



**Lieutenant General Jozef Ludwik Zajac, Ph.D.  
(1891 – 1963)**

Born 14 March 1891 in Rzeszow, and died 12 December 1963 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; was buried at the Notre-Dame Cemetery in Ottawa. Father Szymon and mother Izabela (née Kowalska) raised him in the spirit of dedication to the fatherland and the fellow human beings. He held doctorate degrees in philosophy and psychology; and was a lecturer in British and American universities. He was an art connoisseur and collector.

He was an officer in the Polish Legions (*Legiony Polskie*), served in the II Polish Corps in the East (*II Korpus Polski na Wschodzie*), and in the Blue Army under the command of general Jozef Haller. He was a pilot and a fighter in the Polish-Bolshevik war 1919 – 1920; and the Silesian Uprisings. During the WWII, with the Polish Armed Forces in the West (*Polskie Siły Zbrojne na Zachodzie (PSZ)*) he fought against the Germans.

**Education**

Attended schools in Rzeszow and Wadowice. At the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, he studied mathematics, physics, philosophy, and specialized in experimental psychology. He earned a doctorate degree for his dissertation *Der vertikale Schnitt das monokularen Sehraumes*, which was published by the Polish Academy of Learning in Paris in 1923. After the WWII, lived in Edinburgh, Scotland, and studied at University of Edinburgh where he earned a doctorate in psychology.

**The First World War**

In 1912, Zajac joined the Riflemen's Association in Krakow, and in August 1914 he was already commanding their withdrawal from Wadowice. He participated in the Karpaty, Besaraby and Volhynia campaigns with the II Legion Brygadewas (*II Brygada Legionów*); he was wounded twice. As a major-general, he commanded: the 6th Regiment of the Legion in July 1917, the 5th Regiment in August, and the Polish Auxiliary Corps in Przemysl (*Polski Korpus Posiłkowy*) in September.

Zajac was one of the first initiators of promoting breaking the unfavorable for Poland Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the alliance of Central Powers: Soviet Russia with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. After the battle of Rarańcza, he forced his way through to Ukraine where general J. Dowbór-Muśnicki appointed him Colonel. He commanded the 15th Rifle Regiment in the II Polish Corps in Russia that was formed from both the Brigade II of the Polish Legions and other Polish regiments selected from the Russian Army. Was captured and imprisoned by the Germans during the Kaniv Battle (Kaniów) in Ukraine in May 1918.

### **War for the Polish Borders 1918-1921**

After fleeing from German captivity, he we went to France where he commanded a military school regiment. In 1919 he returned to Poland with general J. Haller's Blue Army. In May of the same year, he was put in charge of the Regulations and Translations Council for the military training. He commanded groups of the military schools in Modlin and Rembertów. Studied at the École Superiere de Guerre in Paris 1919-1920. During the two-year Polish-Soviet war, he was the chief-of-staff of the Operational Group Dolna Wisla with the 3rd Army; and later, the chief-of-staff of PSZ during the Third Silesian Uprising (*III Powstanie Śląskie*). His report about the support given to the Silesian fighters was submitted to the Chief-of-State J. Pilsudski, Prime Minister W. Witos, and Gen. W. Sikorski.

### **Between the Wars**

During the period from 1922 to 1926 he served as the chief of the First Department of the General Staff, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, and the Krakow District Military Corps respectively. In 1924 he was appointed Major General. During the ten-year period of his commandership, he developed a close connection with the society. He supervised the works on the first fortifications in the region of Silesia. In July 1923 he became the commander of the Lwów District Military Corps, and later the Inspector of the National Air Defence. While conducting the air force preparedness activities, he frequently warned his superiors about the country being inadequately prepared for the war.

### **The Second World War**

General Zajac was the Commander of the Polish Air Force during the September campaign. After the campaign, with the tremendous effort and determination, he evacuated a significant number of the air force personnel to Romania, Hungary, and later to France.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces Gen. Władysław Sikorski appointed him as the Commander of the Polish Air Force with a task to organize the air forces first in France, and later in Great Britain. He was a deputy commander of the I Polish Corps in Scotland (*I Korpus Polski w Szkocji*), and the commander of the following: the Polish Army in the Middle East, the II Corps of the Polish Independent Carpathian Brigade that consisted of the Polish forces evacuated from the Soviet Union. In 1942 he was promoted as Lieutenant General. Until 1943, he remained in the Middle East as deputy commander of the Polish Army. The same year, he resumed his duties as commander of the I Corps in Scotland. After Gen. W. Sikorski's death, Zając was appointed the Inspector of Training of the Polish Armed Forces.

