

# Trails of Hope. The Odyssey of Freedom

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## Stanisław Poziomek (1908-1944)

Commander of No. 304 (Land of Silesia) Polish Bomber Squadron

He was born on 22 March 1908 in the village of Potoczek into the family of Stanisław and Marianna née Chycka. From 1923 to 1928, he attended the State Teachers College in Chełm and then the Infantry Officer Cadet School in Komorowo, from which he graduated in 1931. Having been appointed a second lieutenant, he was assigned to the 36th Infantry Regiment of the Academic Legion. His efforts to turn his formation from an infantry unit into an air force unit were successful and Stanisław Poziomek was sent to a ten-month Air Observer Course at the Air Force Officer Training Centre in Dęblin. In March 1934, he was promoted to lieutenant, and on 31 August 1934, he started to serve as observer lieutenant. He was assigned to the 5th Air Regiment in Lida and improved his professional qualifications while studying at the War College in Warsaw. After graduation, as a graduate officer, he was promoted to captain on 19 March 1939. On 18 August 1939, he was assigned to the Department of Army Supply at the Main Staff of the Polish Air Force General Command.

As a member of that unit, which became part of the structures of the General Command of Aerial and Air Defense Forces after the outbreak of the Second World War, he participated in the defensive war. Following Soviet Union's aggression against Poland, he crossed the Polish-Romanian border in Kutry on 18 September. He managed to escape from his place of confinement and reached France on 15 March 1940. After the surrender of France, he made his way to the UK, where he joined the Polish Air Force.

He was sent to the 12th Operation Training Unit (OTU) for aviation training and, after completing it on 26 August 1940, he was assigned to No. 305 Polish Bomber Squadron. After the Squadron was battle ready, Stanisław Poziomek took part in air raids on German-occupied Europe. On 20 June 1941, he received the Field Observer Badge and was named commander of "A" squadron. He was promoted to major on 1 September 1941. By 20 October, he already had 19 combat flights to his credit. On 12 November 1941, he took the command over No. 304 Polish Bomber Squadron and led it until 16 August 1942. After nearly two years of combat service and completing his round of combat

flights, he was transferred to the Organisation Department of the Air Command of the PAF, where he served until April 1943.

In February 1943, he took part in the event known as the conspiracy against Gen. Stanisław Ujejski. For organising meetings and collecting signatures for a letter of protest addressed to President of the Republic of Poland Władysław Raczkiewicz, he was punished by being transferred to the Officer Concentration Station Rothesay on the Isle of Bute on 21 April 1943.

After the tragic death of General Władysław Sikorski, he was brought back to active duty by the new Commander-in-Chief - General Kazimierz Sosnkowski. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel and took up the post of deputy chief of staff of the PAF Inspectorate. He served in that capacity until the tragic night of 10 April 1944. Visiting No. 304 Squadron, he volunteered as a so-called supernumerary pilot for a patrol flight over the Biscayne Bay. The Wellington he was flying was shot down by German night fighters, killing the entire crew. The body of Lt. Col. Ob. Stanisław Poziomka was retrieved on 22 September 1944, in a Spanish port town of Santander and buried on the same day at a military cemetery in Bilbao.

For his service, he was awarded the Silver Cross of the War Order of Virtuti Militari (no. 9114), the Cross of Valour four times, the Air Medal three times, the Bronze Medal for Long Service, the Field Observer Badge and the British Distinguished Flying Cross.

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