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**REAR-ADMIRAL GEREON GRZENIA-ROMANOWSKI (1916–1983).
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

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Interest in biographies in Polish historical science has been evident since the 1960s. It allows for better understanding of important stages in the life of an outstanding individual. It also penetrates into the values, political culture and mechanisms of social promotion that characterize the community in which the protagonist of this biography came to live and act. Moreover, it helps to understand the processes of the shaping of the elites in a given historical epoch.¹

Among servicemen, Rear Admiral Gereon Grzenia – Romanowski (1916–1983) was such an individual. He came from a Kashubian merchant family in Chojnice. He began his military education at the Cadet Corps in Chełmno, and then continued it in Rawicz. He was later admitted to the Infantry Officer Cadet School in Komorów near Ostrowia Mazowiecka. During the September Campaign he fought among the ranks of the Warsaw Armoured Motorized Brigade. During the occupation period he joined the Union of Armed Struggle (UAS), and from 1943 he was active in the communist People's Guard (PG). After 1945, he held many responsible positions in the political and educational apparatus of the Polish People's Army. He was, inter alia, Deputy Commander for Political Affairs of the 12th Infantry Division (12th ID) and the 16th Kashubian Infantry Division (16th KID). In 1956, he became the Deputy

¹ Teresa Kulak, „Biografistyka a badanie kultury politycznej”. in: *Dzieje kultury politycznej w Polsce od schyłku XIX wieku do roku 1939. Materiały sympozjum zorganizowanego w dniach 3–4 kwietnia przez Instytut Historii UG*, edited by Roman Wapiński (Gdańsk: University of Gdańsk – Faculty of History, 1981), 15–17, 21–22.

Commander of the Polish Navy (PN) for political affairs. He remained in office until 1965. He also held many important positions at Tri-City universities. He was Head of the Military College (MC) of the Gdańsk University of Technology (GUT) (1949–1956), the Higher Economic School in Sopot (HES) (1969–1970) and the University of Gdańsk (UG) (1970–1973). Between 1966–1969 he was the commander of the Polish Naval Academy of the Heroes of Westerplatte (PNAHW). Grzenia-Romanowski was also involved in the Pomeranian regional movement. In 1956, he co-founded the Kashubian Association (later the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association). After retiring, he worked for some time as a representative of the Polish Ocean Lines (POL) in China. He died on January 18, 1983 and was buried in Honor Lane at Witomiński Cemetery in Gdynia.

Archive data collected from the Personal File of Rear Admiral Grzenia-Romanowski, which can be found in the Military History Bureau in Warsaw, has proved to be very helpful in preparing this article.² The file contains valuable documents, which include: a hand-written biography, applications for distinctions, opinions of superiors as well as a personal record sheet and record card, showing the exact course of his military career. The most important are: a Personal Record File³ from April 1945 and a hand-written “Biography” written in December 1947.⁴ The first of the above sources was created at the time when Grzenia-Romanowski applied for admission to the “reborn”, Polish People’s Army. For this reason, he highlighted only some elements in his biography. The same situation occurs in the case of the “Biography”, which was probably written during his efforts to be admitted to the General Staff Academy.⁵ Noteworthy in this collection are promotion applications and opinions of superiors from both individual infantry divisions (12th ID and 16th KID) as well as from Navy Command. They allow for a better understanding of the circumstances of further promotions and demotions of Grzenia-Romanowski in his whole military career. Minutes of the meetings of the GUT Senate from 1949–1956 are also a valuable source. Grzenia-Romanowski, due to his occupied position, was a member of the body that settled the most important matters at the university. Therefore, they contain information about the proposals of the head of the MC regarding the functioning of the university. I also used the collections of the Military Archives in Gdynia, where you can find documents of the Military Political Board (MPB) of the Polish Navy from 1956–1965. They contain, among others, instructions and orders of the future Rear Admiral.⁶ Essential information regarding the fate of the to-be Rear Admiral during the German occupation is provided by an

2 Military History Bureau (MHB), Personal File (PF): Gereon Grzenia-Romanowski (PF), 1624/78/87.

3 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Personal Record Sheet (PRS), Poznań 26.04.1945.

4 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography (Życiorys), Elbląg 9.12.1947.

5 See MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Opinion about Gereon Grzenia-Romanowski, 1.03.1948, k. 119.

6 Testimony of Professor Jerzy Przybylski, 29.09.2017.

article by Stanisław Dziadoń.⁷ The presented biographical sketch is also based on oral accounts of people who knew Grzenia-Romanowski: Lieutenant Commander Wiesław Piórkowski⁸ and Prof. Jerzy Przybylski. In the years 1956–1969, Lieutenant Commander Wiesław Piórkowski was an adjutant of Rear Admiral Grzenia-Romanowski, i.e. in the period when he was the head of the Political Board of the Polish Navy and the commander of the PNAHW. Profesor Przybylski served in the Navy when the protagonist of the article held important positions in it.

In the last several years there have been many publications on Grzenia-Romanowski. They mainly take the form of short biographies.⁹ Information about him can be also found in publications devoted to the history of the Polish Navy¹⁰ or the Kashubian-Pomeranian movement.¹¹

This sketch is an important contribution to showing the ways of developing a career in the Polish People's Republic, especially for people from Gdańsk Pomerania. This text was written to help answer the following questions:

1. What factors contributed to the fact that Grzenia-Romanowski decided on a military career?
2. What did the cooperation of the future Rear Admiral with the Union of Armed Struggle look like?
3. Why Grzenia-Romanowski was included in the ranks of the communist People's Guard?
4. What was the political and military career of Grzenia-Romanowski in the first post-war years?
5. How did the work of Grzenia-Romanowski as the head of the Military College of the Gdańsk University of Technology look like?
6. Why did Grzenia-Romanowski act as deputy commander of the Navy for political affairs?
7. How did the superiors of Grzenia-Romanowski evaluate his work as the head of Political Administration in the Polish Navy?

7 Stanisław Dziadoń, „Kaszubski Admirał”, *Litery*, 1963, 1–2.

8 Testimony of Commander Wiesław Piórkowski, 9.07. 2018.

9 See *Słownik Biograficzny Pomorza Nadwiślańskiego G–K*, edited by Stanisław Gierszewski, t. 2, edited by Zbigniew Nowak (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1994); Walter Pater, *Admirałowie 1918–2005. Słownik biograficzny* (Gdynia: Muzeum Marynarki Wojennej, 2006); Janusz Królikowski, *Generałowie i admirałowie Wojska Polskiego 1943–1990 (AH)*, t. 1 (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2010); Zbigniew Stromski, *Pamięci godni. Chojnicki słownik biograficzny 1275–1980* (Bydgoszcz: Pomorze, 1986); „Zmarł kontradmirał w st. sp. Gereon Grzenia-Romanowski”, *Żołnierz Wolności*, 21.01.1983, 2.

10 Władysław Białek, Tadeusz Struniewski, *Wyższa Szkoła Marynarki Wojennej imienia Bohaterów Westerplatte* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo MON, 1978); Czesław Ciesielski, Walter Pater, Jerzy Przybylski, *Polska Marynarka Wojenna 1918–1980. Zarys dziejów* (Warsaw: Bellona, 1992).

