

# The Polish Review

VOL. 1 No. 6

NEW YORK, N. Y. OCTOBER 6, 1941

PRICE 10 CENTS

## WHY AMERICA HONORS PULASKI

“WHY has America so signally honored the memory of General Pulaski? It cannot be said that his military achievements in this country were of an outstanding character. No great victories are to his credit. Nowhere did he play a part in snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. Yet everywhere there stands out clearly the undying picture of a dashing soldier without fear and without reproach.

“Americans honor his memory for the soul which flamed in the final glorious charge. Cannon were belching shot along and across the Augusta road. From behind the British entrenchments poured a devastating storm of lead. The French were in retreat. The American columns were falling back. Disorder in the ranks was settling into a rout. It had become a massacre instead of victory. Defeat was inevitable when Pulaski, still inspired by fearless hope, gave the command and led his legion in one of the boldest, bravest and most glorious charges in the annals of the War of Independence. His spirit swept through the ranks of that little body of horsemen and animated every man with the same unflinching courage that moved its leader. America could not forget the charge at Savannah and be true to its own conception of valor. The monuments which have risen to Pulaski, the counties and towns and forts and military companies and streets that bear his name, all attest the American admiration of the spirit that entirely forgets self in love of the abstract principle of human freedom, and holds no price, even life itself, too great to pay in its behalf.” (From an article of Thomas Gamble, *Savannah Morning News*, September 1, 1929.)

“GENERAL PULASKI bore an unblemished reputation in private as well as public life.

“In all the military engagements of which we have record, he was distinguished for his extraordinary personal bravery and for his handling of cavalry, employing surprise and shock tactics by virtue of which he almost invariably met with success despite the use of small number against greater forces.

“Having been the first officer to be given command of all the United States cavalry, General Pulaski may be considered the father of that branch of the service. For eighteen months the Americans had no regular cavalry corps and had none until Congress gave the command to General Pulaski. He immediately began training our cavalry upon sound military lines, and there is no doubt that the knowledge that he brought to the task was passed on to the other cavalry leaders. So that it may be asserted that his training of the cavalry was probably just as important to that arm of the service as that of

Baron Von Steuben's training to the infantry.

“The leading motive of General Pulaski's life was love of liberty. For this he fought valiantly in behalf of his native land and, although in that struggle he lost his near relatives, his home and all his property, and finally was driven from the country as an outlaw, his thirst for liberty could not be quenched and he dedicated his talents and finally his life to the cause of American liberty. (*The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, October, 1929).

(Please turn to next page)



Monument to Pulaski in Washington, D. C.

In the American Military Biography containing the lives and characters of the officers of the Revolution who distinguished themselves in achieving American independence, the author says: "Perhaps a braver man than Pulaski never drew a sword," and in describing his death at Savannah: "Thus fell, in a most bold and daring achievement, the distinguished Polish patriot and hero, in the cause of American Liberty; his memory is entitled to our veneration, as his life forms an item in the price of our independence."

"Thus ended the life of one who was the incarnation of the best tradition of Polish chivalry. He shared its virtues and its weaknesses. Proud and unyielding, patriotic and unselfish, he formed a worthy member of a gallant band of men who came to help America in the Revolution, and there was none who deserve a higher rank in the minds and hearts of the American people. His was the spirit of the Poles who saved Europe with Sobieski, who fought on so many battlefields for freedom, and in these days of upheaval the patriotic career of Pulaski, with his willingness to sacrifice his life for ideals, must deserve mention. No finer tribute can be paid than the remark of the King of Poland on

*"I assure you, sir, I have a high sense of your merit and services and the principles that influence the part you have taken in the affairs of this country. The disinterested and unremitted zeal you have manifested in the service gives you a title to the esteem of the citizens of America, and has assured you of mine."*

*George Washington, from a letter to Pulaski dated November 24, 1778.*

hearing of his death: 'Pulaski died as he lived, a hero, but an enemy of kings.' He fought and died for liberty, but he united with it a firm sense of his personal dignity and obligations, and by his fearless advocacy of his code of all lands and all epochs.

"It is only proper and just that America and grateful people enjoying the blessings of liberty, peace and prosperity should on October 11th of this year recall the life of this great man and pay tribute to his valor and chivalry on the anniversary of his untimely death." (From *Pennsylvania Pulaski Sesquicentennial Historical Booklet*.)

## PULASKI MONUMENTS

The citizens of Savannah, Ga., erected a monument to the memory of Pulaski in Monterey Square, which was completed in 1855. In February, 1825, one of the citizens of Savannah had suggested it would be appropriate to erect a monument to Pulaski.

On March 21, 1825, General Lafayette while on a visit to Savannah, laid the cornerstone of the monument to Pulaski in Chippewa Square. The site for the monument was later shifted to Monterey Square where the cornerstone was re-laid October 11, 1853.

The monument was completed January 8, 1855. It was designed and executed by R. E. Launitz, a Polish sculptor who has given to the world a most graceful and beautiful monument.

The Pulaski monument is a sculptured shaft type

of memorial with a beautiful natural entourage and enclosed in a decorative iron railing.

