

2 The symbol of the cannon at the University of Warsaw

4 March 1921 saw the return to Warsaw of the 36th Academic League Infantry Regiment composed of students from Warsaw institutes of higher education, which had been formed at the university in November 1918. This regiment fought at Lwów (Lviv) as well as on the outskirts



The cannon – the symbol of the students' fight

! THE HEROIC CHAPLAIN

Ignacy Jan Skorupka (1893-1920) was born in Warsaw into a working-class family with patriotic traditions (his mother was the daughter of an insurrectionist in the January Uprising). In 1916 he was ordained as a chaplain and in 1919 he began working in the Warsaw curia. He gained recognition as an able preacher who delivered fiery sermons, but above all he distinguished himself by his wonderful contact with young people. On 8 August, at his own request, he was appointed chaplain of the 236th Volunteer Army Infantry Regiment to provide spiritual support to young volunteers – pupils and students. He accompanied them to Ossów, where he was killed on 14 August.

Father Ignacy Skorupka came to symbolise the dedication and commitment of Poles fighting in the Battle of Warsaw. The myth of his heroic death was immortalised by, for example, Jerzy Kossak, in a painting showing the priest advancing towards the enemy in the front rank, cross in hand. The hero's body was brought back to Warsaw. On 17 August funeral ceremonies were held in the garrison church at Długa Street and subsequently at Powązkowski Cemetery, which turned into a great patriotic rally. General Józef Haller honoured the heroic chaplain with a posthumously awarded Class V Virtuti Militari Cross.

of Warsaw during the Polish-Bolshevik war. The cannon at the back of the university's Kazimierzowski Palace is a reminder of the students' heroism and bears a plaque with the following inscription: *The cannon – the symbol of the students' fight for independence in 1918-1920*

– returned to the academic community on 15 August 1990.

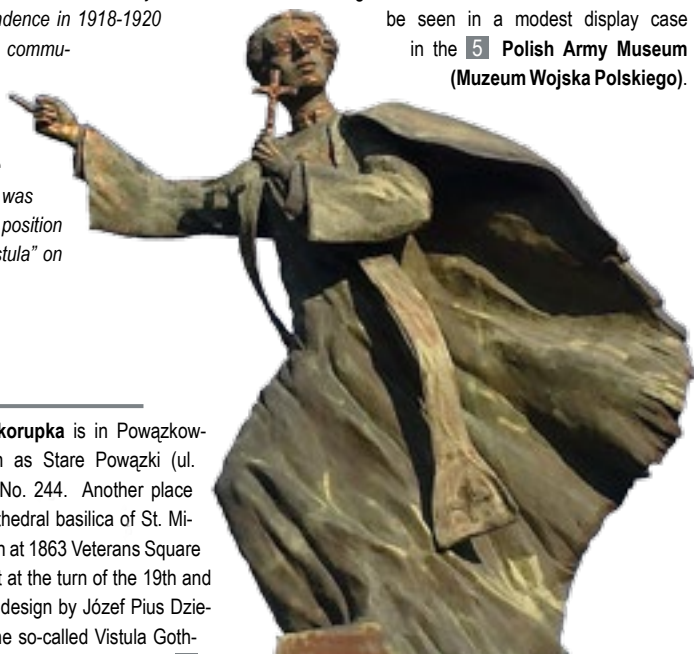
It alludes to the inter-war tradition when a similar cannon captured from the enemy by student soldiers was placed in an artillery firing position during the "Miracle on the Vistula" on 10 January 1921.

Places commemorating Father Ignacy Skorupka

3 The grave of Ignacy Skorupka is in Powązkowski Cemetery, usually known as Stare Powązki (ul. Powązkowska 1), in Section No. 244. Another place that merits attention is the cathedral basilica of St. Michael Archangel and St. Florian at 1863 Veterans Square (Plac Weteranów 1863r.), built at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries according to a design by Józef Pius Dziekoński in a style alluding to the so-called Vistula Gothic (gotyk nadwiślański). In front of the church is a **4** statue by Andrzej Renes, which was unveiled in August 2005. The sculpture, full of expression, shows Father

Skorupka holding a cross in his left hand and indicating the direction of attack with his right. Eloquent memorabilia to the heroic chaplain – his cross, stole, cap with an eagle on it and the Virtuti Militari Cross – can

be seen in a modest display case in the **5** Polish Army Museum (Muzeum Wojska Polskiego).



Memorial to Father Ignacy Skorupka at 1863 Veterans Square in Warsaw

6 Military Cemetery at Powązki

The cemetery (ul. Powązkowska 43-45), also known as Military Powązki (Powązki Wojskowe), came into being in 1912 for the tsar's military garrison. Its area increased and it was given a new shape after Poland regained independence. In 1921 Polish soldiers killed in World War I were buried here, as were those killed in the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1919-1920, and in 1929 the Polish Eaglets monument was erected in their memory (in Section B-11) in the form of a column crowned by a sculpture of an eagle and a cross. Reliefs on plaques at the foot of the monument present battle scenes. One of them immortalises Father Ignacy Skorupka, the other Józef Piłsudski. The



Polish Eaglets monument at Powązki Military Cemetery

base contains the inscription: *To Polish Eaglets killed in the defence of Warsaw during the Bolshevik incursion in 1920. Grateful compatriots.*

7 Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (pl. Piłsudskiego), unveiled in 1925, expresses the nation's homage to all who

! Polish Armed Forces Day, also known as Soldiers Day, was established to commemorate the battles fought in 1920. The date was not chosen at random – 15 August symbolises the victory in the Battle of Warsaw, because on that day the first Polish detachments crossed the Wieprz River in the region of Kock, thus beginning the successful counteroffensive. This holiday was also remembered during the Occupation and was officially celebrated after World War II until 1947, when the Communist authorities declared 12 October Polish Armed Forces Day. In 1990-1992 the Polish army's day was celebrated on the anniversary of adopting the Constitution of 3 May 1791. In 1992, by act of parliament, the holiday was restored to 15 August.

gave their lives for their country. The ashes of the first unknown soldier were brought here from the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lwów (also known as the Cemetery of Eaglets of Lwów) on 2 November 1925. The first tomb commemorated Polish soldiers fighting in World War I and in the Polish-Bolshevik war. Of the 35 battles mentioned on the memorial plaques, as many as 18 were fought precisely during this war. After World War II the plaques concerning 1920 were taken to the Polish Army Museum and were not returned to their former place until 1990. New tablets were also unveiled, commemorating the most important battles in Polish history.

8 Church of the Victorious Madonna in Kamionek

The church (ul. Grochowska 365) stands in the place where the oldest church in Praga stood until the 18th century, and later a cemetery chapel, which served as a parish church from 1917. On 13 August 1920 Father Ignacy Skorupka said mass here and heard the confessions of soldiers of the 236th Infantry Regiment.

The church, completed in 1931 – a votive offering by the capital's citizens for the victory in the Battle of Warsaw – was designed by Konstanty Jakimowicz in a modernist style with elements of Romanism.



Church in Kamionek



Plaque commemorating General Rozwadowski on the front of the church in Kamionek

The plaque on the church front commemorates General Tadeusz Jordan Rozwadowski, commander of the defence of Lwów in 1918-1919 and Chief of Staff during the Battle of Warsaw. On the main altar is a triptych by Bronisław Wiśniewski presenting the Victorious Madonna, to whom saints Andrzej Bobola and Stanisław Kostka (left wing) as well as papal nuncio Archbishop Achilles Ratti and Father Ignacy Skorupka (right wing) pay their homage of thanksgiving. Scenes from the battle at Radzymin can be seen in the background.

