



# PAVEL WONDRAKZEK

Descendant of Czech exiles after the Battle of White Mountain,  
bearer of the  
**Silver Cross of the Virtuti Militari Order**

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## PAVEL VONDRÁČEK,

granduncle of the author from the mother's side, was born on 13 August 1897 in Ignaców, which is a part of the town of Zelów, about 60 km south-west of Łódź. The Vondráček family line traces the journey of 18-century exiles from East Bohemia, to founding of the first exile communities, all the way to Zelów, and, after the WWII, back to Bohemia. The youth of Pavel Vondráček was strongly influenced by Czech pastor Bohumil Radechovský, who oriented the life of the community towards the famous Czech evangelic history. Pavel could still remember a verse from the Old Testament, which was assigned to him for confirmation and led him through his life and the war events described below. "Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth." (Psalm 31:6) When he was young, he worked on his father's farm on a loom, which opened his way to great textile factories, he learned to do business and deal with people. Then war broke into his life. He was drafted in to the army of the young Polish Republic and served in the 10th Kaniowski light field artillery regiment. This regiment belongs to the golden history of the Polish warfare.



*Pavel Vondráček*

## "VIRTUTI MILITARI"

is the highest Polish military order awarded for victory in a war. It is very rare and its bearers deserve honour and dignity. It is awarded for exceptional courage when fighting the enemy. The order awarded to Pavel Vondráček has the number 2806 and was given to him for heroism in a battle fought on 4 July 1920 near the village of Ulino at the northern border of today's Belarus in the Polish-Soviet War, also called the War of the White eagle and the Red star according to the heraldic symbols used by the opposing sides.

## Bomb. Pawel Wondraczek

Order Virtuti Militari, V kl., No. 2 806,  
10 kaniowski pulk artylerii polowej.



*The Virtuti Militari Order*

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Information: CENTRALNE ARCHIWUM WOJSKOWE, ul. Czerwonych Beretów bl. 24,





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## TRANSLATION OF A DESCRIPTION OF A WAR EVENT

(CENTRALNE ARCHIWUM WOJSKOWE, WARSZAWA)

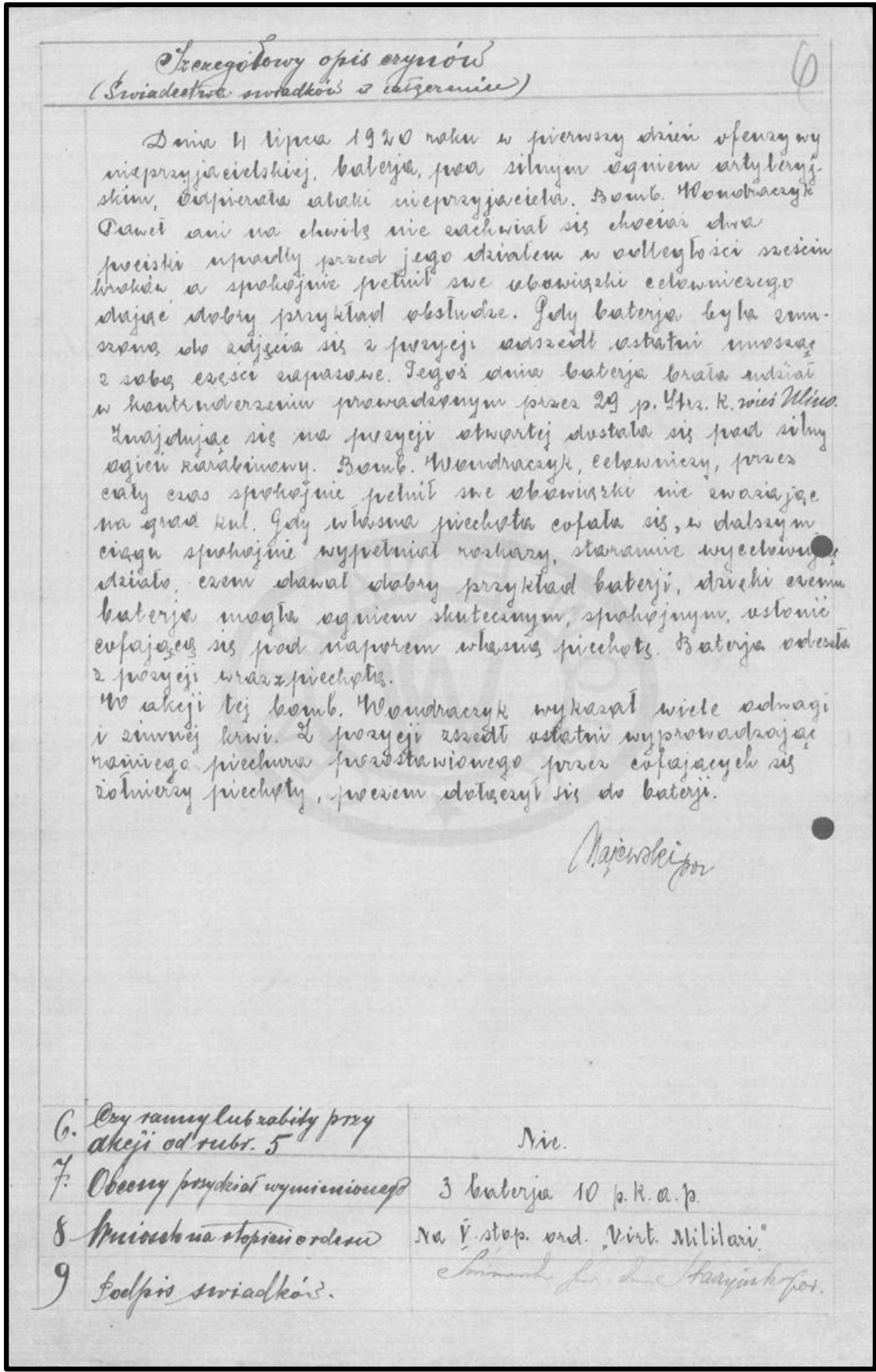
On 4 July 1920, the first day of enemy offensive, the battery withheld an enemy attack, even though under a heavy fire of the enemy artillery. Artilleryman Pawel Wondraczek did not for a moment hesitate nor shiver when two grenades fell in front of his cannon, only in a six steps distance, and he calmly fulfilled his duties of aimer and gave a good example to the other gun operators. Even though the battery was forced to retreat, he was among the last ones, taking spare parts with him.

