



INSTYTUT
PAMIĘCI
NARODOWEJ

JÓZEF HALLER

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HEROES OF AN INDEPENDENT
POLAND



Józef Haller, Commander of the Second Brigade of the Polish Legions,
Commander of the Polish Army in France (National Digital Archives
[Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, hereafter: NAC])



JÓZEF HALLER

1873–1960

“A man of a decent height – on broad, masculine shoulders and a pale, haggard face, with bright eyes and a smile in which there is something soft, something so endearing that it immediately grabs one by the heart. Only in the eyebrows rests energy and a sense of purpose. One knows, that with one twitch, that whole face could be transformed. Looking into this face, you read from it the history of a man who loves, and when he has loved, he possessed the will – and when he willed, he would accomplish. And you understand that in this heart, that love breeds courage and action, and that action takes away all essence to such an extent that there is no more room for weak hatred.” This is how the future commander of the Blue Army [Błękitna Armia], Józef Haller, was described in 1916. These words aptly describe the General himself, who with outstanding commitment and dedication carried out the tasks set before him. Moreover, even greater determination could be found in his actions when it came to a cause he “loved” – which was regaining Poland’s independence.



Roots

About 30 kilometers south of Cracow, one can find the picturesquely situated Jurczyce manor house. Its history dates back to the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. Initially, it was a one-story wooden house surrounded by a beautiful park. Over the years, the manor was modernized and extended. In 1867, the estate was purchased by Henryk Haller de Hallenburg, father of Józef Haller – the future general.

Józef Haller was born on August 13, 1873. He was the third of seven children of Henryk Haller and his wife, Olga née Tretter. The history of the Haller family in the Lesser Poland Province [Małopolska] reaches back to the end of the 15th century. The first member of the Haller family to arrive in the Kingdom of Poland from Franconia was Jan Haller, a printer, bookseller, and publisher, who settled in Cracow. In 1793, Martin Haller received a title of nobility from Emperor Francis II, and from then on, the family name was Haller von Hallenburg.



Jurczyce Manor House, a drawing by Celina Dominikowska (The National Library [Biblioteka Narodowa, hereafter: BN])

Józef Haller was raised in a very patriotic and religious family. His closest relatives were involved in the Polish independence movement and participated, among others, in the January 1863 Uprising, and also took part in the political life of Galicia.

Young Józef was initially home-schooled, as was the case with many landowning families at that time. The father of the future general placed great emphasis on the study of geography and history. He prepared various instructions for his sons' teachers, in which he suggested using places in the vicinity of the manor house to explain natural, geographical, and historical topics.

His mother took care of his religious upbringing at home. She instilled in Joseph many values that later guided him throughout his life. He was not ashamed of his faith, and later some soldiers called him "the praying general." After Henryk Haller's death, his mother entrusted his sons to the care of his uncle, Field Marshal Karol de la Solly Malessot.

Józef Haller saw his future in the army. It did not differ from the plans his parents had for him. His father, a participant in the January 1863 Uprising, believed that the future cadres of the Polish army should be appropriately prepared by attending Austrian schools. However, to be admitted to appropriate institutions, one had to speak German very well and pass exams. Therefore in 1882, the family moved to Lwów (Lvov), where young Haller started to attend a grammar school with German as the language of instruction. A few years later, he enrolled in Austro-Hungarian military schools.

The first stage on the road to later military service was the Lower Secondary Realschule in Košice, followed by the Higher Secondary Realschule in Hranice, which focused entirely on the preparation of future members of the military corps, and finally the Technical Academy in Vienna – faculty of field artillery. After eight years of study, Józef Haller was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant. His first assignment was



Artillery Lieutenant Józef Haller 1894 (National Archive in Cracow [Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie, hereafter: AN Cracow])

to the 11th Artillery Regiment in Lwów (Lvov). During this time, he met Aleksandra Sala, whom he married in 1903. Together, they had a son whom they named Eryk (born in 1906).

As the commandant of the one-year volunteer artillery officer school in Lwów (Lvov), he introduced Polish as the language of instruction. In 1907, he was transferred to the 32nd Landwehr Field Artillery Regiment.

A community worker and activist of the “Sokół” (“Falcons”)

