

*"I came here where freedom is being defended,
to serve it and live or die for it"*

*Brigadier General Casimir Pulaski
To George Washington*



— OFFICIAL STATE OF ILLINOIS —

Pulaski Day

— VIRTUAL CELEBRATION —

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024

hosted by

The Polish Museum of America

and the

Polish Roman Catholic Union of America

Streamed live on

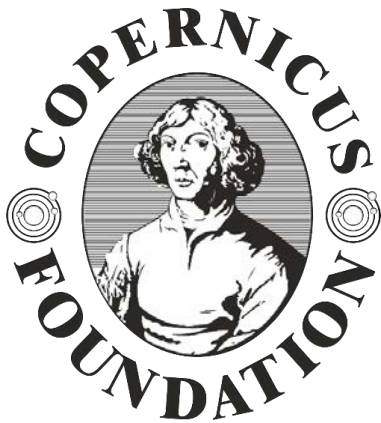
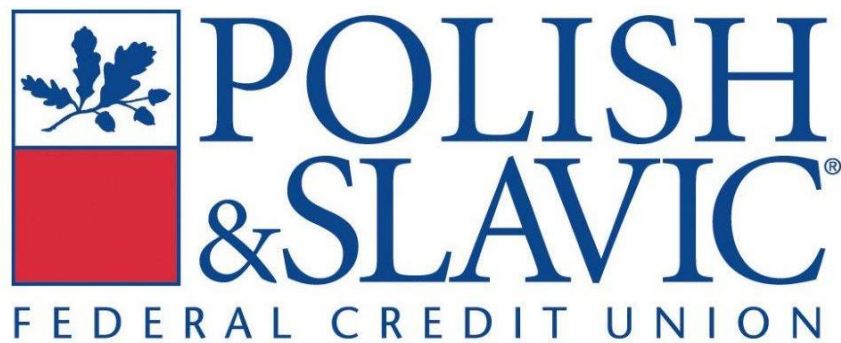
www.PolishMuseumOfAmerica.org

from the

Sabina P. Logisz Great Hall, 984 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60642



*The 2024 Official State of Illinois Pulaski Day Celebration
is generously sponsored by*



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Malgorzata Kot

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Mirosława Sojka-Topor

Kamil Bundyra

Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA

Tadeusz Kosciuszko Polish Lancers Society

Zbigniew Habina

Eugeniusz Jarzabek

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2024 VIRTUAL PULASKI DAY PROGRAM

GREETINGS

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The Polish Museum of America President

James Robaczewski
*Polish Roman Catholic Union of America President;
The Polish Museum of America Chair; PMA Life Member*

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

Tadeusz Kościuszko Polish Lancers Society

NATIONAL ANTHEMS

Mirosława Sojka-Topór
soprano

Kamil Bundyra
pianist

WELCOME

Hon. Michael Frerichs
State of Illinois Treasurer

REMARKS

Hon. Richard Durbin
State of Illinois US Senator

Consul General Paweł Zyzak
Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago

Dances and songs from the region of Rzeszów
Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA

REMARKS

Hon. Brandon Johnson
City of Chicago Mayor

Frank Spula
*Polish American Congress President;
Polish National Alliance President*

Hon. Mike Quigley
5th Congressional District of IL US Representative

PAST PULASKI DAY COMMEMORATIONS
at the Polish Museum of America

RECOGNITION OF COPERNICUS FOUNDATION UNDERWRITING

Hubert Cioromski
Copernicus Foundation Chair

REMARKS

Hon. Aurelia Pucinski
IL First District Appellate Court Justice

Zol

A kie jo se zagrom...

