

= Casimir Pulaski =

Kazimierz Michał Władysław Wiktor Pułaski of Łepowron coat of arms (Polish pronunciation : [kaʐim?? pu?waskʲi] ; English : Casimir Pulaski ; March 6 , 1745 ? October 11 , 1779) was a Polish nobleman , soldier and military commander who has been called with his fellow Hungarian friend Michael Kovats de Fabriczy " the fathers of the American cavalry " .

Born in Warsaw and following in his father 's footsteps , he became interested in politics at an early age and soon became involved in the military and the revolutionary affairs in Poland (the Polish ? Lithuanian Commonwealth) . Pulaski was one of the leading military commanders for the Bar Confederation and fought against Russian domination of the Commonwealth . When this uprising failed , he was driven into exile . Following a recommendation by Benjamin Franklin , Pulaski emigrated to North America to help in the cause of the American Revolutionary War . He distinguished himself throughout the revolution , most notably when he saved the life of George Washington . Pulaski became a general in the Continental Army , created the Pulaski Cavalry Legion and reformed the American cavalry as a whole . At the Battle of Savannah , while leading a daring charge against British forces , he was gravely wounded , and died shortly thereafter .

Pulaski has been remembered as a hero who fought for independence and freedom both in Poland and in the United States . Numerous places and events are named in his honor , and he is commemorated by many works of art . Pulaski is one of only eight people to be awarded honorary United States citizenship . He never married and had no descendants . Despite his fame , there have been uncertainties and controversies surrounding both his place and date of birth and burial .

= = Personal life = =

Pulaski was born on March 6 , 1745 , in the manor house of the Pułaski family in Warsaw , Poland. a Casimir was the eldest son of Marianna Zielińska and Józef Pułaski , who was an advocatus at the Crown Tribunal , the Starost of Warka , and one of the town 's most notable inhabitants . He was a brother of Franciszek Ksawery Pułaski and Antoni Pułaski . His family bore the Łepowron coat of arms . The Pułaski family was Roman Catholic and early in his youth , Casimir Pulaski attended an elite college run by Theatines , a male religious order of the Catholic Church in Warsaw , but did not finish his education .

There is some circumstantial evidence that Pulaski was a Freemason . When Gilbert du Motier , Marquis de Lafayette laid the cornerstone of the monument erected in Pulaski 's honor in Savannah in 1824 , a full Masonic ceremony took place with Richard T. Turner , High Priest of the Georgia chapter , conducting the ceremony . Other sources claim Pulaski was a member of the Masonic Army Lodge in Maryland . A Masonic Lodge in Chicago is named Casimir Pulaski Lodge , No.1167 and a brochure issued by them claims he obtained the degree of Master Mason on June 19 , 1779 , and was buried with full Masonic honors . To date no surviving documents of Pulaski 's actual membership have been found .

= = Military career = =

In 1762 , Pulaski started his military career as a page of Carl Christian Joseph of Saxony , Duke of Courland and vassal of the Polish king . He spent six months at the ducal court in Mitau , during which the court was interned in the palaces by the Russian forces occupying the area . He then returned to Warsaw , and his father gave him the village of Żezuli?ce in Podole ; from that time Pulaski used the title of Starost of Żezuli?ce .

= = = Bar Confederation = = =

With his family , he took part in the 1764 election of the new Polish monarch , Stanisław II August . In December 1767 , Pulaski and his father became involved with the Bar Confederation , which saw King Stanisław as a Russian puppet and sought to curtail Russian hegemony over the