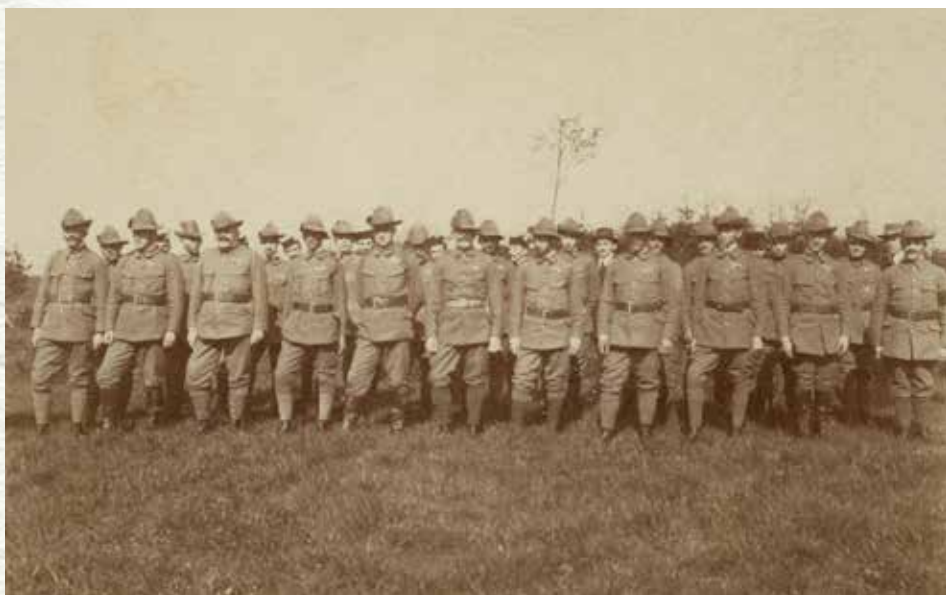
In 1911, Józef Haller left the army and focused on social activities. The period of his retirement was as intense a time for him as the period of his military service. One of the undertakings he got involved in was the cooperative movement. This movement developed very intensively in Galicia at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. It brought together landowners, among others. Initially, credit unions, peasants' savings and loan associations, and food and dairy cooperatives were established. It was the latter that Józef Haller became involved in. He developed his interests in this area for quite some time and studied the press and professional literature on the subject. He was also an inspector of the Farmers' Circles Society [Towarzystwo Kółek Rolniczych] and a member of the Economic Society [Towarzystwo Gospodarcze]. Holding this position obliged him to conduct field visits and organize agricultural courses. He was often forced to give lectures himself, in which he discussed, for example, the cultivation of fodder crops and the benefits of joining dairy cooperatives. He initiated the establishment of such cooperatives in Sanok and Haczów, among others and further developed his interest in this field by reading specialist literature and articles in the press, participating in trips aimed at familiarizing himself with the functioning of cooperatives in other parts of Europe. Working

with young people, in whom he saw the future of the Polish nation, was also of great importance to him.

He got involved in the activity of the “Sokół” Gymnastic Society, one of whose primary goals were to increase the physical fitness of society. Haller advocated the militarization of “Sokół,” including the introduction of shooting exercises, field maneuvers, and elements of military drill.

An increasing number of duties resulting from his position as a military instructor and inspector of regular team units forced him to move back to Lwów (Lvov).

It was in February 1913 that Haller met Józef Piłsudski for the first time. Describing this event in his diary, he mentioned that they both agreed “on the most important issues,” yet differences arose when



Józef Haller was one of the organizers of the 1913 Grunwald “Sokół” Jamboree held in Lwów (Lvov). On the photo: members of the “Sokół” Gymnastic Society from Wieliczka. The picture was taken before the departure for the jamboree in Lwów (Lvov) (BN)

they began to discuss how to regain Poland's independence. Piłsudski's position was that the best solution was to initiate an anti-Russian uprising in the Kingdom of Poland at the outbreak of a Russian-Austrian war. On the other hand, Haller believed that an uprising should not be instigated but that it would be better to fight alongside Austria-Hungary. He also wanted the regulations of the "Sokół" and "Strzelec" teams to be unified, which would facilitate their cooperation in the future. However, Piłsudski was not enthusiastic about that idea.

The development of scouting, which took place at the beginning of the 20th century, gave Haller a new field of interest activity. He began to form scout troops among the youngest members of the "Sokół" organization. Together with Polish scouting movement founder Andrzej Małkowski, Haller developed Polish terminology and designed the Scout badge. He was one of the organizers of the Grunwald "Sokół" Jamboree, which took place on July 15–16, 1913, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the "Sokół" Gymnastic Society. About 6,000 members of "Sokół" and 800 scouts participated in this great war game.

Officer of the Legions

In 1914, due to his duties at the Farmers' Circles Society, Józef Haller traveled to Denmark. In July of that year, while in Copenhagen, he received a summons from the Austrian Legation with a mobilization card and headed back to Lwów (Lvov). He had to leave the Austro-Hungarian army's ranks in order to be able to continue working in the structures of the "Sokół." Taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the War Minister's decree about the creation of the Polish Legions, to which reserve officers could apply, Haller sent in an appropriate application. Having received a favorable decision in this matter, he was transferred to the Eastern Legion [Legion Wschodni] in Lwów

(Lvov), on August 13, 1914, which brought together members of Polish paramilitary organizations from Eastern Galicia. Until September 14, 1914, Lieutenant Colonel Piotr Fijałkowski performed the duties of commander there. After his resignation, Captain Haller took over as head of the Legion.

As of August and September 1914, the Eastern Legion was not sufficiently equipped to face the Russian army soldiers, who were fast approaching Lwów (Lvov).