### **Post-war activities**

After the Second World War, Gen. Zając and his family resided in Edinburgh where he returned to his academic studies. In 1949 he started independent research focused on spatial perception. In 1951, at the age of 60, he received his second doctorate degree in psychology. He was a research fellow and lecturer at the University of Edinburgh until 1957. His son Antoni and daughter Barbara also studied there. Zając was a member of the following organizations: the Polish Society of Arts and Sciences Abroad, the Association of University Professors and Lecturers of Allied Countries in Great Nature - Association of Edinburgh, the Natural Science, Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America (PIASA). As connoisseur of art, Gen. Zając possessed a significant number of paintings and engravings. He donated his entire collection to the Upper Silesian Museum (Muzeum Gornoslonskie) in Bytom, Poland, but was unable to view the exposition because Poland was occupied by communists at that time.

### **Canada**

In 1957 General Zając moved to Canada to join his daughter Barbara Judek residing in Ottawa. He continued his research in psychology and wrote the war memoirs. The first edition of his *Dwie Wojny – Moj udział w wojnie o Niepodleglosc I w obronie powietrznej Polski* (include title in English if possible) was published by Veritas in London in 1964. Zając died suddenly on 12 December 1963. After the Mass at St. Hyacinth Polish Church, he was laid to rest at Notre-Dame cemetery in Ottawa. The tombstone shows the engraved letters IHS, the Polish Armed Forces' symbol of an Eagle, and the inscription:

GENERAL JÓZEF LUDWIK ZAJĄC  
1891-1963

JANINA SZYMAŃSKA ZAJĄC  
1895-1972

## Family

He was married to Janina neé Szymanska who studied at universities in Kraków, Lwów and Sorbonne in Paris. They had two children: Jan Antoni (b. 1920), officer of the II Polish Corps, and daughter Barbara (b. 1923), professor of physics in Ottawa.

## Awards

- Silver Cross of the Order Virtuti Militari
- Commander's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta
- Cross of Independence
- Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (2 May 1923)
- Cross of Valour (four times; the first and second in 1921)
- Gold Cross of Merit with Swords (during the WWII)
- Cross of Merit of the Forces in Central Lithuania
- Commemorative Medal for War 1918 – 1921
- Medal of Tenth Anniversary of Independence
- Military Merit Cross (Austria-Hungary)
- Military Merit Medal *Signum Laudis* (Austria-Hungary)
- Iron Cross 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (Prussia)
- Companion of the Order of the Bath (Great Britain)
- The Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus (Italy)
- Order of the Star of Romania (Romania)
- Chevalier of the Legion of Honour - V class (France, 1921)
- Allied Victory Medal (1921)

## Publications

*Badania nad wytwarzaniem się mechanizmów skojarzeń.* Kraków. 1913.

*Słownik taktyczny francusko-polski.* Warszawa. 1919.

*O podstawach karności wojskowej.* Warszawa. 1922.

*Szkolenie taktyczne dowódców.* Warszawa. 1935.

*Z problematyki widzenia przestrzennego.* Poznań. 1959. (and 1961)

*Dwie wojny*, t. 1, *Mój udział w wojnie o niepodległość i w obronie powietrznej Polski*, Londyn 1964; t. 2, *W Szkocji i na Środkowym Wschodzie*, Londyn 1967.

Articles in English published in British *Journal of Psychology*, *Acta Psychologica*, *American Journal of Psychology*.

Articles in Polish published in *Estetyka* and in *Przegląd Psychologiczny*.



**Tomb of General Jozef Ludwik Zajac (1893-1972) and his wife Janina neé Szymanska Zajac (1899-1972), Cemetery Notre-Dame in Ottawa. (Phot. L. Bakowska)**

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English translation /SH/

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