

Greater Poland Uprising 1918-1919

<https://greaterpolanduprising.eu/pwe/form/r60509688928,SLIWINSKI-Bernard.html>
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ŚLIWIŃSKI Bernard

Person

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Born

1883

Died

1941

Description

Lawyer, organiser and commander of the "Leszno" Group and a lieutenant colonel in the Polish Army. He was born on 5 July 1883 in Poniec, to the family of a master butcher - Roman, and Antonina née Obecna. In his home town he graduated from common school and then gymnasium in Wschowa. He studied law at the university in Berlin (2 semesters) and in Wrocław (5 semesters), where, on 1 February 1911, he received his degree of a doctor of law. He was an active member of the Tomasz Zan Society and other organisations. From 1911 till 1914 he worked in the judiciary as a legal secretary. In the years 1907-1908 he did his one-year military service, and after being called up again, he served seven more months (2 March-30 September 1909). On 20 April 1910 he was promoted to the rank of sergeant, and received the officer's patent of second lieutenant on 22 March 1912. On 1 August 1914 he was drafted into the German army. On 15 June 1917, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. In November 1918 he was witness to the events in Berlin. He left the army and went to Greater Poland. At the beginning of December 1918, through the agency of B. L. Marchlewski, he made himself available to the Supreme People's

Council and „enrolled himself on the list of officers who wished to get involved in insurgent fighting”. In Poniec he maintained contact with the local Polish-German Worker and Soldier Council as well as the Poviats People's Council (for the Gostyń poviat), from which it received the order on 6 January 1919 „to arrive in Gostyń immediately for the purpose of commencing military action”. In Gostyń, he was entrusted with the “leadership of the uprising in the poviat”. In his memoirs he wrote: "I made the reservation that I take charge of the military action solely and that I take full responsibility for it in every possible respect, as only a single commander may supervise such action, this is how, and in no other way, I understand the insurgent operations.". He led the announcement of mass mobilisation in the area of the poviat and on 7 January, 425 volunteers appeared, whom he divided into three companies. Thus he laid the foundations for the future Gostyń battalion. He marched in the direction of Poniec, with the task of manning the Sowina-Zawada-Wieszkowo-Janiszewo line, covering Poniec, which was exposed to the greatest danger from the German troops in Leszno and Rawicz. This initiated the formation of the South-Western section of the Greater Poland Front. Couriers were sent together with patrols in the direction of Kąkolewo and Pawłowice. On 8 January, Śliwiński went to Poznań to receive his instructions and assignments of weapons. He contributed to corrections in the division of Military Districts. By day order of 13 January 1919 he was approved as the commander of the Leszno section. Until the middle of January 1919, the following groups were formed as a result of continuous fighting: Poniec, Pawłowice, Osieczna and Boguszyń. This division was sanctioned by Operating Order No. 1 of Central Command dated 18 January 1919. At the beginning of February, he formed the 6th Greater Poland Rifle Regiment from the group's units. The regiment became part of the Greater Poland Rifle Division. On 3 March, Śliwiński was approved as the regiment commander. The regiment secured the South-Western section of the front until 30 July. By decree of the Commissariat of the Supreme People's Council No. 102 (dated 3 June 1919), he was appointed captain and by decree No. 104 - major (with precedence from 1 December 1917). On 1 September, he manned the Zbąszyń section with his regiment, getting ready for a repossession operation. On 18 December he was moved near the area of Bydgoszcz, close to Żnin. On 20 January 1920, leading the 6th Greater Poland Rifle Regiment, he entered Bydgoszcz and occupied Świecie, Koronowo and Tuchola. At the beginning of February he concentrated his regiment near Koronowo, and then moved to Bydgoszcz, whence on 8 March he went to Brody in the eastern Lesser Poland region. He participated in offensive

military operations in Ukraine (April-May), in the offensive on the Lithuanian-Belarusian Front and in a fighting withdrawal. On 11 June he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel, and from July till October he underwent hospital treatment in Poznań. After his return to the regiment, he received the following opinion: "Very good regiment commander. He cares about his soldiers and looks after them.". Until his transfer to the reserves (1922) he still commanded the 60th Infantry Regiment, and then the 29th Infantry Brigade in Inowrocław. From 7 February 1921, he was the provincial commandant of the State Police in Poznań, in the years 1922-1927, he was the mayor of Bydgoszcz, and then he moved to Poznań where he ran his lawyer's office. He co-organised the Association of Insurgents and Soldiers in Poznań, acting as its president. On 23 January 1938, he joined the Governing Board of the Association of Greater Poland Insurgents as deputy president. In 1939 he was appointed commander of the National Defence Regiment in Poznań - the National Defence Brigade. In September, he took part in withdrawal and defensive battles near the Bzura River. Having been taken into captivity, he died on 17 December 1941 in the prisoner-of-war camp in Neubrandenburg. He received the Order of Virtuti Militari of the 5th class, the Cross of Independence with Swords, the Cross of Valour, the Golden Cross of Merit, the Legion of Honour Medal and many other medals and badges. He was married to Maria née Cichowicz and had two sons - Roman Marian (1928) and Tomasz Augustyn (1930). In the years 1930-1939, he published a number of articles and memoirs about the Greater Poland Uprising.

Bibliography

B.Polak, Śliwiński Bernard (1883-1941) (in:) Słownik biograficzny powstańców wielkopolskich 1918-1919, ed. A. Czubiński, B.Polak, Poznań 2002, pp. 361-362.

Author of the entry

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