Commonwealth . The confederation was actively opposed by the Russian forces stationed in Poland . Pulaski recruited a unit and on February 29 , 1768 , signed the act of the confederation , thus declaring himself an official supporter of the movement . On March 6 , he received the rank of a pułkownik and commanded a chorągiew of cavalry . In March and April he agitated among the Polish military , successfully convincing some forces to join the Confederates . He fought his first battle on April 20 near Pohorele ; it was a victory , as was another on April 23 near Starokostiantyniv . An engagement at Kaczanówka on April 28 resulted in a defeat . In early May he garrisoned Chmielnik , but was forced to retreat when allied reinforcements were defeated . He retreated to a monastery in Berdyczów , which he defended during a siege by royalist forces for over two weeks until June 16 . Eventually he was forced to surrender and was taken captive by the Russians . On June 28 , he was released in exchange for a pledge that he would not again take up arms with the Confederates , and that he would lobby the Confederates to end hostilities . However , Pulaski considered the pledge to be non-binding , and made a public declaration to that effect upon reaching a camp of the Confederates at the end of July . Agreeing to the pledge in the first place weakened his authority and popularity among the Confederates , and his own father considered whether or not he should be court-martialed ; some heated debates followed and Pulaski was reinstated to active duty only in early September .

In 1769 , Pulaski 's unit was again besieged by numerically superior forces , this time in the old fortress of Okopy Świętej Trójcy , which has served as his base of operations since December the previous year . However , after a staunch defense , he was able to break the Russian siege . On April 7 , he was made the regimentarz of the Kraków Voivodeship . In May and June he operated near Przemyśl , but failed to take the town . Criticized by some of his fellow Confederates , Pulaski departed to Lithuania with his allies and a force of about 600 men on June 3 . There , Pulaski attempted to incite a larger revolt against Russia ; despite no decisive military successes , he was able to assemble a 4,000-strong army and deliver it back to a Confederate staging point . This excursion received international notice and gained him a reputation as the most effective military leader in the Bar Confederation . Next , he moved with his unit towards Zamość and after some skirmishes was defeated at the Battle of Włodawa on September 15 . He spent the rest of the year rebuilding his unit in the region of Podkarpacie .

In February 1770 , Pulaski moved near Nowy Targ , and in March , helped to subdue the mutiny of Józef Bierzyński . Based in Izby , he subsequently operated in southern Lesser Poland and on May 13 his force was defeated at the Battle of Dobórzyn . Around June 9 - 10 in Prešov , in a conference with other Confederate leaders , he met Joseph II , Holy Roman Emperor , who complimented Pulaski on his actions . On July 3 - 4 , Pulaski 's camp was captured by Johann von Drewitz , and he was forced to retreat into Austria . Early in August he met with the French emissary , Charles François Dumouriez . He disregarded an order to take Lanckoronna and instead cooperated with Michał Walewski in a raid on Kraków on the night of August 31 . He then departed for Człuchowa . On September 10 , along with Walewski , he used subterfuge to take control of the Jasna Góra monastery . On September 18 he met Franciszka z Krasińskich , an aristocrat from the Krasiński family and the wife of Charles of Saxony , Duke of Courland ; he impressed her and she would become one of his protectors . Around September 22 - 24 Walewski was made the commandant of Jasna Góra , which slighted Pulaski . Nonetheless he continued as the de facto commander of Confederate troops stationed in and around Jasna Góra . Between September 10 , 1770 , and January 14 , 1771 , Pulaski , Walewski and Józef Zaremba commanded the Polish forces during the siege of Jasna Góra monastery . They successfully defended against Drewitz in a series of engagements , the largest one on November 11 , followed by a siege from December 31 to January 14 . The defense of Jasna Góra further enhanced his reputation among the Confederates and abroad . A popular Confederate song taunting Drewitz included lyrics about Pulaski and Jasna Góra . Pulaski intended to pursue Drewitz , but a growing discord between him and Zaremba prevented this from becoming a real option .

In February 1771 , Pulaski operated around Lublin ; on February 25 he was victorious at Tarłów and on the night of February 28 and March 1 , his forces besieged Krańnik . In March that year he became one of the members of the Confederates ' War Council . Dumouriez , who became a

military adviser to the Confederates , at the time described him as " spontaneous , more proud than ambitious , friend of the prince of Courland , enemy of the Potocki family , brave and honest " as well as popular among other commanders . This was due to his refusal to follow orders and adhere to discipline . J?drzej Kitowicz who met him as well around that time described him as short and thin , pacing and speaking quickly , and uninterested in women or drinking . Furthermore , he enjoyed fighting against the Russians above everything else , and was daring to the extent he forgot about his safety in battles , resulting in his many failures on the battlefield .

