

# 1944 Rising

## WARSAW RISING

1 AUGUST – 2 OCTOBER 1944

1939

1940

1941

1942

1943

1944

1945

### CORE INFORMATION

27.09.1939  
19.01.1945

The uprising was the culmination of the actions of the Polish Underground State, whose constituent structures were formed after Poland's occupation by the Germans and Soviets in September 1939. The Underground State organized the country's resistance and its fight for a free Poland. It encompassed both military and civilian sections. Its military arm, established from 1942 by the underground Union of Armed Struggle (Pol. Związek Walki Zbrojnej, ZWZ), was known as the Home Army. The civilian section arranged aid for the victims of the German occupation (incl. Jews), organized underground educational and justice systems and laid foundations for the country's administration after the war.

### PRECEDING EVENTS

#### LAST DAYS OF JULY 1944

In July 1944, as the Soviets advanced towards German-occupied Warsaw, the Poles in the underground Home Army launched their fight for independence, believing the Red Army would offer military support. For the Home Army soldiers the insurrection demonstrated the Poles' aspirations to form a sovereign state after the war. Despite having fought the Germans alongside the Western Allies since 1941, the USSR's leader Joseph Stalin was not prepared to support the Poles, as he was planning to turn Poland into a communist state dependent on the Soviet Union. He therefore withheld military assistance to the insurgents.

### OUTCOME

2.10.1944

The uprising ended in the Poles' military defeat and failed to prevent the introduction of communist rule in Poland. Still, it instantly became both a symbol of the Poles' determination to gain independence and proof of the treacherous and inhuman attitude of the Soviets, who refused to help Poland's capital city as it perished. Today the uprising plays an important part in the collective consciousness of Poles as an example of defiance against the evil propagated by totalitarian regimes.



## ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING



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### HOME ARMY

(Pol. Armia Krajowa, AK)

The Underground State's military organization; it accounted for c. 90 per cent of the insurrectionary forces

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### NATIONAL ARMED FORCES

(Pol. Narodowe Siły Zbrojne, NSZ)

Right-wing military units

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### PEOPLE'S ARMY

(Pol. Armia Ludowa, AL)

Military force formed by Polish communists and allied with the Soviet Union



↑ Army courier Bożena Grabowska, *nom de guerre* 'Magda', outside apartment building at 7 Moniuszki Street, north Śródmieście, mid-August 1944. Insurgency posters on wall: 'One bullet, one German' by Henryk Chmielewski, 'Our road to freedom 1939–1944' and 'We are fighting for Unity, Freedom, Independence'. **Photograph by Eugeniusz Lokajski, nom de guerre 'Brok'. MPW-IN/407**

← Poster on wall in Śródmieście during Warsaw Rising: 'Call to Arms in the Home Army's ranks', 9 August 1944. **Photograph by Joachim Joachimczyk, nom de guerre 'Joachim'. MPW-IP/789**



# COURSE OF EVENTS

AUGUST 1944

SEPTEMBER 1944

OCTOBER 1944

## STAGE I (1–4 AUGUST)

**In the first days of the uprising the Poles took control of large tracts of the city, including the central districts of Śródmieście and the Old Town.**

In the first few days there was an explosion of euphoria and joy. After five years of humiliation, the Poles could at last raise their flag and sing the national anthem. They quickly started to organize their new state and its institutions. During the uprising there was a fledgling parliament, a postal service, a radio station and even a cinema. A daily newspaper was published, bringing the latest news from the uprising and from around the world, and also featuring debates on the shape of the future independent Poland.

## STAGE II (5 AUGUST – 2 SEPTEMBER)

**On 5 August the Germans launched a concentrated offensive on the city's western districts of Wola and Ochota, enacting Hitler's heinous order to wipe out the civilian population. In Wola they executed close to 40,000 civilians. After capturing both districts, fighting for the Old Town continued to 2 September.**

Wola and Ochota both fell to the Germans by 11 August. The fighting then shifted to the Old Town. After fierce battles that involved air support and heavy artillery the German forces took control of the Old Town on 2 September.

