

SAMPLE RESEARCH REPORT · POLISH MILITARY SERVICE RESEARCH

A sergeant's road to Anders' Army

Sergeant Franciszek Rejek (born 1901), Border Protection Corps (KOP)

Sample report. This example is based on genuine archival records. The client, the research question and the layout are illustrative, and some sections are shortened. Scans are reproduced from public archive portals for demonstration only.

WHERE WE STARTED

- Franciszek Rejek, born "around 1900, near Gostyń". He was remembered as "a sergeant somewhere in the east".
- A story that he "was taken to Russia", came back after the war and died in Kielce. One undated photo in uniform, no papers.

Missing: his date and place of birth, his unit, and what happened to him in 1939–1942.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Our grandfather Franciszek was a sergeant before the war and was taken to Russia. What happened to him between September 1939 and 1942?

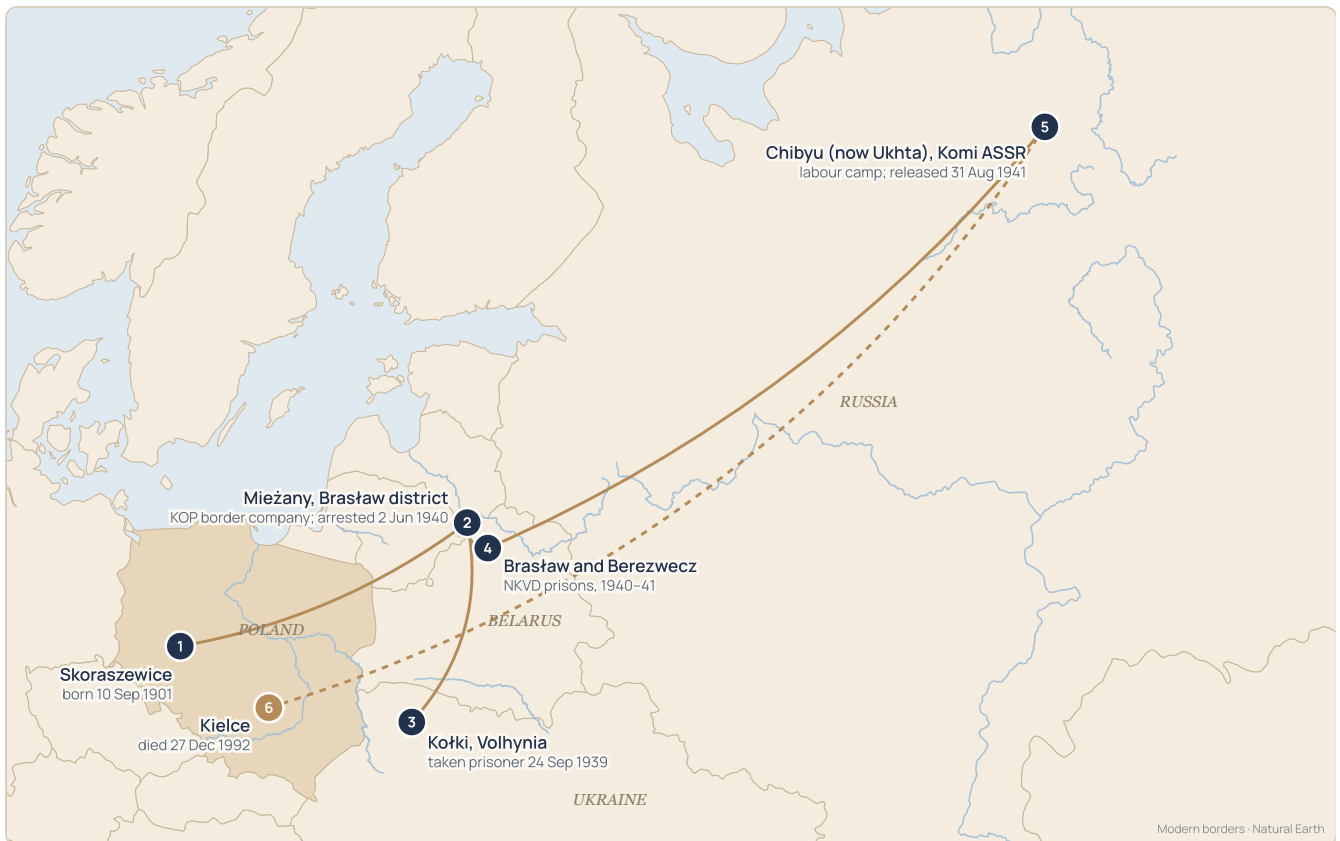
WHAT WE FOUND

Full name	Franciszek Rejek
Born	10 September 1901, Skoraszewice, Gostyń district, Poznań province (birth registered at Krobia, no. 302)
Parents	Piotr Rejek, a labourer, and Jadwiga née Kopec
Rank and service	Career non-commissioned officer (sergeant), Border Protection Corps (KOP)
Key document	Questionnaire no. 18214, signed 4 August 1942. Hoover Institution Archives, Władysław Anders Collection

Summary of findings

- Located his personal questionnaire no. 18214, completed in the Polish Army in the East and signed on 4 August 1942.
- Before the war he served in the KOP battalion "Słobódka", 2nd border company, near Dryświaty in Braśław district.
- Taken prisoner on 24 September 1939 near Kołki in Volhynia and released after 24 hours in Kowel.
- Arrested by the NKVD on 2 June 1940, sentenced to 8 years of forced labour, and released at Chibyu (Komi ASSR) on 31 August 1941 under the amnesty. His own account adds details of prison and camp life.
- His German birth record from Krobia confirms the date he gave in 1942, names his parents and notes his death in Kielce on 27 December 1992.