Composed by Waclaw Geiger
Miroslawa Sojka-Topór

RECOGNITION OF PSFCU UNDERWRITING

Video Remarks
Bogdan Chmielewski
Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union President/ CEO

PULASKI, KOSCIUSZKO, AND POLONIA

Dominic Pacyga, PhD
Columbia College Chicago Emeritus Professor of History

THE PULASKI COLLECTION
at the Polish Museum of America

REMARKS

Hon. Delia Ramirez
3rd Congressional District of IL US Representative

Hon. Susana Mendoza
State of Illinois Comptroller

Hon. Maria Pappas
Cook County Treasurer

RECOGNITION OF PNC UNDERWRITING

Beata Mikita
*PNC Bank Regional Manager Chicago
Northwest Suburbs Senior Vice President*

Dances and songs from the Eastern Kraków region
Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA

LAYING OF THE WREATH

Polskie drogi
Composed by Andrzej Kurylewicz, 1976
Kamil Bundyra

BENEDICTION

Rev. Andrzej Tetzke, SChr
*Holy Trinity Polish Mission Pastor;
The Polish Museum of America Chaplain*

FINALE

God Bless America





OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

JB PRITZKER
GOVERNOR

Greetings!

As Governor of the State of Illinois, I am pleased to welcome everyone gathered for The Polish Museum of America's celebration of Casimir Pulaski Day. This occasion offers an exciting opportunity for everyone in attendance to recognize the heroic contributions of Pulaski and his impact on U.S. history.

Nicknamed the "Father of the American Cavalry," General Pulaski displayed valiant and fearless opposition to British forces. General Pulaski earned praise from several high-ranking members of the military, including General Benjamin Lincoln, Pulaski was eventually named Brigadier General. He is a testament to the contributions that Polish Americans have made in this country.

On behalf of the people of Illinois, I offer my best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable occasion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB Pritzker". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Governor JB Pritzker



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO**

BRANDON JOHNSON
MAYOR

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Chicago is home to a proud and vibrant Polish American community that has undoubtedly impacted culture and industry by influencing the arts and education, business and government, social service, and scientific and technological advancements near and far; and

WHEREAS, Casmir Pulaski, known as the “Father of the American Cavalry,” was a military leader who fought for independence and freedom in Poland and against British troops during the Revolutionary War in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Pulaski’s heroic efforts on the battlefield earned him the title of Brigadier General and the first Commander of the American Cavalry; and

WHEREAS, Polish Americans who had faced hardships championed Casimir Pulaski as a Polish American hero, and in 1977 the Polish American Congress successfully lobbied to designate the first Monday of March as Casmir Pulaski Day; and

WHEREAS, many tributes to Casmir Pulaski can be found around Illinois including Pulaski County, the Pulaski International School in Chicago, and Chicago’s well-known Pulaski Road; and

WHEREAS, the Polish Museum of America was founded in 1935 and opened to the public in 1937 with the mission of promoting the legacy, traditions, and history of Polish Americans in Chicago and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Pulaski Day is celebrated on the first Monday of March to commemorate Casmir Pulaski’s birthday and is commemorated by the Polish Museum of America and celebrated across the city with parades, gatherings, and ceremonies:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BRANDON JOHNSON, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO, do hereby proclaim March 4, 2024 to be CASMIR PULASKI DAY IN CHICAGO in recognition General Pulaski’s heroic efforts and the many contributions of Polish Americans.

Dated this 4th day of March, 2024.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brandon Johnson".

Mayor



Chicago, February 23, 2024

**Consul General
of the Republic of Poland
in Chicago**

Paweł Zyzak

**Mr. Ryszard Owsiany
President Polish Museum of America**

Dear Mr. President,

It is with great admiration and gratitude that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to you and the entire staff of the Polish Museum of America in Chicago. As the Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago I am continually inspired by the dedication and hard work you all invest in preserving and celebrating the rich history and heritage of our Nation.

The Pulaski Day celebration at the Museum is a poignant reminder of the enduring legacy of General Kazimierz Pułaski a towering figure in both Polish and American history. Pułaski's unwavering commitment to the ideals of freedom and independence resonates deeply with the historic struggles of both our Nations. From his early days fighting against Russian Imperial tyranny as part of the Bar Confederation to his pivotal role in the American Revolutionary War, Pułaski exemplified an unparalleled spirit of heroism and sacrifice.