11 Cezary Obracht-Prondzyński, *Zjednoczeni w idei. Pięćdziesiąt lat działalności Zrzeszenia Kaszubsko-Pomorskiego (1956–2006)* (Gdańsk: Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 2006).

8. What factors determined that the protagonist of the article became the commander of PNA, and then the head of the High Military College and the University of Gdańsk?

Gereon Grzenia was born on March 19, 1916 in the town of Piece near Zblewo in the Starogard powiat, in the Pomeranian voyevodeship. He came from a petty-bourgeois family. His father Jan Grzenia was born in 1894 and came from Chmielno in the Kartuzy powiat. In the interwar period, he was a co-owner of a textile store in Chojnice and then in Wejherowo. After the end of World War II, J. Grzenia joined the Polish Socialist Party (PSP) and took the position of director of the National Clothing Factory “Odzież” in Wejherowo.¹² His mother Agnieszka née Laskowska was born in 1894 and came from the village of Pobłocie in the Wejherowo powiat. She had no specific profession and was never politically involved.¹³

In 1920, his parents moved to Chojnice, where Grzenia studied at the local Classical Gymnasium, which he graduated in 1931. It is worth mentioning that the graduates of this school, which was established in the 17th century, were many outstanding regional activists, people of science and art. Apart from Grzenia, they were: the later, co-founder and honorary president of the branch of the Kashubian Association in Chojnice, Albin Makowski, the world-famous opera singer Bogdan Paprocki and head of the Department of Human Genetics at the Polish Academy of Science (PAS) Prof. Antoni Horst.¹⁴ However, Grzenia decided to continue his professional career in the army.¹⁵ This decision could have been influenced by family circumstances. Probably in 1929 his parents divorced.¹⁶ In a Catholic community, divorce was extremely rare at the time. This event must have certainly been a hard experience for Grzenia. Because of this, his parents might have thought that military school would be good for him.

12 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, *Biography*, k. 126; Record Sheet, 1960, k. 2.

13 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, *Biography*, k. 126; Record Sheet, 1960, k. 2. Jan Grzenia probably died on 03.10.1960. Author could not establish the date of death of Agnieszka Grzenia. See Gdynia Cemetery – Witomino Cemetery/ Jan Grzenia, accessed on 16.12.2017, <http://nieobecni.com.pl/index.php?s=grob&id=197570>. The date of birth found on J. Grzenia tombstone is March 1890.

14 Henryk Poróżyński, *Z dziejów Liceum Ogólnokształcącego im. Filomatów Chojnickich w Chojnicach (1623–2002)* (Słupsk: Wydawnictwo Pomorskiej Akademii Pedagogicznej, 2004), 72, 94, 158, 170, 208, 238. Albin Makowski (1908–1982), accessed on 09.04.2017, <http://www.historiachojnic.pl/biografia/27/albin-makowski>.

15 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, *Biography*, k. 126 – 127; Record Sheet, k. 2.

16 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Excerpt from report of Chief of Personnel PEB Lieutenant Tomczak from MD Morski from 1947, k. 43. In his assessment of Grzenia-Romanowski as deputy commander of 16th Infantry Division he wrote: “In the last couple of weeks I have noticed bad influence of his mother, with whom he had no contact for years /mother divorced his father 18 years ago/”.

Studying there would allow him to be away from the harsh atmosphere of his family home. Grzenia joined the Cadet Corps No. 2 (KK nr 2) in Chełmno. During the Second Polish Republic period, Cadet Corps were elite schools that taught future officers – commanders of the Polish Army (PA). Graduates could continue their education in Infantry Officer Cadet Corps or other military structures.¹⁷

Grzenia's education in Cadet Corps in Chełmno lasted until 1936, when as a result of a reform of education and the policy of budget cuts for military purposes, Cadet Corps No. 2 was liquidated and its students were transferred to Cadet Corps No. 3 in Rawicz. As a result of the merger of the two schools, the Rawicki Corps adopted No. 2 of the Chełmno Corps.¹⁸ In this school he passed his final exams in 1937.¹⁹ After passing the secondary school-leaving examination, he perfected his military skills at the Infantry Officer Cadet School (IOCS) in Komorów near Ostrowia Mazowiecka. After completing his education at the IOCS, he was sent to practice in the Rifle Regiment (RR).²⁰ This unit was then part of the Motorized Infantry Regiment, which was part of the Warsaw Armoured Motorized Brigade (WAMB).²¹ Its commander was the future chief commander of the Home Army (HA), Certified Colonel Stefan Rowecki "Grot". On August 1st, 1939, in the face of the impending conflict with Germany, Grzenia received his first promotion to the rank of officer – he was assigned to permanent active duty in the infantry and appointed 2nd lieutenant. At the same time, he was the commander of the 2nd platoon of the 1st company of RR WAMB.²² During the September Campaign, a brigade commanded by Colonel S. Rowecki fought in the area of Puławy, Dęblin

17 Witold Lisowski, „Polskie Korpusy Kadetów w latach 1918–1939”, *Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny* (WPH) R.26 (1981): 157 – 158.

18 Andrzej Cwer, *Polskie szkoły kadeckie w latach 1918–1939* (Siedlce: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Przyrodniczo-Humanistycznego, 2012), 115– 116; Jerzy Wodzyński, Marian Pawluk, Andrzej Dławichowski et al., *Księga Pamięci Kadetów II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Rytm, 2001), 49–50.

19 MHB, Cadet Corps (CC) No. 2, I.340.39.10, Daily Orders No. 84, Rawicz 21.04.1937; Daily Orders No. 87, Rawicz 24.04. 1937, Attachment to Daily Orders 87/37, k. 2; Wodzyński, Pawluk, Dławichowski *Księga pamięci*, 171; Marian Pawluk *Księga pamięci Kadetów II Rzeczypospolitej. Aneks* (Warsaw: Rytm, 2006), 47.

20 MHB, Infantry Officer Cadet School (IOCS), I. 340.13.14, Daily Orders No. 170, Komorowo near Ostrowia Mazowiecka 27.07.1939.

21 Waclaw Zaleski, *W Warszawskiej Brygadzie Pancerno-Motorowej 1939. Z dziejów 1 Pułku Strzelców Konnych* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo MON, 1988), 17–19.

22 Zaleski, *W Warszawskiej*, 285; MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, ZE, k. 3; MHB, PF, 1624/78/87 Record Card (RC), 1973, k. 129, MHB, PF, 124/78/87, Biographys, k. 126.

and Józefów.²³ Then Grzenia took part in a series of battles for Tomaszów Lubelski.²⁴ After the defeat of the Polish army, he joined the underground Service for Poland's Victory. He then adopted a new name: Zbigniew Romanowski (born on June 6, 1912 in Lubomel).²⁵ He associated himself with his underground nickname "Romanowski" so much that after World War II it became his official second surname.²⁶

Grzenia-Romanowski, at the time known under the pseudonym "Zielony", was tasked with organizing a secret Permanent Alertness Platoon in the Radzyń Podlaski powiat in the area of southern Podlasie.²⁷ He officially worked at the Mutual Insurance Institution (MII) in Radzyń Podlaski, then in a forester's lodge in Suchowola.²⁸ During this period, due to numerous arrests among members of the resistance movement, he was directed to Warsaw, where he worked as a laborer in the construction of the airport in Bielany.²⁹ At the same time, he regularly gave chief of intelligence at MII, 2nd Lieutenant Franciszek Gramza plans for the construction of the airport, including the location of hangars and fuel tanks.³⁰ After some time, he quit his job at the construction site and went to work at the "Władysław Juchniewicz" transport office in Warsaw.³¹ He was then given the task of creating proper conditions for the use of car rolling stock for the needs of underground activity.³² In November 1941, the owner of the transport office, not wanting to have a person cooperating with the underground in his factory, dismissed Grzenia-Romanowski from his job. In this situation, he moved to the forwarding company "A&P Haller" in Warsaw.³³ There he was appointed freight forwarder.