Therefore, the decision was made to withdraw the unit to the west. This task rested mainly on the shoulders of Captain Haller. Eventually, the soldiers reached Mszana Dolna, near Rabka, where the Legionnaires' situation did not improve. Furthermore, they were not only faced with provisioning problems. There were disputes among the officer cadre, issuing contradictory orders and undermining Haller's authority, which resulted, among others, in a decrease of morale in the ranks. The situation became even more complicated following the news that the Supreme Army Command demanded an oath of allegiance to Emperor Franz Joseph. Most of the officers and soldiers were against it. A significant influence contributing to the bad situation was that National Democracy activists conducted pro-Russian agitation in the ranks of the Legionnaires. Rumors were also spread, including those about the death of Józef Piłsudski, which were to lead to more significant confusion and discouragement among the soldiers. On the other hand, Haller himself saw taking the oath as a political necessity if one wanted to continue fighting. Due to very high resistance from his subordinates, he was forced to disband the Legion. The relevant order was issued on September 21, 1914.

The soldiers who remained and took the oath, including Haller, thought this would allow them to continue fighting against Russia. The 3rd Legion Infantry Regiment was formed from this core group, with Captain Józef Haller as its commander.



A group of officers, with Lt. Col. Józef Haller, mounted on a grey horse (NAC)

The unit underwent its 'baptism of fire' in Hungary in the Eastern Carpathians. It was decided that despite insufficient equipment and proper training, the soldiers would be thrown into battle. The first clash with Russian troops took place near Rafajłowa. The Legionnaires took over the village, and the regiment's headquarters were set up there.

The following weeks proved to be a real school of war for the soldiers of the 3rd Legion Infantry Regiment. The units fought over ten smaller and more significant battles only during a dozen or so days of October, including the heaviest one at Mołotków, where they fought against much stronger Russian units. On November 9, 1914, Haller was wounded in the Battle of Pasieczna, but he returned to command the Legion under enemy fire after treating his wounds. For his courage and achievements, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. At the end of November, part of the troops stationed in the vicinity of Rafajłowa formed the Haller Combat Group [Grupa Bojowa Hallera]. Soldiers under his

command were to weaken Russian forces advancing towards the Pantyr Pass [Przełęcz Pantyrska]. During the night of January 24–25, 1915, the Legionnaires displayed courage and determination, including in defense of Rafajłowa. Despite fatigue, in early February, the Combat Group took part in the Austrian offensive on Stanisławów and became famous in the Battle of Maksymiec, fought under extreme winter conditions.

After these battles, the 3rd Legion Infantry Regiment started to be called “The Iron Regiment.” Haller commanded it until February 1915, when he handed over his command to Major Henryk Minkiewicz. During that time, he took a short leave of absence, during which he tried to promote the Legions’ cause. The beginning of May 1915 turned out to be tragic for Haller – he suffered a serious car accident near Częstochowa. He was travelling with Władysław Sikorski to meet Józef Piłsudski. Haller’s condition was so severe that he was even in danger of having his leg amputated. He spent the following months at a hospital in Vienna. The treatment proved to be successful, as already in the spring of 1916, he returned to the front and joined the 3rd Regiment in Volhynia [Wołyń]. Not without resistance, he became a member of the Council of Colonels [Rada Pułkowników] appointed by Piłsudski. Together with other officers, he submitted a memorandum to the Supreme National Committee [Naczelny Komitet Narodowy], in which the issue of regulating the status of the Legions in Vienna was raised.

In the Act of November 5, 1916, the emperors of Germany and Austria-Hungary announced the creation of the Polish Kingdom with unspecified borders. From their perspective, the most critical issue was to recruit Poles. After the proclamation, Haller himself was full of hope for the creation of a Polish state.

At the beginning of 1917, his 3rd Infantry Regiment was stationed in Warsaw’s Powiśle District, and he himself was not on the front line. However, the relative peace did not last long.



Colonel Józef Haller (BN)

In the spring of 1917, Governor General Hans Hartwig von Beseler began creating the Polish Armed Forces [Polnische Wehrmacht – PSZ], which was to include the Legions. However, Józef Piłsudski wanted them to be transformed into a Polish army and placed under Polish command. The creation of the PSZ was connected with taking a new oath



Welcoming Legionnaires led by Józef Haller in Warsaw, December 19, 1916 (BN)

by the Polish soldiers – this time in allegiance to the German emperor. After Germany and Austria-Hungary rejected Piłsudski's demand for the creation of a Polish army subordinated to the Polish government, an oath crisis broke out in July 1917. Following Piłsudski's example, many Legionnaires refused to take the oath; however, Haller decided to take it. He believed that by doing so, he would save the Legions and be able to continue fighting. The Polish Auxiliary Corps [Polski Korpus Posiłkowy – PKP] was formed from the soldiers who took the oath. Eventually, the PKP was sent to Bukovina, became a rear unit, and did not make it to the front line.

The straw that broke the camel's back was the attitude of the Central Powers towards Poland during the negotiations in Brest, where a treaty was signed whereby Germany and Austria-Hungary ceded the Chełm Land [Chełmszczyzna] and Podlasie to Ukraine. This prompted Haller to break his military oath. On the night of February 15–16, 1918, under the pretext of exercises, he gave the order to cross the Austro-Russian front and join up with the Polish troops fighting alongside Russia. During this maneuver, however, there were clashes with Austrian units near Rarańcza. Only 1,600 soldiers managed to get to the other side while the Austrian army stopped the rest. After reaching the Romanian town of Sorok in Bessarabia, Haller made contact with the Polish II Corps. Unfortunately, the troops had no time to rest because Romania, on whose territory the Polish units were staying, had signed a peace treaty with the Central Powers. It committed to removing all foreign formations from its territory. The order was therefore given to further go beyond the Dnieper River and into Ukraine.

