

= Stefan Czarniecki =

Stefan Czarniecki [ʃtɛfan tʃɔˈrɲɛtʃski] of the Łódź coat of arms (1599 ? 16 February 1665) was a Polish nobleman , general and military commander . In his career he rose from a petty nobleman to a magnate holding one of the highest offices in the Commonwealth , something that was unprecedented in the Commonwealth history . On 22 July 1664 he received the office of the voivode of Kiev and on 2 January 1665 , a few weeks before his death , he was given the office of Field Hetman (one of top military commanders) of the Crown of the Polish Kingdom . He is remembered as an accomplished military commander , and regarded as a Polish national hero . His status in Polish history is acknowledged by a mention of his name in the Polish national anthem .

Czarniecki made significant contributions fighting the Khmelnytsky Uprising , during the Russo-Polish War , and the Polish-Swedish war (The Deluge) . His use of guerrilla warfare against Swedes is credited as one of the main reason for the eventual Polish victory in this war .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early career = = =

Stefan Czarniecki was born in 1599 in the family estate of Czarncza by Włoszczowa in southern Poland in a szlachta (nobility) Czarniecki family . The date of his birth is only an assumption , as no documents exist to prove it without a doubt ; most historians , as noted by historians Leszek Podhorodecki and Adam Kersten , accept the 1599 date , although historian Zdzisław Spieralski argued for 1604 . His father , Krzysztof Czarniecki , was a soldier who participated in several wars in the late 16th and early 17th century , and eventually became a courtier to Polish queen Constance of Austria . Whereas historian Mirosław Nagielski notes that the Czarniecki family was not well off , which limited some of Stefan 's life chances , Podhorecki points out that they owned several villages and even a small town , and the family wealth was " not small " . However , Stefan had ten siblings (he himself was the sixth out of nine brothers) , and divided into that many parts , the family resources would be stretched rather thin . However , involvement with the queen 's court allowed Krzysztof to boost his son 's careers with the court influence , where they were often able to serve as young courtiers themselves .

Nothing is known about Stefan 's childhood . His family could not afford to send him to a university abroad (only one of his brothers would do so) ; hence he embarked early on a military career . Before that , he attended a jesuit college , either in Kraków or Sandomierz , achieving a solid secondary education . After finishing his schooling , he became a courtier to then @-@ royal prince and future king of Poland John II Casimir Vasa . As Stefan could not afford the equipment needed to join a hussar unit , he learned the art of war serving with the Lisowczycy mercenaries , joining them as towarzysz (companion , a junior cavalry officer) in the spring of 1621 . Already an officer at the age of eighteen , he took part in the battle of Chocim (Khotyn) in 1621 , where the Commonwealth army stopped the Ottomans and ended the Polish-Ottoman War (1620 ? 21) . His years with the brutal Lisowczycy mercenaries would impact his strategy in the latter years , where he would not hesitate to use any means necessary ? including mistreatment of civilians ? to achieve victory .

The next time he took arms was in 1623 , when his brother Paweł received a nomination as a rotmistrz of light (cossack) cavalry of the regular army (wojsko kwarciane) , and recruited some of siblings , including Stefan , into his unit . They served under hetman Stanisław Koniecpolski in the campaigns against the Tatars in 1624 (participating in the battle of Martynów) . In 1625 they took part in the quelling of a Cossack Zhmaylo Uprising . He fought later against Gustavus Adolphus (1626 ? 1629) (part of the Polish-Swedish War) . His light cavalry was used in reconnaissance , diversion , and raiding the enemy territory . In 1627 Stefan , serving in his brother 's chorągiew , was promoted to chorąży . On 6 ? 7 August that year he participated in the battle of Tczew , where Gustavus Adolphus was nearly killed . During those years , he learned much from observing a mastery of military arts , hetman Koniecpolski , who often commanded the Polish army in which he

served , and from Poland 's Swedish opponents , and earlier from the Cossacks and Tatars they fought .

As the Polish ? Swedish war ended , in 1630 Czarniecki enlisted in the Habsburg forces and continued to fight against the Swedes , participating in the battle of Breitenfeld . In 1633 he joined the Commonwealth forces again , to fight under the new Polish king , W?adys?aw IV , in the Smolensk War against Muscovy that lasted until 1634 . During the Smolensk War he learned Western tactics used by the foreign mercenary troops . In December 1633 he commanded a raiding unit that successfully raided and pillaged behind the Russian lines , spreading terror , disrupting supply lines , and burned Kozelsk . For his achievements in that war , in which he advanced to a porucznik rank in the light " cossack " cavalry unit under hetman Marcin Kazanowski , he received some land in the Smolensk Voivodeship near Starodub .

