

Biography of Tadeusz Nowierski

Tadeusz "Novi" Nowierski was born in Warsaw on 22nd June 1907. He joined the Polish Army Air Force in 1929 and completed his flying training course in the 1st Air Regiment. He subsequently became a flying instructor with NCO rank under the direct command of the famous Polish aviator Janusz Meissner. In 1935 he was promoted to the rank of junior lieutenant and posted to the 24th Light Bomber Flight as part of the 2nd Air Regiment in Cracow. At the outbreak of World War II his tasks involved army observation and combat duties which included participation in a bombing and machine gun attack against elements of the German 16th Panzer Corps proceeding towards the town of Czestochowa. By the second week of hostilities the military situation in Poland was becoming hopeless in the light of a co-ordinated attack by Soviet Russian forces, this time coming from the East. T. Nowierski was thus entrusted the final task of personally delivering the direct orders of the C-in-C of the Polish Armed Forces to the general in command of the defence of the beleaguered city of Warsaw. Flying at tree-top level and under fire from German units he managed to land in the encircled capital city and safely deliver staff dispositions. The way back was equally hazardous but luck prevailed and together with many other airmen he escaped to Romania making his way to France and thence to England in 1940. After conversion to Spifires, he was posted to 609 Squadron in August during the Battle of Britain. His first aerial victory came on the 13th of August during "Adlertag" when he managed to shoot down a Bf 109 from the famous Jagdgeschwader 53. He was later to encounter Bf 109s from the Richthofengeschwader and survive unscathed. But potential bad luck was never far away when he almost suffered a fatal accident when trying to land on one wheel. His life was saved by the timely warning of D. M. Crook who told him to bail out, which he did, facing the further danger of being taken for a German due to his broken English. But the farmer on whose land "Novi" landed put away his shotgun and he was duly driven back to squadron. For lack of regular entertainment during long stand-bys "Novi" was frequently asked "to speak English" to the great amusement of his English friends... Thus passed his tour of duty during BoB crowned with the award of a DFC. He was subsequently posted to Polish squadrons. From January to April 1942 he commanded 308 Squadron at Woodvale. Then he became S/L Flying of the Northolt Wing. In December 1942 he was posted to HQ 11 Group as Polish Liason Officer. During this staff stint he managed to get himself actively involved in the air battle of Dieppe. In 1943 he went to an OTU as an instructor, and in June was appointed Wing Commander Flying 2nd Polish Wing. He was subsequently to command 133 Airfield from October 1943 to February 1945. Combat tasks included the air defence of Great Britain against V-1 rockets. As the war approached its end he was sent to a course at the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, USA. His final command was that of Group Captain at RAF Dunholme Lodge.

After the war (1947), dearly missed by his family, he decided to return to Poland - this time ruled by the Soviets. It was not long before he came under the watchful eye of the NKVD-run local communist security services (the UB). He was duly arrested on trumped up charges, tortured in prison and saw many of his dear friends being led out to be executed. During his prison term he even struck up friendships with people he had never seen by way of a system of wall-tapping Morse code. When he was finally released, he was a virtual invalid. But he still soldiered on in civilian life, first as a night taxi-driver driving an old Opel Olympia which had once belonged to the Gestapo. Later he set up a workshop manufacturing all sorts of handy

items which he would sell. This he continued doing right up until his sudden death of a heart failure on the 2nd of April 1983. He had never lost hope of Poland finally regaining her independence. His funeral was kindly attended by Group Captain A. A. Ramus and many of his flying friends. He is remembered by many as a true gentleman because he treated the poorest and the humblest with the greatest respect. [txt: T. B. Goschal]

VM, DFC, CV+3bars. BoB. Score: 5 - 2 - 6.

He flew PZL P.23 "Karas" light bombers during Polish campaign. In England posted to 609 where he took part in the Battle of Britain. In January 1941 he joined No. 316 and year later was given a command of 308. Then posted as a liaison officer to 11 Group HQ. In June 1943, as a W/Cdr flying, took over 2 Polish Wing. From Oct 1943 till Feb 1945 CO of 133 Airfield in 2nd TAF. After the war returned to Poland where he passed away in April 1983.

