

# Institute of National Remembrance

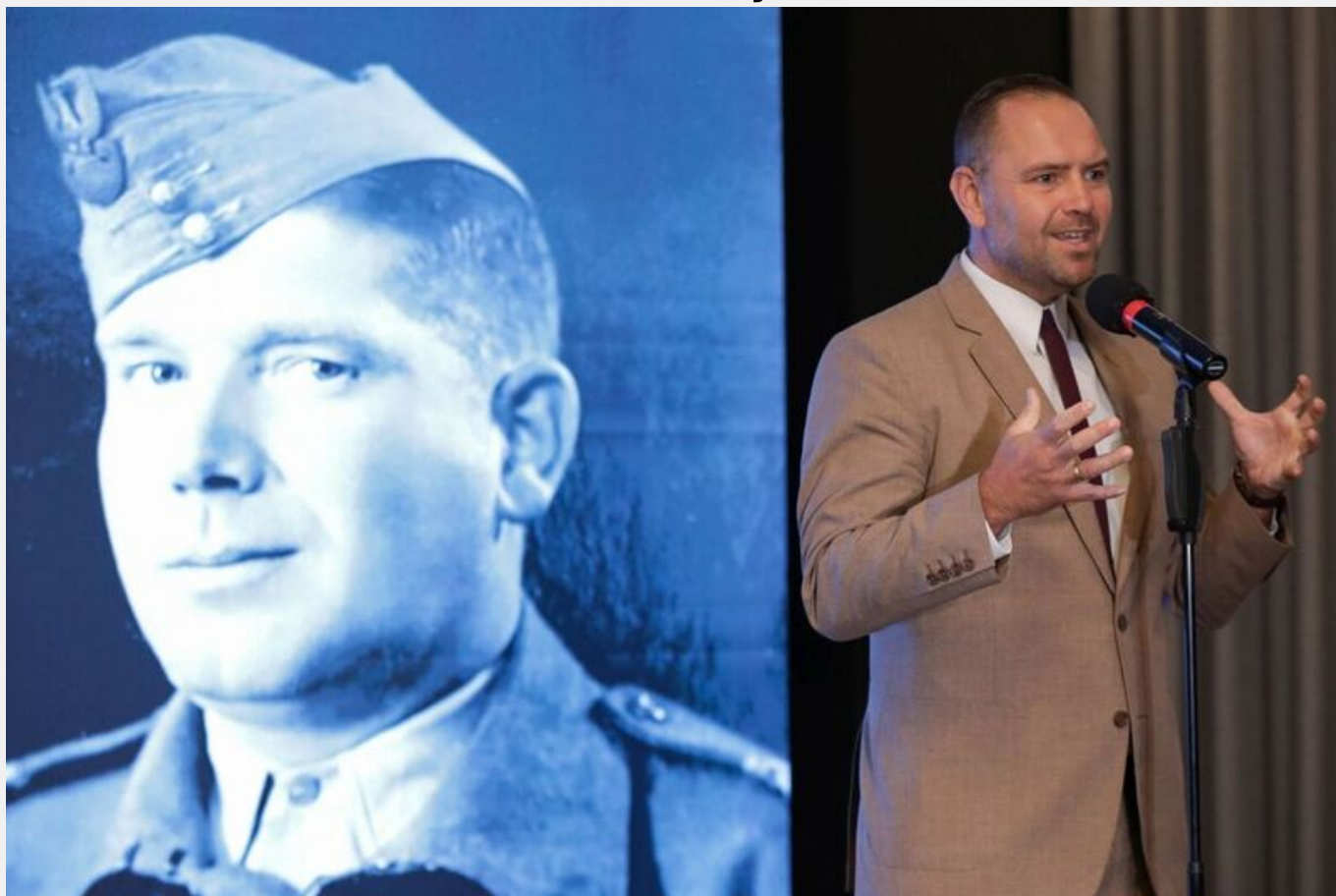
<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/10648,The-ID-tag-of-the-veteran-of-the-2nd-Polish-Corps-was-handed-over-to-the-family-.html>

02.05.2024, 20:25

20.07.2023

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The ID tag of the veteran of the 2nd Polish Corps was handed over to the family of the brave man









On 19 July 2023, at the Janusz Kurtyka Educational Center *History Point*

of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, in the presence of the IPN President Karol Nawrocki, Ph.D., a ceremony of returning the ID tag of a Polish veteran Franciszek Żbikowski to his relatives took place.


