



# Secret of Gen. Casimir Pulaski

by Pat Morgan

Many philatelists only know of General Casimir Pulaski from the only U.S. (Sc. #690) postage stamp, issued Jan. 16, 1931, which was the first stamp commemorating him. However, the story of Gen. Pulaski has become much more since the unearthing of his remains in Savannah, GA in 1996.



1. Engraving used for the #690

Casimir Pulaski was the second-born son to a noble Polish family on March 6, 1745, in Warsaw, Poland. Records from his birth stated that had a debility that was not life-threatening and which only becomes clear long after his death. Pulaski was small in stature and only 5' 4" tall. As a youth, he excels at horsemanship. He was described as flamboyant, aggressive, brash, solitary, a loner, who never marries and has no descendants.



3. Poland, SC. #267, 1932

At an early age, he finds an interest in politics and soon became involved in the military and the revolution in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He was a bold and brash commander in the Bar Confederation fighting against the Commonwealth. When the uprising failed, a bounty was placed on his head and he escaped to France. While in France, Pulaski met Benjamin Franklin and was solicited to join Washington's Continental Army. Pulaski accepts and arrives near Boston on July 23, 1777. He was not initially

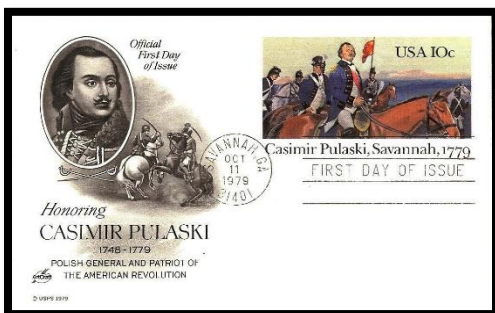
accepted by Washington or his commanders. At the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777, Pulaski proves himself to Washington by performing a tactic known as a rear-guard action which turns the battle around and in effect saved Washington's life. 2 days later Washington makes Pulaski a Brigadier General and puts in charge of all of Washington's cavalry.



2. Poland, SC. #C26B, 1948

After Brandywine, Pulaski is made the Commander of Horses. He establishes the Pulaski Calvary Legion which earns him the title of "the father of the American cavalry." In May 1779, the Pulaski Calvary Legion is dispatched to Charleston, SC to find the city in crisis. When the British advanced, Pulaski's Legion engaged the British force and was badly beaten in the battle.

At the beginning of September 1779, the Continental Army prepared to launch an attempt to retake Savannah. He was ordered to Augusta, GA, where he was to join forces with General Lachlan McIntosh. His units then acted as advance guards for the allied French unit. In the assault on Savannah on October 9, 1779, Pulaski commanded the whole cavalry, both French and American. While attempting to rally fleeing French forces during a cavalry charge, Pulaski, at the age of 34, was mortally wounded by British grapeshot. A wounded Pulaski was taken to a warship, later removed from the ship, and taken to the Greenwich Plantation in the town of Thunderbolt, near Savannah, where he died and was buried, on October 11, 1779. His heroic actions and death further boosted his reputation in America.



4. U.S., UX79, 1979

In March 1825, during his grand tour of the United States, Major General Lafayette personally laid the cornerstone for the Casimir Pulaski Monument in Savannah, GA. In 1853, remains found on Greenwich Plantation believed to be Pulaski's by William Bowen are sealed in a metal box and interred in the Casimir Pulaski Monument.

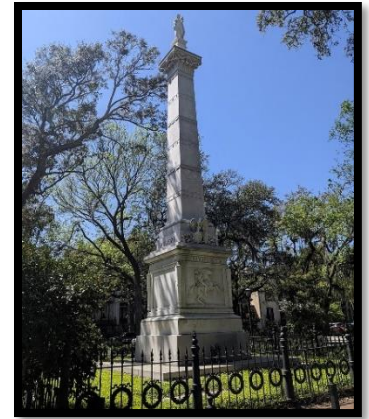
In 1996, during the restoration of the Pulaski Monument, the remains were exhumed and a forensic study is performed to confirm they are that of Casimir Pulaski. During the study, the anthropologist determine that the remains were characteristically female as the forehead, cheekbones, and pelvis are that of a woman. The eight-year examination of the remains proved inconclusive, although the skeleton was consistent with Pulaski's age and occupation as were several other skeletal injuries consistent with historical records of Pulaski's battle injuries. In 2005, the remains were reinterred in a public ceremony with full military honors, including Pulaski's induction into the Georgia Military Hall of Fame. A unique honor was bestowed on Casimir Pulaski in 2009 when he became only one of eight people to have been awarded honorary United States citizenship.



6. Poland, SC. #2357, 1979

In 2015, a second study funded by the Smithsonian Institution was begun. The combination of the skeleton having several typically female features (pelvis, facial structure, jaw angle) and that Pulaski had lived his life as a man, led researchers to the hypothesis that Pulaski may have been female or intersex (formerly referred to as a hermaphrodite). The Smithsonian study hypothesized that the intersex condition could have been caused by congenital adrenal hyperplasia, where a female fetus is exposed to a high level of male hormone (testosterone) in the womb causing the development of partial male genitals. This is very likely the debility that was noted in his birth record and his having been baptized at home. Released in 2019, the results of this study concluded from the mitochondrial DNA of his grandniece, known injuries, and physical characteristics that the skeletal remains are certainly that of Pulaski.

The mystery of Pulaski's remains has now been solved. While unusual, it will not change the historical facts that Pulaski was a Polish and American war hero, outstanding horseman, and exceptional military leader who fought valiantly for the independence and freedom of both Poland and the United States.



5. Pulaski Monument, Savannah, GA



7. Poland, SC. #2120, 1975



8. Poland, SC. #2122c, 1975



9. Israel, 2015



10. Tobacco Card



11. General Casimir Pulaski

Sources:

- Smithsonian Channel: [America's Hidden Stories – Season 1 Episode 6 – The General was Female? \(April 2019\)](#)
- Wikipedia: [Casimir Pulaski](#), [Commemoration of Casimir Pulaski](#), [Casimir Pulaski Monument](#)
- emich.edu: [Buried Secrets - Eastern Magazine](#)
- Smithsonian Magazine: [Was the Revolutionary War Hero Casimir Pulaski Intersex?](#)
- hekint.org: [Did Casimir Pulaski have a 21-hydroxylase deficiency? - Hektoen International](#)