The story of Pułaski serves as a bridge connecting our two Nations, reminding us of the shared values and aspirations that bind us together. His courageous actions on the battlefield continue to inspire generations of Poles and Americans alike, symbolizing the enduring quest for liberty and justice.

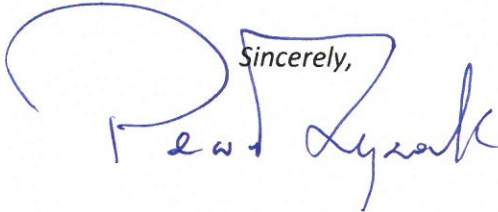
I am also deeply appreciative of the Museum's dedication to preserving the stories of the Polish diaspora in the United States. By honoring the contributions of those who built new lives in America thousands of miles from their homeland, you ensure that their legacy will not be forgotten. Your efforts to cultivate a sense of pride in our shared heritage are invaluable, serving to strengthen the bonds between our two countries.

1530 North Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60610, USA

Phone: +1312 3378166 w. 315
chicago.kg.sekretariat@msz.gov.pl
www.gov.pl/usa-en

Furthermore, I am pleased to reaffirm the continued support of the Polish government for the Polish Museum of America. Our partnership is a testament to the vital role that the museum plays in preserving Polish culture and history for future generations. Together, we will continue to uphold the legacy of General Pulaski and celebrate the enduring friendship between Poland and the United States.

Once again, congratulations on your outstanding work, and my best wishes for continued success in all your endeavors.

Sincerely,




Maria Pappas
Cook County Treasurer

March 4, 2024

James J. Robaczewski
National President
Polish Roman Catholic Union of America
984 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60622

Dear President Robaczewski:

I am proud to join the Polish community as it honors a hero of two nations on this Casimir Pulaski Day.

Pulaski was born in Poland 278 years ago, and became a hero of both his nation and of a land that was not truly a nation until he helped it become one, the United States of America.

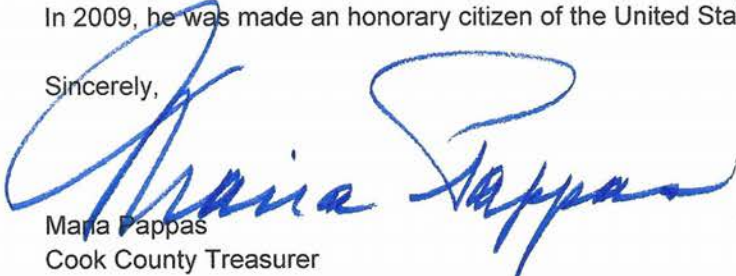
By age 20, Pulaski was a warrior for freedom in and of Poland, with a military talent that made Russia put a price on his head. He fled to Paris and met Benjamin Franklin, himself on a diplomatic mission for his fledgling nation. Franklin saw Pulaski's inordinate talent and recommended that he go to America and talk to George Washington, who needed some help with the Revolution he was leading.

Pulaski went, and Washington sent him to Brandywine on September 11, 1777, where Pulaski brought about success. Washington put him in charge of the American cavalry, and Pulaski made its horsemen so effective that he became the "Father of the American Cavalry."

But death stalked Pulaski and in 1779, at Savannah, cannon fire struck him. He died two days later, on October 11. The respectful mourning began in two countries and continues today.

In 2009, he was made an honorary citizen of the United States, but he has ever been a Pole.

Sincerely,


Maria Pappas
Cook County Treasurer

:bb



James J. Robaczewski, ALMI, FIC, ACS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

March 4, 2024

Dear Friends of The Polish Museum of America,

Polish Americans in Chicago have every reason to take pride in General Casimir Pulaski. He was a key figure in American history, known for his bravery during the Revolutionary War. Pulaski saved George Washington's life at the Battle of Brandywine and fought tirelessly for freedom, sacrificing his own life at the Battle of Savannah.