The story on a map



Places named in the questionnaire and the birth record, shown on modern borders. In 1939 Miežany, Brasław and Kołki lay in eastern Poland; today they are in Belarus and Ukraine. The route of his later years is not documented and is shown as a dashed line.

Timeline

- 10 Sep 1901** Born in Skoraszewice, then in the Prussian partition; birth registered at Krobia on 14 September.
- 1930s** Career NCO with the KOP battalion "Słobódka", 2nd border company, at Miežany near Dryświaty.
- Sep 1939** Serves with the 3rd KOP Regiment; taken prisoner near Kołki on 24 September and released in Kowel after 24 hours.
- 2 Jun 1940** Arrested by the NKVD in Brasław district; held in Brasław and Berezwezc prisons.
- 1941** Sentenced to eight years of forced labour; released at Chibyu, Komi ASSR, on 31 August after the amnesty.
- 4 Aug 1942** Completes questionnaire no. 18214 in the Polish Army in the East.
- 27 Dec 1992** Dies in Kielce, according to a note added to his birth record.

The Border Protection Corps (KOP) guarded Poland's eastern frontier from 1924. After the Soviet invasion of 17 September 1939, many of its soldiers were arrested. The amnesty of August 1941 freed Polish citizens held in the USSR so that they could join the army led by General Władysław Anders.

Sources consulted

Source	Reference	Result
Anders Collection, questionnaires filed by document number	Hoover Institution Archives, Władysław Anders Collection; questionnaire no. 18214	Found · four-page questionnaire
Szukaj w Archiwach, catalogue and scans	Fonds “Dokumenty Władysława Andersa”, 1939–1946	Found · digital copy online
Civil registry of Krobia, births 1901	State Archive in Leszno, Civil Registry Office in Krobia	Found · entry no. 302 with a 1992 death note
Pre-war KOP personnel records	Central Military Archives, Warsaw-Rembertów	Recommended · not yet requested
Post-1942 service record	UK Ministry of Defence, Polish armed forces records	Recommended · requires a formal application

The questionnaire

From 1942, soldiers and civilians who left the Soviet Union with the Polish Army were asked to complete a standard questionnaire about their deportation or imprisonment. These testimonies are now in the Władysław Anders Collection at the Hoover Institution. They often give a place of birth, pre-war unit and a precise account of arrest and release that survives nowhere else.

[illegible]

Questionnaire no. 18214, page 1: personal data, September 1939, arrest and release. Hoover Institution Archives, Władysław Anders Collection.

TRANSCRIPTION (EXTRACT, POLISH)

1. Nazwisko i imię: Rejek Franciszek
2. Data i miejsce urodzenia: 10 IX 1901, wieś Skoraszewice, pow. Gostyń, woj. poznańskie
5. Zawód: podoficer zawodowy
8. Stosunek do służby wojskowej: podofic. zawod. (sierżant)
10. ... 24 IX 1939 r. w rejonie Kołki (Wołyń), doprowadzony do Kowla, po 24 godz. zwolniony
12. ... 2 VI 1940 r. przez NKWD Braśław ...
14. Data i miejsce zwolnienia z obozu pracy: 31 VIII 1941, Czybju, Komi ASSR

TRANSLATION (ENGLISH)

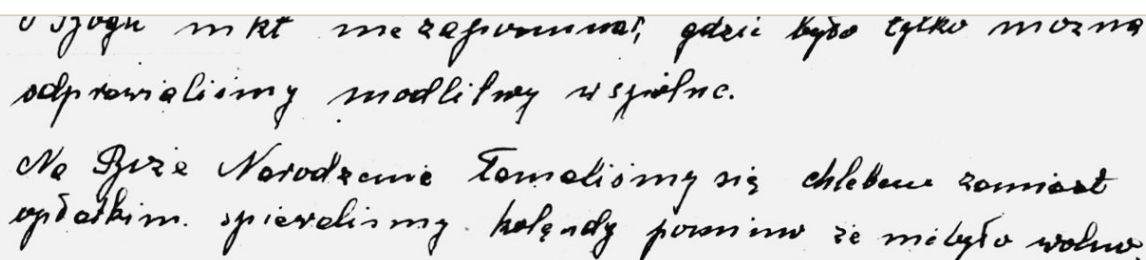
1. Surname and first name: Rejek, Franciszek
2. Date and place of birth: 10 September 1901, the village of Skoraszewice, Gostyń district, Poznań province
5. Occupation: career non-commissioned officer
8. Military status: career NCO (sergeant)
10. ... 24 September 1939 in the Kołki area (Volhynia), taken to Kowel and released after 24 hours
12. ... on 2 June 1940 by the Braśław NKVD ...
14. Date and place of release from the labour camp: 31 August 1941, Chibyu, Komi ASSR

