



# Ivan Babak

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**Ivan Ilyich Babak** (**Ukrainian:**  Іван Ілліч Бабак, **Russian:**  Ива́н Ильи́ч Баба́к; 26 July 1919 – 24 June 2001) was a **Ukrainian Soviet Air Forces captain, flying ace**, and a **Hero of the Soviet Union**.

A schoolteacher, Babak joined the **Red Army** before **Operation Barbarossa**, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, began, and completed pilot training in 1942, after which he flew the **Yakovlev Yak-1** and later the **Bell P-39 Airacobra**. He distinguished himself in the air battles over the **Kuban bridgehead** in April 1943 and was credited with eighteen aerial victories when he received the title Hero of the Soviet Union on 1 November, after spending the northern hemisphere summer in the hospital due to malaria. Babak briefly returned to combat but was again sidelined by a recurrence of malaria, going back into combat in mid-1944. In mid-March 1945 Babak took command of the 16th Guards Fighter Aviation Regiment but was downed by anti-aircraft fire and captured days later. He survived captivity and was released at the end of the war, but as a result of being captured, he was not awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union title a second time. Credited with 37 aerial victories in official Soviet accounts, Babak commanded a regiment postwar and retired in 1949, after which he returned to teaching.

## Early life

Babak was born on 26 July 1919 to a peasant family in the village of Oleksiyivka, **Yekaterinoslav Governorate** (now in **Nikopol Raion, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast**), then controlled by the **Ukrainian National Republic**, though it was under Soviet control by the end of the year. A graduate of the **Zaporizhia** Pedagogical Institute and a flying club, he taught chemistry and biology at the Partizanskoy Secondary School in **Prymorsk Raion** of **Zaporizhia Oblast**, before being drafted into the **Red Army** in October 1940.<sup>[1]</sup>

## World War II

Upon his April 1942 graduation from the Stalingrad Military Aviation School as a **sergeant**, Babak joined the **45th Fighter Aviation Regiment** of the 216th Mixed Aviation Division on the **Crimean** and **North Caucasian Fronts** as a **Yakovlev Yak-1** pilot in May.<sup>[1]</sup> His performance was considered unsatisfactory by regimental commander Ibrahim Dzusov, who intended to transfer him, but flying ace Dmitry Kalarash tutored Babak, after which **Dmitry Glinka** selected him as his wingman. After he claimed his first aerial victory over **Mozdok** in September,<sup>[2]</sup> the regiment was sent to **Adzhikabul** in Azerbaijan for rest and retraining on the United States-supplied **Bell P-39 Airacobra** fighter,<sup>[3]</sup> which Babak flew for the remainder of the war.

## Notes

- ↑ <sup>*a*</sup> <sup>*b*</sup> "Ivan Babak" ↗ *warheroes.ru* (in Russian). Retrieved 8 May 2018.
- ↑ Mellinger 2012, p. 68.
- ↑ Bykov 2014b, p. 175.

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- Mellinger, George (2012). *Yakovlev Aces of World War 2* ↗ . Osprey Publishing. ISBN 9781782005537.

<b>Authority control databases</b> <span><span></span></span>	Encyclopedia of Modern Ukraine <span><span></span></span>
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<span><span></span></span> <b>Categories:</b> <span> </span> <span> </span> 1919 births <span> </span> <span> </span>   <span> </span> <span> </span> 2001 deaths <span> </span> <span> </span>   <span> </span> <span> </span> People from Yekaterinoslav Governorate <span> </span> <span> </span>   <span> </span> <span> </span> People from Dnipropetrovsk Oblast <span> </span> <span> </span>   <span> </span> <span> </span> Soviet Air Force officers <span> </span> <span> </span>   <span> </span> <span> </span> Soviet military personnel of World War II from Ukraine <span> </span> <span> </span>   <span> </span> <span> </span> Soviet World War II flying aces <span> </span> <span> </span>   <span> </span> <span> </span> Recipients of the Order of Lenin <span> </span> <span> </span>   <span> </span> <span> </span> Soviet prisoners of war <span> </span> <span> </span>   <span> </span> <span> </span> Recipients of the Order of the Red Banner <span> </span> <span> </span>   <span> </span> <span> </span> Heroes of the Soviet Union

Ivan Ilyich Babak	
<span></span> <div>Ivan Ilyich Babak</div>	
<span></span>	
Born	26 July 1919 <div>Oleksiyivka, Yekaterinoslav Governorate, Ukrainian National Republic</div> <span></span>
Died	24 June 2001 (aged 81) <div>Poltava, Ukraine</div> <span></span>
Allegiance	<span><span></span></span> Soviet Union
Service / branch	Red Army Air Forces (later <b>Soviet Air Forces</b> )
Years of service	1940–1949
Rank	<b>Captain</b>
Commands	<b>16th Guards Fighter Aviation Regiment</b> <b>32nd Guards Fighter Aviation Regiment</b>
Battles / wars	<b>World War II</b>
Awards	<b>Hero of the Soviet Union</b> <b>Order of Lenin</b> <b>Order of the Red Banner</b> (2) <b>Order of the Patriotic War</b> , 1st class <b>Order of the Red Star</b>
Other work	Educator

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