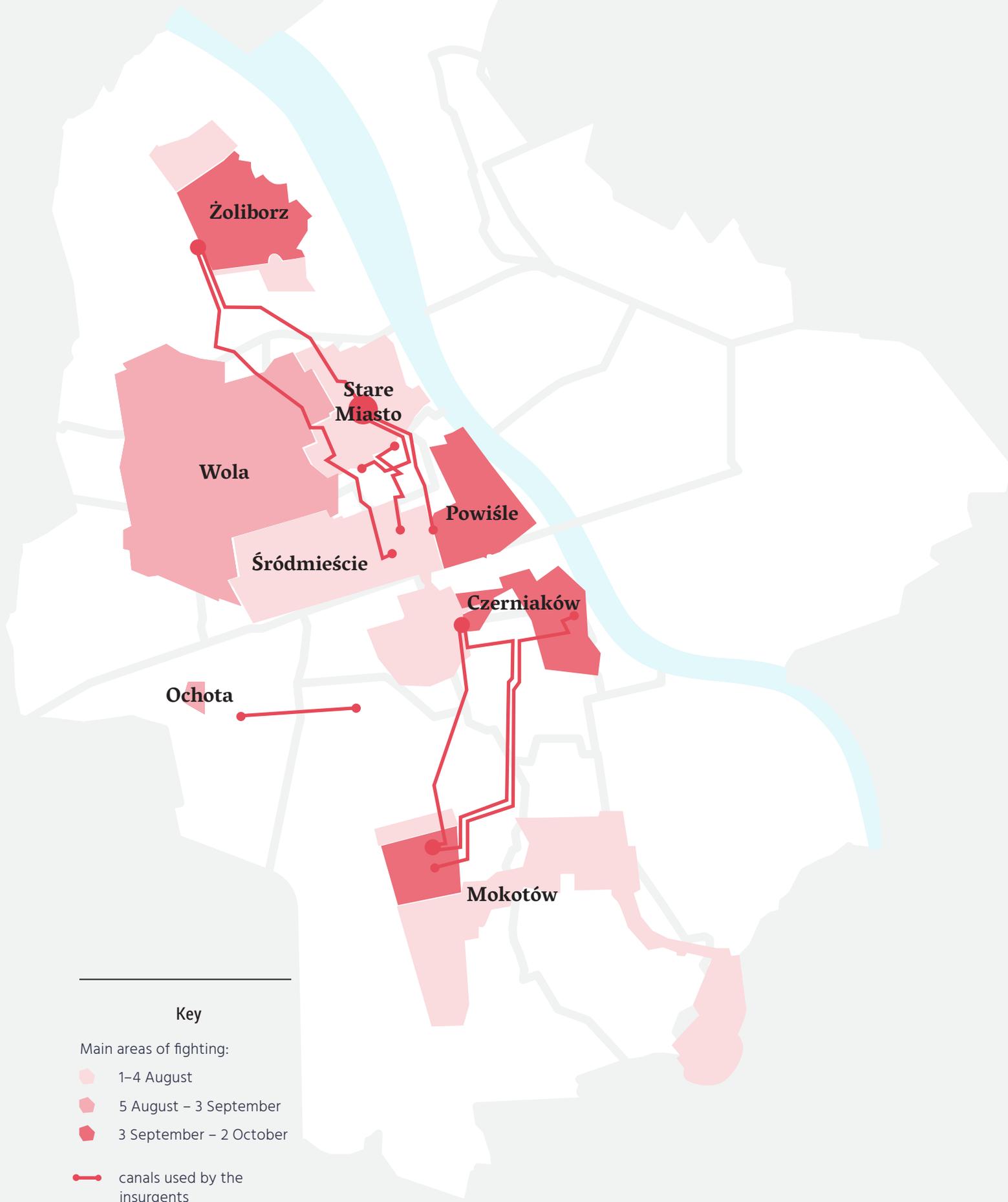
## STAGE III (3 SEPTEMBER – 2 OCTOBER)

**Having gained control of the Old Town, the Germans continued their main offensive along the riverside districts of Powiśle and Czerniaków. Between 10 and 14 September the Red Army occupied Warsaw's eastern district of Praga and the right bank of the Vistula, but offered no help to the insurgents.**

By the beginning of October the Polish fighters still controlled just a fragment of Śródmieście. At this point they decided to capitulate, negotiating the terms. Initially the German command wanted to push the insurgents away from the river, as they were expecting the Soviets to attack from the right bank. In the end, a few hundred soldiers from Polish units serving under Soviet command made it across to the left bank, but they were unable to change the final outcome of the uprising. After the fall of Czerniaków, the Germans suppressed the fighting both in the southern district of Mokotów (27 September) and in Żoliborz to the north (30 September).