The tall monument of Italian marble features a pedestal superimposed by a shaft adapted from the Renaissance and Classic Corinthian-Composite styles of architectural columns, terminated by a statue. The shaft is square in plan and retains the entasis and proportions of Classic examples. It is divided by alternate bands of stars and garlands; the stars are emblems of the states and the garlands denote that the states are green and flourishing. Above the elaborate Corinthian-Composite capital there is a statue of Liberty holding in her left hand the banner of stars and stripes. In her right hand she holds a laurel wreath, extended as to crown the hero for his noble deeds. On the north side of the pedestal, there is a bronze panel featuring the figure in bas-relief of the wounded General Pulaski falling from his horse while still grasping his sword. Above this, at the base of the shaft, an eagle, symbolic bird-emblem of Poland and America, rests with its feet on the arms of both countries indicating the common bonds between Poland and America.

The inscription of this fine Savannah tribute, reads "Pulaski, the heroic Pole who fell mortally wounded fighting for American Liberty at the siege of Savannah."

The resolution of the Continental Congress providing that a monument be erected to Pulaski's memory was not carried out until 1910, when the 57th Congress of the United States provided for the erection of a bronze equestrian statue in Washington, D.C. This monument was unveiled during the month of May, 1910.

### A Proclamation

*Whereas, the Governor and the Legislature of New Jersey, in recognition of the heroic and self-sacrificing service rendered by General Pulaski during the war for the independence of the thirteen colonies and, remembering that New Jersey was known as the "Battleground of the Revolution" and that here was expended much of the General's splendid effort in the cause of Liberty, have designated the overhead road between Jersey City and Newark as the "General Pulaski Skyway."*

September 10, 1933

A. Harry Moore, Governor

## A HERO'S LIFE AND DEATH

CASIMIR PULASKI began his military career when only 20 at the siege of Mitau, Courland; at the early age of 31, he gave his life to the American cause at the siege of Savannah. Admired by Benjamin Franklin, commended by George Washington, the friend of "Light Horse Harry" Lee, Casimir Pulaski's fame rests upon a solid foundation.

Benjamin Franklin, in one of his letters, said:

"Count Pulaski is esteemed one of the greatest officers of Europe."

Again, Franklin wrote to General Washington, in a letter dated at Paris, May 29th, 1777:

Count de Pulaski, to think of some mode for employing him in our service, there is none occurs to me liable to so few inconveniences and exceptions, as the giving him the command of the horse . . . a man of real capacity, experience and knowledge in that service, might be extremely useful. The Count appears by his recommendations, to have sustained no inconsiderable military character in his own country; and as the principal attention in Poland has been for some time past paid to the Cavalry, it is to be presumed this gentleman is not unacquainted with it. I submit it to Congress how



Death of Gen. Casimir Pulaski

"Count Pulaski of Poland, an officer famous throughout Europe for his bravery and conduct in defence of the liberties of his country against the three great invading powers of Russia, Austria and Prussia, will have the honor of delivering this into your Excellency's hands. The Court here have encouraged and promoted his voyage, from an opinion that he may be highly useful to our service. Mr. Deane has written so fully concerning him, that I need not enlarge; and I only add my wishes, that he may find in our armies, under your Excellency, occasions of distinguishing himself.

Washington wrote to the President of Congress on August 28th, 1777, as follows:

"Having endeavored, at the solicitation of the

far it may be eligible to confer the appointment I have mentioned upon him."

"Light Horse Harry" Lee said:

"Pulaski, a name dear to the writer, from a belief in his worth and knowledge of the difficulties he always had to encounter . . . this gallant soldier was a native of Poland, whose disastrous history is well known. . . He was sober, diligent and intrepid, gentlemanly in his manners, and amiable in heart."

The life of Casimir Pulaski is shrouded in mystery, unsettled by controversy as to many of the details, but always tinged with romance. The date of his birth is variously stated as 1747 and 1748. Pulaski himself fixes it as 1747.

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# POLAND SPEAKS . . .

**WHENCE** springs the glorious legend of Casimir Pulaski? What impelled this knight of Poland's freedom to go to the New World, what prompted him to fight and lay down his life for America?

*Was it not the love of Liberty, which for 170 years, has moulded the lives of hundreds and thousands of Polish immigrants and exiles?*

*Were it not so, how explain the lives of Kosciuszko, Pulaski, Mieroslawski, Bem, Dembinski, General Dabrowski and many other Polish fighters for freedom; how explain that wherever this Battle of Freedom was being fought, from the end of the XVIII Century onwards, Poles were always to be found in the forefront of that fight.*

*In his letter to Metternich, Talleyrand said that the partition of Poland was the main cause of the liberty seeking revolutions of the XVIII Century.*

*Expelled from their own country, the Poles went forth into the world to fight for "Our Freedom and Your Own."*

*Kosciuszko and Pulaski in America, Bem and Dembinski in Hungary, Mieroslawski in Baden and Sicily, General Dabrowski in France and in Italy, all fought for the freedom of Poland and the liberties of their adopted countries.*

V

*When, after the fall of Napoleon, reaction raised its boary head and deprived individuals and nations of their freedom, Metternich coined a motto:*

*"Everything for the People, Nothing by the People."*

*Metternich was answered by Abraham Lincoln on the battlefield of Gettysburg:*

*"Government of the People, by the People, for the People."*

*For well nigh 200 years the forces of freedom have been locked in a death struggle with autocracy, and the issue is yet undecided whether the individual exists for the benefit of the State; or whether the State and all Government exist for the individual and the protection of his rights and liberties.*

V

*Pulaski shed his blood "For Our Freedom and Your Own," and 160 years later the same slogan inspired the Polish people to fight Hitler. Let us look at the meaning of that motto.*