9 Church of Christ the King in Targówek

Built from the 1930s until 1953, the church – a votive offering for the “Miracle on the Vistula” – is at the same time a monument honouring those killed in defending the country. The architecture of the three-naved edifice, designed by Bronisław Colonna-Czosnowski, alludes to the mediaeval churches of Lombardy. The initial design also assumed the construction of a high belfry with plaques containing names of those killed in the Polish-Bolshevik war (ul. Tykocińska 27/35).

10 Church of the Victorious Madonna in Rembertów

The third of the votive churches commemorating the victory in the Battle of Warsaw is a neo-Baroque church built in 1928-1954 according to a design by Wiesław Kononowicz (ul. Grzybowa 1). In the chevet there is a painting depicting the Madonna surrounded by saintly patrons of Poland praying for victory in 1920. In front of the church, one's attention is drawn by a remarkable monument unveiled in 1996. It is made up of plaques, placed on plinths, with the names of commanders and heroes of the Polish-Bolshevik war; they are connected by a ledge with small plaques containing places and dates of battles in 1919-1920.

11 “Miracle on the Vistula” monument in Bródno

This monument, funded by residents of Nowe Bródno and unveiled on 15 August 1925, is composed of a steel cross mounted on a base, as well as sandstone slabs (ul. Piotra Wysockiego 49).



Monument in front of the church in Rembertów commemorating the Polish-Bolshevik war

12 Museum of Independence (Muzeum Niepodległości)

The museum was opened in 1990, its main seat being Przebendowski/Radziwiłł Palace, where the Lenin Museum was located in 1955-1989. Here one can see the



1920 Polish and Soviet propaganda posters, from the collection of the Museum of Independence



GOSPEL FROM THE CITADEL

On 15 August, the day on which Polish forces retook Radzymin, Polish intelligence deciphered Mikhail Tukhachevsky's telegram to the 4th Army commanders. In it, the commander of the Northern Front called off the order to force the Vistula between Toruń and Płock, and instead ordered troops to turn back and attack General Sikorski's 5th Army fighting at Nasielsk. On 17 August, Poles deduced from a further intercepted dispatch that this order had not reached the Bolshevik army command. A diversionary tactic was decided on – for two days and nights Warsaw's radio station broadcast St. John's Gospel from the Citadel on the same wavelength that the Soviet radio station was broadcasting on. In the meantime Sikorski's troops were gaining the upper hand over the Bolshevik 3rd and 15th armies, and by the time the 4th Army had turned back it was already too late to reverse the outcome of the battle.

exhibition “*Polonia Restituta* – For independence and borders 1914-1921”, presenting events which led to Poland's rebirth in 1918 after the partitions. It also houses materials and exhibits concerning the first years of independence, among them those connected with the Polish-Bolshevik war.



www.muzeum-niepodleglosci.pl

Muzeum Niepodległości

Al. Solidarności 62

tel. +48 22 826 90 91





Part of Jerzy Kossak's painting "Miracle on the Vistula"



Mazovia 1920

During the Polish-Bolshevik war, Mazovia was the scene of intense fighting. The Battle of Warsaw which, despite its name, was fought at a distance from the capital – at times dozens and even hundreds of kilometres away – consisted of many dramatic war episodes: clashes, skirmishes, attacks and retreats, counterattacks and operations designed to defend occupied positions. The victory won determined the outcome of the war. Some historians believe it decided not only the fate of Poland, but also the whole of Europe. The following pages present the most important places connected with the Battle of Warsaw.

2 OSSÓW

On 14 August 1920 at Ossów a battle was fought which was regarded as one of the most important events of the Battle of Warsaw. Here, in a small village on the Wolomin Plain, about 20 kilometres from the centre of Warsaw, the Poles managed to halt the Bolsheviks' march on the capital.

On 13 August 1920 Soviet forces occupied the village of Leśniakowizna, thereby paving the way to Ossów. A considerable gap was created in the Polish line of defence, which the



Wayside chapels and crosses are a typical feature of the Mazovian landscape. They are religious monuments but at the same time memorials to history. They can be seen in places connected with the Battle of Warsaw, particularly in rural areas. They were put up by the local population in memory of the martyrdom suffered by the Poles, or in thanksgiving for victory over the Bolsheviks. An example is the little chapel in Nadiwie in the district of Jadów (see photo). In July 1920 the residents vacated the settlement, dreading Soviet cruelty. On their

return they built the chapel in gratitude for the victory. Proof that they had good reason to be afraid can be seen in the events taking place in nearby Rybienko Leśne, where members of the Bolshevik secret political police brutally murdered three civilians and four Polish Army soldiers from the 10th Infantry Division on 17 August 1920.





Tourist and History Information Centre in Ossów

Poles tried to fill with infantry battalions defending nearby Rembertów, but the Soviets could only be halted for a few hours. At dawn the next day, two Bolshevik regiments left Leśniakowizna for Ossów. Two Polish battalions were defending Ossów. With their threefold numerical superiority the Soviets pushed the Poles south towards Rembertów, and a further Polish battalion counterattacking from Ossów failed to stop the aggressors. Faced with a dramatic situation, the Polish command decided to send their last reserves into battle, composed of several companies of volunteers from Warsaw which had been organised just before the battle began. The soldiers, recruited mainly from secondary school pupils and scouts, lacked appropriate combat training.

The first two volunteer companies started fighting at 5.30 in the morning. During heavy fighting in Ossów, the village buildings kept changing hands. The Bolsheviks could not manage to exploit their advantage. Several times they pushed the defenders from their occupied positions,



Memorial to Father Ignacy Skorupka in Ossów

but the Poles immediately counter-attacked and regained them. During the fighting a bullet from a Bolshevik machine gun fatally wounded Father Ignacy Skorupka. At 10 am, with the defenders holding out in the last buildings in Ossów, the awaited assistance finally arrived. The 13th Infantry Regiment came to the rescue from Rembertów in the south. Lieutenant Jan Szewczyk, the commander of the regiment's leading battalion, carried out a daring attack on the Bolsheviks from a direction from which the Poles had not been expected – the Długa River. When the Polish detachments

approached the enemy line the Soviets fled to Ossów, but there they stood no chance of organising a defence under Polish artillery fire. As the Soviets left the village in a panic, Polish soldiers immediately pursued them, breaking their units apart. Scattering the Bolshevik regiments enabled the Poles to reconstruct the lines of defence in Leśniakowizna.

Symbolic crosses and monuments

In Ossów the Battle of Warsaw is commemorated by a cross indicating the place where Father Ignacy Skorupka died. In front of the primary school stands a statue of the heroic chaplain, and in Materewicza Street, near the cottage where his body was taken after the battle, is

an obelisk dedicated to him. A wooden cross in the same street shows the point to which the Bolsheviks got during the battle. Another cross – at the junction of the street and



Cross at the site where Father Ignacy Skorupka died

the road leading to the cemetery – commemorates the place where the bodies of those who had been killed were laid after the battle. There is a grave monument in Ossów in the form of an Orthodox cross, placed on the collective grave of Bolshevik soldiers who died in the fighting.



Chapel of the Victorious Madonna and monument to General Józef Haller

Military cemetery

The Cemetery of Those Killed in the Battle of Warsaw is a memorial site where about 50 soldiers were buried in nine graves (eight collective ones and a single one); many of them were not more than 18 years of age. Those who fought at Ossów are also commemorated in a monument dating from 1924 and the obelisk from 1929, containing the names of those killed and the inscription: *On 14 August 1920 we repelled the Bolshevik hordes on seven occasions and were killed here, at the gateway to the capital; but the enemy retreated...* A statue of Józef Haller stands by the entrance to the cemetery.

