**Polish Air Force**

The Polish Air Force is quite large with almost 1000 aircraft; unfortunately, due to domestic turmoil it suffers from failing, morale, maintenance and training. Originally organized along Soviet lines with an Air Force supporting the Army, an independent Naval Air Force and an Air Defense Force focused solely on control of Polish airspace. Efforts to change this to a more western approach with new reforms and organizations were largely stalled by intransigence and lack of political will or capacity. One significant change is that the small Polish Naval Air Force has been folded into the Air Force. The domestic aircraft industry in Poland was very productive throughout the Cold War, producing everything from light training/civil aircraft (**PZL-104**) and jet trainers (**PZL I-22**), to helicopters (**PZL SM-2**) to derivatives of the **MiG-15** (PZL-Mielec **Lim-1 & 2**) and MiG-17 (PZL-Mielec **Lim-5 & 6**). As war breaks out in Northern Fury Poland is in even more disorder as military formations try and determine who is in control and where their loyalties lie.

**MiG-29**

Poland received 12 MiG-29 in 1989-1990 just before political troubles truncated any further delivery. Nine of the aircraft were **MiG-29A** while the remaining three were the training version (**MiG-29UB**). Allocated to the 1st Squadron of the 32nd Air Intercept Wing, these were meant to seize and maintain air superiority over the battlefield and prevent NATO aircraft, particularly the F-16 and A-10 from harassing Polish maneuver forces on the ground. Although they have the capacity for strike and close air support, this would be a purely secondary role for the Polish Fulcrums.



**MiG-23**

The Polish Air Force operated 36 **MiG-23MF** Flogger B’s and six MiG-23UB two seat training versions. The Floggers were also used primarily in the intercept role to protect Polish ground formations, although they could also be used for ground attack if needed.



**MiG-21**

About 450 **MiG-21** Fishbed are in service with about 100 more in reserve. Most of the more modern variants are maintained for the Air Defense role with 72 **MiG-21bis**, 120 **MiG-21MF** and 36 **MiG-21M** as well as one Regiment of 36 ageing **MiG-21PFM** being the main component of the Air Defense force. The remaining Fishbeds in service are 90 **MiG-21PFM** in the Fighter Bomber role, 36 reconnaissance (R) versions supporting the army and about 50 two seat trainers (UB). There are about 80 older **MiG-21PF** as well as a few PFM, R and UB airframes in ready reserve.



**Su-20/22**

The **Su-20** and **Su-22** Fitter are the primary ground attack aircraft used by the Polish Air Force. The 27 older **Su-20**s were acquired in the 1970s and are over-due for retirement or relegation to reserve status. During the 1980s 90 modern **Su-22M4** were acquired with an intent to obtain a further 45, this later purchase was overtaken by the internal strife in the later part of the decade but 20 **Su-22UM3K** two seat trainers were delivered. The Fitters form the lead Regiment in each of the Fighter Bomber Divisions. About 40 of the much older **Su-7** Fitter A variants are held in reserve.



**Lim-6**

The domestic Polish aircraft industry was quite prolific and one of the main products was the **Lim-6** Fresco, a derivative of the Soviet **MiG-17**. About 180 of these aircraft remain in service but are obsolete and poorly maintained. All have been upgraded to the **Lim-6bis** or are **Lim-5** rebuilt to the same standard and called the **Lim-6M**.



**Combat Aircraft organization**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Formation** | **Location** | **Unit** | **No** | **Type** |
| 2nd F/B Div | Pila | Regt | 45 | Su-22M4 |
|  |  | Regt | 45 | MiG-21PFM |
|  |  | Regt | 45 | Lim-6M/bis |
|  |  | Sqn | 12 | Mig-21R |
| 3rd F/B Div | Swidwin | Regt | 45 | Su-22M4 |
|  |  | Regt | 45 | Lim-6M/bis |
|  |  | Regt | 45 | Lim-6M/bis |
|  |  | Sqn | 12 | Mig-21R |
| 4th F/B Div | Malbork | Regt | 27 | Su-20 |
|  |  | Regt | 45 | MiG-21PFM |
|  |  | Regt | 45 | Lim-6M/bis |
|  |  | Sqn | 12 | Mig-21R |
| 1st AD Corps | Minsk | 32nd Wing | 12 | MiG-29A/UB |
|  |  |  | 36 | MiG-23 MF |
|  | Lask | Regt | 36 | MiG21bis |
| 2nd AD Corps | Zegrze | Regt | 36 | MiG21bis |
|  | Slupsk | Regt | 36 | MiG21MF |
|  | Babie Doly | Regt | 36 | MiG21M |
| 3rd AD Corps | Wroclaw | Regt | 36 | MiG21MF |
|  | Mierzecice | Regt | 36 | MiG21MF |
|  | Pozanan | Regt | 36 | MiG-21PFM |

**Surface to Surface Missile forces**

The Polish Air Force operates four Air Defense Brigades and one independent Regiment deployed at about 50 locations around the country. These formations are part of the Air Defence Force and are in addition to Army Air Defences elements. About 300 old SA2 and SA3 systems are in operation with a few longer range SA5.



**Air Transport**

The Polish Air Force operate a wide range of transport aircraft in three Regiments, two based in Warsaw (36th and 37th) and one in Krakow (13th). Together these units operate:

* 18x Yak-40 Codling
* 2x Tu-154 Careless
* 4x Tu-134 Crusty
* 6x Il-62 Classic
* 6x An-24 Coke
* 2x An-12 Cub
* 12x An-26 Curl
* 138x An-2 Colt (some retired)
* 25x M-28B Skytruck; Polish built derivative of the An-28, capable of short takeoff and landing (STOL) able to carry 19 passengers, cargo or paratroops.



**Helicopter Forces**

Two aviation Regiments support the Army and operate:

* 3x Mi-6 Hook
* 36x Mi-8 Hip
* 48x W-3; Polish built utility helicopter, 12 passengers
* 26x Mi-2 Hoplite



**Maritime Support**

Recently grouped as part of the air force, the maritime aviation elements are:

* 9x M28B Bryza 1R; Maritime patrol and reconnaissance
* 4x M28B Bryza 1E; Maritime ecological reconnaissance
* 12x Mi-14PL; ASW helicopter
* 4x Mi-14PS; SAR helicopter
* 4x Mi-2; Light utility and reconnaissance



**Training**

Air training is concentrated at the Air Force University located at Deblin which operates:

* 16x PZL I-22 Jet trainers
* 50x Mig-21UM
* 20x Su22UM3K
* 6x Mig-23UB
* 16x Mi-1 Hare



**Reserves**

Held in reserve are the following aircraft:

* 84 MiG-21PF
* 36 Mig-19
* 12 MiG-17
* 250 MiG-15
* 36 Su-7
* 700 Lim-1/2
* 200 Lim-5/6
* 72 Il-28
* 15 Il-28R
* 17 Il-14
* 5 Il-18
* 30 SM-1 (utility Helicopter)
* 17 Mi-4