23 Tadeusz Jurga, *Regularne jednostki Wojska Polskiego w 1939 r. Organizacja, działania bojowe, uzbrojenie, metryki związków operacyjnych, dywizji i brygad* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo MON, 1975), 298; Stanisław Lityński, Tadeusz Wasilewski, „Armie «Prusy i Lublin» oraz grupa armij gen. Dęba-Biernackiego”. in: *Polskie Siły Zbrojne w II wojnie światowej. Kampania wrześniowa 1939. Przebieg działań od 9 do 14 września*, t. 1, part 3, edited by Adam Sawczyński (London: Instytut Historyczny im. gen. Sikorskiego, 1959), 359–360.

24 Apoloniusz Zawilski, *Bitwy polskiego września* (Kraków: Znak, 2009), 634.

25 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography, k. 126.

26 Only through the order of Minister of National Defense Marshal Konstanty Rokossowski from 31.01.1951 Gereon Grzenia could officially change his surname to "Grzenia-Romanowski". See MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Personal order excerpt No. 108, Warsaw 31.01.1951, k. 113.

27 Dziadoń, „Kaszubski”, 1.

28 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography, k. 126; KE, k. 129.

29 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography, k. 126 – 127.

30 Ibidem, k. 126–127; MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, PRS, k. 123.

31 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography, k. 127; MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, KE, k. 129.

32 Dziadoń, „Kaszubski”, 1.

33 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography, k. 127; MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, KE, k. 129.

This relatively quiet period in his life (despite the everyday dangers of underground activity) did not last for too long. On May 14, 1942, he was arrested by the Gestapo on charges of political murder in Powązki.³⁴ Consequently, he was detained in Pawiak.³⁵

His ordeal lasted for three months. The owner and employees of “Władysław Juchniewicz”, who collected money for a bribe for prison guards, were the ones to contribute to the release of Grzenia. Thanks to their effort, on August 14, 1942, he left the prison.³⁶ It is important to note that no archival materials mentioning his captivity have survived.³⁷

After being released from prison, Grzenia-Romanowski politically approached the radical left. A significant role was played by a member of the People’s Guard, Władysław Kempa, a worker employed at Juchniewicz’s factory, with whom Grzenia-Romanowski distributed the illegal biweekly “Robotnik” for Polish Socialists. This publishing house represented socialist activists who advocated cooperation with the communists and the Soviet Union.³⁸ On July 12, 1943, Grzenia-Romanowski became an instructor in the People’s Guard, adopting the underground name “Gwardiuk”.³⁹ Such a decision could have been the result of support given to him by the communist workers during his imprisonment. He felt he owed a debt of gratitude towards them, which probably explains his involvement in communist partisan activities.

At the beginning of his activity in PG, he was responsible for the training of young Guardsmen and the distribution of “bibuła”. His new comrades in arms helped him find a job at the Warsaw West railway station. While working there, he announced train departures and arrivals. He also warned his underground associates about searches.⁴⁰

During the occupation, an important event took place in the private life of Grzenia-Romanowski. On October 29, 1939, he married Jadwiga Kuzarzewska in a Roman Catholic parish in Cechówka (it is currently part of the city of Sulejówek near Warsaw). The relationship led to two children being born: his daughter Irena (May 22, 1944 – ?),

34 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography, k. 127. Author could not determine which mass political murder Grzenia-Romanowski was accused of.

35 Pawiak was an infamous Gestapo prison in Warsaw. In 1939–1944 around 100 thousand prisoners passed through its walls, of which 37 thousand were killed.

36 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography, k. 127–128; MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, PRS, k.123; Dziadoń, “Kaszubski”, 1.

37 Pawiak Museum employees were able to recreate only 50% of prisoner files. We can base our knowledge only on the personal testimony of Grzenia. I received this information from Robert Hasselbusch, a researcher from Pawiak Museum.

38 The ideological “worker” concept is covered by: Jerzy Jarowiecki, Jerzy Myśliński, Andrzej Notkowski, *Prasa polska w latach 1939–1945* (Warszawa: PWN, 1980), 85–88; Stanisława Lewandowska, *Polska konspiracyjna prasa informacyjno-polityczna 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1982), 137–142, MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography, k. 127–128; PRS, k. 123.

39 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography, k. 128.

40 Dziadoń, „Kaszubski”, 1.

and his son Zbigniew (February 7, 1947 – February 10, 2000), who later became a captain in the Polish Navy.⁴¹ It is no accident that the protagonist of this biographical sketch gave his son his old underground name. He probably wanted to pass onto him a part of his own partisan identity.⁴²

At the end of July 1944, at the news of the Red Army approaching Warsaw, Grzenia-Romanowski abandoned his job on the railway and tried to reach the territories occupied by Soviet troops. However, he was captured by the Germans and detained in a camp in Kąkolewo near Leszno (Polenlager). Poles imprisoned there had to work at road construction and unloading of wagons.⁴³ In January 1945, when the Red Army entered Wielkopolska, Grzenia-Romanowski supposedly ordered his fellow prisoners to escape. He himself went to Poznań, which was occupied by the Russians.⁴⁴ There, he became involved in the Polish Workers' Party (PWP), which was at the time building its urban and provincial structures,⁴⁵ and took the position of chairman of the youth wing of the party – the Union of Youth Struggle (UYS). At the end of April 1945, he was mobilized into the army.⁴⁶ He took the position of political and educational officer, assuming the function of a lecturer (full-time in the rank of major) in the 12th Infantry Division, which was being formed at the time in Poznań. In May and June 1945, the unit was moved to West Pomerania to protect the new western border of the country.⁴⁷

Taking into consideration the political situation of the time, it may seem surprising that a pre-war officer and former Union of Armed Struggle soldier, became a political officer in the 12th ID. However, Grzenia-Romanowski's professional past could have been an asset for the communists. The corps of political and educational officers suffered from numerous staff shortages at that time. As of February 9, 1946, only 4,557 of the 5,743 positions were occupied, which meant that the level of employment in this

41 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, *Wyrok w imieniu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 6.12.1949, k. 110; Gdynia Cmentary – Witomino Cmentary/Zbigniew Grzenia-Romanowski, access 09.04.2017, <http://nieobecni.com.pl/index.php?s=grob&id=197562>. On the tombstone of Zbigniew Grzenia-Romanowski we can find the date of birth: 17 February 1947.