Chapel of the Victorious Madonna

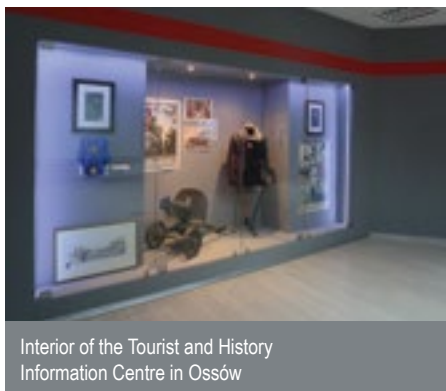
Right by the cemetery, in a chapel built in 1928 after a design by Brunon Zborowski, a copy of Jerzy Kossak's painting "Miracle on the Vistula" is worth seeing, depicting the fighting in Ossów. The centre of the painting shows Ignacy Skorupka spurring the soldiers on to fight. The hero's final moments are also presented in a fresco by Manuela Kornacka. The events in 1920 are recalled in letters, photographs and short biographies of those taking part in the Battle of Warsaw displayed on the chapel walls, as well as on plaques, at the frontage of the chapel, in honour of soldiers killed in the battle and Ignacy Skorupka.



Propaganda poster exhibited in Ossów

Tourist and History

Information Centre An excursion tracing the Battle of Warsaw in the vicinity of Ossów can be rounded off with a visit to the Tourist and History Information Centre run by the Local Government Cultural Institution "Ossów Culture Park – Gateway to the Battle of Warsaw 1920". The centre is housed in a small pavilion where archive material devoted to the Battle of Warsaw and the Polish-Bolshevik war is presented using multimedia. Visitors have touch-screens, an interactive kiosk, a virtual presenter, listening



Interior of the Tourist and History Information Centre in Ossów

cabins with recordings of eye-witness accounts and other interesting audio archive material at their disposal. A 40-minute documentary film called "Victory 1920" enjoys great interest, with its contributions by authorities on history, personalities from the world of film and members of Father Ignacy Skorupka's family. The film is made even more attractive by shots of battle sequences performed by reenactors. The centre also organises museum classes, lectures and conferences.



ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE

The events of 1920 are commemorated each year in Ossów. The historical reconstructions – a highly popular spectacle held on 15 August – are a regular feature of the programme.



www.ossow1920.pl

Local Government Cultural Institution "Ossów Culture Park – Gateway to the Battle of Warsaw 1920"

ul. Matarewicza 148
tel. +48 22 209 50 78

in the vicinity

KOBYŁKA

Holy Trinity Basilica in Kobylka

The church, built in 1736-1740 after a design by the Italian architect Guido Longhi, is one of the most valuable late Baroque monuments in Poland. Inside it, one's attention is drawn by the richly decorated presbytery, the monumental altar, the original baptismal font dating from the end of the 19th century and the organ. Of particular interest are the frescos adorning both the church interior and the external walls (Stations of the Cross).



Front of the Holy Trinity Basilica in Kobylka



ARMOURED TRAINS IN THE BATTLE OF WARSAW

Three trains played a part in the battle: the "Paderewski", the "Danuta" and the "Avenger" ("Mściciel"). They initially operated in the region of Wolomin, contributing to the victory at Ossów. On 17 August 1920 they were used during the counter-attack and the liberation of Mińsk Mazowiecki.

in the vicinity

ZIELONKA

Jerzy Hoffman's Cinema History Museum in Zielonka

Admirers of Henryk Sienkiewicz's "Trilogy" and Jerzy Hoffman's work will undoubtedly visit this museum. It is housed in a manor designed on the basis of descriptions of the Kurcewicz family seat in Rozłogi from the novel "With Fire and Sword" ("Ogniem i Mieczem"). Memorabilia from Hoffman's film sets are on view here, including costumes, props, weapons and photos. Also worthy of note are the exhibits connected with the film "Battle of Warsaw 1920".



Exhibition concerning the film "Battle of Warsaw 1920" in Zielonka Museum



www.hoteltrylogia.pl
ul. Poniatowskiego 46
tel. +48 22 771 82 24

! POLISH TROOP WEAPONRY DURING THE BATTLE OF WARSAW

The basis of the weapons used by the revived Polish Army in 1918 was what was taken over from the partitioning armies – German and Austro-Hungarian – as well as the arms brought to Poland by General Haller's units. Fairly substantial arms purchases were made in France in 1919.

The basic Polish infantry weapon in 1920 was the repeating rifle. The most usual kinds were German Mauser, Austrian Mannlicher and Russian Mosin rifles. Also in use were a lot of French Label-Berthier rifles, with which the Blue Army was armed. The most popular support weapon was the Maxim



machine gun, most of them coming from war-time conquests. Soldiers also had machine guns used by the Austro-Hungarian army and from French stocks.

A decisive role in defeating the Bolshevik Cavalry Army was played by Polish cavalry armed with rifles, swords and lances. It also had machine guns mounted on tachankas. Renault FT 1917 tanks arriving with General Haller's Blue Army also added to the Polish Army's weaponry. Poland had 120 of these light tanks, which made it the world's fourth biggest armoured force. Also in use were Ford T-c and Russian Jeffery-Poplavko armoured cars, and British Austins. The basic artillery weapon was the French Schneider field gun. 100-millimetre field howitzers were also found in the Polish Army's inventory. The Polish Army made use of German, French and British mortars. Obviously these are not all the kinds and types of weapons used by the Polish Army. However, it must be stressed that as a result of the enormous variety of equipment, ensuring that troops were efficiently supplied with ammunition and spare parts was a veritable challenge.



3 RADZYMIN Battle of Radzymin

On 13 August, Bolshevik divisions grouped near Radzymin attacked the town. The Poles managed to repel the first assault, but during a further one carried out the same day the Soviets broke through the first Polish line of defence and captured the town. On 14 August, after a daring attack, Polish forces retook Radzymin, but this success was only short-lived. The Bolsheviks broke through the second line of defence and again seized the town. The road to the capital therefore lay open to them. Only 15 kilometres separated the Soviets from the bridge on the Vistula. On the morning of 15 August a further counter-offensive by Polish units got underway, and in the evening, after heavy fighting, Radzymin was liberated.

On 16 August Polish divisions broke through the Soviet positions in an assault in the region of Radzymin. The battle came to an end, and after the victory in Radzymin a ceremony was held during which General Józef Haller, commander of the Northern Front, decorated the soldiers for their outstanding combat action.

Polish Soldiers 1920 Cemetery

The military cemetery two kilometres from the centre of the town is one of the most important memorial sites of the 1920 war. Soldiers who met their death at Radzymin, Nieporęt and Mokre were laid to rest in four collective graves there. Memorial plaques in honour of those who fought for the town were set in the entrance gate. On both sides of the cemetery's main alley are sections containing the collective



Chapel at Polish Soldiers Cemetery in Radzymin

graves of unknown soldiers killed in August 1920. At the far end of the alley are two graves with the remains of the 28th, 29th and 30th Kaniv Rifle Regiment (Pułk Strzelców Kaniowskich).