Pulaski Day provides an opportunity for the Polish community and others to reflect on the contributions of figures like Pulaski and Kosciuszko, who sought refuge in the United States and dedicated their lives to its prosperity and freedom. Their unwavering dedication and sacrifice epitomize the spirit of freedom and determination that paved the way for American independence.

As the president of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America, it is my honor to work for and support our Polish American community. We take pride in the heroic legacy of our ancestors and strive to build a better future for every American.

General Casimir Pulaski's courage and commitment to liberty serve as an inspiration for Polish Americans, reminding us of our heritage and the strength of our community.

Fraternally yours,

James J Robaczewski, ALMI, FIC, ACS
President



Polish Roman Catholic Union of America | PRCUALife™

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James J. Robaczewski, NATIONAL PRESIDENT | (773) 782-2602 | fax (773) 782-2741 | james-robaczewski@prcu.org



POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

6100 N. Cicero Ave. Chicago, Illinois 60646
P: (773) 286-0500 ★ E: pacwash@pac1944.org
WWW.PAC1944.ORG

March 4, 2024

Warmest greeting to everyone gathered at the Polish Museum of America as we celebrate Pulaski Day.

Today, we reflect on the legacy of Casimir Pulaski, a Polish-American hero whose courage continues to inspire generations.

Casimir Pulaski, a Polish nobleman and military commander, is remembered for his commitment to the cause of freedom and justice. His bravery on the battlefield, particularly during the American Revolutionary War, left an incredible mark on history. Both Poles and Americans alike take pride in recognizing him as a true hero. Now, Pulaski is one of many important symbols of the unbreakable bond and friendship between Poland and America.

Beyond his military achievements, Pulaski's legacy transcends borders. His unwavering belief in the principles of liberty and equality resonates with people around the world, serving as a reminder of the power of courage and determination, especially in the face of adversity. He is a hero that many can look up to, regardless of ethnicity.

As we reflect on Casimir Pulaski's legacy, let us honor his memory by continuing to uphold the values of freedom, justice, and equality for all. May his example inspire future generations to stand up for what is right and to never give up in the pursuit of a better world for all.

*Frank J. Spula,
President*

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Illinois Governor Daniel Walker signing the Pulaski Day bill
at the Polish Museum of America, September 9, 1973.
From the PMA Photography Archives Collections

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Vice President of the United States

Hon. Napoleon Harris
15th District IL State Senator

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Dear General

I have taken my quarters about seven miles
from Savannah, at the widow Gibbon's house, on the
way to Ogeechee's ferry, it is very essential post, the
Enemies got an advanced one about two miles from
the town, that they have posted there since last
night, being alarmed by the detachment which was
on their lines yesterday, it will be necessary that
my detachments should be reinforced not only by
the Cavalry, but with some infantry to give me
the facility of attacking their pickets, I shall pursue
two miles further on the Sunbury's road to keep a
free communication with Count D'Estaing, the enemies
send on that road very soon after some parties.

I have the honour to be
with respect Dear General

your most humble
servant
K. Pulaski

September the 14th 1779
at three o'clock in the morning.

Handwritten letter by Pulaski, reporting to General Benjamin Lincoln on the enemy at Savannah, on September 14, 1779 - less than one month before the assault in which he was mortally wounded.
From the PMA Archives Gen. Kazimierz Pulaski Collection

CASIMIR PULASKI

A Biography by Jan M. Lorys



Casimir Pulaski was born in Warsaw, Poland. Named after a Polish saint, his birthday has been established as March 6, 1745. Part of the aristocracy, he was educated on the family estate at Warka, south of Warsaw, and participated in activities befitting his rank and gender. In 1762, he was a page in the court of the Duke of Courland, a vassal of the Polish King. The Duke's court was interned by Russian forces occupying the area. Pulaski was later released and returned to Warka. Based on his experiences of Czarist expansionism, he learned contemporary military tactics. He was also educated in running farming estates, and took part in responsibilities of local and national government, as the aristocracy was the class that defended the State, elected the King, set foreign policy, and oversaw the economy.