Imprisonment and release

The questionnaire records that he was arrested by the NKVD in June 1940 in the village where his border company had been stationed, held for about ten months in prison and five months in a labour camp, and sentenced to eight years of forced labour for his service as a KOP sergeant. He was released on 31 August 1941 at Chibyu in the Komi ASSR. The date matches the amnesty for Polish citizens that followed the Sikorski–Mayski agreement of July 1941, which allowed many former prisoners to reach the Polish Army being formed in the USSR.

A personal voice

Later pages describe prison conditions in Braśław and Berezwech and the life of Poles in the camps. One short passage shows how such documents preserve family memory as well as facts:



W obozie nikt nie zapominał, gdzie było tylko można
odprawialiśmy modlitwy wspólne.
Na Boże Narodzenie Tomasiśmy się chlebem zamiast
opłatków. śpiewaliśmy kolędy ponieważ że nie było wolno.

Questionnaire no. 18214, page 4 (extract).

“No one forgot God. Wherever it was possible, we said prayers together. At Christmas we shared bread instead of the Christmas wafer and sang carols, although it was not allowed.”

Birth and family

Skoraszewice lay in the Prussian partition in 1901, so his birth was registered in German at the civil registry office in Krobia (Kröben). The entry confirms the date he gave in his questionnaire more than forty years later, and names both parents.

A.

Nr. 302.

Kröben am 14. September 1901.

Vor dem unterzeichneten Standesbeamten erschien heute, der Persönlichkeit nach _____, b. kannt,

der Arbeiter Peter (Piotr) Rejek _____

wohnhaft in Skoraszewice _____

katholischer Religion, und zeigte an, daß von der Hedwig Rejek geborenen Kopec seiner Ehefrau _____

katholischer Religion, _____

wohnhaft bei ihm _____

zu Skoraszewice in seiner Wohnung _____

am _____ 10. September des Jahres _____

tausend neunhundert und eins _____ auf mittags _____

um _____ ein Knabe _____

geboren worden sei und daß das Kind _____ den Vornamen _____

„Franz“ (Franciszek) erhalten habe. _____

Begelesen, genehmigt und unterschrieben. _____

Piotr Rejek _____

Der Standesbeamte. _____

Obok wymieniony zmarł w Kielcach dnia 92-12-27 ... nr aktu zgonu 17...

Birth record no. 302, civil registry office in Krobia (Kröben), 1901, with a later note in the margin. State Archive in Leszno, Civil Registry Office in Krobia.

TRANSCRIPTION (EXTRACT, GERMAN)

Nr. 302. Kröben, am 14. September 1901. ... der Arbeiter Peter (Piotr) Rejek, wohnhaft in Skoraszewice, katholischer Religion, ... zeigte an, daß von der Hedwig Rejek geborene Kopec, seiner Ehefrau, ... zu Skoraszewice in seiner Wohnung am zehnten September des Jahres tausend neunhundert und eins ... ein Knabe geboren worden sei und daß das Kind den Vornamen „Franz“ (Franciszek) erhalten habe.

Margin note (Polish): Obok wymieniony zmarł w Kielcach dnia 92-12-27 ... nr aktu zgonu 17...

TRANSLATION (ENGLISH)

No. 302. Krobia, 14 September 1901. The labourer Peter (Piotr) Rejek, living in Skoraszewice, of the Catholic religion, reported that his wife Hedwig (Jadwiga) Rejek née Kopec gave birth to a boy at his home in Skoraszewice on 10 September 1901, and that the child was named Franz (Franciszek).

Margin note: The above-named died in Kielce on 27 December 1992. Civil Registry Office in Kielce, death record no. 17... (the rest of the number is cut off).

Analysis

The questionnaire is a first-hand statement, so it is strong evidence for dates and places that only the soldier himself could know. The German birth record, written in 1901 by a different authority, gives exactly the same date of birth and the same village. That independent match confirms that both documents concern the same man. The pre-war KOP posting and the 1939 unit can be checked in the Central Military Archives, and his later service in the Polish Armed Forces should appear in the personnel records held in the United Kingdom.

Some handwritten place names are hard to read. Where a reading is uncertain, a full report states this and gives the alternatives, rather than presenting a guess as fact.

Recommended next steps

- Request his service record from the UK Ministry of Defence to follow him from 1942: units, campaigns such as Monte Cassino, decorations and demobilisation.
- Search the Central Military Archives for pre-war KOP personnel documents.
- Check the Polish Resettlement Corps and post-war records if he settled in Britain.
- Order the full 1992 death record from the Civil Registry Office in Kielce. It may name his spouse and his last address.
- Trace his return to Poland after the war and his family in Kielce through population and civil records.

The Polish Genealogist · polishgenealogist.co.uk · Sample report prepared to show the structure and standard of our written reports.