RAF No.: P.76803

Article: "with November being a busy month, the absence of Novi's name from the Squadron Records seems to indicate either leave or sickness". According to his logbook, confirmed and signed by F/O T Forshaw, O/C 'B' Flt this is incorrect. November 1940:

1st	Spitfire	R6961	Southampton Angels 27
5th			Base 12000
13th			Warmwell 25000
14th			Sector Drill
14th			LFP
15th			LFP
15th			Base 20000
16th			Warmwell 20000
17th			LFP
18th			Escorting Harrows
19th			GOW 50+
20th			LFP
22nd		X4173	Escorting Harrows
27th		X4331	LFP
27th			LFP
28th		X4165	20000
28th		X4173	Base 25000 (On that day Novi heard Dundas on the R/T claiming a Bf109.....quoted from his diary written in Polish)
29th			Scramble
29th			To Warmwell
30th			Scramble Base

Comments by Novi about his fellow pilots, in barely legible Polish handwriting. "I shall neither add or omit anything that I went through" it says in the introduction to his diary:

10th October 1940, Novi relating his experiences of combat, probably referring to 25th September:

"It was quite a short while ago, a couple of weeks back, I was to all intents and purposes comatose while airborne. As usual, we got off to a rapid start and in ten minutes I was able to report to the squadron that to the left of us there was a large formation of bombers. We turn towards them and within half a minute the attack is on. After the regrettable experience of the previous day, of which anon, I decide not to fire until I am absolutely certain it's the Jerries. I turn the aircraft head on towards the slightly separated four double-engined planes. The aircraft leading the foursome is in a momentary state of panic, they veer over to the left and to the right, after which we pass at equal altitude at a lateral distance of 30 yards. As soon as I see the dirty great big black crosses, I make an immediate turn and at this very moment. I am joined by Flying Officer Newbery / as of date of diary entry he has been hospitalised / (Reference is here made of Newbery pulling out of a power dive, as a result having his seat pulled off its fixings, thus causing severe internal injuries).

We approach at full revs when the foursome, taking up a defensive stance, makes a turn to the right. The manoeuvre is typically German. I attack the others. One short burst slightly prolonged and I choose a Messie below me at very short range. I make the first move and when I find myself almost in a flying group formation with an attacked Ju88, exposing myself to being fired at by three aircraft simultaneously, I kicked with my lower foot. The movement was too violent, and in consequence there was a rapid upturn at a speed of over 500 kilometres per hour.

A slight black out ensued and just when I thought my vision was returning, a state of coma suddenly set in. How long this lasted is hard for me to tell, albeit the moment of waking was extremely unpleasant (...) Similar symptoms were encountered by all who went through the same thing - (...)

After complaining bitterly about how by a narrow margin two Me109s had eluded him on that fateful day (27th Nov) Novi made the following entry about John Dundas: And on that same day I can't remember whether it was before or after my unsuccessful attack, I heard F/Lt Dundas over the R/T saying that he had "downed a one-oh-niner". F/Lt Dundas is my Flight Commander; he is one of the bravest pilots in the Squadron, having more than ten victories to his credit. F/Lt Dundas won't be returning today. He was lost in the Channel like so many, many others.

On this same day (Novi must have confused the nearness of two consecutive dates, 27th and 28th November) during the same engagement, 20 miles south of the English coast, P/O Baillon, the Squadrons very young pilot, trying to save himself from burning alive, bailed out of his Spitfire, but whether he was wounded or sustained a fatal injury ditching into the sea in his torn parachute it is hard to say. Watching him after he had made the jump, P/O Keith Ogilvie saw no signs of life in Baillon as the parachute, like a sail, swept him across the sea.

Making an entry on 10th December, Novi recollects the following:

"This happened even earlier, it must have been back in September (the date has been verified as 27th September) A large group of bombers, about sixty in number, escorted in force by fighters was on the way to bomb Bristol. We met them rather belatedly, because just after they had managed to drop their bombs, they were forming a wide circle and heading towards the south. And so it happened that, not being able to assume an advantageous position of attack, what with the fighters lurking above our heads, we did not go into action. But neither were the Messerschmitt's keen to pounce on us, despite considerable advantage of height. Only one grouping of Me110's which, as if closing off this armada, took any visible notice of us. We also devoted a certain amount of our attention to them, which cost them the

loss of six of their aircraft being shot down. Thus when we had made our way over Portland from Bristol, the Messerschmitt's emboldened by our apparent docility, formed a great circle just above the coast. We reached them in a very short time, and before they managed to make one full circle, the squadron launched its attack. All this happened so quickly that it was difficult even to be aware of what was afoot. I was on the right wing, being the last covering aircraft, so I was able best to see from a relatively long distance.

Pilot Officer Miller, a twenty year old marvellous brave young fellow, attacking the first of them, collided with a Messerschmitt, which blew to bits, and unfortunately Miller was killed diving into the sea, his Spitfire ablaze. Moments later there was no circle formation, only single machines diving in a southerly direction, and behind the tail of each of them was a Spitfire discharging its deadly rounds.

Passing one of the Me110s I gave only a short burst at three-quarter lengths ahead, however without apparent result. A moment later there was already someone else sitting on his tail and he quickly sent him crashing.

All this did not last longer than 60 to 70 seconds and the valiant squadron returning home from all directions had sustained a loss of 6 aircraft, that is the equivalent of half its complement of machines. We lost Miller, about whom the British press later devoted a lot of space.