42 Dziadoń, „Kaszubski”, 1.

43 Ibidem.

44 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography, k. 128; Dziadoń, „Kaszubski”, 1–2.

45 More about building urban and provincial structures of the Polish Workers' Party in Wielkopolska see Krzysztof Strykowski, *Poznań '45. Ostatni rok wojny i pierwszy rok odbudowy* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Nauka i Innowacje, 2013), 138–139, 141.

46 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, PRS, k. 123; Dziadoń, „Kaszubski”, 2.

47 Kazimierz Kozłowski, *Między racją stanu a stalinizmem. Pierwsze dziesięć lat władzy politycznej na Pomorzu Zachodnim 1945–1955* (Warszawa–Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Archiwum Państwowego „Dokument”, 2000), 94; Stanisław Komornicki, *Regularne jednostki Ludowego Wojska Polskiego. Formowanie, działania bojowe, organizacja, uzbrojenie, metryki jednostek piechoty* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo MON, 1968), 163; Strykowski, *Poznań '45*, 162; Tadeusz Białecki, „Pierwsze lata polskiego Szczecina (1945–1949)”, w: *Dzieje Szczecina 1945–1990*, t. 4, red. Tadeusz Białecki et al. (Szczecin: „13 Muz”, 1998), 52–57.

apparatus was only 79.3%. Another weak point of the corps was the low level of education of its staff. It is estimated that in the spring of 1945, only 8.5% of officers had a university degree and 49.8% had secondary education (complete and incomplete).⁴⁸ In this situation, for decision makers of the Main Political and Educational Administration of the Polish Army (MPEAP), Grzenia-Romanowski could have been a perfect candidate for the job. His education and knowledge of military life were to help him gain authority among soldiers. On the other hand, as a member of the Polish Workers' Party and a person experienced in political work, he was to guarantee the implementation of the governmental political agenda in the army.⁴⁹

Working in this position was difficult for 2nd Lieutenant Grzenia-Romanowski. That is why on July 21, 1945, he assumed, as suggested by his superiors, the position of deputy commander of the battalion (full-time in the rank of captain) for political and educational matters of the 43rd Infantry Regiment (IR).⁵⁰ At the same time, on August 14, 1945, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the corps of political and educational officers.⁵¹ This meant that his superiors could see in him some potential that had not yet been fully utilized. He did much better in his new position. He was to gain some authority among both soldiers and his superiors.⁵² His commander Captain Leo Lis, however, believed that Grzenia-Romanowski devoted too little work to political and educational training in the unit.⁵³

In the first years after World War II, Polish troops, apart from military tasks, also carried out activities in the field of organization of military administration and settlement in Western Pomerania.⁵⁴ That was also one of the new responsibilities of Lieutenant Grzenia-Romanowski. He organized, among other things, military settlement in the Gryfino powiat, in which military colonists constituted approx. 75% of residents.⁵⁵ For his services, on May 9, 1946, he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of

48 Witold Jarno, „Praca polityczno-wychowawcza i nastroje w wojskach lądowych w pierwszych latach po zakończeniu II wojny światowej”, *Przegląd Nauk Historycznych* 10 (2011): 151; Andrzej Lewicki, „Polityka kadrowa Polskiej Partii Robotniczej w wojsku (1944–1948)”. In: *Trzydzieści pięć lat Ludowego Wojska Polskiego w służbie narodu i partii*, edited by Bolesław Krasiewicz, *Zeszyty Naukowe WAP (ZN WAP)* 96 (1978): 72–76.

49 Grzenia-Romanowski became member of Polish Workers' Party 20.02.1945 r., a different source states that it was 20.11.1945. See MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Biography, k. 128; ZE, k. 1.

50 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Employment characteristic, 20.06.1945, k. 57.

51 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Promotion application (copy), 3.07.1945, k. 58; ZE, k. 1.

52 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Employment characteristic, 7.11.1945, k. 56.

53 Ibidem.

54 Zygmunt Huszcza, Zbigniew Szydłowski, „Z dziejów Pomorskiego Okręgu Wojskowego w latach 1946–1948”, *WPH* 8 (1963): 283–284; Zdzisław Misztal, „Udział ludowego WP w tworzeniu administracji państwowej i zagospodarowaniu kraju po II wojnie światowej”, *MHB* 26 (1981): 31, 38.

55 Huszcza, Szydłowski, „Z dziejów”, 283; MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Decoration application (Order Polonia Restituta kl. V), 23.11.1945, k. 55.

Polonia Restituta.⁵⁶ He got it for his contribution in rebuilding Poland and strengthening its existence.⁵⁷ When he worked as a political and educational officer in the battalion (he was also the deputy military commander of the city of Szczecin), he was again promoted in military rank. On May 9, 1946 (the same day he received Polonia Restituta), he was promoted to captain.⁵⁸ This date was probably not accidental. It was the day when the Polish People's Army celebrated its first anniversary of victory over Germany. Grzenia-Romanowski rose very quickly among the ranks of the corps of political officers of the 12th ID. On February 15, 1946, he became the deputy commander (full-time in the rank of lieutenant colonel) of the 43th Infantry Regiment for political and educational matters.⁵⁹ His superiors from the political and educational division of 12 ID (Major Hakman, Captain Gąsiorowski) saw him as a "democrat with a straight political spine," who "leaned towards Marxism".⁶⁰ In their opinion, he was a person who had great sympathy for the new government, but still lacked proper ideological education. Still, at work, both with the conscripts and the civilian population, he was able to achieve results that were expected of him.⁶¹ Consequently, on May 2, 1946, he took the office of deputy head of the Political and Educational Department (PED) of 12 ID.⁶² In the opinion of his superiors, the education he had received in the Corps prevented him from working effectively with the conscripts.⁶³ They believed that Captain Grzenia-Romanowski should be directed to the line service, where after appropriate training he could take command of an infantry regiment.⁶⁴ However, in contrast to other members of the Political and Educational Department, he fulfilled his duties well.⁶⁵ During this period, Grzenia-Romanowski was again decorated. He was given the Silver Cross of Merit⁶⁶ on July 18, 1946.⁶⁷ The medal was awarded to people who were particularly accomplished in professional and social work.⁶⁸ In his new position, Captain

56 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, ZE, k. 4.

57 Kazimierz Madej, „Ordery i odznaczenia Ludowego Wojska Polskiego”.in: *Trzydzieści pięć lat Ludowego Wojska Polskiego w służbie narodu i partii*, edited by: Bolesław Krasiewicz, ZN WAP 96 (1978): 198.

58 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, ZE, k. 1.

59 Ibidem, Promotion application (granting the rank of "captain"), 1946, k. 59; Employment characteristic, 20.02.1946, k. 54; ZE, k. 4.

