

BATTLE OF SAVANNAH

The plan of attack was somewhat complicated. The southwestern side of Savannah was the most satisfactory approach, yet the strongest fortifications were established there. But once taken the British position would be lost. And victory for the American cause would be the outcome. It was a sound plan of attack, but complicated. One mishap and the battle would go for the worst.

Unknown to the Americans and the French, a deserter by the name of James Currie secured the plans of attack and crossed the battle field into Savannah, giving the plans to the British. Now that the British were forewarned, they were able to take measures not only to gain position but actually turn the battle into their favor.

General Hugger of the French forces, who was to make a feint attack and draw British fire lost his way in the dark, and the main attack began before he reached his position. The leading units of the main attack also became confused and by the time they were reorganized, they were caught in the deadly fire of the waiting British' guns.

Chaos broke out among the French troops and General d'Estaing fell slightly wounded; his troops lost morale and began to fall back. On a summit a little ways back was saddled the American cavalry. The young Brigadier General in charge saw what was happening. His troops were idle because the battle was in another sector and he could not take them forward until the position was taken. He knew that d'Estaing was wounded and that the French would retreat: there was only one thing to do. He, personally, would have to take command of the French troops. He was the only one that might save the army from defeat. He hurriedly turned the command of the cavalry over to Colonel Horry and attended only by his inseperable aide, Captain Bentalou, galloped



GEN. CASIMIR PULASKI

off for the French lines crying "EMPRESE! — "FORWARD! He was too far away, for them to hear his commands. He had just barely started to gallop across the British line of fire when a shot from a swivel gun struck him in the groin and he fell from his horse mortally wounded. It was the end of the battle: d'Estaing wounded, and Brigadier General Casimir Pulaski mortally wounded. There was nothing to do but to call off the attack, and return to safe ground. The British had won a victory: The Colonist had lost a new son of the Republic.

"Pulaski, — a thunderbolt of war, who always sought the post of danger as the post of Honor" — Ramsey.

HIS YOUTH

Whenever one think of General Pulaski, one thinks of the American Revolutionary hero, who played such an important part in the building of the American Cavalry, and as one who had laid down his life for American Independence. There are many, who know very little about his fight to free Poland from Russian oppression

Casimir Pulaski, second son of Josef Pulaski, who was a distinguished Jurist and a self made man, was born on March 4, 1748. He was born on his father's estate in the province of Mazovia, one of the most fertile and beautiful parts of Poland. This section of the country was less influenced by the distractions and allurements of the corrupted court; therefore, from early childhood Casimir was brought up with the true Polish dislike of oppression.

Poland in the mid-eighteenth Century was a country that could not boast of a national army, and the King was merely the puppet of his mistress, Catherine of Russia. The Noblemen of the land were many, but their interest was not in centralizing the Polish forces into a central body; they were mainly interested in their own welfare. These Noblemen were against strenghtening Poland by a strong central government and with a strong army because that would have meant the curtailment of their own ridiculous privileges. Foreign aid and intrigue was their plan of salvation.

Young Casimir knew very little of the Russian oppression that Poland had to endure at those times. He led a life fitting of a boy in his station of life. Going to parties, at the neighboring estates, and riding horseback extensively were his past times. At the age of eleven, his father entered him into the School of the Teatyni Fathers. This school was maintained

by a foreign order, and made a strong bid for the sons of prominent men, who were far more interested in advancing their sons socially than intellectually. It was after leaving this school and becoming a page for the Prince of Courland, that young Casimir became a deadly enemy of the Russians. As a page, he witnessed the many abuses perpetrated by the Russians on the Prince of Courland. There was no revenge for these abuses; Poland had no Army. With this thought in mind, Pulaski left Courland and went back to his father. He realized the situation,—there was only one thing to do—he, Casimir Pulaski would build his own army and fight the Russians.

CONFEDERATION OF BAR

Upon arriving at his father's estates, he found to his pleasure that he was not the only one, who thought of active opposition, but that his father, brothers and a few others were willing to sacrifice everything in order to see Poland a free nation again. This was the beginning of the Confederation of Bar. On February 29, 1768 a solemn Mass was held at the little town of Bar. This was to signify the beginning of the fight against Russian oppression. Father Mark Jandolowicz, celebrated that Mass, and blessed the banners and men, who joined the Confederation. The motto of the Confederation was "Jesus Maria", and its aim was to defend the faith and to protect Poland from the uncoming invasion by its enemy, the Russians.

This confederation which started within the Pulaski family, father, sons, and relatives, soon had within its ranks such notable Polish men as Colonel Stanislaw Kostka Orzynski, Wawrzyniec Potocki, Maurycy Bieniawski, Count Strzelecki, Martin Lubomirski and many other great patriotic Poles. It was then that the Confederation was able to take the offensive and attack the Russians wherever and whenever possible.

Casimir Pulaski was made the head of the Army and he won great glory as a capable and daring leader and commander. His name was a terror to the Russians and a sign of freedom to the Poles. Victory after victory was added to his exploits. The Russian realized what a great enemy they had to cope with. He

was a fighter not like the others, who spoke of fighting, but quit when a battle was on hand. They realized that he must be done away with at any cost.