After that war , he moved to a more prestigious hussar unit (rota) , and likely due to a reduction of the royal army , he served in the private formation of W?adys?aw Myszkowski and later , voivode Stanis?aw Lubomirski . In 1635 he might have served as a military adviser to John II Casimir Vasa , and possibly accompanied the king to Vienna . In 1637 he married Zofia Kobierzycka , and later that year he fought in the Pawluk Uprising against the rebellious Cossacks under Pavel Mikhnovych , participating in the battle of Kumejki . He led a cavalry charge at Kumejki which was instrumental for the Polish victory there . Earlier that year he served as a military delegate to the Sejm (parliament) in Warsaw .

= = = Struggles against the Cossacks = = =

For the next several years he would serve on the always @-@ virulent south @-@ eastern border , where he made his home in the city of Ill?ce . In 1644 under Koniecpolski he took part in the battle of Ochmatów where Commonwealth forces dealt a crushing defeat to To?ay bey 's (Tuhaj Bej) Tatars . He served as one of seven pu?kowniks in Koniecpolski 's army , and once again his cavalry unit charge proved to be a decisive moment of the battle , bringing him much fame . That year he also became a regimentarz in his own light cavalry unit , but he still held the rank of a porucznik of hussars .

He took an active part in the battles against the Cossacks in the Khmelnytsky Uprising . On 16 May 1648 he was one of the many noble Polish prisoners who fell into the hands of Bohdan Khmelnytsky at the battle of Zhovti Vody , but he was quickly ransomed . He participated in the defense of the Kudak Fortress , which surrendered on 26 September ; he was once again captured and not released until the autumn of 1649 , in the aftermath of the Treaty of Zborov . He served as a porucznik in the hussar chor?giew of hetman Miko?aj Potocki , a military judge deputized by the hetman , and a member of his staff , meeting with the new king of Poland , John Casimir Vasa . He was part of the fighting at the battle of Berestechko and battle of Bila Tserkva in 1651 . He received the title of chor??y of Sandomierz , and was elected the military deputy for the Sejm in January 1652 . According to Nagielski , Czarniecki , while returning from the Sejm , witnessed the massacre of Polish prisoners in the aftermath of the battle of Bato? ; This scene made him reject the notions that a compromise with the enemies of the Commonwealth was a likely or desired outcome . Podhorodecki however notes that another historian , Wojciech Jacek D?ugo?ecki , questions Czarniecki 's presence there , and concludes that we have no conclusive proof whether Czarniecki was present at Bato? , The massacre further escalated the hostilities and the surrounding hatred ; illustrating that is a letter Czariecki wrote soon after the battle , in which he promised that if enough military forces are gathered and given to him , he will leave few Ruthenians alive .

Later that year Czarniecki received territories from the king , along with the office of Crown obo?ny . In 1653 he led a unit to Ukraine , ransacking much of the Cossack @-@ held lands , although the attrition among the troops was high . During that campaign Czarniecki was wounded at Monastyriska . He continued his suppression campaign in 1654 , and the following January took part in the battle of Okhmativ . In May 1655 he was called from Ukraine to Warsaw , as the king John Casimir Vasa , respected his experience and requested his presence at a new war council , convened to discuss the looming thread of the war with Sweden . At that time his reputation was

significant ; Sejm often passed resolutions applauding him for his efforts to reclaim Ukraine , and he was even held in much consideration by the Ottomans , then temporarily allied with the Commonwealth . On 14 May 1655 he received the office of the castellan of Kiev , a position that made him a member of the Senate of Poland .

== = The Swedish Deluge == =

When Charles X of Sweden invaded Poland in 1655 , Czarniecki distinguished himself by his defence of Kraków , which he eventually surrendered on good terms , retreating with his army . He remained loyal to the Polish king , even when much of the army , including most of the senators and the hetmans , temporarily joined the Swedes . His vocal support for the wavering king , which at that time found refuge abroad , and was considering abdication , was instrumental . For his continuing support , the Polish king rewarded him with more lands , and the office of the royal army regimentarz .

He led guerrilla warfare against Swedish troops of Charles X , a type of a campaign he authored , despite the objections of the hetmans , who by that time returned to serve under John Casimir Vasa . The mobile Swedish forces , even with their significant firepower , proved to be rather vulnerable to Czarniecki 's guerrilla @-@ style warfare . Czarniecki was defeated at the battle of Gołb in mid @-@ February 1656 , but later inflicted serious defeats upon the Swedes , notably at the Battle of Warka in April that year . The tide of the war turned several times that year , and he was again defeated at the battle of Kock and battle of Kscynia . His defeats , however , were limited , and in most cases he was able to retreat with most of his army in good order . Under his direction the popular rising against the Swedish troops in Greater Poland proved highly successful . It was against his advice that the battle of Warsaw was fought , and his subsequent strategy neutralized the ill effects of this defeat . Despite support from the king , Czarniecki was seen by many older , established noble family as an arrogant newcomer , and they prevented him from getting the hetman office that year ; instead early next year he received the office of the voivode of Ruthenia , and an extraordinary title of the " general and vice commander of the royal forces " , which put him in a position of an unofficial hetman @-@ like authority . The Field Crown Hetmanship went to Jerzy Sebastian Lubomirski , also an accomplished commander , if not so much as Czarniecki ? but from a magnate Lubomirski family ; Czarniecki commented famously that " Not of salt , or fields , I am , but from what hurts me " , alluding to the fact that Lubomirski family built its fortune on salt trade and agriculture , whereas his smaller one was built through military service ? yet it was money and politics , not military experience , that decided who was to get the hetman 's office .

