

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY

22 April, 1943.

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
No. 1364

U.S. PILOT DECORATED BY POLISH COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

General Wladyslaw Sikorski, commander-in-chief of the Polish Army, and prime minister of the Polish Republic, at a ceremony in London today pinned the Polish Cross of Valor on Capt. Francis Gabreski, a U.S. Army fighter pilot, for "courage and daring, and spirit of comradeship" exhibited by him in three months of combat flying with a Polish fighter wing.

Gabreski was attached by the U.S. Army to the Polish Air Force to study their methods and technique in fighter operations. He flew a Spitfire with them on many fighter sweeps.

Polish flyers commended him in particular for one action in which he went to the aid of his section leader and drove off an enemy attacker. In so doing, Capt. Gabreski abandoned a splendid opportunity to knock down his first German plane, which he had lined up in his sights at the moment, and he disregarded the fact that there was also an enemy fighter on the tail of his own Spitfire.

Gabreski was stationed in Hawaii at the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and took part in that action.

He is 23 years old and was born in the United States of Polish parents, who now live at 95½ Spruce St., Oil City, Pa.

Leaving Notre Dame University after 2½ years as a medical student, Gabreski entered the army as an aviation cadet in 1938.

He has an older brother in the army - Maj. Thaddeus Gabreski, now serving with the medical department in India. Maj. Gabreski formerly practiced medicine in Oil City, Pa.

Capt. Gabreski is now a flight leader with a fighter squadron of the Eighth U.S. Army Air Force in England.

Witnessing the decoration of Gabreski by Gen. Sikorski were Col. O.N. Solbert, U.S. military attache to Poland, Lt. Col. W. McK. Dunn and Lt. Paul M. Brikeland of Col. Solbert's staff.

Also present were Col. Borowski, Chief of Gen. Sikorski's cabinet, Gen. Ujejski of the Polish Air Force, Col. Brogdan Kwiecinski, air attache to the Polish Embassy, and a number of Polish fliers of the squadron with which Capt. Gabreski served.

-END-