The cemetery chapel on the right side of the alley houses a copy of the Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn (Matka Boża Ostrobramska) painting, memorial plaques in memory of the fallen, and urns containing earth from Katyń and Polish soldiers 1920 cemeteries in Grodno, Nowogródek

and Wolkowysk. The chapel façade is adorned by a fresco showing Polish soldiers on the attack, as well as a bust of John Paul II and a plaque with the Pope's words spoken during a visit to the cemetery in 1999.

Calvary Road of the Polish Nation

This name refers to a promenade joining the collegiate church of the Lord's Transfiguration in Radzymin to the Polish Soldiers 1920 Cemetery. It was built as an offering of thanksgiving for John Paul II's visit. The name was inspired by the words spoken by Polish Primate Stefan Wyszyński, who during the 500th anniversary celebrations of the parish of Radzymin called the Warsaw highway the Calvary Road of the Polish Nation. The Primate of the Millennium referred to the events of August 1920, when the Polish infantry regiments fanned out in line formation. Wounded soldiers were also transported along the highway to field hospitals. Replicas of Virtuti Militari crosses have been placed along the Calvary Road of the Polish Nation, commemorating soldiers of Polish Army regiments, the residents of Radzymin and outstanding commanders involved in the battle for Radzymin. At the end of the Calvary Road, on the site of the former narrow-gauge railway station, stands a memorial to the railway workers who aided the Poles fighting in the battle by taking soldiers to field hospitals in Pustelnik and Marki.



Grave of Kaniv Riflemen at the cemetery in Radzymin





Cross at Calvary Road of the Polish Nation in Radzymin



www.radzymin.pl



VISIT BY JOHN PAUL II

On 13 June 1999 John Paul II prayed at the Polish Soldiers 1920 Cemetery in Radzymin. He also met heroes of the Polish-Bolshevik war who were still alive, paid tribute to them and thanked them. To those gathered at the cemetery, he said: *You know that I was born in 1920, in May, when the Bolsheviks marched on Warsaw. That's why, since my birth,*

I have owed a great debt to those who undertook to fight the invader at that time and won, paying for it with their lives. Their mortal remains rest here, at this cemetery. I have come here in tremendous gratitude, as if paying the debt for what I received from them.



in the vicinity

ZAMOSTKI WÓLCZYŃSKIE Pogonowski's Manoeuvre

During the night of 14 and 15 August 1920, Bolshevik troops were a mere 15 kilometres from Warsaw. A gap was opened in the Polish divisions defending the capital. The 28th Kaniv Rifle Regiment was assigned to recapture Radzymin from the Soviets. In line with the order given to Stefan Pogonowski, the lieutenant commanding the regiment, the Bolsheviks were to be attacked on the morning of 15 August.



Obelisk in Zamostki Wólczyńskie

In the late evening, hearing shooting in the Polish defensive outposts, Pogonowski headed his battalion to move in the direction of the fighting and attacked Soviet forces on their way to Warsaw in the area of Wólka Radzyńska. This manoeuvre caused panic among the Bolsheviks, resulting in their retreat. Lieutenant Pogonowski died on the battlefield, leading his battalion in the attack. He was posthumously awarded the Virtuti Militari Cross and promoted to the rank of captain. An obelisk was erected at the site of the battle, between Wólka Radzyńska and Zamostki Wólczyńskie, to commemorate his bravery.



Modlin Fortress, granary

4 MODLIN FORTRESS

Modlin Fortress, one of the biggest and best preserved fortresses in Poland, stands at the mouth of the Narew to the Vistula. The strategic advantages of this place were already appreciated by King Charles X Gustav, who set up a fortified camp here in 1656 during the Swedish Deluge. In 1806 Napoleon Bonaparte ordered the citadel to be built, which was modernised and extended several times during the 19th century. Polish (Duchy of Warsaw, Kingdom of Poland, Polish Republic), French, Saxon, Württembergian, Russian and German garrisons were all stationed

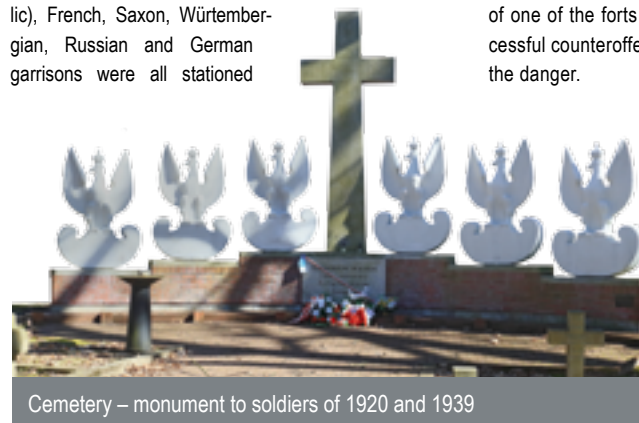
here. The fortress was defended four times: in 1813, 1831, 1915 and 1939. Nowadays this unique fortification monument offers tourists a visit of interest, whether with a guide or individually.

During the Battle of Warsaw the fortress was an important defensive point for the 5th Army. At that time, Modlin was a support and supply base for the soldiers. At the beginning of August 1920, the Volunteer Division was formed in the fortress.

On 13 and 14 August it was the scene of intense fighting, particularly in the area of the "Goslawice" fort group, where the Bolsheviks managed to take control of one of the forts for a dozen or so hours, but a successful counteroffensive begun near Borkowo removed the danger.

Military cemetery in Modlin Fortress

The fortress cemetery, established in 1915 on the site of the Modlin stronghold, contains a section where Polish soldiers, killed in August 1920 on the battlefield or after succumbing to their wounds, were laid to rest.



Cemetery – monument to soldiers of 1920 and 1939



The Vistula Flotilla

On 28 November 1918 Józef Piłsudski ordered a Polish Navy to be set up, which was the beginnings of the Polish Military Navy. Its main base – until access to the sea was regained in February 1920 – was the port in Modlin. During the defence of Płock in August 1920, vessels of the Vistula Flotilla – the “Minister”, the “Stefan Batory”, the “Wawel” and several motor boats – came to the aid of the 80-strong military police unit and 300 volunteers of the Civic Guard defending the bridge.

In the flotilla's main base at the Modlin stronghold there is a memorial plaque with the inscription: *In commemoration of the first river port of the Second Republic and the Vistula flotilla established here on 23 December 1918, whose marines in August 1920 defended the crossings on the Vistula and the Bug-Narew on ships equipped at the Modlin shipyard and transported the wounded in the hospital ship the “Łokietek”. In memory of marines of the M.W. Vistula river flotilla unit, whose ships were based in Modlin.*

www.twierdzamodlin.pl

www.3rzeki.pl

Tourist Information Centre

ul. Baški Murmańskiej 164

tel. +48 22 713 32 79

5 ZAKROCZYM

Fort I, built in 1883-1888 to the north of Zakroczym and an element of the internal ring of forts at Modlin Fortress, was an important point in the defensive system during the Battle of Warsaw. The town itself played a crucial part in the regrouping of Polish forces during operations at the Wkra River. For example, troops of the 8th Infantry Brigade – the reserve of the 5th Army commanded by General Władysław Sikorski – were stationed there. Concentrated in Zakroczym, the 8th Infantry Brigade was to have been transported by bus to Płońsk in the event of a need to strengthen any stretch of defence. Because of its location, Zakroczym was also used by logistical, medical

and communications units. The Northern Front's medical support base was set up there. It consisted of two field hospitals numbered 503 and 108. During the Battle of Warsaw the future president of France, Charles de Gaulle, who served in a unit stationed in Modlin Fortress, lived in Zakroczym.

www.zakroczym.pl

CHARLES DE GAULLE – GREATEST FRENCHMAN OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Charles de Gaulle attended the military school in Saint-Cyr from 1910. After graduating from it he served in an infantry regiment. He was wounded three times during World War I and taken prisoner at Verdun in March 1916. Of interest is the fact that in the prisoner-of-war camp he was interned together with Russian officer Mikhail Tukhachevsky, future commander of the Soviet Western Front during the Polish-Bolshevik war.

