

## PATRON OF ZESPOL SZKOL NO 3, SUWALKI



Brigadier General Pilot **Witold Urbanowicz** (30 March 1908 – 17 August 1996) was a Polish fighter ace of the Second World War.

Urbanowicz was born in Olszanka, Suwalki County. In 1930 he entered the Szkoła Podchorążych Lotnictwa cadet flying school in Dęblin, graduating in 1932 as a 2/Lt. Observer.

Later he completed an advanced pilotage course to become a fighter pilot. In August 1936, flying an PZL P.11a, he shot down a Soviet reconnaissance plane which had crossed into Polish airspace. He was officially reprimanded and unofficially congratulated by his superior officer and he was nicknamed "Cobra". During the Invasion of Poland in 1939, Urbanowicz was in an improvised Ulez Group, composed of flying instructors.

He was ordered with the cadets to Romania, where they were told to await re-equipment: British and French aircraft were rumoured to have been sent, but no aircraft arrived. Urbanowicz returned to Poland to continue to fight, but after the Soviet invasion on Poland, he was captured by a Soviet unit. The same day he managed to escape, crossed the Romanian border and eventually found his way to France where, after the fall of Poland, a new Polish army was being formed. While in France him and a group of other Polish pilots were invited to join the Royal Air Force in Great Britain. He was transferred to the Polish-manned No. 303 Squadron, flying as "A" Flight commander, soon he became Squadron Leader. Urbanowicz was awarded the Silver Cross of the Virtuti Militari, the Distinguished Flying Cross.

During the Battle of Britain, he claimed 15 confirmed kills and 1 probable, which made him one of the top Polish aces (second only to Stanisław Skalski) and in the top ten Allied aces of the battle.

In June 1941 he was assigned as the 2nd Air Attaché in the Polish Embassy in the United States. In September 1943 Urbanowicz joined the USAAF 14th Air Force on attachment in China (Flying Tigers).

During the war none of Witold Urbanowicz's planes were hit by a single enemy bullet.

After the war he moved to the USA where he settled down with his family.