In May 1918, units under Haller's command were stationed in Kaniów, south of Kijów (Kiev). Nearby were German units, which attacked the Poles on the night of May 10–11, 1918. The battle was very fierce, and the Polish units were forced to surrender due to running out of

ammunition. Haller himself, under the assumed name of Mazowiecki, escaped capture and made his way to Moscow. There he contacted with the national-democratic Council of the Polish Inter-Party Union [Rada Polska Zjednoczenia Międzypartyjnego]. After receiving information from the Polish National Committee [Rada Narodowa Polska] in Paris about the possibility of taking command of the Polish Army in France, he went to Murmansk, controlled by the British Expeditionary Corps, and from there to France.

The Blue Army

From the beginning of the Great War, Polish émigré circles in the West considered creating units composed of Polish volunteers. As early as the end of July 1914, the Committee of Polish Volunteers for Service in the French Army [Komitet Wolontariuszów Polskich – KWP), was formed. Those who came forward in response to the appeal of the KWP were conscripted into the Foreign Legion. A unique company was formed within it, consisting of Polish recruits who made up, among others, the Bayonne and Rueil units (the names came from the French cities of Bayonne and Rueil). The first of them fought in the Champagne region. After heavy fighting near Neuville-Saint-Vaast in the spring of 1915 and heavy casualties, the unit was disbanded, and the remaining soldiers were incorporated into French units. The Rueil units were initially withdrawn to the rear of the front, but after Georges Clemenceau's intervention, they were incorporated into the 2nd Marching Regiment of the 2nd Foreign Regiment.

For the following years, the French government was not interested in creating Polish units on its territory. It did not want to enter into conflict with its ally, Russia. The situation changed after the outbreak of the February Revolution in 1917.

On June 4, 1917, the President of France signed a decree establishing the Polish Army. Article 1 of that decree stated: “An autonomous Polish Army is created in France for the duration of the war, to fight under the Polish banner, under the highest French command.”

The first commander of the Polish units was General Louis Archinard. From the color of French uniforms used by the Poles, they were called the ‘Blue Army.’ On June 8th, the French-Polish Military Mission was established to recruit Polish volunteers and organize the army. In August 1917, under Roman Dmowski, the Polish National Committee [Komitet Narodowy Polski – KNP] was established in Lausanne, which was recognized as the representative of Polish interests and the Polish government-in-exile. The Committee was given the right to appoint the commander of the Polish Army. After Józef Haller arrived in France, he was incorporated into the KNP. On October 4th, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the Polish Army in France and promoted to the rank of Major General. Haller took command of an army that consisted primarily of volunteers from all over the world. Among the soldiers were enlistments from the United States, Canada, Brazil, and even China. The second group, equally numerous, were prisoners of war from the Central Powers, released from camps in Italy.

General Haller did not have the opportunity to test his army thoroughly in battle, as the Great War was coming to an end, and only a few units underwent their baptism of fire in Champagne. On the eve of the end of hostilities, the Polish Army in France numbered about 70,000 soldiers. The most significant influx of volunteers occurred after the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918. The end of hostilities made it necessary to decide on the further fate of the Polish troops. The intention was to direct them to the territory of the newly-forming Polish state, where well-equipped units were very much needed.



General Józef Haller assumed the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army in France on October 4, 1918 (NAC)



General Haller addressing the inhabitants of Nancy (BN)

During this time, Julian Ejsmond wrote a poem titled *Do Hallera* [*To Haller*], in which the author urged the general to soon come to Poland:



Come! Your homeland calls you...
The people are longingly awaiting you...
The enemy surrounds us from all sides.
The East is burning red with glows...
Our Leader from the black prison of darkness
conducts us into the dawn of new dawns...
Come and stand by His side...
Come back now from distant France!



Do HALLERA

Przybądź! Ojczysty Kraj Cię woła...
Czeka Cię z utęsknieniem lud...
Wróg nas otacza dookoła.
Czerwienią łun goreje Wschód...

Nasz Wódz z czarnego więzień mroku
Wiedzie nas w świty nowych zórz...
Przybądź i stań u Jego boku...
Z dalekiej Francji powróć już!

JULJAN EJSMOND

Postcard with a poem about Haller (BN)

In the spring of 1919, it was decided that the Polish Army together with General Haller would come to Poland. Initially, the possibility of transporting the troops by sea through Gdańsk was considered. However, this idea was quickly abandoned, as it could have been a source of a new conflict between Germany and the reborn Poland. Therefore, it was decided that the soldiers and their equipment would be transported by rail through France and Germany. In the order dated April 15, 1919, General Haller wrote:

The long-awaited moment of the Polish Army marching out of the Italian, French and American lands to Poland has arrived. Today, just like a hundred years ago, we are returning to Poland, happier than those who have been here before us... The Polish divisions, created in foreign lands by the effort of the entire Polish nation, and especially thanks to the bravery and vigor of its emigres from North and South America: Thanks to the persevering work of Polish statesmen, such as Ignacy Paderewski and Roman Dmowski; thanks to the valiant deeds of the Head of the Republic of Poland, Józef Piłsudski.