In May 1771 , Pulaski advanced on Zamo?? , refusing to coordinate an operation with Dumouriez against Alexander Suvorov ; without Pulaski 's support , the Confederates were defeated at the Battle of Lanckorona . Pulaski 's forces were victorious at the Battle of Majdany , and briefly besieged Zamo?? , but it was relieved by Suvorov . He retreated , suffering major losses , towards Cz?stochowa . On July 27 , pressured by Franciszka z Krasi?skich , he declared he would from then on strictly adhere to orders from the Confederacy that he had previously habitually disregarded . In October his responsibilities in the War Council were increased , and the same month he became involved with the plan to kidnap King Poniatowski . Pulaski was initially opposed to this plan but later supported it on the condition that the king would not be harmed . The attempt failed , weakening the international reputation of the Confederates , and when Pulaski 's involvement with the attempted kidnapping became known , the Austrians expelled him from their territories . He spent the following winter and spring in Cz?stochowa , during which time several of his followers were defeated , captured or killed .

On May 31 , 1772 , Pulaski , increasingly distanced from other leaders of the Confederation , left the Jasna G?ra monastery and went to Silesia in Prussia . In the meantime , the Bar Confederation was defeated , with most fighting ending around the summer . Overall , Pulaski was seen as one of the most famous and accomplished Confederate leaders . " At the same time , he often acted independently , disobeying orders from Confederate command , and among his detractors (which included Dumouriez) had a reputation of a " loose cannon " .

Leaving Prussia , Pulaski sought refuge in France , where he unsuccessfully attempted to join the French Army . In 1773 , his opponents in Poland accused him of attempted regicide , and proceedings began at the Sejm Court on June 7 .

Poniatowski himself warned Pulaski to stay away from Poland , or risk death . The court verdict , declared in absentia in July , stripped Pulaski of " all dignity and honors " , demanded that his possessions be confiscated , and sentenced him to death . He attempted to recreate a Confederate force in the Ottoman Empire during the Russo @-@ Turkish War , but before he could make any progress , the Turks were defeated , and he barely escaped by sea to Marseilles , France . He found himself in debt and unable to find an army that would enlist him . He spent the year of 1775 in France , imprisoned at times for debts , until his allies gathered enough funds to arrange for his release . Around that time , due to the efforts of his friend Claude @-@ Carloman de Ruhière , he was recruited by the Marquis de Lafayette and Benjamin Franklin (whom he met in spring 1777) for service in the American Revolutionary War .

= = = In the United States = = =

= = = = Northern front = = = =

Franklin was impressed by Pulaski , and wrote of him : " Countb 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 ... may be highly useful to our service . " He subsequently recommended that General George Washington accept Pulaski as a volunteer in the Continental Army cavalry and said that Pulaski " was renowned throughout Europe for the courage and bravery he displayed in defense of his country 's freedom . " Pulaski departed France from Nantes in June , and arrived in Marblehead , Massachusetts , near Boston , on July 23 , 1777 . After his arrival , Pulaski wrote to Washington , " I came here , where freedom is being

defended , to serve it , and to live or die for it . "

On August 20 , he met Washington in his headquarters in Neshaminy Falls , outside Philadelphia . He showed off riding stunts , and argued for the superiority of cavalry over infantry . Because Washington was unable to grant him an officer rank , Pulaski spent the next few months traveling between Washington and the US Congress in Philadelphia , awaiting his appointment . His first military engagement against the British occurred before he received it , on September 11 , 1777 , at the Battle of Brandywine . When the Continental Army troops began to yield , he reconnoitered with Washington 's bodyguard of about 30 men , and reported that the enemy were endeavoring to cut off the line of retreat . Washington ordered him to collect , as many as possible , the scattered troops who came his way , and employ them according to his discretion to secure the retreat of the army . His subsequent charge averted a disastrous defeat of the Continental Army cavalry , earning him fame in America and saved the life of George Washington . As a result , on September 15 , 1777 , on the orders of Congress , Washington made Pulaski a brigadier general in the Continental Army cavalry . At that point , the cavalry was only a few hundred men strong organized into four regiments . These men were scattered among numerous infantry formations , and used primarily for scouting duties . Pulaski immediately began work on reforming the cavalry , and wrote the first regulations for the formation .