*No nation can retain real and lasting freedom, when Might rules on its frontiers. Political and economic isolation of a nation, no matter how great, was impossible even 150 years ago. Today that science has conquered space, only the blind can dream of isolation.*

*Two centuries of strife and suffering have shown that individual freedom and national liberty, can be assured only by the triumph of liberty and democracy throughout the world.*

V

*Poles—who since the partition have shed their blood on the battlefields of liberty all over the world, who have fought for the freedom of almost every foreign nation—have at times been called incorrigible idealists.*

*Instead of working on their own soil, even in the chains of slavery, they preferred to wander like knights-errant through the world, in the pursuit of an unattainable ideal. That is what, too often, was said of them.*

*Today, the most matter-of-fact Americans, the most sober politicians, taught by the experiences of the past two years, know that the sacrifices of Pulaski and so many others were not inspired by Quixotic thirst for adventure, but by the highest human ideals that of Liberty. As Patrick Henry said: "Give me Liberty or give me Death."*

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There is no need to dwell here upon his exploits in Poland, covering the whole territory of the Republic at the head of a small band of horsemen, who spread terror among the invaders. It suffices to say that subsequent unfortunate events forced him to leave his native land. Nor is it necessary to tell of his wanderings in Turkey except to say that when the Sultan refused to aid him, he made his way to France in 1775.

A graphic description of his arrival in Paris was given by his schoolmate and intimate friend, Dr. N. Belleville, an interne of one of the military hospitals in Paris.

On a rainy evening, just as he was about to retire, a handful of sand was thrown against his window and he said, "Who's there?" Someone called him by name so he went down to see who wanted him. There he found Pulaski, ill, worn out with fatigue and exposure, and entirely destitute, as he had concealed his presence in Paris from the authorities, not knowing how he might be received. Dr. Belleville took him into his apartment, provided for him and opened a correspondence with Pulaski's friends.

At the same time, Pulaski, sympathizing with the American Colonies in their struggle for liberty against enormous odds, asked Benjamin Franklin to aid him in securing a commission in the American Army.

As Henry Williams said at the laying of the cornerstone of the Savannah monument to Pulaski in 1853: "It stirred the heart of Pulaski like the voice of a battle trumpet. It was a struggle for liberty. It was his cause whoever the people and wherever the scene of conflict."

Dr. Franklin was overwhelmed with similar requests but impressed with Pulaski's splendid military record and with the sincerity of his motives, furnished Pulaski with letters to General Washington, which proved invaluable.

## PULASKI COMES TO AMERICA

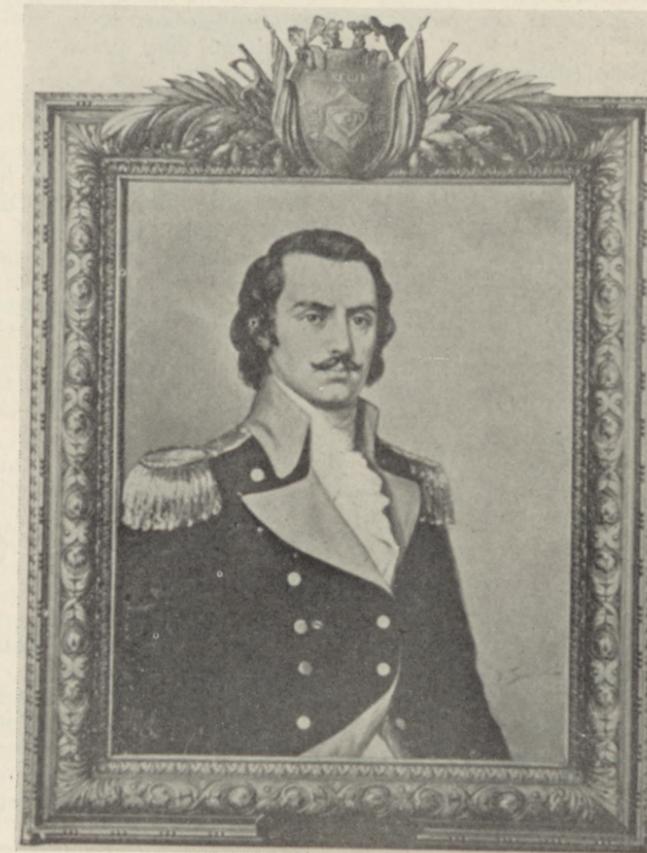
A year passed before arrangements could be perfected. With Lieutenant-Colonel Kotkowski, another Polish patriot, he sailed for America in June, 1777.

Pulaski landed from the state brigantine "Massachusetts" at Marblehead on July 23, 1777, forty-four

days out from Nantes, France. It was not likely that more than a few knew of his long and desperate struggles for Polish independence from foreign domination. The letters he brought emphasized his merits. The gallant and unconquerable soul that spoke from eyes that are described as "flashing with enthusiasm," his soldierly bearings, his youthful ardor, his eagerness for action—these were a stronger endorsement and appeal than the lines that Franklin had penned.

Pulaski arrived in Philadelphia in August, 1777, and immediately presented his credentials to General Washington, who was so impressed with him

that he forthwith wrote to Congress suggesting that Pulaski be given command of the Horse. The cavalry had received but scant attention when Pulaski sought a commission from Congress. Four days after Washington had commended him to Clymer by letter, Pulaski had conferred in Philadelphia with John Hancock, president of the Congress, and presented to him a plan for a mounted corps. Washington also wrote to Hancock afterwards recommending the creation of a corps of cavalry with Pulaski in command. But before the letters could be considered by Congress, Pulaski, two weeks later, on September 11, was to receive his first baptism of fire on American soil at the battle of Brandywine, and by his valor smoothed the path to Congressional action along the lines Washington intimated.