The train with General Haller aboard arrived in Kąkolewo on April 20, 1919. Two days later, there was a ceremonial greeting in Warsaw. Józef Piłsudski sent a telegram saying that he was glad the army had arrived in Poland.

The Blue Army was incorporated into the Polish Army on September 1, 1919.

Poland's Wedding to the Sea



The ceremony of Poland's Wedding to the Sea took place during very unpleasant weather – it was raining and snowing – and it was cold. Puck, February 10, 1920 (NAC)

After arriving in Poland, Józef Haller was appointed as commander of the Volhynia-Galicia Front, which included the territory of Eastern Little Poland [Małopolska]. To a limited extent, the units of the Blue Army took part in battles against Ukrainians. One of Haller's main objectives was to conquer this area. The offensive was launched on May 14, 1919, but under pressure from Western countries, the operation had to be aborted, and General Wacław Iwaszkiewicz-Rudoszański took Haller's place. The 'Blue' General was re-assigned as the commander of the South-Western Front to defend the Polish-German border, as Polish intelligence feared a German offensive. At the outbreak of the First Silesian Uprising, Haller unofficially aided the insurgents, and

in the pre-Plebiscite period, he led the pro-Polish agitation effort by issuing proclamations to the Silesians.

It was decided that after completing his tasks in the south, Haller would take command of the Army of the Pomeranian Front, which was to take over the lands situated in Pomerania and granted to Poland by the Treaty of Versailles. The command headquarters was located in Skierniewice. A very detailed plan of taking over particular regions was created there.

The Polish Army was to begin executing the entrusted task precisely seven days after the treaty's ratification by Germany. The whole operation was divided into two phases. In the first phase (January 17–25, 1920), the southern part of the Pomeranian Province on the right bank of the Vistula River was taken over, as well as the lands of the Poznań Province, which had not been incorporated into Poland after the Greater Poland [Wielkopolska] Uprising. In the second period of operations (January 25 – February 10), the remaining territories were taken over, lying on the left bank of the Vistula, all the way to the Baltic Sea.

The Polish population gave a tumultuous welcome to the units of the Pomeranian Front entering their cities and towns. To make the soldiers feel welcome, towns were decorated with white and red garlands, welcome arches were erected, and rallies were held in market squares. General Haller described the ceremonial entry into the Pomeranian capital of Toruń as follows:

On January 21, 1920, there was a ceremonial entry into Toruń of the commander of the Pomeranian Front amidst an enthusiastic audience.

After laying wreaths at the foot of the statue of Nicolaus Copernicus, the most famous Pole from Toruń, a city which the Germans had annexed, I spoke to the army and thousands of people from the

balcony of the City Hall. When I finished, unceasing cheers rang out in honor of the Most Eminent Republic of Poland [...].

This is how Polish Pomerania passed from eternal slavery into the hands of a free and independent Poland.

Similar to the plans of taking over Pomerania, the “wedding to the sea” was also discussed in the Skierniewice quarters while Haller set out from Toruń for the Polish sea. On his way to Puck, he stopped in Gdańsk, where he received two platinum rings from the local Polish population. He traveled by train from Gdańsk to Puck. At this important moment, he was accompanied by representatives of local and central authorities, including the Minister of Internal Affairs, Stanisław Wojciechowski, the Pomeranian Governor, Stefan Łaszewski, Rear Admiral Kazimierz Porębski from the Department of Maritime Affairs, as well as foreign delegations from France, Great Britain, and Italy.

It was cloudy and rainy on February 10, 1920. People from all parts of Kashubia came to the small fishing port located on the Puck Bay to celebrate and see Polish soldiers and their commander. The General rode on horseback from the station to the place where Holy Mass was to be celebrated. After Mass, everyone went to the bay, where Haller performed the symbolic wedding of Poland to the sea. On that day, he also gave a speech to the assembled population:

Behold, today is a day of honor and glory! It is the day of freedom because the White Eagle has spread its wings over Polish lands and the Polish sea. The nation feels that it is no longer suffocated by the hydra, which till now had strangled its neck and breast. Now the world is free before us, free countries. Today, Polish sailors will be able to reach everywhere under the banner of the White Eagle.

We owe it, first of all, to God's mercy and then to all those who did not give up the fight but persevered, especially our forefathers who fought for freedom.

Glory to them! They did not live to see this happy moment. We are much more fortunate than they.

Glory to those who died in this war! Glory to the living who fight the grey, everyday battles of life with their work, toil, and weariness! Glory to the whole Polish nation, glory to those free nations who wanted to live with the free Polish nation and stood shoulder to shoulder with us in those titanic fights as good allies!