THE BAR CONFEDERATION

In 1764, along with his family, he participated in the election of King Stanisław Augustus Poniatowski. The Polish monarchy was elective, not hereditary, and only the nobility, which made up around 14% of the population, had the right to vote. Unfortunately, the system was open to bribery and intimidation. By 1766, a significant part of

the nobility became convinced that the King was a weak monarch, and that the Russian ambassador was directing Polish decisions.

The Polish nobility invoked a Confederation on February 29, 1768, a feudal move consisting of a general mobilization of the nobility when the country was threatened. Based in the southeastern town of Bar, the Bar Confederation counted the Pulaski family amongst its leaders, and young Casimir became one of its military commanders. With the Royal Army divided on its loyalty, and as the Confederation did not maintain a standing army, its forces were composed of retainers representing various degrees of military training and equipment. Their well trained and equipped opponents, the Russian Army, was one of the largest in Europe. Relying on what would later be known as guerilla tactics, the Confederation forces, knowing the terrain and grouped as small bands, attacked elements of the Russian Army. Sometimes they would form larger bands and try to fight larger numbers of Russians. Sometimes they won, sometimes they lost.

Pulaski was one of the luckier commanders, winning some battles, but losing others. Though of an offensive frame of mind, he became proficient at fighting defensive battles, first at Berdyczów, then at Okopy Świętej Trójcy, or the bastions of the Holy Trinity. The war ebbed and flowed. Bar was captured early on, but the Confederation found a temporary ally in the Austrian monarchy. France, under the old maxim, the enemy of my enemy is my friend, secretly supported the Poles as a counterweight to the Russians. Reinforced, Pulaski captured the shrine at Częstochowa. Pulaski held off the Russians, but this was not a decisive victory to end the war.

Confederation forces found refuge in Austria, which remained neutral. Here, the leaders of the Confederation proposed a plan to kidnap the King and have him become the figurehead of the struggle and rally the country to defeat the invaders of Poland. Pulaski at first opposed the plan, but eventually saw that the nation had to rally around someone. He stipulated that no harm come to the King.

The abduction on November 3, 1771 happened in such an amateurish style, that the king managed to outwit his captors. The Russians quickly declared that the king had been the target of an assassination attempt and named Pulaski as the chief instigator and accused him of attempted regicide. The botched kidnapping turned Austria against the Confederation, and lost support among those European powers that had been secretly supporting the Confederation against Russia. Pulaski, seeing that further struggle was pointless, ordered his troops in Częstochowa and other detachments to disband. He left Poland for good. In 1773, the Polish Royal Tribunal sentenced him to death *in absentia* and stripped him of “all dignity and honors.”

Pulaski found himself in exile in the Ottoman Empire, then at war with Czarist Russia. He convinced the Ottoman Turks to organize a force of exiled Poles with him in command, but the Turks surrendered before these troops could be organized and trained. He barely managed to escape to Marseilles. In France, he tried to obtain a commission in the French Army, but was rebuffed. Stripped of his lands and income and with no other prospects of employment, he was placed in debtor’s prison until his friends were able to raise funds to pay off his debts.



A. Szyk pinx. George Washington and Kazimierz Pułaski.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Fortunately, there were other wars going on in the world. It was 1777, and the American Revolution against King George III had been going on for nearly two years. At first, the Colonists fought to preserve their rights as British subjects, but on July 4, 1776, they declared independence from the British crown. As a fighter against

the Czar of Russia and perceived of regicide, Pulaski had a certain renown among those recruiting European experts to train the Continental forces. The American agents were Silas Dean and Benjamin Franklin. Franklin wrote a letter of introduction to the American Commander in Chief, presenting Pulaski in glowing terms: “Count Pulaski of Poland, an officer famous throughout Europe for his bravery and conduct in defense of the liberties of his country against the three great invading powers of Russia, Austria... may be highly useful to our service.”