60 Ibidem, Employment characteristic, 23.03.1946, k. 53.

61 Ibidem.

62 Ibidem, ZE, k. 4.

63 Ibidem, Employment characteristic, 05.06.1946, k. 52.

64 Ibidem.

65 Ibidem.

66 Ibidem, Decoration application (Srebrny Krzyż Zasługi), 25.04.1946, k. 50.

67 Ibidem, k. 50; ZE, k. 4; Record Sheet (RS), 1973, k. 129.

68 Madej, „Ordery”, 208–209.

Grzenia-Romanowski became even more involved in political work with the inhabitants of Szczecin. He was a co-founder of organizations highly involved with the government: the Soldier's Friend Society and the Union of Participants of Armed Struggle with Germany.⁶⁹ After three months of work in PED 12th ID, he was again nominated. On August 5, 1946, he assumed one of the highest positions in the Political and Educational Apparatus of Military District No. 2, i.e. division deputy commander (full-time in the rank of colonel) for political and educational affairs in the 12th ID.⁷⁰ However, as early as 1947 he was transferred to the position of deputy commander of the 16th Kashubian Infantry Division (KID) in Gdańsk. One can assume that the Kashubian roots of Grzenia-Romanowski may have played a major role in this change. From 1946, the communist authorities carried out activities aimed at winning the sympathy of the Kashubian population. This also applied to local conscripts who served in the 16th KID⁷¹. It seems that the decisions regarding Grzenia-Romanowski's career were made to find a commander for the 16th KID who would know and understand the specificity of the region, which would allow the acting government to achieve its goals.⁷² This was particularly important in the context of the forthcoming elections to the Legislative Sejm on January 19, 1947. In the election, the Polish Workers Party's main competitor was the Polish People's Party (PPP) under the leadership of Stanisław Mikołajczyk. PPP enjoyed great support in rural areas, which were inhabited by the Kashubian population.⁷³ After the communists committed electoral fraud, they decided on a more thorough process of verification of the political and educational apparatus of the Polish Army under their control. According to the head of the Personnel Department of the Political and Educational Board (PEB) MD No. 2 Captain Lisicki, Grzenia-Romanowski did not work systematically on deepening his worldview, which was necessary when working with conscripts and civilians.⁷⁴ Lisicki came to the conclusion that his subordinate would be better off as a regiment commander. However, he took into account the current staff quality of the Polish Army and warned against swift dismissal of Grzenia-Romanowski from his position.⁷⁵ However, in the following months of

69 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Decoration application (Order Polonia Restituta kl. V), 25.06.1946, k. 51.

70 Ibidem, ZE, k. 4.

71 Jan Prokurat, „Działalność polityczna i społeczna 16 Dywizji Piechoty na Wybrzeżu w latach 1945–1947”, in: *Z lat wojny i okupacji 1939–1945*, t. 4, edited by: Leszek Grot (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo MON, 1972), 415.

72 Commander of the 16th KID Gen. Daniluk considered Grzenia-Romanowski his deputy of Kashubian, not political affairs. See MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Excerpt from report of the Lecturer of the First Branch of the Political Board, Maj. Worwa, June 1947, k. 43.

73 Jarosław Wtorkiewicz, *Wojsko Polskie w akcji propagandowej i wyborach do Sejmu Ustawodawczego w 1947 roku* (Warsaw: Trio, 2002), 26–31.

74 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Employment characteristic (copy), 27.03.1947, k. 49.

75 Ibidem.

1947, deputy commander of the 16th KID experienced symptoms of “post-election depression”, which negatively affected the quality of his work. This situation was caused by the electoral failure of the Kashubian Ticket of which he was a candidate.⁷⁶ Also, Grzenia-Romanowski experienced family problems.⁷⁷ Because of this crisis the Minister of National Defense Michał Rola-Żymierski was forced to personally intervene.⁷⁸ As a result, a meeting was arranged which was attended by: Marshal M. Rola-Żymierski, commander of the 16th KID, General Stanisław Daniluk, deputy head of PEB MD No. 2 Lieutenant Colonel A. Hajnicz and Captain Grzenia-Romanowski (full-time lieutenant colonel⁷⁹). It was established that the deputy commander of 16th KID would be transferred to Elbląg.⁸⁰ On September 3, 1947, he took over the position of commander of the 55th Infantry Regiment in Elbląg.⁸¹ He was also a member of the City National Council.⁸² Due to the lack of appropriate competence and experience in commanding the regiment, he held this position only until the end of February 1948. After leaving Elbląg, he was directed to a training course for regiment commanders at the Infantry Training Center (ITC) in Rembertów. While studying at the Infantry Academy, the superiors of Grzenia-Romanowski noticed that he made an effort to raise his level of military knowledge, and committed himself to consolidating his political worldview. This became apparent in his studies of Marxist ideology.⁸³ In January 1949, he completed ITC training with a good overall grade.⁸⁴ After graduation, he became (starting from February 3, 1949) the commander of the 42nd Motorized Infantry Regiment in Żary (full-time in the rank of colonel), which was part of the 11th Motorized Infantry

76 The Kashubian Ticket was created at the end of 1946. It comprised local Kashubian activists. It was intended by the communists to compete with the Polish Workers Party in the area of Gdańsk Pomerania. See: Tadeusz Bolduan, *Nie dali się złamać. Spojrzenie na ruch kaszubski 1939–1995* (Gdańsk: Oficyna Czac, 1996), 59–64; Krzysztof Sławski, *Bernard Szczęsny (1919–1993). Więzień Stutthofu, burmistrz Wejherowa, prezes Zrzeszenia Kaszubsko-Pomorskiego* (Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 2015), 148–151.

77 See MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Excerpt from report of Chief of Personnel PEB Lieutenant Tomczak from MD Morski from June 1947, k. 43. During this time his relationship with his first wife Jadwiga deteriorated. They divorced in December 1949. See MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, *Wyrok w imieniu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 6.12.1949, k. 110.

78 Ibidem.

79 An entry in his Record Sheet says that Grzenia-Romanowski held the position of Colonel during this time. See: MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, ZE, k. 4.

80 Grzenia-Romanowski in his *Biography*, which he wrote down while serving in Elbląg, he claimed that he was moved to lined infantry on his own request. See: MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, *Biography*, k. 128.

81 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, ZE, k. 4; ibidem, Personal order excerpt No. 1007, 21.08.1947, k. 111.

82 Prokurat, „Działalność”, 420, annotation 74.

83 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Employment characteristic, 08.01.1949, k. 39.

84 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Ministry of National Defense, Infantry College. School certificate No. 36, 29.01.1949, k. 115.

Division.⁸⁵ This unit was stationed in MD No. 4, covering the region of Silesia, and was established as part of the “6-Year Plan”, which assumed a significant expansion of the Polish Army due to the increase in international tension.⁸⁶

Initially, Grzenia-Romanowski performed his new duties well. However, he quickly came into conflict with the division command. It is probably for this reason that the ID command No. 4 punished him with a written warning.⁸⁷ After receiving his first reprimand, subsequent charges began to pile up. They concerned poor organization and educational methods. In result, the regiment received a failing grade during an inspection in autumn⁸⁸. It should be noted that in the years 1948–1949 there were mass purges within the ranks of the Polish Army. Numerous arrests and dismissals within the corps of officers took place. It happened both to officers who had previously served in Gwardia Ludowa and started their careers before the war.⁸⁹ In this situation, Grzenia-Romanowski was also in danger of being repressed. In early October 1949, he was dismissed from his post⁹⁰. He was assigned a minor job as head of the Military College (MC) of the Gdańsk University of Technology. He held this position until November 1956.⁹¹

Gdańsk University of Technology was established two weeks after the end of World War II, by decree of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland on May 24, 1945, and is still the largest technical university in northern Poland to this day.⁹² The period in which Grzenia-Romanowski held the office of head of MC was one of the most fruitful in his career. The College had approximately two thousand students at a given time, and training took 3 years. Military training included learning special and theoretical subjects as well as practical and field exercises. The academic year comprised 144 lecture hours and 200 camp hours.⁹³ At the time when Grzenia-Romanowski worked at MC, it was considered one of the best educational facilities in the

85 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, ZE, k. 4. From 30.06.1949 captain Grzenia-Romanowski was a fully fledged commander of the 42th Motorized Infantry Regiment.

