

# Institute of National Remembrance

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## Anniversary of the internment of the 2nd Rifle Division in Switzerland - Warsaw, 19 June 2023





KWATERA ŻOŁNIERZY  
POLSKICH SIŁ ZBRÓJNYCH  
NA ZACHODZIE

Generalowi  
Henri Guisanowi  
1875-1960

Generalowi  
Bronisławowi  
Prugarowi-Ketlingowi  
1891-1948

Generalowi  
Henri Guisanowi  
1875-1960

Naczelnemu Wódzowi  
Armii Szwajcarskiej (1939-1946)  
Człowiekowi żołnierski polskości  
2. Dywizji Strzelców Pieszych,  
który po walkach i kapitulacji Francji  
zrealizował na górskiej ziemi Helweckiej,  
ochroniając żołnierską głowicę do wsi,  
przebiegając przez i wysiłki na rzecz  
grupowania i obronności Szwajcarii  
20.06.1940 - 15.12.1945

Z podziękowaniem  
w 75 rocznicę utworzenia  
żołnierskiej  
2. Dywizji Strzelców Pieszych

Generalowi  
Bronisławowi  
Prugarowi-Ketlingowi  
1891-1948

Dowódca Batalionu Armii Hallera - Francja 1918  
Szefowi Wydz. Operacyjnego IV Armii - Polska 1920  
Dowódca 11. Karpackiej Dywizji Piechoty - Polska 1939  
Dowódca 2. Dywizji Strzelców Pieszych  
Francja i Szwajcaria 11.11.1939 - 15.12.1945  
odznaczonemu

Złotym i Srebrnym Krzyżem Wirtuti Militari  
Krzyżem Komandorskim i Oficerskim Legii Honorowej  
Krzyżem Niepodległości  
Krzyżem Walecznych - dwukrotnie.

Człowiekowi o wielkim sercu i rozważnie  
Wybitnemu Wódzowi i Humanisto  
właściemu żołnierze







































On 19 June 2023, the Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance Prof. Karol Polejowski paid tribute to the soldiers of the 2nd Rifle Division at the Powązki Military Cemetery in Warsaw. The ceremony was held on the 83rd anniversary of the internment of the soldiers after they had crossed the French-Swiss border.

Participants gathered at the plaques commemorating Henri Guisan – the Commander-in-chief of the Swiss army during World War II, and Gen. Bronislaw Prugar-Ketling – the Commander of the 2nd Infantry Rifle Division. According to the inscription on Prugar-Ketling's plaque, he was a *man of great heart and prudence, an outstanding commander and humanist*. After the laying of wreaths and occasional speeches, a march was held to Gen. Prugar-Ketling's grave to honor his memory.

The event was organized by the Swiss Embassy in Poland. The

ceremony was attended by Swiss Ambassador to Poland Fabrice Filiez, military officers, veterans and representatives of military ordinaries of various denominations.

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The 2nd Rifle Division was part of the Polish Army recreated in France in 1940. The division gathered 15,830 soldiers and was commanded by General Bronisław Prugar-Ketling. From late December 1939 to May 1940, it was based in Parthenay in Eastern France. The division was in charge to hold the defense around Belfort in Alsace. Engaged in heavy fighting from June 17 to 19 near the Doubs and Saône rivers, it stopped a German attack on the Clos-du-Doubs hills. However due to the rapid retreat of the nearby French forces it was surrounded by the Germans. Nonetheless the Rifle Division managed to break through to Switzerland in 20–21 June 1940, where its soldiers were interned for the rest of the war, although many "escaped" back to France and eventually made their way to England to join the Polish Armed Forces in the West. According to Henri Guisan's defense plan, in case of a German invasion of Switzerland the 2nd Rifle Division would fight alongside the Swiss forces.

On 8 May 1945, the war in Europe came to an end. The 2nd Infantry Rifle Division was disbanded. Nearly half of the internees returned with their commander Gen. Prugar-Ketling to their homeland. The rest feared a return to Poland ruled by the communists. Many of the soldiers, having left Switzerland, ended up in France, Britain, Australia or the United States. About one thousand of them remained in

Switzerland.

[More about the Poles on the front lines of World War II](#)

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