The same day, the battery took part in a counter attack led by the 29th rifle regiment towards the village of Ulino. The battery got to its position under a heavy machine gun fire.

Artillery aimer Wondraczek calmly fulfilled his duties for the whole time. He paid no attention to the hailstorm of enemy fire. Our own infantry was retreating while he continued to follow orders, carefully aimed the cannon and gave a good example to the entire battery. Thanks to this the battery allowed the infantry to retreat. Eventually, the battery retreated from its position with the infantry.

In this action artilleryman Wondraczek showed great courage and cold-bloodedness. He was the last one to leave the position and he pulled to safety a wounded infantryman, who was left there to his faith by his companions, and thus saved him from being taken prisoner, and joined the battery.

Lt. Majewski



Original of the description of the war event





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ON THE MIDNIGHT OF 18  
OCTOBER 1920 THE WAR  
BETWEEN POLAND AND SOVIET  
RUSSIA CAME TO AN END...

*Piłsudski's order of the day for 18 October 1920 was very heartfelt and personal*

*Soldiers! You have spent two long years amidst arduous toil and bloody strife. You end the war with a magnificent victory.*

*Soldiers! Your efforts did not come in vain... From the first moments of existence, envious hands were grasping for the New Poland. There were numerous attempts to reduce Poland to a state of impotence, and to make it a plaything for others. The nation placed the heavy burden on the commander in chief as well as you, defenders, of protecting Poland's existence, of establishing general respect, of giving it the freedom to fully chart its destiny.*

*Soldiers! You have made Poland strong, confident and free. You can be pleased at having fulfilled your duty. A country which has produced in only two years soldiers such as you can regard its future with tranquillity.*

After World War II, same as many descendants of Czech exiles, **Pavel Vondráček** returned to his Fatherland, Bohemia. He lived in Svitavy and worked in the textile industry. He died on 19 February 1978 at the age of nearly 81.



Orders of the day



**M. N. Tukhachevsky**  
A Russian and then Soviet military commander and the main driver of the reforms of the Red army on the turn of the 1920s.



**Józef Klemens Piłsudski**  
The Commander in Chief of the Polish armed forces from 11 November 1918 and the first Marshal of Poland from 19 March 1920.