At first, the Confederation met with much success, but eventually control of the Confederation fell into the hands of group of Polish noble men, who were interested in making themselves the new rulers of Poland and paid very little attention to the needs of the Confederation. This group was known as the Generalcy. They were the supreme rulers of the Confederation, and Casimir Pulaski was to take orders from them.

Casimir wanted to cooperate with the Generalcy, but he hated intrigue and many a time had acted on his own, besides stating that he was against many of their plans. He was especially against the abduction of the King, but the Generalcy paid no heed to his plea to forget this foolish idea. The King was abducted and through fear on the part of the abductors returned again to safety. Pulaski was blamed for this attempt on the King's life and many Poles, who at one time regarded Pulaski as their liberator, now regarded him as an ordinary renegade. He wrote a public statement giving true facts, but no one believed him. The Heads of the other countries gave orders for his arrest if he ever dared set foot on their soil.

The war still went on and the Generalcy planned a last attack. This was to be at Krakow. It was unsuccessful; since the Russians felt that the Confederation was too great a nuisance and did every thing in their power to break the Confederation. Pulaski seeing disaster close at hand made a decisive move. He was going to leave Poland and fight the Russians from Turkey. He left the fortifications of Czestochowa. It was not until the next day that his second in command told the men that Pulaski had left. Tears fell down the cheeks of the war weary veterans. They remembered that Casimir had never shirked responsibility — had never avoided the post of danger. They knew the sincerity of his love for Poland, the zeal with which he had sought to protect their interests rather than his own. He was gone. There was no

more struggle for Polish liberty. It was only a question of seeking their own safety, their own future. The Confederation of Bar was ended.

WANDERER OF THE WORLD

As Pulaski saw the lights of Czestochowa disappear behind him, it must have seemed as if he was leaving the bond that held him to the Polish cause. For four years he had served on the field of battle. He had seen his family decimated by the war. His father and his brother, Franciszek, were dead, his other brother a Russian prisoner, his mother a wanderer, countless relatives slain or captive.

When all believed that Casimir Pulaski had deserted the cause and went into hiding, the commandant of Czestochowa received a letter from him which stated that they should not give up hope. That overseas power are making a new alliance and a general war is expected. Pulaski with a few others travelled to Turkey to start negotiations for a general war against Russia by Turkey and Poland. But, the Turks were not interested in fighting for the Polish cause; therefore, they stalled Pulaski until his money gave out. Seeing that it was hopeless to stay on in Turkey, he left for France. Here, too, he was an outcast. He could not gain a position in the French army and slowly but surely he ran into debt for which he was imprisoned. His friends tried to get him out, but they, themselves were seriously handicapped by lack of funds. Finally word reached Poland about Pulaski's misfortune and a few of his close friends raised enough money to set him free from debtor's prison.

Once Casimir Pulaski was free he knew that the same misfortune of running into debt would occur if he did not acquire some position. The French government was willing to settle the remainder of his debt if he would leave for America.

It was about this time he was introduced to Benjamin Franklin, who at that time was the Ambassador to France, from the newly formed, United States. Franklin took a liking to Pulaski and wrote to Congress about him. A few months passed and then word came that Pulaski should start his journey to America.

ENTRANCE INTO AMERICA

While aboard ship on his way to America, Pulaski was making plans on how the Revolutionists would defeat the British. But, taking into consideration that he did not know of the situation as it was here with the Continental Army he gave up those plans and hoped to receive his command as soon as possible.

Upon landing in America, he went in search of Congress, to ask them for a command. Finally, when he did locate the Continental Congress they were unable to help him. He then volunteered as an aide to General George Washington.

The British were attacking Philadelphia. The American forces could not hold them back. Pulaski saw that Washington had not made use

of the Cavalry. Pulaski saw his opportunity to show himself in battle. He rode up to General Washington and though he had no definite power or rank, he asked the American commander to put him in charge of the headquarters cavalry detachment of some thirty men. Washington knew that this was no time for ceremony or formality. The harassed General gave the permission and Pulaski saved large contingents American troops by repeatedly charging the British forces and harassing them, giving time to the American troops to retreat. Casimir Pulaski won great prestige that day, and he was admired in Washington's eyes.

Brigadier General Casimir Pulaski was then given command of the entire American cavalry. He noticed that the American cavalry was poorly organized and made up his mind to drill them and train them on the European basis. This was a hard job and was quite impossible, since, he could not receive the provisions that he asked for from Congress. His subordinates at times refused to take orders and he was truly disgusted at the whole affair.

Pulaski resigned as Commander of the Horse and set to form his own Legion with his own funds. After a trying time he did accomplish the task and was reimbursed, in part, by Congress. Pulaski's Legion won many battles in the South and it was on October 6, 1779, while Pulaski was in Georgia that he heard General d'Estaing was looking for him, and that the French General would collaborate with Pulaski on the seizing of Savannah. Both these Generals met and decided upon a plan of attack. This was Pulaski's last battle. Pulaski died for god, honor, and country.



CASIMIR PULASKI

A thunderbolt of war, who always sought the post of danger as the post of Honor — Ramsey.

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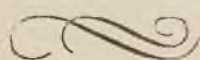
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