Pulaski arrived in Marblehead, Massachusetts, near Boston on July 23, 1777, as a volunteer. He wrote ahead to General Washington, famously stating: “I came here, where freedom is being defended, to serve it and to live or die for it.” Although Washington did not have the authority to appoint Pulaski to any position or salary, Pulaski appeared at the Continental Army headquarters, near Philadelphia on August 20, 1777. While still without a command or rank, he participated in his first battle at Brandywine. When the tide began to turn against the American forces, Washington gave Pulaski command of his 30-man bodyguard to scout out what the British were attempting. The reconnaissance mission discovered that the British outflanked the Americans and



A. Szyk pinx.

George Washington and Casimir Pułaski after the battle near the Brandywine river
Jerzy Washington i Kazimierz Pułaski po bitwie nad rzeką Brandywine.

planned to cut off their line of withdrawal. Washington told Pulaski to hold off the British with his 30 horsemen and any infantry that would fight until the army could retreat. This Pulaski did, allowing the main Army to escape in rather good order, and incidentally, saved the life of Washington. Had Washington been killed or captured, the Revolutionary cause would have died out, because the Americans did not have anyone with his prestige and determination.

On September 15, 1777, Congress issued orders commissioning Count Pulaski a Brigadier General and in charge of the few hundred men in the four regiments of American cavalry. The next day, Brigadier General Pulaski, doing a job normally performed by a lieutenant, spotted British forces moving towards the American lines. Heeding Pulaski's warnings issued in French and Polish, Washington organized for battle. However, severe weather discouraged both sides from engaging.

On October 4, 1777, he fought at Germantown, the last battle before both sides went into winter camps. Pulaski and his cavalry spent the winter of 1777/78 in the Valley Forge area. Pulaski, who had fought the Russians in Poland in the winter months, argued that military operations should continue. However, he was overruled and instead trained his four cavalry regiments. The American cavalry was not considered a decisive arm of battle. Rather than being a screening force, to keep the enemy from finding out your intentions, the regiments were used as escorts for supply columns, dispatch riders and bodyguards for the higher officers. Pulaski rewrote the cavalry regulations based on his experiences. He even tried to get the Americans to adopt the lance.

With winter coming to an end, General Anthony Wayne, one of the better junior generals of the Continental Army, was sent on a foraging mission to gather supplies. He requested support from the cavalry. On February 29, 1778, 50 horsemen led by Pulaski convinced the British that they were being attacked by a much larger force. The British retreated back into Pennsylvania.

Despite his good relations with the senior American officers, Pulaski and other foreigners were resented by some American who thought that they should hold higher ranks. Also, while Pulaski spoke a few languages, English was not one of them; often, his orders were misinterpreted or ignored. Congress was always behind in paying the soldiers and reimbursing the commanders for their expenses. Pulaski's request to arm his cavalry with lances was also denied. Under such conditions, Pulaski resigned his command and left the cavalry under the command of Colonel Michael Kovats, a Hungarian volunteer.

At Yorktown in Virginia, Pulaski met with General Horatio Gates, who recommended that Pulaski organize a new unit that would act independently and according to his desires. This unit, a mixture of cavalry and infantry, would be named Pulaski's Cavalry Legion. The unit was filled with European volunteers and some Americans and headquartered in Baltimore. It numbered about 330, mostly infantry. Due to Congress' chronic financial shortages, Pulaski supported the unit from his personal fortune. The Legion received a standard from the Moravian Sisters, a Christian religious grouping.

