

# Institute of National Remembrance

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## Rotmistrz / Rotamaster Witold Pilecki 1901-1948

The biography of this officer in the Polish Army, a talented painter and poet, perfectly reflects the history of Poland in the first half of the 20th century. He fought for a free and independent Poland already from a young age. His patriotic activity began at the age of seventeen, when, at the beginning of 1919, he fought for Vilnius. After Poland's independence was solidified, Pilecki settled down in his family estate. During this time he became known as a wise landlord, social activist and patriot. He again fought for Poland in September 1939, subsequently joining the ranks of the independence conspiracy.

Witold Pilecki devoted his entire life to Poland, following the motto: "Nothing for myself, everything for the Fatherland". At various stages of his life, Pilecki was guided by such ideals as: dignity, honour, courage, patriotism, faith and freedom. Thanks to his attitude-that of a soldier and a steadfast patriot - he has permanently inscribed himself on the pages of not only Polish, but also world history. However, the Communists did much to prevent this from happening. First, they

trampled on his name. Then, by throwing his body into an unnamed grave, they tried to erase any trace of his existence.

(from the preface of the President of the Institute of National Remembrance Karol Nawrocki, Ph.D.)

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ROTMISTRZ ROTAMASTER

# WITOLD PILECKI

1901–1948

