

Greater Poland Uprising 1918-1919

<https://greaterpolanduprising.eu/pwe/form/r8910753574073,PALUCH-Mieczyslaw.html>
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PALUCH Mieczysław

Person

PALUCH Mieczysław

Born

1888

Died

1942

Description

Independence activist, organiser and commander of the insurgent troops and major in the Polish Army. Born on 10 October in Trzemżał (Trzemeszno commune) to the family of a farmer - Jan, and Józefa née Mayor. In 1898, he started his education at a progymnasium in Trzemeszno. He was a member of the Tomasz Zan Society. He was expelled from Trzemeszno for his participation in a school strike. He was then admitted to a gymnasium in Gniezno and again expelled for his activity in the Tomasz Zan Society. His father made every effort to enrol his son in a gymnasium in Wągrowiec, and then in Międzyrzecz, where he received his secondary education certificate as an external student (1909). He started his studies in economics and commerce in Berlin which he completed with an exam and receipt of a licence which entitled him to work in trade enterprises. He completed his vocational training in Gdansk. On 13 October 1913, he was called up for military service in the 5th Heavy Artillery Regiment. After the outbreak of the war he still served in the artillery as a non-commissioned officer, mainly on the Western Front. In 1917, he was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant. In Autumn 1918,

he did not return from leave to his unit. He hid near his home town and also at his brother's house in Kępno, under the pseudonyms: "Maks" or "Polochowski". On 7 November 1918, he arrived in Poznań, looking for work at, among other places, the Cegielski metal works. He met a friend from his secondary school years - Bohdan Hulewicz, who introduced him into the circle of people involved in the preparations for the Uprising. On 10 November, he became a member of the Military Commission of the Central Citizen's Committee, establishing contact with Bronisław Sikorski and Wojciech Korfanty. The Commissariat of the Supreme People's Council saw him as an officer who could instil discipline in the members of the Polish Military Organisation of the Prussian Partition and other independence militias which would be glad to commence the uprising as soon as possible. He took care of them, acting unofficially as their commandant. By taking advantage of the enthusiasm of the youth, he contributed to the success of the daring raid on the Town Hall and the seizure of the Executive Division of the Worker and Soldier Council in Poznań (13 November). Paluch became a delegate of the Council at the 5th Army Corps command. He quickly became an organiser of the staff and legally formed the Guard and Security Service. A battalion with about 2000 soldiers was formed in December 1918. He established contacts with other centres, including Gniezno, Jarocin, Pleszew and Września. In November-December 1918, together with B. Hulewicz, he brought together a group of young officers and non-commissioned officers as a substitute secret military staff, which fulfilled the role of a centre for legal and underground Polish troops in both Poznań and other remote areas. He maintained contacts with the envoys of the General Staff of the Polish Army, providing them with data for reports about the situation in the Poznań region. On 27 December 1918, he brought the companies of the Guard and Security Service into action, attempting to make the Supreme People's Council announce the uprising in the area of the entire partition. He also sent envoys or communicated the order to start military action in other cities. He organised volunteers for the infantry, artillery and cavalry units. It was on his initiative that most of the military facilities in Poznań and its vicinity were seized. After the establishment of the Polish-German city command, a dispute with Jan Maciaszek took place with regards to the subordination of the units of the Guard and Security Service. Paluch presented a project of declaring a "small war" against the Germans to the Commissariat of the Supreme People's Council. The political leadership treated this as insubordination and competition against the established Central Command for the insurgent armies. At the instruction of politicians, Central Command relieved M. Paluch of command over the

Guard and Security Service (4 January 1919) sending him to the yet non-existent artillery command. On 5-6 January, he took part in the expedition to the Ławica Air Base which was seized with few losses. After the defeat in Szubin (7-8 January) he organised volunteer companies from Poznań and its surroundings, sending them to Gniezno as their area of insurgent group formation. During the consecutive briefings of the commanding staff, he persuaded K. Grudzielski to change the offensive plan for Szubin. He was personally involved in the coordination of tactics regarding Szubin, and then Kcynia. He was the chief of staff on the Northern Front, contributing to the maintenance of the Noteć River line. Colonel K. Grudzielski gave him a free rein in this area. By decree No. 49 of the Commissariat of the Supreme People's Council, on 5 May he was promoted to the rank of captain. After a short assignment to the Artillery Inspectorate, he became commander of the 8th Greater Poland Rifle Regiment in Krotoszyn. After his regiment was subordinated to Colonel A. Jasiński, he came into violent conflict with his superior. The whole issue ended with the transfer of Paluch to the disposal of the Greater Poland Front Command (23 November 1919), then the Artillery Inspectorate of Poznań Central Command. On 2 March 1920, he was transferred to the Upper Silesia region, where he was appointed head of the Supply Department of the Polish Plebiscite Committee. He also got in touch with the Polish Military Organisation of Upper Silesia. When the second Silesian Uprising broke out, its command was entrusted to M. Paluch. As a consequence of intervention by the Inter-allied Commission, the fighting was stopped (24 August 1919), and the Polish Military Organisation of Upper Silesia was officially dissolved. Its tasks were taken over by the legal Physical Education Headquarters (PEH) headed by Captain M. Paluch. As a result of subterfuge, Paluch withdrew from work at the PEH, though he was still active in the activities of the Plebiscite Committee. At the end of November 1920, he was sent to Gniezno, where, at his own request, on 29 March 1921, he was transferred to the reserves. At the same time he was promoted to the rank of major with precedence from 1 July 1919. Initially, he ran an office which dealt with trade in agricultural equipment. From the year 1923, he leased the post-German estate of Piwnice near Toruń. From 1922, he was active in the Union of Associations of Insurgents and Soldiers. After the May coup in 1926, he became an advocate of strict cooperation with the Sanacja camp. In 1934, he accepted the post of director, responsible for the state supervision of estates owned by Count Hochberg-Pszczynski. He was active in the Association of Reserve Officers and the Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government. In Autumn 1939 he got through to France, and later

on to England, where, as an adherent of the Sanacja camp, he was sent to Bute in Scotland, to an isolation camp in Rothesay. He died there on 18 July 1942. He was buried in the cemetery in Rothesay. He received, among other awards: the Order of Virtuti Militari of the 5th class, the Cross of Independence with Swords and the Order of Polonia Restituta of the 4th class. In the years 1921-1935 he was married to Jadwiga Prus-Wieczfińska. This marriage produced no children. Since 2015, the Society for the Memory of Major M. Paluch has been active. Also a film - a fictionalised documentary about him was made under the title: "Mieczysław Paluch, człowiek, powstaniec, dowódca" [Mieczysław Paluch, Man, Insurgent, Commander] (directed by Janusz Sidor).

Bibliography

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