In 1919 Captain de Gaulle found himself on Polish territory together with General Haller's army. As an instructor, he was a member of the French military mission in Poland until 1921. He lectured on tactical theory in the former school of the Imperial Guard in Rembertów. During the Polish-Bolshevik war in 1920 he was briefly conscripted to a Polish combat unit and promoted to the rank of major. He was awarded the Virtuti Militari Silver Cross for his actions during armed operations against the Bolsheviks. As a military theoretician he advocated using armoured weapons on a wide scale. During World War II he headed the French government in exile that carried on the fight against Nazi Germany, and after the war he was president of France in 1959-1969.



6 PŁOCK

Defence of the town



Mound containing earth from Plock barricades

The operational plans of the Bolshevik troops moving westwards assumed taking swift control of Plock and then emerging at the rear of the Polish forces near Warsaw. The assault on the town was to be carried out by Hayk Bzhishkyan's 3rd Cavalry Corps and the 3rd Rifle Division of the Bolshevik 4th Army.

The fighting began on 18 August 1920 at 2 pm. The Bolsheviks attacked almost simultaneously from two sides, occupying the north-western part of Plock. Chaos reigned among the defenders, and soldiers left the town in a panic. The "Red Bzhishkyan Cossacks", known for their cruelty, plundered houses and shops, murdered civilians, and also committed crimes on hospital patients and staff. In a situation where the Polish command was located on the left bank of the Vistula, it was the civilian population which took on the initiative to defend the town, together with loose groups of soldiers, police and gendarmes. 34



The Plock guardroom

barricades were put up, 12 of them with barbed wire entanglements; scouts provided communications between the fighting positions. Women organised medical points where the wounded could be tended.

At about 3 pm regular Polish troops from the Podhale Rifle Regiment came to their aid. On 19 August, after over 21 hours of uninterrupted fighting, Plock was liberated. On 10 April 1921 Chief of State Józef Piłsudski awarded the Cross of Valour (Krzyż Walecznych) to Plock. His words at the time were characteristic: *For displaying courage and strength of will in the difficult and extraordinary circumstances the town found itself in, for fortitude and valour – I appoint the town of Plock a Knight of the Cross of Valour.*

! THE GUARDROOM

The Plock guardroom is a Classicist building built in 1837 as a guardroom for Russian soldiers. The January Uprising began in Plock with a failed attempt to seize it in 1863. German units stationed there were disarmed in 1918. During the 1920 war, one of the barricades put up by the town's defenders was close to the guardroom. Nowadays it is the seat of the Plock branch of the Polish Tourist Country Lovers' Society (PTTK). A symbolic Tomb of the Unknown Soldier stands in front of it, and one of the plaques set in the building's façade commemorates those killed in August 1920.

Memorials to the battle

A mound of earth taken from the Plock barricades, built by the cathedral in Plock, commemorates the events of 1920. A place of symbolic significance is the grave of Antolek Gradowski, a 14-year-old scout killed in the fighting, in the cemetery at Kobylańskiego Street. A section containing the remains of the Plock defenders killed in 1920 is at the garrison cemetery. Inside the parish church is a plaque commemorating the heroes who defended Plock. One of the streets is named after Archbishop Antoni Julian Nowowiejski, who called for the residents to defend their town, and a statue of the archbishop stands in that street. At Defenders of Warsaw Square (plac Obrońców Warszawy,



Antolek Gradowski's grave

formerly plac Floriański), a monument to Józef Piłsudski was erected. It was in that square that the Marshal awarded the town the Cross of Valour.



www.turystykaplock.pl

Tourist Information Centre

ul. Stary Rynek 8, tel. +48 24 367 19 44

7 BORKOWO

During the Polish-Bolshevik war, Borkowo on the Wkra River was of great strategic importance to the Polish Northern Front. Breaking through the Polish defence at the river would have enabled the Bolsheviks to force the Vistula and attack Warsaw from the west.



SIBERIAN BRIGADE

The most important role in the battle at Borkowo was played by the Siberian Brigade made up of demobilised soldiers of General J. Haller's Blue Army arriving in the country, and volunteers. Colonel Kazimierz Rumsza was the brigade's commander. The volunteers, making up 75% and being mainly secondary school pupils and scouts, began fighting after a mere two weeks of training.

The Bolsheviks struck at Borkowo on 14 August 1920. Their forces were attacked by the Polish Siberian Brigade and detachments of the 9th and 18th Infantry Division as they prepared to cross the Wkra. Intense fighting continued until 15 August. The Soviets launched another eight attacks on the Zawady – Borkowo line, but were unable to cross the Wkra. On 16 August Polish units crossed over to the eastern bank of the river and began an offensive towards Nasielsk and Pultusk, forcing the enemy to retreat. The events of August 1920 are commemorated by a monument in the form of two rocks and a high metal cross. About 150 metres south of the monument, in a spot colloquially known as Old Bridge (Stary Most), are the remains of the bridge abutment that was the focus of most of the fighting. Borkowo's greatest attraction are the historical reconstructions of episodes of the battle, organised each year on the first Saturday after 15 August.



Reconstruction of the battle at the Wkra River in Borkowo

in the vicinity

NASIELSK

One episode of the Battle of Warsaw was the fierce fight for Nasielsk by two infantry regiments of General Sikorski's 5th Army. The town was eventually liberated on 16 August. The Polish losses amounted to over 100 soldiers killed or



RAID ON CIECHANÓW

The Kalisz 203rd Lancer Regiment distinguished itself in a daring attack on Ciechanów, capturing the staff of the Soviet 4th Army and a radio station ensuring contact between the Bolsheviks and the front command in Mińsk. The Poles intercepted and deciphered an order for the 4th Army to turn back and strike at General Sikorski's troops fighting at Nasielsk. The Poles organised a lightning diversive operation which involved tuning Warsaw transmitters to the frequency of the radio station in Mińsk and effectively jamming the information it was broadcasting. As a result, the order to change the direction of the assault did not reach the Soviet unit commanders, and the Soviet army continued to carry out the old orders, thus basically failing to take part in the battle for Warsaw.

wounded. Commemorating those events is the collective grave at the parish cemetery. It was the final resting place for 60 people killed fighting the Bolsheviks.

in the vicinity

CIEKSYN

At the cemetery in Cieksyn is a grave where 85 unknown Polish soldiers killed during the battle at the Wkra on 14-15 August 1920 are buried.

in the vicinity

SARNOWA GÓRA

Sarnowa Góra is a small place south of Ciechanów. On 15-19 August 1920 a fierce battle was fought here between General Krajowski's Polish Operational Group and

the Bolsheviks. On 14 August, after an order by the commander of the Northern Front, the Polish 5th Army headed by General Sikorski attacked the Bolshevik 15th Army as it was preparing to cross the Wkra River. General Krajowski's troops were in a gap between the Bolshevik armies and, in a surprise move, launched an attack on the flank of the 15th Army. On 15th August the Cavalry Brigade, part of the 8th Group, took Ciechanów, scattering the command staff of the Bolshevik 4th Army stationed there (see frame). The battle at Sarnowa Góra lasted 4 days. Engaging the Bolsheviks enabled General Sikorski to launch an assault on Nasielsk and Pułtusk. The Poles lost over 900 soldiers. Soviet losses were never estimated.

