

Rowecki, Stefan

(1895-1944), Polish army officer who served as the commander of the Home Army, a military resistance organization that constituted the most important part of the Polish underground.

When the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, Rowecki commanded a tank brigade. The Polish army surrendered by the end of that month; Rowecki then received orders to go underground and form a secret resistance organization that would report to the Polish Government-in-Exile. Rowecki's militia was first called "Service for the Victory of Poland," renamed "Union for Armed Struggle" in 1940, and was finally dubbed "Home Army" (*Armia Krajowa*) in 1942.

In his post as Home Army commander, Rowecki came up with the idea of limiting actual fighting against the German army until it was sufficiently weakened, at which time the Home Army could stage a successful revolt. In preparation, Rowecki worked to fortify the underground. However, when the time came, the concept was unsuccessful.

After being contacted by members of the Jewish resistance, Rowecki provided limited aid to the Jewish underground militia in Warsaw, the Jewish Fighting Organization. In June 1943 Rowecki was arrested and deported to Sachsenhausen, where he was subsequently executed. (see also Jewish Fighting Organization, Warsaw.)