86 Jerzy Kajetanowicz, *Polskie wojska lądowe 1945–1960, skład bojowy, struktury organizacyjne, uzbrojenie* (Toruń: Europejskie Centrum Edukacyjne, 2005), 133–139, 148.

87 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Order No. 0388 about state garrisons within Military District IV, 22.08.1949, k. 114.

88 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Employment characteristic for February 1949–October 1949, 28.10.1949, k. 38.

89 Jerzy Poksiński, *Represje wobec oficerów Wojska Polskiego 1949–1956 „TUN”* (Warsaw: Bellona, 2007), 95–120.

90 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, ZE, k. 4.

91 Ibidem.

92 Edmund Wittbrodt, „Politechnika Gdańska. Odbudowa i pierwsze lata”, in: *Zarys dziejów politechniki w Gdańsku 1904–2004*, edited by: Janusz Rachoń, Roman Beger, Jerzy Kulas (Gdańsk: Politechnika Gdańska – Stowarzyszenie Absolwentów Politechniki Gdańskiej, 2004), 44.

93 Gdańsk University of Technology Archive (GUT Archive), BR/0001/5, Minutes from GUT Senate meeting, 08.02.1952, k. 4–6.

country. The school collaborated with the Union of Polish Youth (UPY) and the Polish Students' Association (PSA) in the field of accommodation and culture. Cooperation with the Academic Sports Association brought many awards (including 1,400 badges of the Universal Service "Service to Poland").⁹⁴

As a member of the Gdańsk University of Technology Senate, Grzenia-Romanowski paid special attention to social and daily living related issues of students. He put a lot of emphasis on the creation of a university based entity that would take care of the health of cadets. As medical examinations proved, their health was unsatisfactory. He also openly criticized the indifferent attitude towards students of those responsible for their well-being.⁹⁵

Actions taken by the head of the MC had tangible results. As part of the health-care initiative which he initiated, patients suffering from tuberculosis were admitted to the 7th Health Center. Taking into account the daily schedule of the cadets, the Academic Health Center at ul.Śniadeckich was opened to patients from 1–7 p.m.⁹⁶ In the first years of his work at the university, Grzenia-Romanowski attached considerable significance to coordinating military classes with other subjects, emphasizing the importance of military training among students⁹⁷. Grzenia-Romanowski's positive results as head of the MC were noticed by his military superiors. On October 4, 1952, he was promoted to the rank of colonel.⁹⁸ However, he was still considered politically "unstable". This is proven by the fact the acting Minister of National Defense, General Stanisław Popławski rejected the application of the university authorities to grant Grzenia the 2nd Class Order of the Banner of Work.⁹⁹

During his work at the university, Grzenia-Romanowski made efforts to improve the financial and living conditions of students. In February 1956, he expressed his concerns about his students' fate during a GUT Senate meeting that discussed the particulars of implementing "The 5-year Plan".¹⁰⁰ The head of MC put major emphasis

94 Ibidem.

95 Ibidem. The head of MC also complained about poor conditions of sanitary installations on GUT premises and in dormitories.

96 GUT Archive, BR/0001/5, Minutes from GUT Senate meeting, 24.03.1952, k. 16.

97 GUT Archive, BR/0001/3, Minutes from GUT Senate meeting, 07.06.1950, k. 11. Grzenia-Romanowski invited GUT deans to celebrate the end of the academic year 1949/1950 in the Military College. One of the main events was shooting training using live ammo that was supposed to happen in Brętowo. The ceremony was to end by the deans and the rector Prof. Dr.Eng. Paweł Szulkin awarding the best students.

98 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, ZE, k. 1.

99 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Decoration application, 19.04.1953, k. 30.

100 GUT Archive, BR/0001/9a, Minutes from GUT Senate meeting about "The 5-year Plan", 17.02.1956, p. 84–87.

on providing students with personal military overalls and boots.¹⁰¹ At the same time, Grzenia-Romanowski demanded that appropriate storage rooms were made available to the MC, where uniforms could be stored and ventilated. At the same time, adequate sanitary infrastructure had to be built that would enable students to wash and change clothes after classes.¹⁰²

The events of Polish October 1956, which enabled Władysław Gomułka and his political group to come to power, lead to changes in the professional career of Grzenia-Romanowski. On November 24, 1956, he was promoted to the position of acting deputy commander¹⁰³ for political affairs of the Polish Navy. He was given the post due to many political and social factors. The initial idea of giving Grzenia-Romanowski the post came from Deputy Minister of National Defense, General Zygmunt Duszyński, who knew Grzenia-Romanowski since their joint service in the People's Army. While in office, Grzenia-Romanowski was responsible for the appropriate “moral and political” attitude of the Navy staff, which at that time numbered almost seventeen thousand people.¹⁰⁴ He was also assigned the task of gaining the support of the Kashubian population for the new political party in power.¹⁰⁵ The Polish Navy did not accept Kashubs into their ranks during the Stalinist period (1948–1956). Obtaining such an important position in the Navy by a representative of the Kashubian population was to change the current state of affairs and favor the policy of regaining the good will of Kashubs by the government. The decision was also significant due to the fact that Grzenia-Romanowski belonged to the co-founders of the Kashubian Association (since 1964, the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association), which quickly became the largest regional organization in Gdańsk Pomerania.¹⁰⁶

In his new position, Grzenia-Romanowski also encountered other problems specific to this troubled historical period. One of them was the issue of participation in religious practices of members of the Polish Navy and their families. This happened especially after the events of October 1956, when participation in selected religious rites in the form of weddings, baptisms of children or Holy Mass became a more and more common practice among mariners and navy commanders.¹⁰⁷ Initially,

101 Ibidem. Thanks to Grzenia – Romanowski all 1st and 2nd year students were to receive overalls, which they could use during training. He also submitted a request for boots. The MC had 500 pairs of boots, which could be rented by students. It was still not enough to sustain their needs.

102 Ibidem.

103 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, ZE, k. 4. Grzenia-Romanowski stopped being acting deputy commander for political affairs of the Polish Navy starting from 4 December 1961.

104 Ciesielski, Pater, Przybylski, *Polska Marynarka*, zał. 31, 378.

105 Testimony of Commander Wiesław Piórkowski, 9.07.2018.

106 Obracht-Prondzyński, *Zjednoczeni*, 47, 51–75.

107 Military Archives in Gdynia (MAG), Navy Command – Political Management (NC – PM), 2918/64/16, Minutes from the 6th Polish Navy Party Conference that took place on 21–22.04.1960, k. 361.