The events at Sarnowa Góra are commemorated by a monument erected on the site of the battle, and by a plaque at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Warsaw.

8 SEROCK

Serock, near the first line of defence, was in the area of the defensive "Zegrze" stretch created by the 1st Army



Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Serock



Part of Stanisław Bienias' painting "Miracle on the Vistula" from the church in Serock

made up of by the 7th Reserve Brigade, the 6th Border Rifle Regiment and artillery sub-units.

During the night of 11 and 12 August 1920 the Bolsheviks approached the town. Under artillery fire they failed to force the Narew, but despite this the Polish units withdrew to the planned line of defence running from Jadwisin through Wola Kiełpińska to Dębe and on to Modlin. On the morning of 13 August the Poles stopped Soviet cavalry patrols approaching from the direction of Serock. Further attacks on the Polish defensive positions also turned out to be ineffective.

On the morning of 15 August the Polish assault from the Wkra River began. On 17 August, during the 5th Army's counteroffensive, soldiers from the "Zegrze" group liberated Serock and pushed the Bolshevik army back in the direction of Wyszaków.

1920 memorabilia

In Serock a valuable late Gothic monument has survived – the Church of the Annunciation with its Baroque furnishings. A painting by Stanisław Witold Bienias depicting the "Miracle on the Vistula" can be seen inside the church.

In the parish cemetery is a collective grave of unknown Polish Army soldiers killed in 1920.



www.serock.pl

in the vicinity

ZEGRZE

Fortress and palace

At the end of the 19th century in Zegrze, situated near Serock, the Russian authorities decided to build a complex of fortifications to protect crossings over the Narew River and cover the outskirts of Modlin Fortress. Two reinforced concrete forts joined by a fort embankment were built: a western one (the "Big Fortification") and an eastern one (the "Little Fortification"), currently belonging to the military Communications and Information Technology Training Centre. Two complexes of barracks also formed part of the fortress – one within it and the other in Zagroby (present-day Zegrze Południowe). Supplementing the whole layout were the communications forts in Dębe and Benjaminów. There were also two bridges over the Narew which the Russians blew up in World War I.

The palace

Zegrze had belonged to the Krasieński family since the mid-17th century. In the first half of the 19th century Stanisław Kostka Krasieński built a neo-Renaissance palace together with a farm building. When they made the decision to build the Zegrze fortress, the Russian authorities bought part of the property and the palace was transformed into a summer residence for the governors of Warsaw. In 1959 the



Palace in Zegrze

building was handed over to the Polish Press Agency. One of the most modern sending-receiving centres collecting press information was created here. At the same time, the building had a training and recreational function. The palace currently houses a hotel and restaurant.



www.palac-zegrzynski.pl

ul. prof. J. Groszkowskiego 3, tel. +48 22 793 13 65

9 WYSZKÓW

Wyszków, situated on the Bug, played an important part during the preparations to defend Warsaw. The task of units grouped in the vicinity of Wyszków was to stop Bolshevik attacks at the Mława – Przasnysz – Wyszków

– Węgrów line. By delaying the Soviets' march on the capital, the Poles gained time to regroup their forces and prepare a counteroffensive. These operations were commanded by General Lucjan Żeligowski, in charge of soldiers of the 10th Infantry Division, the 2nd Lithuanian-Belarusian Division, the 24th, 35th and 201st Infantry Regiment, the 10th Field Artillery Regiment and the 13th Lancer Regiment. This group was strengthened by the 4th Legions Brigade which had at its disposal the "Avenger" armoured train, four tanks and support by aircraft of Wing Commander Kiežun's 10th Squadron. All in all, about 10,000 soldiers were grouped near Wyszków.

At the beginning of August 1920 heavy fighting took place in the White Wilderness (Puszcza Biała) forest surrounding Wyszków, which forced the Red Army to halt and wait for reinforcements. When the Polish Army withdrew from Wyszków on 11 August following an army command order, the Bolsheviks entered the town. The residents experienced difficult days marked by murders of civilians and



Presbytery at St. Idzi's Church in Wyszków



AT THE WYSZKÓW PRESBYTERY

On 19 August, war correspondents visited the Wyszków presbytery, among them the novelist Stefan Żeromski, to whom Father Wiktor Mieczkowski gave an account of the Bolsheviks' stay in the town. A trace of the writer's visit to Wyszków can be found in his story "At The Presbytery In Wyszków": *Whoever led the eternal enemy to the homeland (no matter how sinful and bad it might have been), trod and trampled on it, plundered, burnt and pillaged it with the hands of foreign marauders, has lost his fatherland.* Several days earlier, on 15 August, members of the Provisional Polish Revolutionary Committee – Julian Marchlewski, Feliks Dzierżyński (Felix Dzerzhinsky)

and Feliks Kon – stopped off at the presbytery. From there they were intending to go to Warsaw, the taking of which the Bolsheviks regarded as a foregone conclusion. However, when the Red Army began to withdraw, the Polish Communists left in a hurry in the direction of Białystok. An anecdote is connected with this event. When Żeromski and his colleagues staying at the presbytery saw not only tea on the table but also a sugar bowl filled to the brim with sweet cubes, they were astonished, as sugar was practically unavailable at the time. So the curate whispered to them: *That's Mr Marchlewski's sugar, left behind in his hurry to get away...*

Polish soldiers, as well as by plundering and destruction of property. Fortunately their occupation did not last long – on 18 August, soldiers from the 31st Kaniv Rifle Regiment commanded by Captain Mikołaj Bołtuć liberated the town.

Memorabilia of the events of 1920

The old presbytery at St. Idzi's Church in Wyszków houses a collection of documents, photographs and other memorabilia connected with the Battle of Warsaw and the Polish-Bolshevik war, especially with the fighting in Wyszków and the surroundings. In the parish cemetery (ul. Białostocka) is a war section with the ashes of Polish

Army officers and soldiers killed in August 1920 near the town. Victims of the Bolshevik terror who were murdered in Rybienko Leśne were also buried here. An obelisk in the centre of the section, put up on the initiative of Father Wiktor Mieszkowski the parish priest, contains 8 names of soldiers and mentions 21 unknown victims.



www.turystyka.wyszkow.pl

Tourist Information Centre

ul. gen. J. Sowińskiego 80, tel. +48 29 743 02 34



Recalling the Bolshevik occupation of Wyszków, Father Wiktor Mieczkowski, parish priest at St. Idzi's, wrote:

The infantry arrived too, arousing pity, as most of them were barefooted or wearing the shabbiest shoes (...). The sight of this hungry and ragged horde pained the heart (...). The Bolshevik commissars I debated with in various circumstances were generally the usual swindlers and demoralised people one could often encounter in Russia. Only a tiny number of them knew Marx and could say anything specific about the Bolshevik idea. (...) I went out to the square to see the departing regiments. They were incomplete in number, counting

only a few hundred people, and were ragged or wore women's dress and hats. Not much artillery, but instead countless camps because, apart from their own, they drove the local population before them, which brought them ammunition under pressure. The clergyman also described the Soviet command's plans concerning a two-day pillage of Warsaw after taking it – this was supposed to spur the Bolsheviks on to continue fighting. The Red Army troops were even given maps of the capital with public utility institutions, businesses and shops marked, where costly items and other valuables would be found.