Brigadier-General Casimir Pulaski

## BRANDYWINE

Pulaski had no command at Brandywine. Joining Washington, he had simply become one of his military family awaiting assignment. Howe, with 20,000 troops, had landed at the head of Chesapeake Bay, and was marching to capture Philadelphia. Washington drew his 10,000 poorly equipped and poorly trained men across Howe's advance. While a portion of the advancing army made a fierce frontal attack, Howe and Cornwallis moved sufficiently up stream to escape detection, crossed it with a large portion of the army and flanking the Americans struck a decisive blow that routed one wing and forced Washington to retreat. The absence of a mounted force had again made it impossible for Washington to obtain reliable and prompt information of the British movements until it was

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too late to effectively rearrange his own forces. Washington, at a critical point of the battle, gave Pulaski command of his "own bodyguard" of thirty horse, and with his small detachment Pulaski charged the oncoming victorious British and retarded their advance. Later, when Pulaski called attention to a British maneuver to cut off an avenue of retreat and capture the American baggage, Washington authorized him to collect as many scattered troops as he could and make the best use of them, and Pulaski by so doing defeated the British object and "effectively protected our baggage and the retreat of our Army." Historian Ramsay says, "at Brandywine, Pulaski was a thunderbolt of war, and always sought the post of danger as the post of honor."

After the battle of Brandywine, on September 16, 1777, at Warren Tavern, Pulaski saved the Army of Washington from a sudden surprise that might have proven fatal.

#### WARREN TAVERN

Pulaski was the first to detect the approach of the British in such a force as to menace Washington himself, and part of his command near Warren Tavern. Washington was engaged when Pulaski rode up and he was told that Washington could not be disturbed. Pulaski insisted, however, on seeing him and reporting the near presence of the British forces. Colonel Alexander Hamilton, who understood French, suggested that Pulaski might have mistaken British for American troops, but Pulaski, with great heat, insisted that his report was accurate. This afterwards proved to be true and it was through his intelligence and activity that further disaster was prevented.

As a result of Pulaski's splendid conduct at the battle of Brandywine, which justified Franklin and Washington's opinion of him, on September 15, 1777, Congress awarded to Pulaski a commission as Brigadier-General in command of all cavalry of the American forces.

When Washington attacked the British outpost at Germantown, on October 4, 1777, General Pulaski with his cavalry silently scoured the roads to prevent observation and keep up communication between the heads of the different columns. In that engagement the American troops failed to coordinate their movements and became scattered at the instant when victory was declaring herself in their favor. They were pursued by Cornwallis with his army for five miles, and the latter engaged in skirmishes with the rear guard under Pulaski, who held back the advancing foe and caused Cornwallis to give up the fight.

*"Honor and a true desire of distinguishing myself in defense of Liberty was the only motive which fired my breast for the cause of the United States."*

*"I am a Republican whom the love of glory and the honor of supporting the Liberty of the Union drew hither."*

*From the letters of General Pulaski to Colonel Lee and Congress*

*"Pulaski is esteemed as one of the greatest officers of Europe."*

*Benjamin Franklin*

Pulaski's stay at Valley Forge, where Washington with his Army took winter quarters, was confined to a brief period from December 19th to December 31, 1777, when he received orders to march to Trenton and there establish a camp where more adequate supplies for both men and horses might be obtained, and where the men could be trained for the next campaign. There, assisted by Colonel Michael Kovacz, a Hungarian, who had served in the Polish Army, he perfected the training of his command and prepared a manual for the use of cavalry.

In the latter part of February, 1778, General Pulaski left with a detachment of fifty men to join General Anthony Wayne and two hundred and fifty men of the New Jersey militia, with the object of thwarting an attack that the British planned against Philadelphia to procure supplies. The opposing forces met at Haddonfield, New Jersey, March 3, 1778. Pulaski at the head of his little troop of cavalry was everywhere alert, charging the enemy with spirit and effect. His horse was shot under him, and he personally took seven prisoners. General Wayne in his report of the battle praised Pulaski very highly, saying that he "behaved with his usual bravery."

Washington's high opinion of Pulaski may be gathered from two letters which follow:

On March 14, 1778, Washington wrote to Congress requesting that Pulaski be authorized to raise an independent cavalry corps. "I have only to add that the Count's valor and active zeal on all occasions have done him great honor."

And on the same date, Washington wrote to Governor Livingston:

"I am pleased with the favorable account which you give to Count Pulaski's conduct while at Trenton. He is a gentleman of great activity and unquestionable bravery and only wants a fuller knowledge of our language and customs to make a valuable officer."

#### THE LEGION

On March 28, 1778, Congress passed a resolution that Pulaski retain his rank as a Brigadier and have the command of an independent corps of horse and foot, the corps to be raised in such a way and composed of such men as General Washington should think expedient and proper.

On April 13, 1778, a recruiting station was opened at Mrs. Ross' house in Baltimore and recruiting continued through the months of April, May, June and July, resulting in the forming of an independent corps of three companies of horse, armed with lances, and three companies of infantry, a total of 330 men. "The scheme of independent legions," says Sparks, "seems to have been first suggested by Pulaski, and it proved of the greatest importance in the subsequent operations of the war . . . Lee's and Armand's legions were formed upon a similar plan."