On September 16 , while on patrol west of Philadelphia , Pulaski spotted significant British forces moving toward the Continental position . Upon being informed by Pulaski , Washington prepared for a battle , but the encounter was interrupted by a major storm before either side was organized . On October 4 , Pulaski took part in the Battle of Germantown . He spent the winter of 1777 to 1778 with most of the army at Valley Forge . Pulaski argued that the military operations should continue through the winter , but this idea was rejected by the general staff . In turn , he focused on reorganizing the cavalry force , mostly stationed in Trenton . While at Trenton his assistance was requested by General Anthony Wayne , whom Washington had dispatched on a foraging expedition into southern New Jersey . Wayne was in danger of encountering a much larger British force sent to oppose his movements . Pulaski and 50 cavalry rode south to Burlington , where they skirmished with British sentries on February 28 . After this minor encounter the British commander , Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Stirling , was apparently convinced that he was facing a much larger force than expected , and prepared to withdraw his troops across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania at Cooper 's Ferry (present @-@ day Gloucester City) . Pulaski and Wayne joined forces to attack Stirling 's position on February 29 while he awaited suitable weather conditions to cross . In the resulting skirmish (which only involved a few hundred men out of the larger forces on either side) , Pulaski 's horse was shot out from under him and a few of his cavalry were wounded .

American officers serving under Pulaski had difficulty taking orders from a foreigner who could scarcely speak English and whose ideas of discipline and tactics differed enormously from those to which they were accustomed . This resulted in friction between the Americans and Pulaski and his fellow Polish officers . There was also discontent in the unit over delays in pay , and Pulaski 's imperious personality was a regular source of discontent among his peers , superiors , and subordinates . Pulaski was also unhappy that his suggestion to create a lancer unit was denied . Despite a commendation from Wayne , these circumstances prompted Pulaski to resign his general command in March 1778 , and return to Valley Forge .

Pulaski went to Yorktown , where he met with General Horatio Gates and suggested the creation of a new unit . At Gates ' recommendation , Congress confirmed his previous appointment to the rank of a brigadier general , with a special title of " Commander of the Horse " , and authorized the formation of a corps of 68 lancers and 200 light infantry . This corps , which became known as the Pulaski Cavalry Legion , was recruited mainly in Baltimore , where it was headquartered . Henry Wadsworth Longfellow would later commemorate in verse the consecration of the Legion 's banner . By August 1778 , it numbered about 330 men , both Americans and foreigners . General Charles Lee commented on the high standards of the Legion 's training . The " father of the American cavalry " demanded much of his men and trained them in tested cavalry tactics . He used his own personal finances when money from Congress was scarce , in order to assure his forces of the finest equipment and personal safety . However , later that year a controversy arose related to the Legion

's finances , and its requisitions from the local populace . His troubles with the auditors continued until his death ; Pulaski complained that he received inadequate funds , was obstructed by locals and officials , and that he was forced to spend his own money . He was not cleared of these charges until after his death .

In the autumn Pulaski was ordered to Little Egg Harbor , where in the engagement on October 15 , known as The Affair at Little Egg Harbor , the legion suffered heavy losses . During the following winter Pulaski was stationed at Minisink , at that time in New Jersey . Ordered to take part in a punitive Sullivan Expedition against the Iroquois , he was dissatisfied with this command , and intended to leave the service and return to Europe , but instead asked to be reassigned to the Southern front . On February 2 , 1779 Washington instead ordered him to South Carolina .