Together with P/O Curchin, we both gave two Messerschmitt's a long chase almost right up to the French coast, but our good old trusty Spitfires were already out of breath at that altitude. This was one of the most glorious days of the squadron, in spite of the fact that the held record of only one scramble had resulted in the destruction of thirteen machines.

At the outbreak of war Novi was flying PZL-23 'Karas' aircraft. It was an observation and tactical dive-bombing aircraft of the Polish Army. Novi flew it to observe Force movement, dive-bombing mechanised and armoured units and delivering maps, defence plans and orders from the Supreme Commander of the Polish Armed Forces - Marshal Edward Rydz-Smigly - to subordinate generals.

Novi affectionately referred to his Spitfire as his 'Flying Rolls-Royce'

On 13th August 1940, Flying Spitfire MK1 L1082 PR-A, P/O Tadeusz Nowierski shot down BF109E 'Black 9' of 5./JG53 flown by Fw Pfannschmidt. It was his first fighter sortie - having been a bomber pilot in 1939." Beneath us, above the white clouds, we saw German bombers escorted by Me-110s. They were about 10,000 feet below us. Meanwhile, Me-109s appeared at our altitude. Three sections of our Spitfires attacked the German planes flying below us. Our last section, led by F/Lt Mac Arthur remained above to engage the Me-109s. Everything happened very quickly. The sergeant on the left abruptly broke off from our formation. After a few seconds I saw him attacking a Me-109, which, trailing thick black smoke dived towards the ground. He finished him nicely, firing from maybe 150 yards. At this moment the section leader attacked one of the Huns. I looked around and saw that there was also another Hun for me, I just had to close in, as he was slightly above and about 550 yards away from me. I applied full throttle, my Spitfire surged forward and in 10 seconds I started firing one, and then another burst, straight into his tail. A cloud of debris appeared, the trail of white smoke behind him meant I hit him in the engine cooling. The German wavered and went into a steep dive. Something fell off, but it wasn't the pilot, probably the cockpit canopy. Soon the pilot baled out too, and

quickly opened his parachute... At this moment, going into a turn, I noticed two Messerschmitts behind my tail. Suddenly I felt very hot and uncomfortable. I went through a series of wild maneuvers in order to lose them. I started a dive, then abruptly pulled up. I finally lost them, couldn't see any of the attackers, and found myself all alone above the Channel, which was obscured by clouds. I still had a lot of ammo and fuel, so I decided to go hunting. (...) I noticed a silhouette of a plane, heading east, directly in the sun. I was virtually certain it was a German fighter, but wanted to see the black cross on his fuselage to make no mistake. The sun shone directly in my eyes, blinding me. I was very close and flew into his turbulence, my plane started dancing to the left and right. I moved to the side and immediately saw black crosses on the Messerschmitt's wings and fuselage. I quickly moved back behind him and fired three short bursts with all the guns. There was no point in shooting any longer, as the Hun burst into flames and went into a spin, down towards the sea."

NOWIERSKI, Tadeusz, fought in Poland in 1939, and then escaped to France via Rumania. He flew Morane 406,s with the Armée de l'Air, but with the fall of France was on the run once more. He reached England where he joined the RAF and was posted to 609 Squadron. On 13th August 1940 he shot down a Bf109 and damaged a second, and on 7th September shot down a Do17. He claimed a He111 on the 25th and five days later got a Bf109 and a damaged again. Early in October he had a faulty undercarriage and was unable to land, having to bale out. On 15th October he destroyed another Bf109 and on 2nd December shared a Bf110, bringing his score to 5½. He was awarded a DFC in February 1941, and the following month left the squadron. In 1942 he was Squadron Leader Flying at Northolt, but did not claim any further victories.

Colonel Tadeusz Nowierski DFC

Nowierski is believed to have joined the Polish Air Force in 1929 nad to have escaped to France after the fall of Poland in September 1939. He was sent straight onto the UK as he joined the RAF in March 1940. He was posted to 609 Squadron on 5th August 1940 and saw action with them during the Battle of Britain. He was awarded a Cross of Valour and two bars . In March 1941 he joined 316 Polish Squadron. The award of the Virturi Militari followed in July and in August he was promoted to flight commander with the DFC being awrded in October. In January 1942 he was given command of 308 Polish Squadron then becoming Squadron Leader Flying at Northolt. August brought his third bar to his cross of valour and in December he was posted to HQ 11 Group as Polish Liaison Officer. Feb 1943 he became an instructor at OTU and took over as Wing Commander Flying 2 Polish Wing on 20th June. From October 1943 til February 1945 he commanded 133 Airfield and then was sent on a course in the US. He reurned to Poland in 1947. He is credited with 5 destroyed, 2 probables and 5 damaged.

August 13, 1940

Pilot Officer Tadeusz Nowierski, 609 Spitfire Sqn.

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