The Legion's first mission was to defend Egg Harbor, New Jersey, near present day Atlantic City. Without artillery, this was a mission beyond the capability of the Legion. The British force, made up of American Loyalists, was led by a deserter from the Legion. They launched a surprise attack on the infantry, killing 50 in their sleep and taking few prisoners. Pulaski led the Cavalry in a counter maneuver and drove off



A. Sztyk. p.10x.

Pulaski mortally wounded in the battle of Savannah.
Pulaski ranny śmiertelnie w bitwie pod Savannah.



the attackers. From here, the Legion was transferred to lower New York in a campaign against American Loyalists and Native Americans supported by the English. He was unhappy that his European trained soldiers were best used against British regulars and that feeding the right fodder to the mounts was a constant problem.

Pulaski and his Legion were rescued by the British decision to hold in the North and take the offensive to the Southern colonies. On February 2, 1779, he was ordered to build up his Legion and to move to South Carolina. Pulaski arrived with his cavalry in Charleston on May 8, 1779. The city was threatened by the British under Brigadier General Prevost. Pulaski launched a series of attacks that stopped the British and also stopped the city officials of Charleston from surrendering to the British.

While Pulaski suffered from malaria in the South, he remained on active duty. The American commander, General Benjamin Lincoln, reinforced by the French Army and Navy, decided to retake Savannah from the English. The plan was to cutoff the city from British naval power by means of the French fleet under the command of Admiral Charles Hector d'Estaing. The American and French armies were to prevent the British from

escaping and stopping any help that might come. Hopefully, the garrison would be starved into surrendering. Pulaski was placed in charge of the American and French cavalry. His missions were to prevent the British from going out into the countryside for food and to scout for any British units coming to the aid of Savannah.

Unfortunately, a large British fleet was reported to be sailing towards the South and Admiral D'Estaing decided for an assault rather than a siege. Plans were made for an all-out assault to take Savannah. Again, treachery was afoot. An American Loyalist, posing as an American soldier, warned the British. During the attack, Admiral D'Estaing was wounded and the French forces wavered. Pulaski led his cavalry to rally the French and was wounded by grapeshot. Taken off the battlefield, he never regained consciousness. He was placed on the brig the *WASP* to be taken to Charleston for better medical treatment. On October 11, 1779, he died aboard the *WASP*. Knowing that Czarist Russia's reward for Pulaski, either dead or alive, might be taken up by the British, they reported the body being buried at sea. In truth, he was buried at the Greenwich plantation, near Savannah, Georgia. His remains were disinterred in 1853, and placed in Casimir Pulaski Monument in Monterrey Square in the historic center of Savannah the following year.

Illustrations:

Postcard images featuring Pulaski from the 1939 series, *Pictures from the Glorious Days of the Polish-American Fraternity*, by Arthur Szyk. From the PMA Archives Postcard Collections

Color photographs of the Pulaski Monument in Savannah, Georgia, with detail. From the PMA Photography Archives Collections



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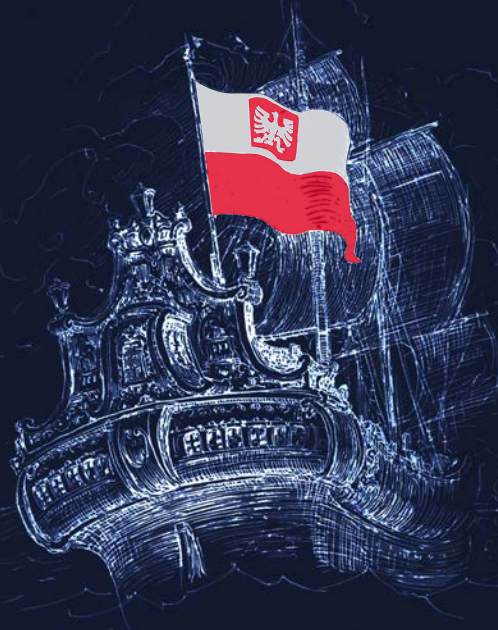
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