= = = Southern front = = =

Pulaski arrived in Charleston on May 8 , 1779 , finding the city in crisis . General Benjamin Lincoln , commander of the southern army , had led most of the army toward Augusta , Georgia , in a bid to recapture Savannah , which had been captured by the British in late 1778 . The British commander , Brigadier General Augustine Prevost , responded to Lincoln 's move by launching a raiding expedition from Savannah across the Savannah River . The South Carolina militia fell back before the British advance , and Prevost 's force followed them all the way to Charleston . Pulaski arrived just as military leaders were establishing the city 's defenses . When the British advanced on May 11 , Pulaski 's Legion engaged forward elements of the British force , and was badly mauled in the encounter . The Legion infantry , numbering only about 60 men before the skirmish , was virtually wiped out , and Pulaski was forced to retreat to the safety of the city 's guns . Although some historians credit this action with Prevost 's decision to withdraw back toward Savannah the next day (despite ongoing negotiations of a possible surrender of Charleston) , that decision is more likely based on news Prevost received that Lincoln 's larger force was returning to Charleston to face him , and that Prevost 's troops had gone further than he had originally intended . One early historian criticized Pulaski 's actions during that engagement as " ill @-@ judged , ill @-@ conducted , disgraceful and disastrous " . The episode was of minor strategic consequence and did little to enhance the reputation of Pulaski 's unit .

Although Pulaski frequently suffered from malaria while stationed in Charleston , he remained in active service . At the beginning of September Lincoln prepared to launch an attempt to retake Savannah with French assistance . Pulaski was ordered to Augusta , where he was to join forces with General Lachlan McIntosh . Their combined forces were to serve as the forward elements of Lincoln 's army . Pulaski captured a British outpost near Ogeechee River . His units then acted as an advance guard for the allied French units under Admiral Charles Hector , comte d 'Estaing . He rendered great services during the siege of Savannah , and in the assault of October 9 commanded the whole cavalry , both French and American .

= = = Death and burial = = =

While attempting to rally fleeing French forces during a cavalry charge , Pulaski was mortally wounded by grapeshot . The reported grapeshot is on display today at the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah ; The Charleston Museum also has a grapeshot reported to be from Pulaski 's wound . A wounded Pulaski was carried from the field of battle and taken aboard the South Carolina merchant brig privateer Wasp under the command of Captain Samuel Bulfinch , where he died two days later , having never regained consciousness . His death , perceived by American Patriot supporters as heroic , further boosted his reputation in America .

The historical accounts for Pulaski 's time and place of burial vary considerably . According to several contemporary accounts there were witnesses , including Pulaski 's aide @-@ de @-@ camp , that Pulaski received a symbolic burial in Charleston on October 21 , sometime after he was buried at sea . Other witnesses , including Captain Samuel Bulfinch of the Wasp however , claimed that the wounded Pulaski was actually later removed from the ship and taken to the Greenwich plantation in

the town of Thunderbolt , near Savannah , where he died and was buried .

In March 1825 , during his grand tour of the United States , Lafayette personally laid the cornerstone for the Casimir Pulaski Monument in Savannah , Georgia . Remains at Monterey Square in that city , alleged to be Pulaski 's , were exhumed in 1996 and examined in a forensic study . The eight @-@ year examination , including DNA analysis , ended inconclusively , although the skeleton is consistent with Pulaski 's age and occupation . A healed wound on the skull 's forehead is consistent with historical records of an injury Pulaski sustained in battle , as is a bone defect on the left cheekbone , believed to have been caused by a benign tumor . The remains were reinterred with military honors in 2005 .