Haller Madonna altar in Mińsk Mazowiecki church

10 MIŃSK MAZOWIECKI

Liberation of the town

The liberation of Mińsk Mazowiecki, which occurred on 17 August, was a watershed in the Battle of Warsaw. It was made possible by Polish forces counterattacking from the Wieprz River side. The Polish commanders planned a strike against the Bolsheviks at the rear of their Western Front.

On 16 August the Strike Force, composed of units of the Central Front stationed at the Wieprz River between Dęblin and Lubartów, began the attack. Józef Piłsudski took command, placing the command post at the staff of the 14th Infantry Division attacking Mińsk Mazowiecki from the south. Polish divisions, exploiting their considerable superiority over the weak Bolshevik troops in this area, defeated them and threatened the rear of the Red Army fighting outside Warsaw. The Poles moved as much as 45 kilometres northwards in a 24-hour period.

At the same time, on 17 August, a second Strike Force headed by Colonel Stanisław Wrzaliński, attacked in the

direction of Mińsk. It was created by the 29th Infantry Brigade strengthened by Major Nowicki's Armoured Force, which had three armoured trains, five sections of tanks and 10 aircraft at its disposal. The assault began at about 9 am in the vicinity of Wesola. At about 6 pm two Polish armoured trains forced their way into the railway station in Mińsk Mazowiecki. The town was liberated.

Painting of the Haller Madonna

On 7 August 1920 General Józef Haller, who was visiting the stretch of the front in Mińsk Mazowiecki, entered the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (kościół pw. Narodzenia NMP). With his staff, he took part in the mass which was being said. After the service he prayed for victory for the Polish Army at a painting of the Angelic Madonna in an aisle. 10 days later the general again knelt before the sacral visage, giving thanks for the victory and requesting further success for the Polish Army. Also praying with him were the apostolic nuncio Achilles Ratti (the future Pope Pius XI) and Charles de Gaulle (the future president of France).



THE LUBLIN LANCERS

The 7th Lublin Lancer Regiment was formed in November 1918 in Lublin, being composed mainly of legionists of the 1st Belina-Prażmowski Lancer Regiment. The most important battle fought by the 7th Regiment during the Battle of Warsaw took place on 16 August at Cyczów, when a charge by the 1st squadron resulted in the opponent's dispersal.

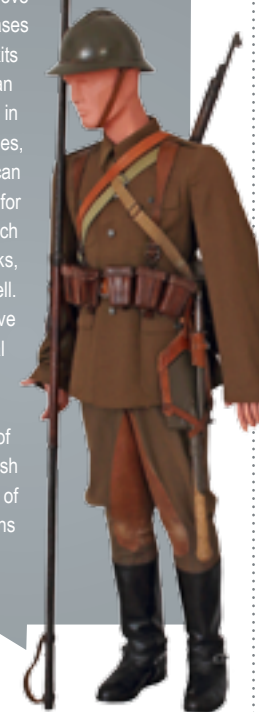
For its part in the Polish-Bolshevik war, the 7th Lublin Lancer Regiment was awarded the Class V Virtuti Militari War Order – this distinction was only granted to five regiments of the 40 cavalry units of the Second Polish Republic. The Lublin Lancers also fought during World War II.



POLISH ARMY UNIFORMS DURING THE BATTLE OF WARSAW

There were one million Polish soldiers in 1920. Providing them with uniforms was quite a problem. The Polish Army's revival began in 1918. Soldiers who had previously fought in the armies of the partitioning powers and allies formed part of it. Polish soldiers therefore wore uniforms of foreign armies, with their different rules and uniform designs, arms and soldiers' kit. In the first months after regaining independence, soldiers were ordered to remove all foreign markings, caps, buckles and belts. Only after some time did they get their first Polish uniforms in a greyish protective colour. They were still being designed in 1917. Two years later a new khaki uniform design was prepared. In 1920 a small quantity of them had been made and some soldiers wore them during the Battle of Warsaw. However, there was no time or money to manufacture Polish uniforms for a million soldiers in 1920. For that reason, uniforms from the armies of the partitioning powers and uniforms worn by General Haller's Polish soldiers arriving from France were still used to a

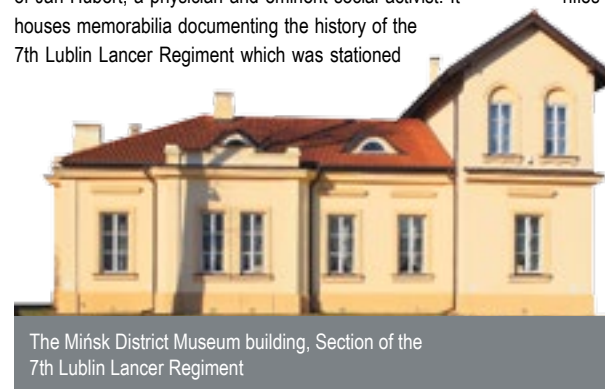
great extent. The spoils of war were also made use of. But above all, substantial uniform purchases were made abroad. American kits predominated, but British, Italian and Austrian ones were also in evidence. Khaki jackets, puttees, forage caps, coats and American demob underwear were worn for a long time. American gear such as bags, haversacks, horse tacks, spades and binoculars fared well. An attempt was made to give the uniforms purchased typical Polish distinguishing features. An example is the frequently observed change of collar cut of foreign army uniforms for a Polish collar cut, and the replacement of other countries' military buttons by Polish ones.



Mińsk District Museum (Muzeum Ziemi Mińskiej) Section of the 7th Lublin Lancer Regiment

The museum is located in a villa dating from the end of the 19th century which originally belonged to the family of Jan Hubert, a physician and eminent social activist. It houses memorabilia documenting the history of the 7th Lublin Lancer Regiment which was stationed

in Mińsk Mazowiecki in 1921-1939. The museum collections contain oil paintings, including portraits of the regiment's commanders, original documents, photographs, rifles and cold steel weapons, cavalry saddles, parts of uniforms and equipment, military decorations and many other interesting exhibits.



The Mińsk District Museum building, Section of the 7th Lublin Lancer Regiment



www.minsk-maz.pl
www.ulani-minskmaz.home.pl
Mińsk District Museum (Muzeum Ziemi Mińskiej) Section of the 7th Lublin Lancer Regiment
 ul. Sosnowskiego 4
 tel. +48 25 759 31 13



Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejów, Milusin Manor House

11 SULEJÓWEK

This place near Warsaw is associated primarily with Józef Piłsudski, who lived here for several years with his family, and after moving to Belweder Palace would return here to rest. Also connected with Sulejów were other personalities of the Second Republic: Ignacy Paderewski, Jędrzej Moraczewski, Stanisław Grabski and Maciej Rataj.

Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejów

The museum was established in 2008 by the Józef Piłsudski Family Foundation and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. A project is currently in the process of being organised and implemented which will involve opening a modern educational centre in 2017, with an exhibition devoted to Józef Piłsudski, his times and the values to which he subscribed. All this will be shown in a broad historical, social and cultural context. Milusin Manor House, where Józef Piłsudski lived with his family in 1923-1926, was a gift to the Marshal from legion officers. It was designed by the outstanding architect Kazimierz Skórewicz. The villa, with its colonnades and

porticos typical of manor house architecture, represents the so-called "national style". Inside it is a biographical museum with the permanent "What Does Milusin Remember?" exhibition. Due to work connected with the construction of a museum complex, the manor house is only open to visitors for a time.

Milusin is part of a historic group of villas in Sulejów's Historical Enclave, which also includes the Wooden House (Drewniak), where the Piłsudskis lived in 1921-1923, the Bzów Villa, and a spacious garden.