# MAP OF WARSAW





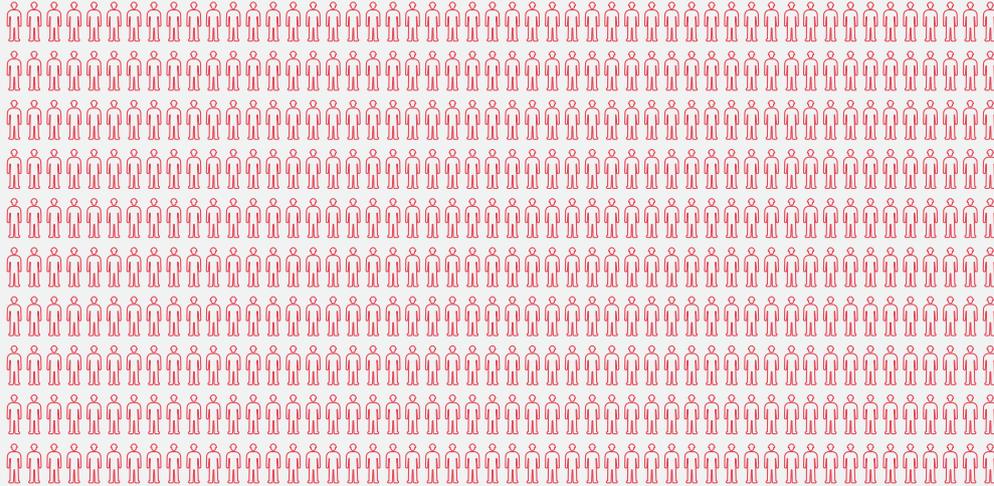
# FIGHTERS ENGAGED

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INSURGENTS

**c. 50,000**

 = 100 soldiers

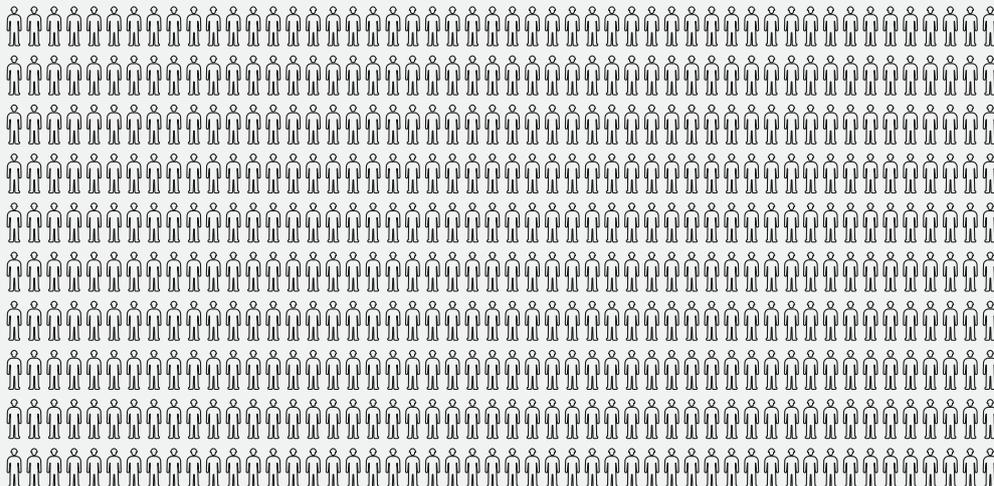


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GERMAN  
FORCES

**c. 50,000**  
well-armed

 = 100 soldiers





## WEAPONS EMPLOYED

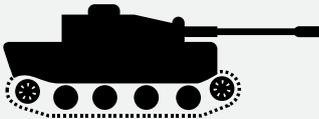
### GERMAN FORCES



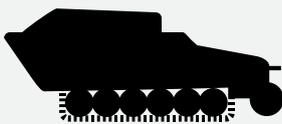
more than  
**400**  
light and heavy  
machine guns