== = Final battles == =

In 1657 he was instrumental in defeating the forces of George II Rákóczi at the battle of Magierów . In 1658 and 1659 he aided Danes during the Danish ? Swedish War , fighting at Als and at the battle of Kolding .

On the conclusion of the Peace of Oliwa , which adjusted the long outstanding differences between Poland and Sweden , Czarniecki was transferred to the eastern frontier where the war with Russia reignited . He distinguished himself in the campaign of 1660 , where he won the victories of the battle of Połonka , battle of Basia , and battle of Kuszliki . This campaign , however , marked the zenith of his popularity . King John II Casimir Vasa attempted to involve him in the unpopular plan of *vivente rege* ? to bypass the traditions of the royal elections in Poland and instead chose the next successor to the Polish throne (John II Casimir favored Louis , Grand Condé) still during the life of the previous king . His reputation among the unpaid and dissenting military took a dive ; and many criticized him for appropriating the entire ransom that the Russians paid for their prisoners from Połonka . During the Sejm of 1662 some military representatives demanded sanctions and punishments to be levied on him .

His last campaign took place at the end of 1664 . He led an army against the Russians , but the

Siege of Hlukhiv was not successful , and a new Cossack uprising of Ivan Sirko forced the Polish troops to fall back .

On 22 July 1664 he received the office of the voivode of Kiev , and on 2 January 1665 he was appointed Field Crown Hetman . Before receiving the news of the nomination he desired for years , he was wounded at Lysianka . Called back by the king , who feared that magnate Jerzy Sebastian Lubomirski that he just banished might start a rebellion , his recent wound became infected , and he died on 16 February 1665 in Sokołówka (now Sokółka) near Lwów , six weeks after receiving this supreme distinction .

= = Legacy = =

Czarniecki received a state funeral in Warsaw , and has been interred in the tomb chapel of the church founded by him in Czarncza . He left his estates to a nephew , Stefan Stanisław Czarniecki , but the Czarniecki name did not last long , and the wealth he gathered became instead the foundation of the Branicki family of magnates .

Czarniecki is remembered as one of the most able Polish commanders of all times . Podhorecki called him the greatest Polish military expert in " hit @-@ and @-@ run tactics " , and notes that he was the longest @-@ serving of the major Polish military commanders of his era , that he participated in 27 large battles , commanding 17 of them . He is seen as instrumental in defeating the Swedes during the Deluge , although he was even more successful in his battles against the Russians . His career , rising from a simple noble family to the rank of a hetman and a wealthy magnate , was unprecedented in the Commonwealth 's history .

His legend had begun growing even during his lifetime , as he became a hero of poems and songs . Few negative rumors about him , popular in the last few years of his life , survived after his death . During the period of Enlightenment in Poland he was written about by poets and writers such as Stanisław Potocki , Franciszek Karpiński , Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz and Franciszek Ksawery Dmowski . A biography by Michał Krajewski cemented his legend of a hero rescuing Poland from anarchy and invasion . That legend that became even stronger during the times of the partitions of Poland in the 19th century , where the artists of the Polish romanticism period used him as a symbol of patriotism , and a reminder of military successes . He appears in the poem Przedwit of Zygmunt Krasiński , but much more significant was his portrayal in The Trilogy of Henryk Sienkiewicz , particularly the second book , The Deluge . It was during that time that his pursuit of the retreating Swedes to Pomerania and Denmark (1658 ? 1659) , particularly his crossing with his entire army to the Danish isle of Als , was commemorated in the song of the Polish Napoleonic Legions that would eventually become the Polish national anthem , the " Dąbrowski 's Mazurka " , with the words commemorating his marine excursion to the island of Als : It was only during the time of the Second Polish Republic when more modern , serious historical work begun analyzing his history that a less hagiographic account begun emerging ; Władysław Czapliński wrote that Czarniecki was " first and foremost a soldier " , and noted his faults such as brutality and greed . Modern historiography of Czarniecki includes works of Czapliński , Stanisław Herbst , Adam Kersten and Zdzisław Spieralski ; however Podhorecki notes that while he has been a major figure in the Polish history , and is discussed extensively in Polish historiography , he has never been a subject of much interest to foreign historians , concluding that he was a major persona in Polish , but not European , history .