

# Trails of Hope. The Odyssey of Freedom

<https://szlakinadziei.ipn.gov.pl/sne/about/9358,Project.html>  
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## Project

“Trails of Hope. The Odyssey of Freedom”

In connection with the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the journey of General Anders's army evacuated from the USSR, the Institute of National Remembrance prepared an international educational-memorative project entitled “Trails of Hope. The Odyssey of Freedom”, which aims to commemorate the military effort of the Polish Armed Forces during World War II and the fate of civilians evacuated from the USSR with the Anders Army.

During World War II we fought on all fronts in defense of dignity and freedom and in solidarity with other enslaved nations. We want to remember the heroic deeds of our airmen in the Battle of Britain, the forgotten Polish soldiers from Tobruk, Narvik or Monte Cassino.

The project is planned for the years 2022-2025, will cover more than 50 countries around the world and is an example of historical policy aimed at a difficult, demanding audience who know little or nothing about Polish history. Often they have a distorted and deformed image of Polish history due to different media.

The „Trails of Hope” should be understood as collective peregrinations of Polish citizens during World War II - of both military and civilian nature - which were motivated by the idea of restoring freedom to Poland and the world enslaved by the Third Reich and its allies, and related to the activities of the legal authorities of the Republic of Poland.

### Military Trails

#### I. The Anders Trail [1941 - 1945/7]

##### 1.1 Polish Army in the USSR [1941 - 1942]

##### 1.2 The Polish Armed Forces in the East [ 1942 -1944]

##### 1.3 The Polish II Corps [1943 - 1945/7]

#### II. The Polish Independent Carpathian Brigade [„African”] [1941-1942]

#### III. The Polish Independent Highland Brigade [„Norway”] [1940]

#### IV. „The French Trail” [1940]

#### V. The Polish 1st Armoured Division [1944 -1945/7]

#### VI. The 1st (Polish) Independent Parachute Brigade [„Arnhem”] [1944]

#### VII. The Navy and Merchant Marine Trail

#### VIII. The Polish Air Force

#### IX. „The Polish Silent Unseen”

## X. The Polish Military Intelligence

### Civilian and mixed trails

- interrupted by internment by e.g. Hungary, Romania,
- relocations, Africa, New Zealand
- emigration after 1945, USA, Canada and others
- the trail of the Polish authorities, i.e. the government of the Republic of Poland in exile.

The pretext for telling Polish history in so many countries around the world will be an exhibition consisting of two parts: a general one telling the odyssey of Poles during World War II and a local one. The synthetic form of the exhibition and the photographs coloured in consultation with historians are to encourage people to get to know our history. In each country, or even in a specific locality, a different local exhibition will be created, dedicated to the local community and presenting Polish local heroes. To this day, the people of Belgium and Holland commemorate the soldiers of the 1st Armoured Division. During the battle of Ypres, General Stanislaw Maczek issued an order forbidding artillery fire, thanks to which the civilian population of Belgium and Holland did not lose their lives and property. There are many more such local stories.

In 2025, we will celebrate the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and in November, the 100th anniversary of the unveiling of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Warsaw. On the column plaques of the Saxon Palace, all the places we will talk about in this project are mentioned. This is also a good moment to summarise it. The final presentation of the exhibition collecting all local parts will be presented in selected places in 2025. The multimedia form of the exhibition (in more than 30 language versions) will be available for years as a result of our long-term work. An extensive campaign in Polish and foreign media will accompany the entire project.

However, the exhibition is not everything, it is just the beginning. There will be a series of new publications, educational materials in various languages, a number of concerts, competitions, meetings and scientific conferences.

An important part of the project is the restoration of forgotten memorials located in different parts of the world, from Asia through the Middle East to sites, historic plaques and cemeteries in Europe, Africa and the Americas. We are planning to create new memorials in cooperation with local authorities. Together with the local communities, embassies, and the Polish diaspora, we will obtain forgotten materials on the soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces and civilians successfully evacuated from the Soviet Union in 1942.

The project is a part of a good, conscious and planned historical policy of the state. It is an answer to the negative narration of Polish history often used by many environments and media in Poland and abroad. It is based on facts and the undeniable role of the Polish Armed Forces in the fight against the Nazism during World War II.