*(Please turn to next page)*

*Head Quarters Bucks County Aug. 21<sup>st</sup> 1777.*

*Sir,*

*I do myself the Honor to inclose you a Copy of Mr. Franklin's Letter in favor of Count Pulaski of Poland, by whom this will be handed to you. — I some time ago had a Letter from Mr. Deane, couched in terms equally favorable to his Character & Military Abilities of this Gentleman. — How he can with propriety be provided for, you will be best able to determine — he takes this from me, as an introduction to your Letter at his own request*

*I have the Honor to be*  
*Sir,*  
*Your most Obedt. Servant*  
*G. Washington*

*The Honble*  
*John Hancock Esqr.*

Washington's letter to John Hancock, President of Congress

When on a visit to Bethlehem, Pa., in April 1778, where there was a branch of the Moravian Sisters, Pulaski asked them to make a special banner for his legion. This was done, and the banner was carried as the battle flag of the Legion, which was with Pulaski up to his last engagement at Savannah. It was sung by Longfellow in his beautiful poem, "Hymn of the Moravian Nuns, at the Consecration of Pulaski's Banner."

Pulaski spent his own money to help equip his legion. In an address to Congress on September 17, 1778, he stated: "I have expended sixteen thousand dollars at least of my own," and again in his memorable letter of August 19, 1779, to Congress, he stated: "You cannot be ignorant that I have spent considerable more than the sum in question of my own, for the pleasure of advancing your cause, you must be sensible also that I did not come to America destitute of resources, to be burthen to you; that I have a Letter of Credit on Mr. Morris; I have lately received a letter from my family advising me that they despatched 100,000 Livres (\$20,000) in hard money to me should it fortunately come safe, the pleasure to me will truly

be great to repay you to the utmost farthing, the whole charge of my Legion." Captain Baldesquin, his paymaster, informed Congress that Pulaski had "laid out for the Legion at least \$50,000 of his own money," which in Revolutionary days was a substantial amount.

It was not until fall that the Legion was actually ordered to take the field and its first operations were at Egg Harbor, New Jersey, where it was sent to protect an American Privateer Base. Here, on October 15th, the infantry of the Legion was surprised by the British, and Lieutenant-Colonel de Bose, a Pole, was killed. This unexpected attack was a result of treason. A deserter had informed the British of the exact location of Pulaski's force. Pulaski with his cavalry rescued the infantry and drove back the invaders.

Pulaski spent part of the winter with General Washington at Morristown and exercised his cavalry in a meadow near Washington's headquarters.

It is said of him that he could ride at full speed, throw his pistol in the air, grasp it as it came down, hurl it ahead and then leaning over his horse, recover it from the ground without checking his speed. American officers undertook to emulate his feats, with the result that no inconsiderable number were injured in the attempt.

#### CHARLESTON

On February 2, 1779, Pulaski was ordered South with his Legion to join General Lincoln, who had been given command of the Southern troops. He

reached Charleston on May 8th with part of his force. On his way to Charleston, Pulaski heard that General Provost of the British forces was coming up from Georgia. On the 11th the latter crossed the Ashley River at the head of 900 men, and scarcely had he landed when Pulaski made an assault upon the advance lines. He kept up a sharp skirmish, but was finally forced to retreat by superior numbers of the enemy. In connection with this attack Sparks says: "His coolness, courage, and disregard of personal danger were conspicuous throughout the encounter, and the example of this prompt and bold attack had great influence in raising the spirits of the people and inspiring the confidence of the inexperienced troops then assembled in the city."

In response to General Provost's demands, the City Fathers were about to surrender Charleston, but General Pulaski appealed to them not to do so and they decided to resist.

Pulaski, in spite of the numerical inferiority of his troops, made an immediate attack upon the British and threw back the head of the column in great disorder. He, himself, displayed the greatest

gallantry and had a number of hand-to-hand encounters with members of the enemy's cavalry.

The effect of this sudden onslaught was to make General Provost believe that reinforcements had arrived and caused him to retire.

#### SAVANNAH

Savannah, Ga., at this time consisted of from three to four hundred wooden houses and was a stronghold of the British. It was the intention of General Lincoln to besiege the city and drive the enemy away. On the 3rd of September, he received information that Count d'Estaing was off the coast with a large French fleet and that he would join General Lincoln in an attack upon the city. The latter left Charleston with his army for Savannah, and General Pulaski was sent ahead of the main army to attack and harass the British outposts. Pulaski dispersed a detachment of British at Ebenezer with his dragoons, and likewise was sent by General Lincoln to attack a party of the British that had come up the Ogechee River and landed below the ferry. He suddenly fell upon the enemy, forcing them to retreat and taking a number of prisoners.

The armies of the French under d'Estaing and the American forces came together at Savannah about the 16th of September. A siege was begun, but the enemy was strongly entrenched and refused to give ground. Finally, becoming weary of the prolonged siege and fearing for the safety of his vessels, Count d'Estaing requested that the city be attacked by storm. General Lincoln consented to this plan with some hesitation, believing that if the siege were kept up the enemy would be forced to surrender or to evacuate the city.

At midnight, October 9, 1779, the movement of the Allies for attack of the city commenced but there was this difference in the opposing forces.

On the night of October 8th, James Curry, Sergeant Major of the Charleston Grenadiers, deserted to the enemy with the Allied plan of attack which he communicated to the British. The battle, therefore, was fought more or less blindly by the Allied forces and by the British with full knowledge of

the American plans. The British therefore, were able to make such disposition of their forces as to forestall every move of the Allies.

