Jan Falkowski

3 languages

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Jan Paweł Falkowski DFC** (26 June 1912 – 27 July 2001) was a Polish fighter ace of the Polish Air Force in World War II with 9 confirmed kills.

Jan Falkowski DSO DFC**	
Born	26 June 1912 Pohulanka, Russian Empire
Died	27 July 2001 (aged 89) Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
Allegiance	Poland France United Kingdom
Branch	Polish Air Force France Armée de l'Air Royal Air Force
Years of service	1934-1947
Rank	major
Service number	P-0493
Unit	Polish 114th Fighter Escadrille No. 32 Squadron RAF No. 315 Polish Fighter Squadron No. 316 Polish Fighter Squadron No. 303 Polish Fighter Squadron
Commands	3rd Polish Fighter Wing
Battles / wars	Polish Defensive War, World War II
Awards	Virtuti Militari; Polonia Restituta; Cross of Valour; Distinguished Flying Cross (UK)

Biography [edit]

Falkowski was born in Pohulanka near Vilnius in 1912. In 1934 he entered to Polish Air Force Academy in Dęblin.[1] He was promoted first lieutenant (podporucznik) in October 1936. Then he began his career in Toruń.[2] In 1938 he was sent to Dęblin as instructor. During the Invasion of Poland, on 3 September 1939, he flew a PWS-26, three German planes attacked him. Falkowski reduced the flight almost to the ground and using aircraft maneuverability caused that one German fighter crashed into the ground, and the other interrupted the attack and turned back, most likely due to the small amount of fuel.[3]

After the Soviet invasion of Poland he crossed the border with Romania, then he came to France where he became instructor at Polish School in Lyon–Bron Airport.[4] On 31 May 1940 he took command of section no. 10.[5] When France capitulated, he arrived in the United Kingdom on 27 June 1940. He was assigned to No. 32 Squadron RAF. He shot down his first plane on 16 January 1941.[6] During the battle, his plane was badly damaged, Falkowski had to jump with a parachute and broke his leg on landing. After treatment he was sent to the No. 315 Polish Fighter Squadron. In August 1941 he downed three Bf 109 over France. In September he scored two victories. On 22 September he became commander of "A" Flight. He also served in No. 316 Polish Fighter Squadron and No. 303 Polish Fighter Squadron. On 30 January 1945 he was named commander of the 3rd Polish Fighter Wing. During one flight over the Netherlands, on 9 March 1945, he was hit by flak, due to the failure of the aircraft, Falkowski had to save himself by jumping with a parachute once again. He was fired upon by the Germans. One of the bullets wounded him in the leg. He was taken POW.[7] On 9 May 1945 he came back to England.

After the demobilization in 1947, he settled in Canada and had a farm 20 miles away from Toronto. In the 1960s he wrote an autobiographic book, *Z wiatrem w twarz* (With the wind in my face), edited in Poland in 1990.[8]

Jan Falkowski died on 27 July 2001 in Peterborough, Canada.[4]

Awards [edit]

- Virtuti Militari, Silver Cross
- Cross of Valour (Poland), four times
- Distinguished Flying Cross (United Kingdom)

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1. ^ Krzystek 2012, p. 174.
2. ^ Pawlak 2009, p. 153.
3. ^ "PWS-26" (in Polish). Wielka Encyklopedia Uzbrojenia M.S.Wojsk. 1918 - 1939. Retrieved 4 August 2012.
4. ^ [a] [b] Pawlak 2009, p. 154.
5. ^ Belcarz 2012, p. 8.
6. ^ Sikora 2014, p. 225.
7. ^ Zieliński 1994, p. 27.
8. ^ Zieliński 2005, p. 45.

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