

Trails of Hope. The Odyssey of Freedom

<https://szlakinadziei.ipn.gov.pl/sne/exposures/people/10003,Jadwiga-Pilsudska-1920-2014.html>
06.05.2024, 22:52

Jadwiga Piłsudska (1920-2014)

Daughter of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, a Polish pilot, who served in the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) during the Second World War.

She delivered about 230 planes. She never caused an air accident or damaged any machine! It is believed that her favourite kite was Spitfire.

Jadwiga was born in 1920. At the age of 17, she underwent glider training. She joined the Warsaw Aeroclub and until the outbreak of the war flew a total of about 100 hours on gliders.

After the outbreak of the war in 1939, together with her mother and sister, she was evacuated to London. There, as a student of architecture at Cambridge University, she applied for admission to the ATA several times. She succeeded in the summer of 1942.

She was sent to the Initial Flying Training School, where after training on light aircraft types she gained the 1st ATA pilot's class. After about 100 hours spent in the air, she entered the Advanced Flying Training School (AFTS), where she obtained the 2nd class of ATA pilot and the right to distribute combat airplanes (including Hurricanes and Spitfires). The next, 3rd ATA class, and the license to fly light two-engine aircraft, she obtained at the end of the course in White Waltham.

Jadwiga was assigned to the unit for distribution of Ferry 1 aircraft and the so-called taxi service - she took on board pilots who were to receive the plane for distribution or who returned to the base.

Jadwiga delivered about 230 planes of different types. From trainers like Tiger Moth and Harvard to fighters like Hurricane, Spitfire and Mustang, to twin-engine machines like Oxford, Rapide and Anson. Her total flight time was 312 hours and 35 minutes. She never caused an air accident or damaged any machine and her superiors held her in high regard describing Jadwiga as "an extremely promising pilot with above-average skills". For her service, she was awarded the Bronze Cross of Merit with Swords and the Aviation Medal.

In 1944 Jadwiga returned to her architectural studies. In the same year, she married a Polish Navy officer Andrzej Jaraczewski and the couple eventually settled in London where

Jadwiga lived until 1990. When the communist regime in Poland finally collapsed she returned to her homeland. Jadwiga Piłsudska-Jaraczewska passed away eight years ago today, aged 94. She was buried in the Powązki cemetery.

During WW2 1,250 men and women from 25 countries served in ATA. They ferried a total of 309,000 aircraft of 147 different types. In total, 173 ATA aircrew died during the service. Apart from the three Polish women, there were also 14 Polish men in service.

[Previous Page](#)



Jadwiga Piłsudska