

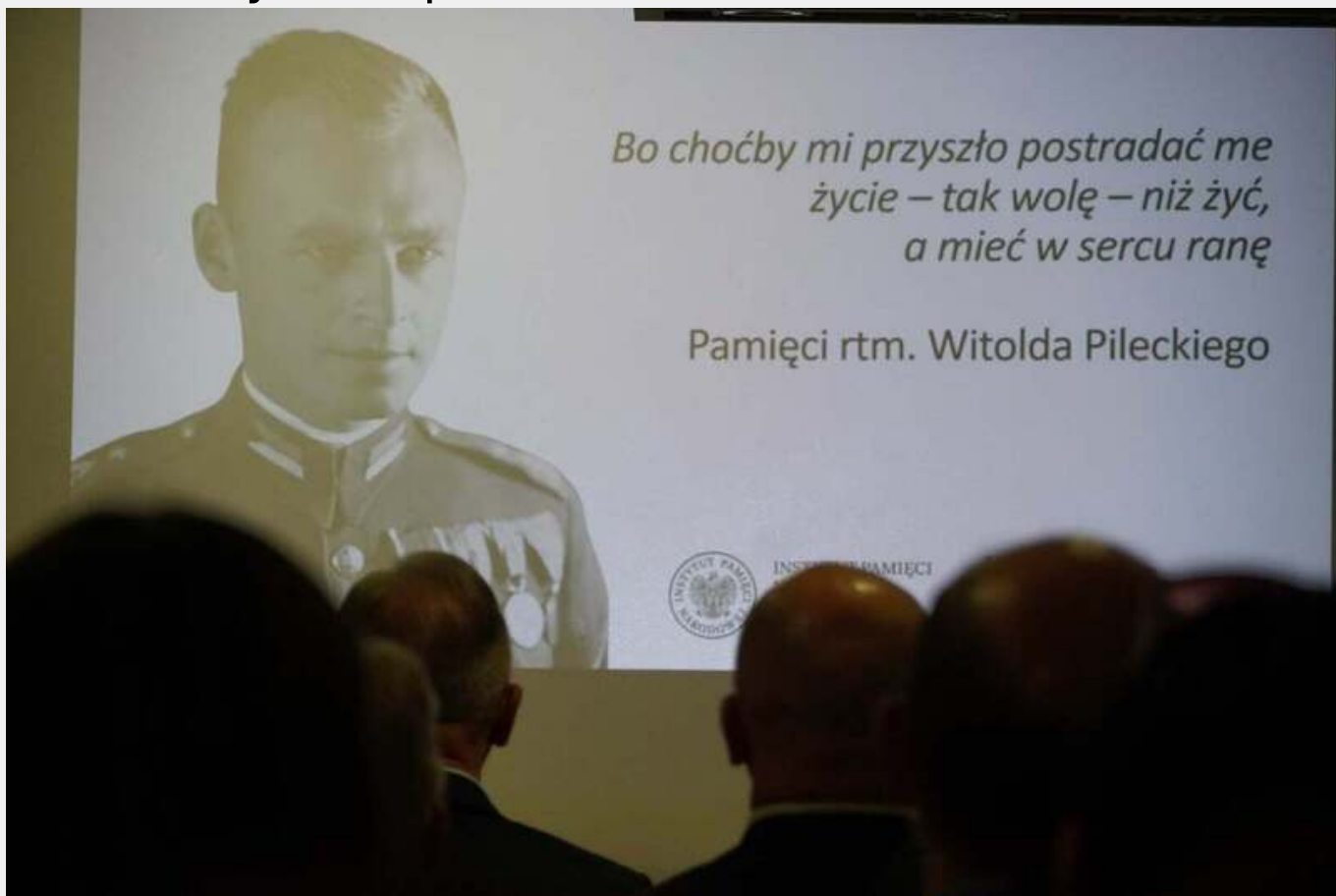
Institute of National Remembrance

<https://eng.ipn.gov.pl/en/news/12475,In-Memory-of-Captain-Witold-Pilecki.html>

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In Memory of Captain Witold Pilecki











On 24 May 2026, on the eve of the International Day of Heroes of the Fight against Totalitarianism, a ceremony dedicated to the memory of Captain Witold Pilecki — one of the greatest heroes in twentieth-century Polish history — was held in Głubczyce. Dr Karol Polejowski, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance attended the event.

The commemorations began with the laying of flowers at the Column of Freedom in Głubczyce, where tribute was paid to all those who fought for Poland's freedom and independence. Flowers were laid, among others, by a delegation from the Institute of National Remembrance.

During the ceremony held at the District Museum of the Prudnik Region, Dr Karol Polejowski presented the *Reipublicae Memoriae*

Meritum medals to Dr Barbara Piechaczek and Elżbieta Słodkowska. The medals are awarded in recognition of outstanding service to the preservation of the history of the Polish Nation and for supporting the activities of the Institute of National Remembrance.

“Poland’s national memory is what shapes us. We are the children of Polish history — a difficult history, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is for this very reason, fully aware of our history, we, the citizens of the Polish state, approach the task of safeguarding remembrance with the utmost care. We fulfill his mission, so that the memory of the past does not perish, but instead, is cultivated and passed down from generation to generation,” said Dr Karol Polejowski.

During the event, the participants recalled the life and legacy of Captain Witold Pilecki — a voluntary inmate of Auschwitz concentration camp, a soldier of the Polish Underground State, a participant in the Warsaw Uprising, and ultimately a victim of communist terror. The speakers emphasized his unwavering courage, his profound sense of duty towards the homeland, and his unconditional devotion to truth

and freedom.

The attendees also listened to a concert performed by the *Angelus Cantat* Choral School under the direction of Tadeusz Eckert, at the Adam Mickiewicz Secondary School in Głubczyce. The programme featured works inspired by Polish poetry and music.

The event concluded with a screening of the docudrama *Brzemię (The Burden)*, directed by Grzegorz Rosengarten and Piotr Owcarz, dedicated to the memory of Captain Witold Pilecki. The film presents the figure of Captain Pilecki both through the story of his life and underground activities, and through a contemporary search for traces of remembrance of him in the public sphere.

Witold Pilecki

Witold Pilecki began his service to Poland during the Bolshevik war of 1920. He fought during the September 1939 campaign, and then within the structures of the Polish Underground State. In 1940, entrusted with a mission by the Union of Armed Struggle command, he voluntarily let himself be arrested and deported to the KL Auschwitz German extermination camp in order to gather information and organize an underground conspiracy there. Threatened with the risk of exposure, he managed to escape from the hell of Auschwitz.

In 1944 he fought in the Warsaw Uprising. A year later he found himself in the 2nd Corps of the Polish Army in Italy, from where, by the

decision of General Władysław Anders, he returned to Poland which was already under communist rule. His mission was to reestablish the intelligence structures of the Polish Government-in-Exile destroyed after the war. Arrested in May 1947, he was taken to the detention center on Rakowiecka Street in Warsaw, where communist torturers subjected him to a cruel investigation. Despite torture, he remained steadfast and faithful to the motto: God, Honor and Fatherland. Sentenced to death in a show trial, he was murdered on 25 May 1948, at 9.30 p.m.

Throughout the People's Republic of Poland, all information about the achievements and fate of Captain Pilecki was subject to strict censorship. His burial place is still unknown. In 2006, Witold Pilecki was posthumously awarded the Order of the White Eagle, and in 2013, he was promoted to the rank of Colonel.

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