And now, let our thoughts turn to Warsaw, from where the government reaches all of Poland. Let us turn our eyes to our sovereign Sejm and let us raise a cry for the glory of the Homeland, the independent Sejm. Our Chief of State and Commander-in-Chief Józef Piłsudski!

The celebrations in Puck lasted until late in the evening. On the next day, the commander of the Pomeranian Front visited the Hel Peninsula and took a short cruise on a fishing boat. He also visited the Kolibki estate on the border between Poland and the Free City of Gdańsk (Danzig), which was bought from the German owner by Witold Kukowski.

For the people of Kashubia and Kociewie, the figure of General Haller symbolized joining Poland. According to one Pomeranian newspaper in 1931:

An indescribable fervor gripped the Kashubians when the Polish troops were to arrive. No sacrifices were spared. As long as Puck is Puck, it had not seen such masses of Kashubians within its walls whom it hosted when Haller arrived. Haller became a Kashubian favorite and is regarded as a Kashubian hero and leader [...].

At the Helm of the Volunteer Army [Armia Ochotnicza – AO]

The annexation of Pomerania to Poland did not mean the end of Haller's tasks. The next task was to fight against the Bolsheviks. However, before that was to happen, General Haller resigned from his command of the Pomeranian Front and asked for a leave of absence. It did not last long. The challenging situation of Poland in the face of the impending Bolshevik invasion led in the summer of 1920 to the creation of the Council for State Defense [Rada Ochrony Państwa] headed by Marshal Piłsudski, with Haller as one of its members. Furthermore, the Chief of State appointed him Commander of the Volunteer Army.

The propaganda and information campaign conducted by the General Inspectorate of the Volunteer Army led in a very short time to an enormous response from Polish society. Volunteers came from all over Poland, representing various social strata. Eventually, 105,714 people joined the ranks of the AO. War correspondent Andrzej Grzymała-Siedlecki described it in his memoirs as follows:

No other stratum of society gave the volunteer army such a close-knit host of defenders as are the schoolchildren, but there was also no social stratum that did not flinch at the call of the Fatherland. First of all, the cities. In the recruitment offices, one saw lawyers, doctors, teachers, merchants, artisans, workers. They did not want to wait for compulsory conscription. [...] Strikes ceased for the time of terror ahead. Above all, the Polish worker wanted first of all to be Polish. [...] The landed gentry cannot be ignored by silence either.

In addition to commanding the AO, as of August 10th, a few days before the decisive battle of the Polish-Bolshevik War, Haller became



A propaganda poster from the time of the Polish-Bolshevik War: General Józef Haller calling for troops, 1920 (Poster Museum at Wilanów, Warsaw)

the commander of the Northern Front, operating in one of the heaviest sections of the war effort during that period.

After the war ended, Haller was appointed General Artillery Branch Inspector. He tried to carry out his new task to the best of his ability. He focused primarily on the organization and preparation of new regulations. Another issue close to his heart was raising the level of knowledge and skills of the officers, which is why he emphasized self-education and supplementary courses. The position of the General Artillery Branch Inspector was also associated with numerous trips around Poland. In visited units, Haller conducted inspections and arranged improvised exercises. The purpose of this was to familiarize himself with the state of training and equipment of individual units. They also analyzed how they interfaced together with other types of weapons. This was to help Haller determine the overall condition of the Polish artillery branch.

In oblivion?

The interwar period was not an easy time for General Józef Haller. Even though in society, and especially among veterans both at home and abroad, he was highly respected and recognizable as commander of the Blue Army, he was not a frequent guest at Warsaw venues. He was not involved in issues related to the modernization of the Polish Army and was pushed aside from more critical tasks. Thus, he wanted to leave active service. He was allowed to do so only after the May Coup.

During this time, Haller also decided to become more involved in politics. In 1922 he was elected as an MP on the list of the Christian Association for National Unity [Chrześcijański Związek Jedności Narodowej] but resigned from his seat just a year later. On December 16, 1922, President Gabriel Narutowicz was assassinated. A few days earlier, protests against his election as president took place in Warsaw. One of



During the Polish-Bolshevik War, Haller was the General Inspector of the Volunteer Army. In the photo, he is surrounded by members of the General Inspectorate of the AO (in the second row, eighth from the left). Warsaw, 1920 (NAC)





Electoral placard with a photo of among others, General Józef Haller, 1922 (BN)

the demonstrations, organized by students, marched to General Haller's apartment. Haller himself gave a speech that intensified the atmosphere of hatred towards the newly elected head of state. When the assassination attempt occurred, the press began to accuse Haller of contributing to Narutowicz's death. These attacks led to a decline in public confidence in the legendary commander of the Blue Army, and PSL "Wyzwolenie" ["Liberation"] parliamentary deputy Marian Zyndram-Kościałkowski called the general a murderer. The politician refused to apologize and expressed his readiness to give satisfaction in a duel. Haller agreed but declared that he would not fire a shot. So it happened. Kościałkowski fired first and missed; Haller did not fire a shot. However, for his participation in the duel, he was expelled from the Marian Sodality (after a long struggle, however, Haller returned to it after four years' time). Then he resigned from the post of the President of the Supreme Scout

Council [Naczelna Rada Harcerska], and in autumn 1923, he resigned from his parliamentary seat.