On October 9th, the order was given out that the ramparts of the British were to be taken by storm. The plan of the assault had been carefully gone over, and orders were issued as to the manner of attack and the points to be assailed. The cavalry of the French and Americans was under the command of General Pulaski, and he was to charge the embattlements, following up the infantry, who were to storm the right of the British lines.

At half past five fire was heard to the East which was recognized to be the troops in the trenches attacking the center of the British lines and General Huger attacking the British defenses on the West. The British easily threw back the troops from the trenches and General Huger with 500 men who had made his way across the rice fields, was repulsed and took no further part in the action.

The British sentinels now perceived the attacking forces. Count d'Estaing sent forward a vanguard with orders to capture a battery on the southwest of the British defenses which menaced the Allied advance. Count d'Estaing, without waiting for the other columns placed himself at the head of the first column and rushed forward to the attack. This was met with a heavy fire of artillery and musketry but in spite of this, the vanguard continued its advance upon the redoubt and Count d'Estaing's columns advanced upon the entrenchments.

The head of the d'Estaing column penetrated within the entrenchments but was not supported by the rest of the column which on the contrary, was thrown into confusion by the difficulties of the ground and cut to pieces by the fire from the redoubts and batteries.

The head of the d'Estaing column penetrated within the entrenchments but was not supported by the rest of the column which on the contrary, was thrown into confusion by the difficulties of the ground and cut to pieces by the fire from the redoubts and batteries.

Count Dillon, who had orders to lead his column under cover of the night round the swamp and gain the rear of the Ebenezer Road redoubt, mistook his way through the darkness, and did not

(Please turn to page 11)



Pulaski Monument, Monterey Square, Savannah Ga.

## PULASKI'S BANNER

The Pulaski banner was made by the Moravian Sisters at Bethlehem, and was carried as the battle flag of his Legion. It was with him up to his last engagement at Savannah and was celebrated by Longfellow in his beautiful "Hymn of the Moravian Nuns."

The original banner is now in possession of the Maryland Historical Society at Baltimore. On one side of the banner are the letters "U. S." and in a circle around them words "Unitas Virtus Fortior." (Union makes valor stronger.) On the other side in the center is the all-seeing eye, with the words "Non Alius Regit." (No Other Governs.)

The poem about the banner was written by Longfellow in 1825 before he was nineteen. It was inspired by a statement contained in an article on Pulaski in the North American Review for 1825.

#### Hymn Of The Moravian Nuns Of Bethlehem At the Consecration of Pulaski's Banner

When the dying flame of day  
Through the chancel shot its ray,  
Far the glimmering tapers shed  
Faint light on the cowed head;  
And the censor burning swung,  
Where, before the altar, hung  
The crimson banner, that with prayer  
Had been consecrated there.  
And the nuns' sweet hymn was heard the while,  
Sung low, in the dim, mysterious aisle.

"Take thy banner! May it wave  
Proudly o'er the good and brave;  
When the battle's distant wail  
Breaks the sabbath of our vale,  
When the clarion's music thrills  
To the hearts of these lone hills,  
When the spear in conflict shakes,  
And the strong lance shivering breaks.

"Take thy banner! and, beneath  
The battle-cloud's encircling wreath,  
Guard it, till our homes are free!  
Guard it! God will prosper thee!  
In the dark and trying hour,  
In the breaking forth of power,  
In the rush of steeds and men,  
His right hand will shield thee then.

The first appearance of the Pulaski Banner in the serious business of war at the head of a fighting column was in New Jersey. A memorial tablet was erected on the site of the massacre by the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New Jersey, with the following description: "This tablet is erected by the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New Jersey to commemorate the massacre of a portion of the Legion commanded by Brigadier General the Count Casimir Pulaski of the Conti-



Pulaski Banner

"Take thy banner! But when night  
Closes round the ghastly fight,  
If the vanquished warrior bow,  
Spare him! By our holy vow,  
By our prayers and many tears,  
By the mercy that endears,  
Spare him! he our love hath shared!  
Spare him! as thou wouldst be spared!

"Take thy banner! and if e'er  
Thou shouldst press the soldier's bier,  
And the muffled drum should beat  
To the tread of mournful feet,  
Then this crimson flag shall be  
Martial cloak and shroud for thee."

The warrior took that banner proud,  
And it was his martial cloak and shroud!

mental Army in the affair at Egg Harbor, New Jersey, October 15, 1778, in the Revolutionary War."

The original banner is now preserved in the museum of the Maryland Historical Society, one of its most treasured relics. It was secured by Captain Paul Bentalou of the First Troop of the Legion who was beside Pulaski when he fell mortally wounded at Savannah, October 9, 1779, and in whose arms Pulaski passed away two days later on the brig Wasp.

# PULASKI IN POLAND

WHAT caused Pulaski to leave his own country and seek service with the American forces? The answer involves a short review of Pulaski's career before he sailed for this country.

After the death of Augustus III, King of Poland, in 1763, a new sovereign, according to Poland's ancient Constitution, was to be elected by Diet. Russia seized the opportunity, when Poland was thus without a head, to send troops into the territory of her friendly neighbor to overawe the deputies and secure their votes for a king of her own choice. Under Russian influence, Poniatowski was elected and crowned King of Poland, under the name of Stanislaus Augustus.

The events that ensued made history. For four years a desperate and bloody, but hopeless battle raged throughout the land. Resistance began by the formation of Confederations for the protection of Polish rights and the expulsion of the invaders from Polish soil.