= = Tributes and commemoration = =

The United States has long commemorated Pulaski 's contributions to the American Revolutionary War , and already on October 29 , 1779 , the United States Congress passed a resolution that a monument should be dedicated to him , but the first monument to him was not built until 1854 . A bust of Pulaski was added to a collection of other busts of American heroes at United States Capitol in 1867 . On May 11 , 1910 , US President William Taft revealed a Congress @-@ sponsored General Casimir Pulaski statue . In 1929 , Congress passed another resolution , this one recognizing October 11 of each year as " General Pulaski Memorial Day " , with a large parade held annually on Fifth Avenue in New York City . Separately , a Casimir Pulaski Day is celebrated in Illinois and some other places on the first Monday of each March . After a previous attempt failed , Congress passed a joint resolution conferring honorary U.S. citizenship on Pulaski in 2009 , sending it to President Barack Obama for approval . He duly signed it on November 6 , 2009 , making Pulaski the seventh person so honored .

In Poland , in 1793 Pulaski 's relative , Antoni Pu?aski , obtained a cancellation of his brother 's sentence from 1773 . He has been mentioned in the literary works of numerous Polish authors , including Adam Mickiewicz , Juliusz S?owacki and J?zef Ignacy Kraszewski . Adolf Nowaczy?ski wrote a drama " Pu?aski w Ameryce " (Pulaski in America) in 1917 . A museum dedicated to Pulaski , the Kazimierz Pu?aski Museum , opened in Warka in 1967 .

Throughout Poland and the United States , people have celebrated anniversaries of Pulaski 's birth and death , and there exist numerous objects of art such as paintings and statues of him . In 1879 , to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his death , Henri Schoeller composed " A Pulaski March " . Twenty years earlier , Eduard Sobolewski composed his opera , " Mohega " , about the last days of Pulaski 's life . Commemorative medals and stamps of Pulaski have been issued . Several towns and counties in United States are named after him , as are numerous streets , parks and structures , such as the Pulaski Bridge or the Pulaski Skyway . There is also a number of educational , academic , and Polish @-@ American institutions named after him . A US Navy submarine , USS Casimir Pulaski , has been named for him , as was a 19th @-@ century United States Revenue Cutter Service cutter . A Polish frigate , ORP Genera? Kazimierz Pu?aski , is also named after Pulaski . Fort Pulaski , active during the American Civil War , is named in honor of Casimir Pulaski . A statue commemorating Pulaski titled General Casimir Pulaski stands at the eastern end of Freedom Plaza in Washington , D.C. There is an equestrian statue of Pulaski in Roger Williams Park in Providence , Rhode Island . A statue by Granville W. Carter depicting Pulaski on a rearing horse signaling a forward charge with a sword in his right hand is erected in Hartford , Connecticut .

Polish historian W?adys?aw Konopczy?ski , who wrote a monograph on Pulaski in 1931 , noted that he was one of the most accomplished Polish people , grouping him with other Polish military heroes such as Tadeusz Ko?ciuszko , Stanis?aw ??kiewski , Stefan Czarniecki , and Prince J?zef Poniatowski .

" The Mysterious Stranger " , a 1959 episode of the ABC / Warner Brothers western television series Sugarfoot , features Adam West as Frederick Pulaski , a declared descendant of the Casimir Pulaski . However , Pulaski never married or had direct heirs . In the story line , Frederick Pulaski is a concert pianist who defends oppressed Polish miners in a western town . Series character Tom " Sugarfoot Brewster (Will Hutchins) , befriends Pulaski in a legal hearing and reconciles him with

the young woman to whom both are smitten , Kathy O 'Hara (Sue Randall) , who is also studying to be a concert pianist . Karl Swenson appears in this episode as Kathy 's wealthy Irish father , Dennis O 'Hara .

= = In popular culture = =

In the Season 3 episode of The West Wing entitled " Stirred " , Pulaski is mentioned , and US President Jed Bartlett describes him as " a Polish Brigadier General who vanquished the Russian and Prussian military , then came to the colonies and commanded our cavalry during the American Revolution " .

There is a statue of Pulaski in the fictional town of Stars Hollow from the TV series Gilmore Girls .

Singer @-@ songwriter Sufjan Stevens wrote a song entitled " Casimir Pulaski Day " on his Illinois album .