The Bzów Villa was built in about 1920. During the times when the Piłsudski family lived in Sulejów, it was a house for adjutants and a guard room where soldiers of the 7th Lublin Lancer Regiment were quartered,



Monument to Polish Marshal Józef Piłsudski in Sulejów

who had the function of protecting the Marshal. A new exhibition and educational building is to be built near it by 2017.

The Marshal's Monument

In 2010 a "family" statue of Józef Piłsudski was unveiled in Niepodległości Square near Milusin Villa. The sculpture, cast in bronze and placed on a navy-blue plinth, is the work of Karol Badyna; the author named it "History Lesson". The Marshal is leaning on a sabre while sitting in an armchair together, while on a bench his younger daughter is playing with a toy aircraft that symbolises her own fortunes – Jadwiga Piłsudska-Jaraczewska did a course in gliding before World War II. During that war she was one of three Polish women to serve in the United Kingdom's Air Transport Auxiliary as a ferry pilot. Beside the bench stands the Marshal's elder daughter, Wanda, with a doll in her arms.

Mound of the Joint Architects of Independent Poland

Near the statue is a mound topped by a rock with the following inscription etched into it: *Józef Piłsudski and the joint architects of Independent Poland: Jędrzej Moraczewski, Ignacy Paderewski, Stanisław Grabski, Maciej Rataj. They loved Sulejów. Grateful residents, 1918-1988.* It came into being on the initiative of the Society of Friends of Sulejów in 1988, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Poland's regaining independence.



www.sulejowek.pl
www.muzeumpilsudski.pl

Milusin Manor
ul. Oleandrów 5,
tel. +48 22 783 02 30



KASZTANKA

The extremely nervous Kasztanka hated artillery fire and did not acknowledge anyone apart from her master. There was a secret understanding between them, so perfect that both were aware of each other's moods and influenced each other mutually – that is how Piłsudski's wife Aleksandra described the Second Republic's most famous mare and the Marshal's favourite horse. Kasztanka had accompanied Piłsudski ever since 1914 and had gone the whole legion route with him. The horse did not take part in the Polish-Bolshevik war because of its age, and in 1922 was entrusted to the care of the 7th Lublin Lancer Regiment stationed in Mińsk Mazowiecki. It was frequently brought to Sulejów "on a visit", and also to the capital, where it accompanied its master at military parades – for the last time on 11 November 1927 during the Independence Day Holiday. That was when it posed for Wojciech Kossak for his famous portrait, completed in 1928, of "Piłsudski on Kasztanka" (excerpt opposite). Several days later, while being transported to Mińsk Mazowiecki, it was injured and died soon after. The mare's remains were buried in front of the 7th Lancer Regiment command building



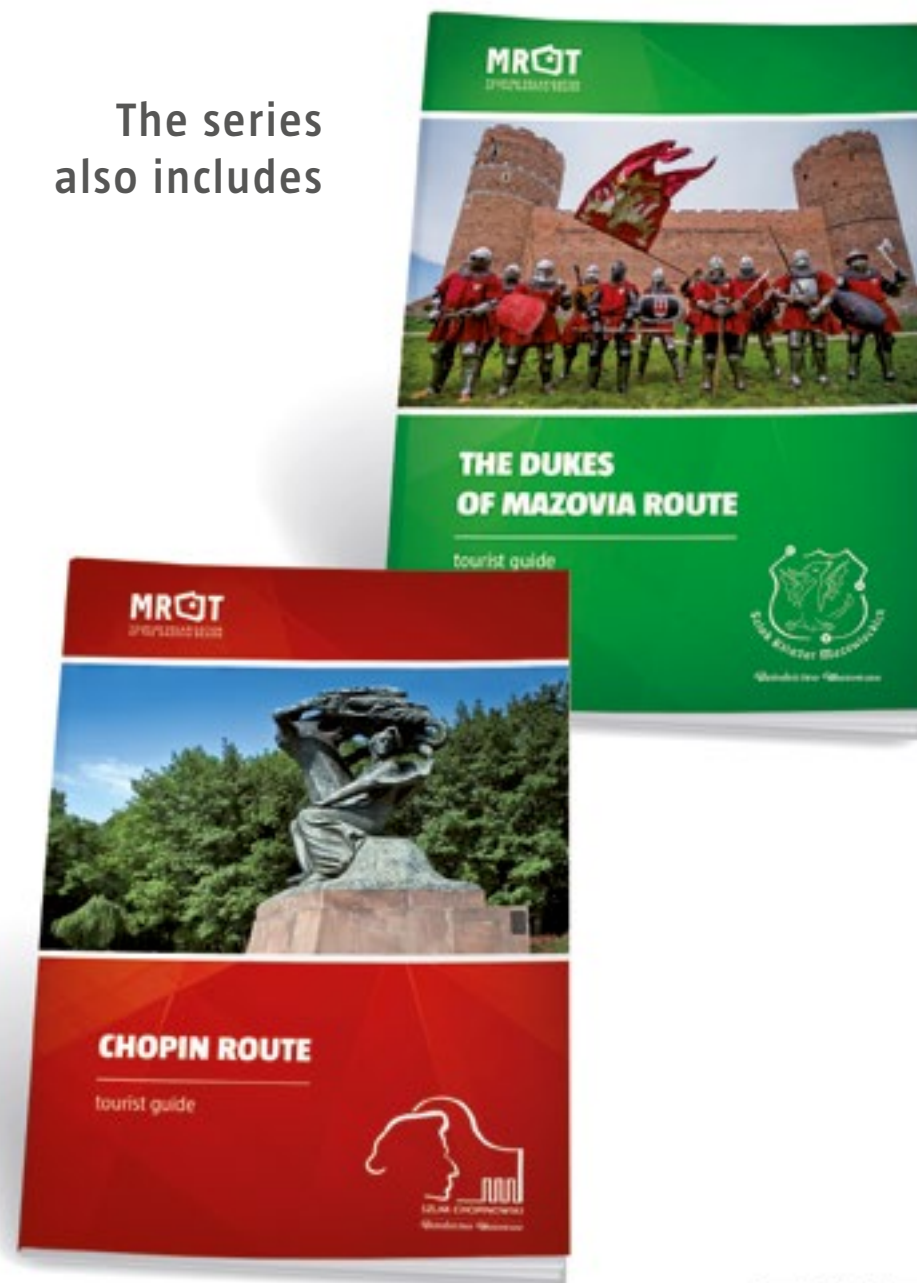
in Mińsk Mazowiecki, and its hide was removed and stuffed. Apparently this was done so badly that the stuffed animal hardly resembled the real Kasztanka. It was nevertheless taken to Belweder Palace, where it remained until the Marshal died. It was then transferred to the Polish Army Museum, where it suffered considerable damage during World War II. After the war it was reportedly found in the museum's storehouse by none other than Marshal Rola-Żymierski, a former legionary and Piłsudski's political opponent. He ordered Kasztanka's stuffed hide to be burnt.

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Author of guide:	Grzegorz Grabowski
Coordination:	Renata Konewicka
Assistant:	Adam Jasiński
Academic consultant:	Dr. Piotr Szlanta, University of Warsaw
Editing consultant:	Magdalena Walusiak
Photos:	Paweł Fabijański, Grzegorz Grabowski, Renata Konewicka, Katarzyna Sosnowska-Gizińska, Euro Pilot Sp. z o.o., Museum of Independence in Warsaw, Local Government Cultural Institution Ossów Culture Park – Gateway to the Battle of Warsaw 1920
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