

Trails of Hope. The Odyssey of Freedom

<https://szlakinadziei.ipn.gov.pl/sne/exposures/places/9491,Buzuluk.html>
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BUZULUK

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RUSSIAN EMPRESS ANNA
ROMANOVA.

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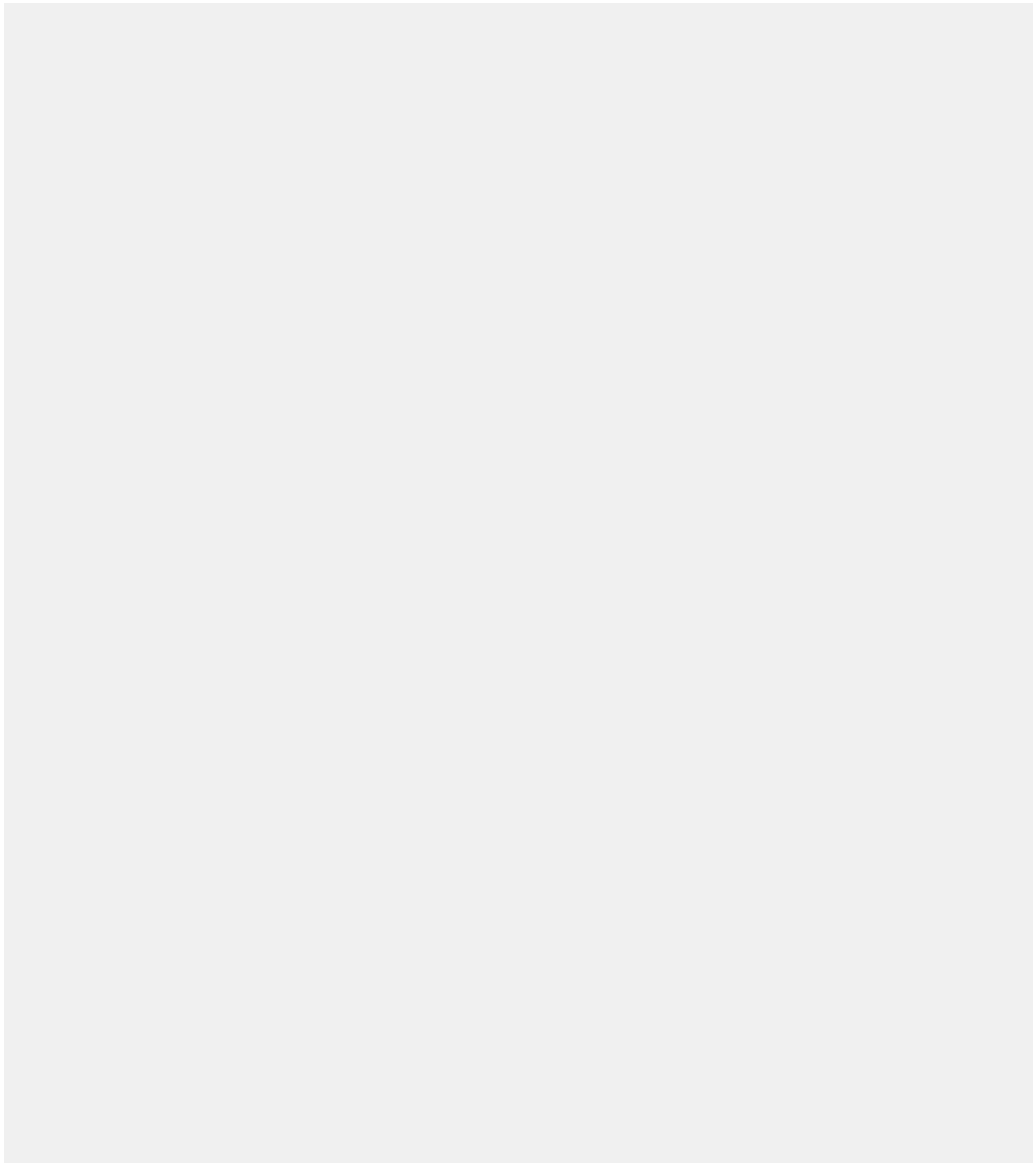
Buzuluk is a city founded in 1736 as one of the fortresses built by the Russian Empress Anna Romanova. The Buzuluksky fortress was granted town status by a decree of 1781 and became the center of the Buzuluksky District. After the Third Reich attacked the USSR, five enterprises and the archives of the People's Commissariat of Defense of the USSR were evacuated to Buzuluk. Buzuluk also became the site of formation and training of military units. The Red Army formed three divisions here, and the 1st Czechoslovak Independent Field Battalion named after Ludwik Swoboda was established here.

On August 22, 1941, the Soviet authorities, under the Sikorski-Majski pact, designated Buzuluk as the location of the headquarters of the Polish Army in the East. Anders' Army was to form its forces there, as well as in Tatishchevo, Totskoye, and Koltubanka. Poles freed from prisons, labor camps, or left to their fate somewhere in Siberia made their way to Buzuluk from all corners of the Soviet Union. Thousands of them died along the way from disease and exhaustion caused by debilitating treatment in the years 1939-1941. It should be added that Polish citizens died at these training centers even after reaching their destination.

Buzuluk became a substitute homeland for Poles - the Polish authorities operated here, and they could join the Polish Army. On 25 November 1941, the troops of the Polish Army in the USSR stationed in and around Buzuluk constituted a force of about 41,000 soldiers. To this number should be added several thousand civilians who gathered around the Polish camps.

The Soviet Union was not able to provide the Polish Army units with adequate equipment or a sufficient amount of food rations, therefore, on 18 March 1942, the evacuation of Polish units began. The Poles were transported to the Middle East, where the military units were equipped by the British army, and the civilian population was provided with social and medical care.

The graves of those who did not live to see the evacuation were left in Buzuluk and its surrounding areas. The Polish War Cemetery is located in G'uzor, where there are 697 graves. The cemetery was restored in 2001, its opening ceremony took place on 14 January 2007. Plaques commemorating the stay of Poles in these areas were unveiled in Buzuluk and Koltubanka.



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