

Trails of Hope. The Odyssey of Freedom

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Mateusz Iżycki de Notto

(1898—1952)

Brigadier general, pilot, commander of Aviation and Anti-Aircraft Defence of the Warsaw Army.

He was born on 22 February 1898 in Odessa, into the family of Aleksander and Zofia, née Koźmińska. He was taught at home until 1908, and then enrolled in the General Chrzanowski High School in Warsaw. In 1913, he moved to the Father Gralewski High School in Swochowo near Jarosław. The outbreak of World War I found him in the territories occupied by the army of the German Empire. He returned to his studies in Warsaw where he became active in the Polish Military Organisation [Polish: *Polska Organizacja Wojskowa*, POW].

In the POW, he was involved in intelligence activities, for which was arrested by the Russian authorities in 1916. As a juvenile, he was released but ordered to leave deep into the Russian Empire. He went to his family in Odessa where he passed his maturity examination in 1916 and started his studies at the Kazan Agricultural Academy in Moscow. Soon after, he was enlisted into military service in the Tsarist army.

In February 1917, he enrolled in the Junker Cavalry School in Yelisavetgrad, but by November he had decided to join the Polish military units being formed at that time in Russia. He was seriously wounded during his journey, but eventually managed to join the units of the 3rd Polish Corps and then, in its ranks, he took part in the final phase of World War I on the eastern front.

He made his way to Warsaw where he participated in the disarming of German troops. In December 1918, he joined the reborn Polish Army and took part in the defence of Lviv during the Polish-Ukrainian War. After the outbreak of the Polish-Bolshevik War, he took part in fighting and was wounded in the Battle of Korets. After his convalescence, he completed an officers' course at the Central Cavalry School and then became Józef Piłsudski's adjutant.

In the years 1922-1924, he studied at the Higher War School where he earned the title of certified officer. In 1925, he attended a pilot training course in the Warsaw-based 1st Air Regiment and took command of the 12th Air Flight. In 1926, he

was appointed air attaché in Istanbul and returned to Poland in 1929. He held the position of commander in the Polish Air Force, including command of the 22nd Line Flight. He was also the commander of the Higher Aviation School, and deputy commander of the 3rd Air Regiment.

After the outbreak of World War II, he served as chief of aviation staff of the Łódź Army, and on 11 September he was appointed commander of Aviation and Anti-Aircraft Defence of the Warsaw Army. On 26 September, he was evacuated by air to Hungary. He reached France, where he took up the post of head of the Polish Air Force Command in France. After the surrender of France, he made his way to Africa where he took command of a Polish transport aviation unit in Sekondi-Takoradi until 1942. He then served as a delegate to the Inspector of the Polish Air Force in the Middle East.

On 14 September 1943, General Kazimierz Sosnkowski appointed him Inspector of the Polish Air Force, i.e. the commander of Polish military aviation in the West. On 6th June 1944, he assumed the official post of Commander of Polish Air Force. After demobilisation in 1947, he left for Argentina. For health reasons, however, he returned to the United Kingdom in 1951. He was referred to the Desgenetts Military Hospital in Lyon for treatment. He died there on 12 February 1952, and was buried in Northwood cemetery near London.

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Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe
Mateusz Izzycki in the cabin of the plane in 1930.
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