Unable to fully realize himself as a military man, the General focused on social activities, in which he had been involved even before the First World War. He divided his time between the Red Cross, the Polish Scouting Association, and the Hallerians [Związek Hallerczyków]. The latter was close to his heart, as it gathered former soldiers serving in the Polish Army in France. The Association was founded in Upper Silesia as early as 1920 but was only officially registered in 1924. General Haller became its honorary president.

From 1932 until the outbreak of WWII, the General and his wife lived in the Gorzuchowo estate, located in the then province of Pomerania. During this period, Haller focused mainly on meetings with Hallerians – not only in Pomerania but also on trips to other regions of Poland. He tried to spend summer months at his house by the sea in



The General's summer house in the village of Hallerowo (BN)

Hallerowo (today a district of Władysławowo), where he often hosted scouts and summer camp groups.

In exile

Shortly before the outbreak of WWII, General Haller and his wife left their Pomeranian retreat for the capital. As befitted an experienced soldier, General Haller placed himself at the disposal of his command. However, he did not take part in military actions because no tasks were planned for him. After leaving the capital, he traveled to Lublin, then further to Lwów, and finally towards the Romanian border. He arrived in Bucharest on September 24, 1939. After completing all formalities and obtaining appropriate documents and visas, he left for France.

In Paris, Haller was appointed to the government of General Władysław Sikorski as minister without portfolio and representative of the



General Józef Haller and his wife among Polish refugees in Romania (NAC)

Labor Party [Stronnictwo Pracy]. His first assignment was to travel to the United States and Canada, which occurred at the beginning of 1940.

In his memoirs, Haller described the tasks of the Goodwill Mission as follows:

[...] to acquaint the Polish-American community and all our friends in the United States with the present state of affairs in Poland, devastated by war and the occupation; to acquaint the Polish-American community with the program of the new Polish government, and to appeal for considerable aid to the people in Poland, so terribly affected by the war and the occupation.

In parallel with his preparations to go overseas, General Haller was also engaged by the Prime Minister for other tasks. He became chairman of the Commission for the Registration of Facts and Collection of Documents Relating to Recent Events in Poland [Komisja dla Rejestracji Faktów i Zbierania Dokumentów Dotyczących Ostatnich Zdarzeń w Polsce]. The Commission's task was to collect documents and data that spoke of the course of events of September and October 1939 in Poland. Obtaining these documents was not just for archiving purposes, but they could hold accountable the authorities responsible for preparing and conducting the war effort.

The beginning of 1940 brought Haller numerous meetings in the United States and Canada. He mainly visited cities with a Polish population. During his visits, he did not limit himself to talking to representatives of Polish-American organizations but also went to the offices of state governors, mayors, and even bishops. Unfortunately, one of the main goals of the visit, which was to recruit soldiers among the Polish community and raise funds, was not achieved. The number of volunteers from the New World was small.

General Haller spent several months in the US and Canada. He returned to Europe in May 1940. After the Third Reich attacked France and the rapid advance of the German army, the Polish authorities in exile decided to evacuate the government to Great Britain. General Haller and his wife were unable to leave war-torn France aboard a Royal Navy ship, but they managed to cross the borders of neutral Portugal, from where they continued their journey to the British Isles.

After the reconstruction of the Government of the Republic of Poland in London, the General became Head of the Office of Education and School Affairs [Urząd Oświaty i Spraw Szkolnych – UOiSS], where he coordinated work related to the organization of general and secondary education for Polish children “in exile,” i.e., among other locations, in Great Britain. The Office’s scope of activity expanded when it became clear that it was necessary to take care of children who had arrived in the Middle East with General Anders’ Army in 1942 (after signing the Sikorski-Mayski Treaty and the evacuation of Polish soldiers and civilians from the USSR). In order to cope with the new tasks, Haller appointed delegates of the UOiSS in Bombay and Nairobi, among others.

Thanks to the General’s activity in Great Britain, two Polish high schools were established in the early forties. Both were located in Scotland: in Perthshire – J. Słowacki Secondary Grammar School for Boys and in Scone Palace – M. Skłodowska-Curie Secondary Grammar School for Girls.

After a thorough analysis of the situation of Polish refugees in the Middle East, Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski decided in 1943 to appoint a government delegate to the Middle East. Initially, the post was offered to Józef Haller. However, during his stay in Egypt in May 1943, Sikorski decided that the former Polish Ambassador to the USSR, Tadeusz Romer, would be a more suitable selection.

The tragic death of General Sikorski in July 1943, and the appointment of a government headed by Stanisław Mikołajczyk, who



Józef Haller as a minister without portfolio, a photo taken in London during the Second World War (NAC)

was hostile to Haller, led to his dismissal from all posts. From that moment until the end of the war, he was at the disposal of Władysław Raczkiewicz, President of the Republic of Poland, which involved only filling official representative functions during ceremonies and visiting wounded soldiers in hospitals.