The father of Casimir Pulaski was Chief Magistrate of Warech and stood high in public esteem. He had taken but little part in public affairs, prior to the election of Stanislaus Augustus. As soon, however, as the liberties of his beloved country were at stake, all the sleeping fire and energy of his character awoke, and were devoted to his country's cause. He favored armed opposition to all the enemies of Poland, and endeavored to arouse the national spirit of his countrymen.

A small town Bar, in Podolia, was selected as the headquarters of the Confederation. A secret compact was drawn up and signed by the elder Pulaski, his three sons, and others, and this first Confederation became the model for many, which at once sprung up throughout the land. A manifesto was issued to the Polish people, explaining the reason for united resistance to foreign rule. The language of this manifesto was not unlike the language of America's own Declaration of Independence, proclaimed nearly a decade later.

The Confederates fought many battles for freedom, in one of which Joseph Pulaski was told that his three sons had been killed. "I am sure they have done their duty," he replied. The report proved false. Casimir, just of age, was then exhibiting proof of his bravery which was soon to render him justly famous. Upon one occasion, with twelve

hundred Confederates, he repulsed an attack lasting seven days, first by an equal number of Russians, then by two thousand, and at last by six thousand.

About this time, the Confederates determined that the Polish King Stanislaw Poniatowski was an enemy to his country and the throne was declared vacant.

Thereupon, Pulaski at the solicitation of two of the Confederates, determined to capture him. Under his plan, about a dozen officers disguised as peasants, made their way to the capital and actually captured the King. They started to take him to Pulaski but, awed by their act of temerity, one by one they fell away and the King was left free to return to his followers.

Pulaski's purpose was to take the King alive but Frederick the Great, assuming the lead, denounced this act as attempted regicide on the part of Pulaski which should receive the utmost condemnation, and which should unite all the powers of Europe to take prompt vengeance for so enormous a crime. The Empress of Austria joined in this condemnation.

In January, 1772, Pulaski issued a reply denying that he had any such purpose, using in part this language: "I have endeavored to mark my course by an invincible fortitude. Neither the blood of one of my brothers which was shed by the enemy before my eyes, nor the cruel servitude of another, nor the sad fate of so many of my relations and compatriots, has shaken my patriotism."

His friends called attention to the fact that the King was in possession of the conspirators for several hours when he could have been made away with if murder had been their purpose. But no defense availed Pulaski. In his absence, he was sentenced to be condemned and executed, his property was confiscated and he was declared to be an outlaw. Under these circumstances, he was compelled to abandon the struggle and leave the country.

Ruhlère, the historian of Poland, says the name which soon eclipsed all others, and became one of the surest hopes of the nation, was that of young Casimir Pulaski, always full of resource in misfortune and of activity in success. His name was a terror to the Russians, and they seldom ventured to attack him except with overwhelming numbers.

The elder Pulaski died in prison. Prussian and Austrian troops, as well as Russian, now began to cross the frontier, and the last hopes of Confederate success finally vanished. The sovereigns of the three invading powers agreed to divide Poland among them, as she lay helpless at their mercy.

Casimir Pulaski escaped from Poland, and after spending some five years wandering among strange lands, reached France in 1777. He heard of the American Declaration of Independence, and realized that America was the place to vindicate with his sword, the rights of man, the laws of justice, the civil and political liberty for which he had vainly fought in the land of his birth.

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reach his position till day discovered him to the besieged, who drove him back with a galling fire. The muskets of the Hessians, Grenadiers, and Loyalists, made awful havoc amidst those well-drilled troops. They fell like grass before the mower. But animated by their officers, they still rallied to the front, pressed onward to the attack, and still hoped for a victory. Amidst all this slaughter they gained the abatis, while the other columns of French troops having mostly lost their way by the darkness of the night, were crowded together in a morass to the west of the city, and exposed to the deliberate and galling fire of the redoubts and cross fire.

The column of M. de Steding moved forward to the left of Count d'Estaing's column but their guide, who claimed knowledge of the British defenses, proved to be utterly ignorant of his task of guiding de Steding's column, with the result that the men floundered in the swamp. The British fired on them furiously but the column was able to make its way to the Augusta Road. Here also the vanguard and the column of Count d'Estaing which has been thrown violently to the left, attempted to get on the Augusta Road and met with de Steding's column and great confusion ensued.

The two English galleys and the frigate trained their guns on this crowded point. Three times the charge was ordered and three times the British threw back the Allied forces with great loss.

A retreat was ordered and the troops began to stream across the swamp to the South of the Augusta Road but they were exposed to terrific fire, many of enemy standing on the parapets and firing with their muskets almost touching the fleeing troops.

But what of the cavalry?

General Pulaski left his camp to the Southwest of the city on the morning of October 9th and at the head of Lieutenant-Colonel Laurens' column advanced to a point on Bull Street extended South of the city. At the edge of the woods, he halted and took a position for observation.

From this time onward, the accounts of his movements and especially of the kind of shot which killed him, materially differ according as the different narrators viewed them. It must also be borne in mind that in making the charges of cavalry across open ground in the face of armed entrenchments, General Pulaski was acting under the express orders of General Lincoln.