Grzenia-Romanowski did not make much of this problem, he even allowed sailors to take part in Pasterka (Midnight Mass).¹⁰⁸ He changed his approach in 1960, when General Wojciech Jaruzelski became the new head of the Main Political Board of the Polish Army. His new superior demanded from his subordinates to strongly suppress religious rites.¹⁰⁹ Another important issue was the negative attitude towards the Soviet Union among both seamen and officers. The new head of the Political Board of the Polish Navy tried to limit religious practice, but it did not bring tangible results.¹¹⁰ During this time, Grzenia completed extramural studies at the Higher Economic School in Sopot, receiving in 1959 a master's degree in economics.¹¹¹

He held the office of deputy commander until autumn 1965. During this period, he again rose in rank, this time in naval forces. In 1963, the State Council appointed him to Rear Admiral. They explained that Grzenia-Romanowski was an intelligent officer with a large knowledge base who fulfilled his tasks with diligence.¹¹² His superiors in the Ministry of National Defense and the Main Political Board of the Polish Army issued his promotion because they trusted him and fully accepted his actions.

The departure of Grzenia-Romanowski from the post of the head of Military Political Board was officially motivated by health reasons.¹¹³ In reality, his superiors had reservations about the work of the political apparatus in the Navy. They criticised the lack of diligence in completing imposed educational projects.¹¹⁴ Also, stopping members of the officer corps, especially non-commissioned officers, participating in religious activities was a failure.¹¹⁵

At the beginning of November 1965, Grzenia-Romanowski was moved to the position of commander of the Polish Naval Academy of the Heroes of Westerplatte in Gdynia.¹¹⁶ This university, having the status of a military academy, was established in 1955 to train future officers of the Polish Navy.¹¹⁷ In the opinion of Jerzy

108 MAG, NC – PM, Instruction of chief of Navy Command – Political Management about days free from classes, 18.12.1959, k. 687.

109 Lech Kowalski, *Jaruzelski generał ze skazą. Biografia wojskowa generała armii Wojciecha Jaruzelskiego* (Poznań: Zysk i S-ka, 2012), 307–332.

110 See: MAG, NC – PM, 2152/61/14, Disposition No. 02/Polit., 9.03.1959, k. 145.

111 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Higher Economic School in Sopot – graduation diploma (copy), 15.10.1959, k. 104. Grzenia-Romanowski MA dissertation subject was: “Socio-economical growth of the Kashubian region.”

112 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Application of appointment to Rear Admiral, 1963, k. 20.

113 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Service note for the period between December 1963 and December 1965, May 1966, k. 18.

114 Ibidem. The author was not able to determine what educational projects Grzenia-Romanowski's superiors had in mind.

115 Ibidem.

116 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, ZE, k. 4.

117 Białek, Struniewski, *Wyższa Szkoła*, 161–163.

Przybylski, a retired professor of the Naval Academy, the new position suited Grzenia-Romanowski best. He wanted Naval Academy students to be allowed free time, which they could use, for example, to meet with families of officers.¹¹⁸ This idea was to help transform the Naval Academy into a university, whose employees would constantly broaden their knowledge and competences on an ongoing basis. This initiative did not meet with the approval of some of the academic staff, which led to conflict with the new commander.¹¹⁹ Consequently, many distinguished members of the Academy were persecuted. Vulgar vocabulary and various intimidation methods were used against them.¹²⁰ At the same time, Grzenia-Romanowski was averse towards the leadership of the Navy. He expressed it through criticizing their orders and publicly showing dissatisfaction with certain decisions within the chain of command.¹²¹ During this time, his health began to deteriorate. Grzenia-Romanowski fainted occasionally while working at the university. He never asked for a doctor when it happened, fearing for his health becoming a public issue. His adversaries took advantage of the situation and argued that his deteriorating health prevented him from performing his duties properly.¹²² The Navy commander, Vice Admiral Zdzisław Studziński took action. He prepared a motion for his dismissal, which was supported by all deputies of the Minister of National Defense and the head of the Internal Military Service.¹²³ They decided that Grzenia-Romanowski was to be transferred to the position of head of the Military College at the Pedagogical University (PU) in Gdańsk. At the same time, he was to be promoted to brigadier general.¹²⁴ Major General Bolesław Chocha, head of the General Staff of the Polish Army and Deputy Minister of National Defense, took it upon himself to convince Grzenia-Romanowski to become the head of the MCPU. They had a conversion, as a result of which Grzenia agreed to take the office of head of military training in Gdańsk.¹²⁵ He was eventually assigned the position of head of the Military College at the Higher Economic School (HES), which he held from April 1969 to June 1970. HES was founded in 1952 and continued the tradition of the College of Seaborne Trade established in 1946. When he was assigned to organize military training in So-

118 The new commander of PNAHW wanted to use the knowledge which he gained in Cadet Corps. Cadets were allowed free time, during which they were invited by families of officers from nearby garrisons.

119 Testimony of Prof. Jerzy Przybylski, 29.09.2017.

120 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Navy command application to release Grzenia-Romanowski from the position of Commander of PNAHW, 4.11.1968, k. 13.

121 Ibidem.

122 Ibidem.

123 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Service note for the Minister of National Defense, 12.12.1968, k. 11.

124 Ibidem.

125 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Service note of chief of General Staff of the Polish Army, Major General Bolesław Chocha, 3.03.1969, k. 12.

pot, the number of students in the facility was almost four thousand.¹²⁶ During his working days, the Higher Economic School and Gdańsk College of Education were merged and the University of Gdańsk (UG) was formed.¹²⁷ As a result of a new university forming in the Tri-City, the current head of the Military College of the Higher Economic School was transferred to a similar position at UG. In this situation, the director of the Military Department of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Brigadier General Dr. Lesław Dudek proposed the nomination of Grzenia-Romanowski as head of the MC UG.¹²⁸ The Rear Admiral worked in his new post until the summer of 1973. In the same year, he was retired and granted class III disability in connection with his military service. Officially, he was retired because he reached the age of 57 and had a long history of military service. However, health was the decisive reason for the release of Grzenia-Romanowski from the army. In 1967 he suffered a myocardial infarction, he also had atherosclerosis and chronic pancreatitis.¹²⁹ The retirement pay he received at that time was not the highest.¹³⁰ In these circumstances, friends helped him get the job of a representative of the Polish Ocean Lines (PLO) in the Chinese capital, Beijing.¹³¹ Grzenia-Romanowski worked in China until 1975. After returning to Poland, from 1978 he was employed in the training division of the Polish Yachting Association, where he was involved in establishing yacht clubs. A testimony from this period of his critical attitude towards the contemporary political reality has survived to this day. In January 1976, Grzenia-Romanowski collected documentation of his military service for the needs of the Association of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy. For this reason, he asked the head of the Central Military Archives (CMA) for proper certificates documenting his military service before 1945. However, his request was met with denial. CMA officials claimed that due to the lack of documents from this period, they could not issue him appropriate certificates. The management of the Archives also asked him to send more detailed information about his military service.¹³² The attitude of CMA officials made Grzenia-Romanowski dissatisfied. He voiced his annoyance in a letter which he sent to Major General Zygmunt Zieliński, the

126 Marek Andrzejewski, Leszek Mokrzejcki, Józef Arno Włodarski, *Zarys dziejów Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Sześćdziesiąt lat tradycji polskiego szkolnictwa pedagogicznego i ekonomicznego na Wybrzeżu* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo UG, 2006), 30.