more than  
**10,000**  
semi-automatic guns,  
rifles and pistols



more than  
**100**  
tanks



more than  
**120**  
armoured vehicles



more than  
**140**  
artillery guns



more than  
**200**  
aircraft and remote-  
controlled demolition  
vehicles

### INSURGENTS

**181**  
light and heavy  
machine guns



**5,754**  
semi-automatic  
guns, rifles, hand  
guns



**2**  
captured  
German tanks



**3**  
armoured  
vehicles



**1**  
captured  
German self-propelled  
assault gun



lack of own  
air support



# CASUALTIES AND LOSSES

 = 100 dead

 = 100 dead

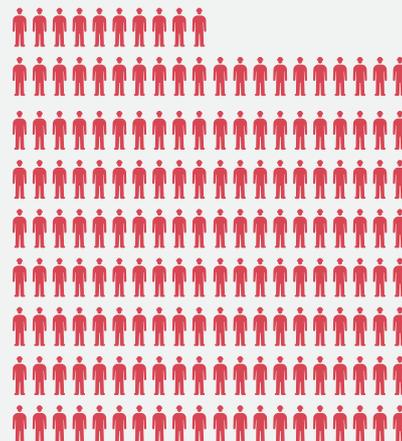
## CIVILIANS

**130,000–150,000** civilians



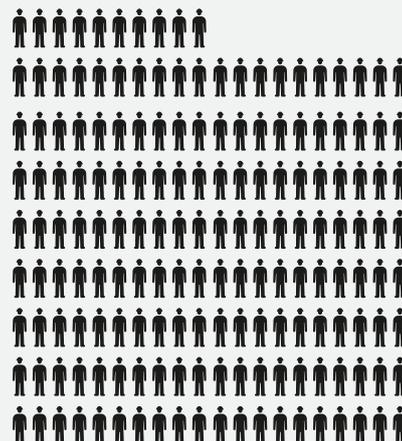
## INSURGENTS

incl. c. **17,000** soldiers dead



## GERMAN FORCES

incl. c. **17,000** soldiers dead and missing in combat





## KEY FIGURES

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**Gen. Tadeusz Komorowski, nom de guerre 'Bór'**

**(1895-1966)**

Home Army commander

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**Col. Antoni Chruściel,  
nom de guerre 'Monter'**

**(1895-1960)**

commander of the Warsaw Rising

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**Jan Stanisław Jankowski, nom de guerre 'Soból'**

**(1882-1953)**

delegate of the Polish government-in-exile  
in the rank of deputy prime minister,  
civilian leader of the uprising

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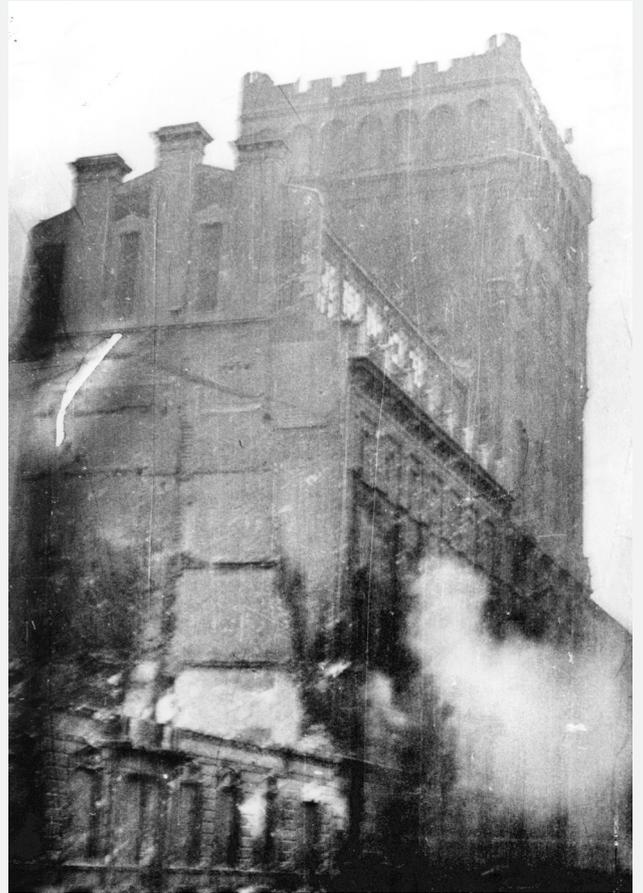
**Rotmistrz (cavalry captain)  
Witold Pilecki,  
nom de guerre 'Witold'**

**(1901-1948)**

one of the Warsaw Rising's most  
outstanding company commanders



## PHOTOGRAPHY



Burning PAST (telephone operator) buildings at 37/39 Zielna Street, 20 August 1944. **Photograph by Eugeniusz Lokajski, *nom de guerre* 'Brok'**. MPW-IN/551

<https://www.1944.pl/szukaj-zdjec,strona,1.html/szukaj/PAST#673>

Emerging from sewer in Warecka Street, north Śródmieście, 1 September 1944. **Photograph by Joachim Joachimczyk, *nom de guerre* 'Joachim'**. MPW-IH/4102

<https://www.1944.pl/fototeka/kanaly,64.html#7154>

Photograph taken during Warsaw Rising. View of roofs between Widok Street and Jerozolimskie Avenue, taken from building at 8 Widok Street, looking south, 24 August 1944. **Photograph by Joachim Joachimczyk, *nom de guerre* 'Joachim'**. MPW-IP/1208

<https://www.1944.pl/fototeka/warszawa-zniszczona,99.html#1706>



European Network  
Remembrance  
and Solidarity



Warsaw  
Rising  
Museum



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