

Greater Poland Uprising 1918-1919

<https://pw.ipn.gov.pl/pwe/form/r3405421253670,KOPA-Andrzej.html>
24.09.2026, 17:51

KOPA Andrzej

Person

KOPA Andrzej

Born

1879

Died

1956

Description

Lieutenant colonel of the Polish army and commander of the 10th Greater Poland Rifle Regiment. He was born on 16 October 1879 in Trzcielín, Poznań powiat. He was the son of Michał and Eufrozyna née Niezielińska. After completion of common school, he became a pupil of the St. Mary and Magdalene Gymnasium in Poznań. He was also active in the Tomasz Zan Society. He learnt the farming practice for four years on the best run agricultural estates in Greater Poland. At the age of 23 he was called up for one-year military service in the 5th Lower Silesia Heavy Artillery Regiment in Poznań, where, after graduation from the cadet training centre he was promoted to corporal. The next promotion, to sergeant, was received by him on 24 June 1904, including the right of application

for the officer's rank. After the death of his father, Michał, he took over the family estate in Trzcielín. He then had his mother and two sisters to support. Until World War I, he was constantly honing his farming skills to perfection, and was also involved in many social activities. He conducted training courses in farming for local farmers and was elected president of the agricultural circle in Konarzewo. He took an active part in the works of the Polish Gymnastic Society "Sokół" (Falcon). When World War I broke out, he was mobilised as early as 4 August 1914 and sent to fight on the front as the commander of an ammunition column. On 5 February 1915, he received a promotion to the rank of second lieutenant. Initially he fought on the Eastern Front, then in Denmark and France. At the end of the war, on 28 September 1918, he was sent back to the hospital in Poznań because of the intensifying symptoms of his heart disease. On 12 November 1918, in Poznań, in the private apartment of Leon Pluciński from Swadzim, the Poviát People's Council was established. Andrzej Kopa was appointed commandant of the People's Council in the West Pomerania poviát. Through his own means and devices, legally, he was provided by the commandant of the Prussian police, Sterznagel, with 250 rifles including ammunition from the military storehouses in Poznań. The weapons were transported in horse carts owned by Antoni Szyfter from Wiry and deposited in the tavern of Teofil Kandulski in Dopiewo. Second Lieutenant Andrzej Kopa proceeded energetically with the organisation of the People's Council in each town within the area of his responsibility. The Greater Poland Uprising broke out on 27 December 1918. The very next day, i.e. on 28 December 1918, Andrzej Kopa announced the mobilisation of the People's Guard of the West Pomeranian poviát. Dopiewo was designated as the meeting spot. This town was an

excellent strategic point as the railway line connecting Poznań and Berlin ran through there, and the Post-Telegraph Office was located there too. Kopa organised a disciplined and well-armed military unit. Some of the insurgents went to Wolsztyn where plenty of service pistols, several heavy machine guns and 4 cannons were captured. At night from 5 to 6 January 1919, the insurgent troops commanded by Andrzej Kopa seized Ławica airport. The insurgents from the West Pomeranian powiat also took part in fighting for Kargowa, Zbąszyń, near Żnin and at the Noteć River. By a decision of the military authorities in Poznań, Second Lieutenant A. Kopa, together with his troop, was sent back to Poznań, then to Biedrusko, where he organised the 10th Greater Poland Rifle Regiment, which, after the reorganisation of the Polish Army was renamed as the 68th Infantry Regiment. Initially he served as a second lieutenant. As an experienced gunner, together with his troop, he was sent to the Eastern Front. He was quickly promoted. On 30 March he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant and then captain. By the decision of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, on 1 January 1920, Captain Andrzej Kopa from Trzcielín was called for the Temporary Chapter of the Order of Virtuti Militari and honoured with the Silver Cross of the Order of Virtuti Militari with the Roman numerals XI (crosses with these numerals were only received by the members of the first, Temporary Chapter, all others received crosses with Arabic numbers). As early as 8 March 1920, Second Lieutenant General (presently the equivalent of brigadier general) Daniel Konarzewski, as the commander of the 14th Greater Poland Infantry Division, sent a motion to the Chapter of the Order of Virtuti Militari to honour Lieutenant Colonel Andrzej Kopa with the Golden Cross. However, Lieutenant Colonel Andrzej Kopa never received this award. After a convalescent leave lasting several weeks,

he returned to the army. On 31 March 1920, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. As early as 29 October 1920, as the commander of the 2nd Brigade of the Volunteer Division from Greater Poland, Lieutenant Colonel A. Kopa was presented for promotion to the rank of colonel. The request was signed by Lieutenant Colonel Adam Koc. In the year 1920, Colonel Andrzej Kopa addressed a request to the Minister of Military Affairs for dismissal from military service. After the Polish-Soviet war came to an end, Colonel Andrzej Kopa was involved in running his farm and after his mother's death he looked after his two sisters. When World War II broke out on 1 September 1939, Colonel Andrzej Kopa stayed in Trzcielín because of a serious heart disease. Already at the beginning of the year 1940, German authorities began to take an interest in him. A German citizen, Kuntz arrived in Trzcielín to take over Andrzej Kopa's farm. However, the two of them found common ground. It turned out that they were both officers from the same regiment and that they had fought together on the Western Front during World War I. Colonel Andrzej Kopa obtained confidential information that 3 days after the taking over of the farm by the new owner, he would be arrested and sentenced to death for his activities in the area of the Western Pomerania poviat during the Greater Poland Uprising. Kuntz made it possible for Colonel A. Kopa and his sister to escape from Trzcielín. Using the military transport which shortly stopped at the railway station in Dopiewo he secretly left for the General Government. He moved to Wierzchowska in the Janów Lubelski poviat, where he stayed till the beginning of April 1945. On 28 April 1945, he returned to Trzcielín. The new situation and the political changes which took place after the year 1945 were not favourable for Andrzej Kopa. As the owner of a farm, he was forced to leave Trzcielín forever.

Initially, he was employed as the manager of an agricultural farm in Głuszyna Leśna. He was also appointed member of the Powiat National Council in Poznań as a distinguished Greater Poland insurgent. However, he resigned quickly from the social work as his participation in the 1920 war on the Eastern Front turned out to be a disqualifying fact for him. Later on, A. Kopa was transferred to the position of field brigadier, and finally he ended his professional activity in agriculture as a farmyard worker. Because of his heart disease he went on a disability pension. He then moved together with his sister to Chomęcice, to live with an old companion from his World War I period, Władysław Szczerbowski, who granted a part of his house to his former commander. Colonel Andrzej Kopa died on 11 June 1956 and was buried in a family tomb at the parish cemetery in Konarzewo, in the Dopiewo commune. As well as the above-mentioned Silver Cross of the Order of Virtuti Militari, Colonel Andrzej Kopa was awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, the Cross of Independence with Swords, the Cross of Valour (twice), the Golden Cross of Merit, the Prussian Iron Cross of the 1st and 2nd class and the Austrian Wartime Cross. Colonel Kopa did not marry. His name was given to one of the streets in Ławica and the main street in Trzcielin.

Bibliography

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