Captain Bentalou says: "Pulaski, impatient to know when he was to act, determined, after securing his cavalry under cover as well as the ground would permit, to go forward himself, called to accompany him, one of the Captains of his Legion. . . . They proceeded only a small distance when they heard of the havoc produced in the swamp by the hostile batteries. d'Estaing himself was grievously wounded . . . Pulaski rushed on to the scene

of disorder and bloodshed. In his attempt to penetrate to the murderous spot, he received a swivel shot in the upper part of his right thigh."

According to another version, Pulaski, seeing the apparent confusion and realizing that all was not well, drove up at the head of his cavalry to where the French were, to reinforce and encourage them, thinking that he might be able to get to the rear of the enemy through some opening. Dashing madly ahead into a withering flame of shot and shell, he himself was struck in the groin by a swivel shot, and fell from his horse mortally wounded, to be picked up later and carried away.

Major Thomas Pinckney says: "Count Pulaski, who with the cavalry preceded the right column of the Americans, proceeded gallantly until stopped by the abatis and before he could force through it, received his mortal wound."

One of the French officers, present at the battle, says: "Our troops, without exception, extolled the bravery of the American Regulars commanded by Pulaski. With astonishing gallantry they returned twice to the assault, planted their flags upon the parapet of the entrenchments, and rallied in good order after having lost their chief, wounded to the death."

Major Rogowski, one of Pulaski's officers, gives the most succinct account:

"For half an hour the guns roared and blood flowed abundantly. Seeing an opening between the enemy's works, Pulaski resolved, with his Legion, and a small detachment of Georgia cavalry, to charge through, enter the city, confuse the enemy, and cheer the inhabitants with good tidings. General Lincoln approved the daring plan. Imploring the help of the Almighty, Pulaski shouted to his men "Forward," and we, two hundred strong, rode at full speed after him, the earth resounding under the hoofs of our chargers. For the first two minutes all went well. We sped like knights into the peril. Just, however, as we passed the gap between the two batteries, a cross fire, like a pouring shower, confused our ranks. I looked around. Oh! sad moment, ever to be remembered! Pulaski lies prostrate on the ground. I leaped towards him, thinking possibly his wound was not dangerous, but a canister shot had pierced his thigh, and the blood was also flowing from his breast, probably from a second wound. Falling on my knees, I tried to raise him. He said in a faint voice. Jesus! Maria! Joseph! Further, I knew not, for at that moment a musket ball, grazing my scalp, blinded me with blood, and I fell to the ground in a state of insensibility."

Some of his command, noting his absence, with the greatest bravery went back and rescued him from the foot of the abatis where he lay wounded.

When about to be removed from the field, in response to a question from Colonel D. Horry, upon whom the command devolved, asking for directions,

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*"Thus ended the service to America of the only volunteer foreign officer of equal rank, who lost his life in her defense, and while other foreign officers received after the war, substantial grants of land and money, Pulaski's only reward was, and must be now, the gratitude of the American people."*

John Frederick Lewis, LL.D., President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

## PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS in this grave crisis, when our precious liberties are gravely menaced by the spread of conquest and tyranny abroad, we may gratefully recall the efforts and sacrifices of those who helped establish this as a free nation; and

WHEREAS on October 11, 1779, at the siege of Savannah, Count Casimir Pulaski, valiant representative of a people that has for centuries displayed magnificent independence of spirit, gallantly gave his life for the cause of American independence; and

WHEREAS, in this connection, the Congress has enacted Public Law 41, approved April 24, 1941, which provides as follows:

"That the President of the United States of America is authorized to issue a proclamation calling upon officials of the government to display the flag of the United States on all governmental buildings on October 11, 1941, and inviting the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies, in commemoration of the death of General Casimir Pulaski."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 11, 1941, as General Pulaski's Memorial Day, and I call upon officials of the Government to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings on that day. I also invite the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies in commemoration of General Pulaski's death.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and forty-one, and of the independence of the United States of America the one hundred and sixty-sixth.

(SEAL)

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

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he answered: "Follow my lancers to whom I have given my orders to attack." But with the loss of their leader, the cavalry turned to the left, plunged through the ranks of the infantry and became involved in the disastrous confusion.

The actual place where Pulaski fell is unknown but it has been stated that Pulaski fell at a point inside of what is now the depot of the Central of Georgia Railway.

### DEATH IN GLORY

Pulaski was carried away by his soldiers, placed on the American brig *Wasp*, and put under the care of skilled French surgeons, who vainly endeavored to remove the bullet and save him. Gangrene had set in, and the stench from his wound was so bad that he was buried at sea on the 11th day of October, 1779, at the age of 31 years.

When the *Wasp* pulled into the harbor of Charleston with her flag flying at half mast and it became known that the gallant Pulaski was dead, the city

took on an aspect of general mourning. The Governor, the Council of the State and the citizens united to pay tribute to their youthful defender, who, shortly before, by his bravery and advice, had saved them from ignominious surrender. When the funeral ceremonies took place, "The pall was carried by three American and three French officers of the highest grade, followed by the beautiful horse which Pulaski rode when he received his mortal wound, with all the accoutrements, arms and dress which he then wore." Congress, on being apprised of Pulaski's death, resolved "that a monument be erected to the memory of Brigadier Count Pulaski."

Thus ended the brilliant career of the illustrious and gallant officer, a heroic figure on two continents, who, on August 13, 1778, had written to Colonel R. H. Lee: "Honor and a true desire of distinguishing myself in defense of Liberty was the only motive which fired my breast for the cause of the United States;" who, on September 17, 1778, had written to Congress: "I am a Republican whom the love of glory and the honor of supporting the Liberty of the Union drew hither."