

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/931,The-results-of-exhumation-works-of-the-Office-of-Search-and-Identification.html>

20.04.2024, 15:53

14.04.2017

The results of exhumation works of the Office of Search and Identification













The remains of 17 people, probably the victims of communist terror, were found during the second stage of work at the Bródno cemetery - said Prof. Krzysztof Szwagrzyk during his press conference.

Deputy President and Director of the IPN's Office of Search and Identification, informed the participants of the conference that from 2015, the remains of 24 people have been discovered on the lot of the Bródno cemetery, where the communists buried, among others, those killed at the prison on 11 Listopada Street in Warsaw. The remains which have been found were transported to the Wólka Węglowa cemetery and will be kept there until the time of genetic testing.

The work on the premises of lot 45N at the Bródno cemetery differed

considerably from the searches conducted in other places, for example on lot "Ł" of the Powązki Military cemetery. The communists buried the victims exceptionally shallowly - at a depth of merely 40-60 cm. In most cases the victims were also laid in single graves in contrast to lot "Ł" in Powązki, where scientists often found collective graves, located at a depth often exceeding two meters. An additional difficulty arose from the fact that in the 1980s, the communists covered the burial site with an additional layer of stones and rubble, to obliterate the traces of their crimes.

The remains found at the Bródno cemetery, similarly to the ones on lot "Ł", bear traces of the so-called Katyn method executions. The skulls of the victims have bullet marks. The attention of the specialists was also drawn to, among others, the type of shoes the victims were wearing. Some were buried in military boots; some were dressed in uniforms. - We suspect that some of the people found were not prisoners, but soldiers killed during battle. It would have been impossible for prisoners to be wearing uniforms - Prof. Szwagrzyk explained.

The investigators also came across certain personal effects belonging to the victims: medallions, toothbrushes and combs. One of the remains was found with a gorget portraying Our Lady of Czestochowa. After its restoration, it became apparent that the gorget had belonged to Bohdan Stanislaw Olszewski, a soldier of the National Armed Forces. The inscription on the back of the gorget revealed the name, surname and probable residence of the victim, as well as a Latin motto : " E viva NSZ. Sic transit gloria mundi " - "Long live the National Armed Forces.

Thus passes the glory of the world". Such situations occur very rarely - said the IPN's Deputy President - the victim left behind a unique trace". Bohdan Stanislaw Olszewski was executed in the "Toledo" prison on 18 May 1945.

IPN researchers plan to return to the Bródno cemetery as the remains of more victims of communist terror may lie, among others, beneath modern-day monuments. The starting date of further works is not yet known. In 2017, the search for victims of communism will also be conducted at the cemetery in Służew and in the area which was until recently a functioning prison on Rakowiecka Street, where the Museum of Accursed Soldiers and Political Prisoners of Poland is going to be located.

Next week, the specialists from the IPN are going to return to lot "Ł" of the Powązki Military cemetery. This time, they will be working in an area, which until recently, was inaccessible, because of the existing tombs from the 80s, which have since been moved to another part of the cemetery.

The IPN is still searching for the remains of about 100 inmates of the Mokotów prison, probably buried secretly in Powązki. Among them are: Rittmeister Witold Pilecki, Gen. August Emil Fieldorf "Nil" and Col. Łukasz Ciepliński "Pług". "It's not just a question of scientific research, it's a matter of utmost state importance" said Prof. Szwagrzyk, when speaking of the search for great Polish heroes of the 20th century.

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