127 Ibidem, 45.

128 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Transfer request, 29.05.1973, k. 10.

129 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Opinion of Military Medical Board, No. 684/2/94/73, 4.05.1973, k. 79–80. Doctors that examined Grzenia-Romanowski found other illnesses: retrosternal pain radiating to the left shoulder and scapula, and epigastric pain on the left side of the body causing nausea. Grzenia-Romanowski also complained that he suffered from cervical spine pain that started as early as 1940.

130 Gereon Grzenia-Romanowski received a monthly pension of 9150 zlotys. See: MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Report of Financial Department of Ministry of National Defense, 23.07.1973, k. 74.

131 Testimony of Prof. Jerzy Przybylski, 29.09.2017.

132 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, CMA director's reply to Grzenia-Romanowski's letter, 28.01.1976, k. 72.

head of the Human Resources Department at the Ministry of National Defense. He complained that after returning from abroad he received his service book, which did not include important information about his military service before 1945. In response to his complaints, military officials claimed that entries in his service book were based on the data from the record sheet found in the Human Resources Department of the Ministry of National Defense. In Grzenia-Romanowski's opinion this was an example of ill will and disrespectful attitude of state officials towards citizens. In his opinion, this negative approach could be seen in the actions of the Polish United Workers' Party members and other state officials, especially employees of military financial bodies.¹³³ He considered their attitude as antisocial and far from what the citizens would like and expect.¹³⁴ Correspondence with the head of staff of the Ministry of National Defense is evidence of his growing sense of detachment. Until recently, he held leading political and military positions in the country. After retiring and returning from the POL facility in China, it turned out that lower-ranking military personnel treated him with disrespect. Obviously, this frustrated the decorated "fighter" for People's Poland, who had many years of military service behind him. The letter he sent is in part a complaint to the Ministry of National Defense, aimed at encouraging its officers to check the quality of work of their subordinates. It is very possible that the ignorance and disregard which he experienced caused him to become interested in the activities of the democratic opposition. However, there is little evidence.¹³⁵ In the following years, Grzenia-Romanowski's health deteriorated. He died on January 18, 1983. On January 24, 1983, the solemn funeral of the Rear Admiral took place at the Witomiński Cemetery in Gdynia. Navy commander Admiral Ludwik Janczyszyn and his deputy Rear Admirals: Ludwik Dutkowski, Kazimierz Bossy and Zygmunt Rudomino took part in the ceremony. Both senior officers and commanders of the Polish Navy, headed by Admiral L. Janczyszyn, kept honour guard at his coffin.¹³⁶ The final farewell ceremony was also attended by representatives of Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy, the University of Gdańsk and the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association.¹³⁷ The delegation of the city of Chojnice with deputy head Marek Wituszyński and former chairman

133 MHB, PF, 1624/78/87, Letter of Grzenia-Romanowski..., k. 71.

134 Ibidem.

135 Prof. Józef Borzyszkowski owns an issue of „Głos” (No 5/17/, June – July 1979), a journal connected to the Workers' Defence Committee, which is stamped by the owner: “Dr. Gereon Grzenia-Romanowski.”

136 „Ostatnia droga kontradmirala w st. spocz. Gereona Grzeni-Romanowskiego”, *Żołnierz Wolności*, 26.01.1983, 2.

137 Ibidem.

of the presidium of the City National Council, Stanisław Rolbiecki, also attended the funeral of Grzenia-Romanowski.¹³⁸

Gereon Grzenia-Romanowski was one of the few pre-war Polish Army officers who achieved the highest political and military positions during the Polish People's Republic era. Although he had a genuine passion and talent for military service, he was not properly trained for most of the positions assigned to him. His political and military career was often not based on his qualifications, but resulted from political needs of the time. That is why he took, among others, the position of deputy head of the Polish Navy. While holding this office, he did not have the appropriate competence to perform political and educational work among soldiers. However, he was a very discretionary person for his superiors. He had extensive contacts with prominent decision-makers and kept his office for several years. His Kashubian roots also played an important role since they worked in favor of the government's policy to regain the trust of Kashubs. On the other hand, in all the positions he held Grzenia-Romanowski showed positive traits such as: diligence combined with the drive to reach goals he set out for himself, willingness to learn about problems related to performing the given job and concern for the affairs of people under his command. That is why his efforts often brought tangible results. This was particularly evident during his work as the head of the Military College of the Gdańsk University of Technology.

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¹³⁸ „Kontradmiral Gereon Grzenia-Romanowski – Honorowy Obywatel Chojnic”, *Gazeta Pomorska*, 3.02.1983, 8.

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English version: Mateusz Matuszczak, Mark Atkinson

SUMMARY

The presented article is a biographical sketch of Rear Admiral Gereon Grzeni – Romanowski (1916–1983). He was a pre-war officer of the Polish Army who fought in the communist resistance during the Second World War. After the Second World War, he made a fast career as a political officer of the Polish People's Army. His greatest promotion was to receive the post of deputy commander of the Navy for political affairs, which he held in the years 1956–1965. In the work on the article, a comparative method was used, consisting of a krytical juxtaposition of various sources (opinions, reports, biographies), which was helpful in determining the selected stages of Grzeni – Romanowski's life. The biographical sketch of Rear Admiral Grzenia – Romanowski shows that the highest positions in the Polish People's Army were often occupied by people who do not have adequate knowledge and competences. With their promotion, Grzenia-Romanowski's likewise, their political commitment and good contacts with the most important decision-makers of the period were more important.

KONTRADMIRAŁ GEREON GRZENIA-ROMANOWSKI (1916–1983). SZKIC BIOGRAFICZNY.

Słowa kluczowe: Korpus Kadetów, oficer polityczno-wychowawczy, Zarząd Polityczny, Marynarka Wojenna, szkolenie wojskowe, Politechnika Gdańska

STRESZCZENIE

Prezentowany artykuł jest szkicem biograficznym kontradmirala Gereona Grzeni-Romanowskiego (1916–1983). By on przedwojennym oficerem Wojska Polskiego, który walczył w komunistycznym ruchu oporu podczas II wojny światowej. Po zakończeniu wojny zrobił szybką karierę jako oficer polityczny ludowego Wojska Polskiego. Jego największym osiągnięciem było objęcie urzędu zastępcy dowódcy Marynarki Wojennej ds. politycznych, który sprawował w latach 1956–1965.

W pracy nad artykułem zastosowałem metodę porównawczą, polegającą na krytycznym zestawieniu różnych źródeł (opinii, raportów, biografii), które były pomocne w określeniu poszczególnych etapów życia Grzeni-Romanowskiego. Z biograficznego szkicu kontradmirala Grzeni-Romanowskiego wynika, że najwyższe stanowiska w ludowym WP często zajmowali ludzie, którzy nie posiadali odpowiedniej wiedzy i kompetencji. Przy ich awansie najistotniejsze było polityczne zaangażowanie i dobre kontakty z najważniejszymi decydentami tego okresu.

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