

Speech before
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Societies and Clubs in the
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PULASKI DIED FOR OUR FREEDOM

With a letter of introduction and recommendation from Benjamin Franklin, Pulaski set foot on American soil the summer of 1777 at Philadelphia.

"....as I could not bow before the powers of Europe," he wrote to Congress sometime later, "I came here to sacrifice everything for the independence of America. I wish to live in a free country, and before I settle down here I wish to fight for that country's freedom."

Not waiting for a decision from Congress, he immediately joined the Colonial army as a volunteer and in his first engagement with the enemy at the Battle of Brandywine, distinguished himself with valor that won the recognition of Washington. Four days later, September 15, 1777, he was appointed by Congress as Brigadier General in command of the entire cavalry of the American forces.

He fought at Germantown in the winter of 1777-78 and on March 28, 1778, was authorized by Congress to form and have command of an independent corps of 68 horses, armed with lances, and 200 foot as light infantry, which became known as the Pulaski Legion and which became a model for others formed in subsequent campaigns. Pulaski has been rightly called the "Father of American cavalry," and proved himself an intrepid commander.

He was mortally wounded at Savannah, while trying to rally French soldiers caught in a swamp under deadly fire after their own commander fell grievously wounded. Pulaski died on October 11, 1779, aboard the U. S. brig, "Wasp," despite the efforts of the most skillful surgeons in the French fleet who attended him.

General Pulaski died for the freedom and independence we enjoy. He himself did not live to enjoy it. Many lives have been lost to obtain the freedom that we often take for granted. It has taken generations of men and women to develop this country with personal sacrifices. But that which we enjoy today can be taken away from us unless we are alert and constantly vigilant. We must bear our share of the present responsibility to preserve this freedom not only for ourselves but for humanity.

True, we Americans have done much -- our armies are now abroad; our production lines are turning off planes, tanks, guns and ammunition at an increasing rate. We have played some part in slowing the advance of the enemy, directly on the Far Eastern front and indirectly through the provision of arms for our British and Russian allies in Europe. Yet, what we have done is a mere fragment of what we have to do -- and do quickly.

So let us work! Work hard! Work harder! Time is vital -- every day, every hour, every minute counts in these fateful months ahead.

In addition to working harder and longer to increase production to the maximum, we must reduce the number of things we buy for our everyday needs and buy war bonds. Buy to strengthen and protect our loved ones on the fighting fronts. Buy to help prevent runaway prices which bring on inflation and increase the cost of war. And buy to protect the nation against a post-war depression, by assuring yourselves purchasing power that will place you and our boys back in peace-time industry after their return from the fighting fronts.

We fight with all we have not only for our country but for the freedom of the enslaved nations -- Poland and the rest. We fight as one with all the United Nations on our side. We are on their side. We fight as the President said for the four freedoms:

"The first is freedom of speech and expression -- everywhere in the world.

"The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way -- everywhere in the world.

"The third is freedom from want - which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peace time life for its inhabitants -- everywhere in the world.

"The fourth is freedom from fear -- which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor -- anywhere in the world."

If we have any imperfections (and we have), if we have any weaknesses (and we have, for we are not a super-race -- but, then, neither are the Germans, the Italians, nor the Japanese), we insist on having the opportunity ourselves to improve our imperfections and to strengthen our weaknesses. This naturally requires exertion by each of us -- physically, mentally, and morally, and by this very effort we develop ourselves and improve our own conditions and our own attitude toward these conditions. But we strenuously oppose Hitler, or Hirohito, or Mussolinia, who would force us by compulsion to do their bidding and to give our all for them and to them alone as their subjects and slaves. Stop for a second and look at Poland today. Need we say more?

This land, this community, this house, this river, this street, this factory, everything about us, are a part of us and we are part of them. We won't let Hitler, or any of his cohorts, take them over or destroy them. To these things we and generations have given lives. They are ours.

Pulaski came here, fought here and died here for that freedom and independence which we enjoy today -- a freedom which he did not know in his life time but for which he made the supreme sacrifice. We

today are fighting and must be willing to make sacrifices for the preservation of that freedom. We today not only wish to live in a free country but in a free world. The present day world cannot live in peace and security anymore than this nation could have lived "part slave and part free." To preserve our freedom, we must ensure world freedom and to that end we shall fight and we shall sacrifice 'till victory is ours.