The story of finding the ID tag belonging to a Polish soldier is related to a social media post in Israel. On one of the search groups, Gan Erez announced that an item had been found that belonged to Polish soldier Franciszek Żbikowski, who served in Gen. Anders' army. The people who had found it wanted to give it back to Żbikowski's family.

After the inauguration of the *Trails of Hope, The Odyssey of Freedom* project by the IPN's President at the Menachem Begin Heritage Center on 6 June 2023, the Israeli Embassy's and the IPN joint efforts succeeded in contacting the soldier's niece.

During the ceremony, the IPN President Karol Nawrocki, Ph.D., recalled the figure of Franciszek Żbikowski:

*Our hero defended his homeland in 1939, and in the following years fought for a free, independent Poland in the Polish Armed Forces in the West. He had walked the long way through the then-British Mandate of Palestine, today's state of Israel,*

said the IPN President Karol Nawrocki, Ph.D.



The IPN President stressed that this ceremony is also an opportunity to remind us that Polish-Jewish relations – although often viewed only through the lens of the most tragic experience of World War II – go much further. The IPN President thanked the Israeli Ambassador to Poland His Excellency Yacov Livne and Gan Erez for the initiative.

In his speech, Yacov Livne mentioned Jewish soldiers fighting with the Allies against Nazi Germany: *many of them in the ranks of the Polish Army. Some of those who served under General Anders decided to stay in Palestine.*

The ceremony was organized by the IPN Office of International Cooperation, the IPN Spokesman Office, the Janusz Kurtyka Educational Center and the Embassy of Israel in Warsaw.

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Sergeant Major Franciszek Żbikowski (1903-1983) was born on 3 or 10 October 1903 in Warsaw. As a soldier of the Polish Armed Forces, he served in the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division, formed on the basis of the Carpathian Rifle Brigade that had been set up in Syria in 1940. The brigade was composed of Poles who, after the defensive war in September 1939, made their way to the Middle East, where they formed a Polish unit attached to the French Army of the Levant. After the defeat of France in June 1940, the Polish brigade was relocated to

Palestine under British command, fighting among other battles, in the defense of Tobruk. In 1942, the Polish units were regrouped, combining existing units of soldiers evacuated from the USSR under the Sikorski-Mayski agreement. In late 1943 and early 1944, the 3rd Division along with the 2nd Polish Corps, was transported to Italy. Franciszek Żbikowski fought in the Battle of Monte Cassino, as a member of the 9th Carpathian Rifle Battalion. For his participation in the battle, he was awarded the Monte Cassino Commemorative Cross No. 14594. Together with Polish soldiers, he took part in the battles on the Adriatic Sea.

In 1945, the 9th Carpathian Rifle Battalion was the first one to enter Bologna, which was liberated by the Poles. To commemorate this event, it was the name "Bologna" was given to the Battalion. Żbikowski was then promoted to the rank of Sergeant Major and received the Cross of Valor. By the end of the war he found himself in Bologna, from where he left for Great Britain. Since his wife Jadwiga and a daughter Zofia remained in Poland, he decided to return to Warsaw. He died in 1983 and was buried at the Bródno Cemetery in Warsaw.

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The Institute of National Remembrance developed the project Trails of Hope. The Odyssey of Freedom so that the memory of the soldiers of Anders' Army and of their contribution to the victory over Germany is not forgotten. In this way, the IPN wants to honor the military effort of the Polish Armed Forces and the fate of civilians evacuated from the USSR with General Anders' Army in 1942. This project is intended to

pay tribute to all the people deported to the camps in Siberia and Russia. It is also an opportunity to recall the memorial sites scattered throughout the world, from Asia via the Middle East, Africa, and Europe, to both the Americas.

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## Downloads

[The ceremony of returning MSG. Franciszek Żbikowski's ID tags to his relatives \(pptx, 19.87 MB\)](#)

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