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Traces of military operations on the outskirts of Warsaw in 1914 - analysis of archaeological finds recorded at the site 4, Nowa Wola, Lesznowola Commune, Mazowieckie Voivodeship

#### Abstract

The article presents the results of archaeological research carried out in connection with the construction of the S7 road near Warsaw. The research uncovered traces of Russian artillery shelling from 1914 and the grave of a German soldier. The soldier was buried in one of the craters left by an artillery shell explosion. An analysis showed that he was a private of the 5th Company of the 146th Infantry Regiment.

Keywords: archaeology of conflict, battlefield archaeology, World War I, war grave

#### Summary

Archaeological excavations at the Nowa Wola 4 site (AZP 59-66/25) were carried out on behalf of the General Directorate of National Roads and Highways, Warsaw Branch, as part of an investment project involving the expansion of the S7 expressway.

The research was conducted in the autumn of 2017, and resulted in the documentation, on an area of 49 acres, of 144 archaeological objects containing 716 artifacts from the late Bronze Age (Lusatian culture), the late Middle Ages and the modern period.

The subject of this article is the relics of the youngest phase recorded at the site in the form of remnants of World War I military activities. They consisted of 15 features interpreted as artillery shell explosion craters and the burial of a German soldier. A total of 228 artifacts were recovered from the features, including 80 fragments of shrapnel and 148 fragments of other objects or fragments thereof.

As a result of the research, the remains of a German soldier were discovered in one of the craters. The fallen soldier was a male aged 27-29 years with a height of about 177 cm. The structure of the skeleton testified that this person was very physically active and walked a lot. In contrast, other traces indicated that he carried heavy objects and performed physical labor. There were traces on the teeth indicating chemical chlorine poisoning. The immediate cause of death was a head injury resulting from the impact of shrapnel.

The remains of the uniform and equipment preserved at the skeleton made it possible to establish that the fallen soldier was a private of the 5th company of the 146th infantry regiment. Based on historical sources, it was established that he was killed by Russian artillery fire in October 1914. He is most likely one of the seven privates appearing on the German war loss list published in November 1914. (Preussische Verlustliste Nr. 78). The soldiers listed died on October 18 near Nowa Wola.