After the war, Haller stayed with his wife in Great Britain. In 1947 the Polish Armed Forces in the West were disbanded; thus, the General's salary had stopped, and he and his wife were granted the status of foreigners. The financial situation of Haller's family, who was already



Meeting of the National Council in London, from the left: Secretary Wójcicki, MP Michał Kwiatkowski, General Izydor Modelski, General Józef Haller, Min. Jan Stańczyk, and MP Herman Lieberman, March 23, 1941 (NAC)

74 years old and could not take up any job, became very complicated. In this challenging time, Blue Army veterans came to Haller's aid from the United States. Thanks to fundraising efforts undertaken on the General's behalf, he was able to live in a house in the London Borough of Ealing.

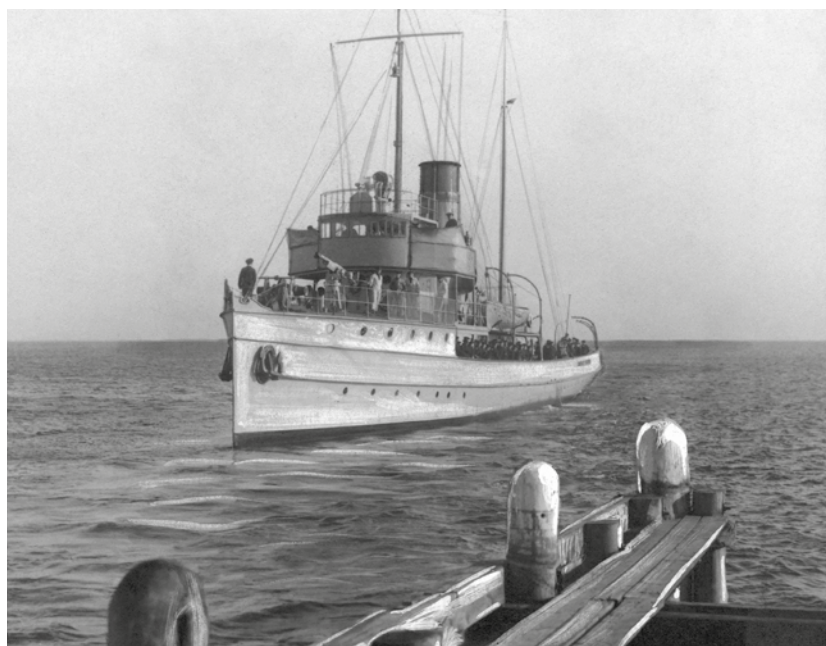
Despite his age, he continued to be involved in Labor Party affairs. In 1954, he became a member of the Provisional Council of National Unity [Tymczasowa Rada Jedności Narodowej]. However, just three

years later, he resigned due to ill health, and in 1958 he stepped down as chairman of the Labor Party General Council [Rada Naczelna SP].

A year earlier, the General wanted to come to Jasna Góra, Poland, to celebrate the end of the Marian Year. However, the communist authorities did not want him to participate in the May 3rd celebrations and suggested that he should arrive in Poland on May 5th at the earliest. Haller refused and, as a result, did not visit Poland for the rest of his life.

Józef Haller died on June 4, 1960, in London after a serious illness. The General's funeral, which took place on June 11th, was a great manifestation of the Polish cause. About 2,000 people attended. His ashes were brought to Poland in 1993 and buried in the Garrison Church of St. Agnes in Cracow.

General Haller became a legend already during his lifetime. He was known not only in Poland but also abroad. He remained close to the



The ORP *General Haller* gunboat (NAC)



Józef Haller in London, 1955 (AN Cracow)

hearts of veterans of the 3rd Infantry Regiment of the Polish Legions and the Blue Army. He also enjoyed great esteem among the people of the Pomeranian Province, whose lands he entered with the Pomeranian Front in January 1920.

One of the first Polish gunboats of the *Wodoryez* type, which were purchased for the newly-created Polish Navy, bore his name. Since 1921 the official name of the vessel was *ORP Generał Haller*. The gunboat was a training unit and served in the Polish Navy throughout the interwar period, and in the first days of Sep-

tember 1939, when it patrolled the Gdańsk Bay. She was sunk during a German air raid on September 6, 1939, in the Hel harbor.

General Józef Haller was honored with numerous state and military decorations during his lifetime. Among them may be mentioned: the Order of the White Eagle, *Virtuti Militari*, Cross of Valor (four times), Commander's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, Order of St. Sava 1st Class, Order of LaFayette, and Honorary Cross of the Legion of Honor of the Polish Falcons Alliance in the USA.

In Poland, Haller is the patron of numerous primary and secondary schools. In practically every town in Pomerania, there is a street named after him, along with busts and monuments. In 1996, the General became the patron of the 12th Mechanized Brigade in Szczecin. Anyone can also visit the famous "Hallerówka" in Władysławowo, a branch of the Florian Ceynowa Museum of the Puck Region.



A plaque commemorating General Józef Haller unveiled at the entrance to the Puck Parish Church on the 100th anniversary of Poland's Wedding to the Sea, February 10, 2020 (PAP)

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