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THE BLUES, THE GRAYS, AND THE RED & WHITES

To my Parents

United States armed forces are today among the most powerful armies in the world. Currently only the active personnel of land forces of United States Army exceeds 519 000 soldiers.¹ added on top of that should be the hundreds of thousands of people who form the National Guard, Army Reserve, State Defense Forces, and United States Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps. The fact that the American expenditure on Armed Forces reaches approximately 3% of the GDP makes US armed forces have at their disposal state-of-the-art weapons and equipment, which lets them fulfill their mission in different parts of the world. Voices may sometimes be heard that the USA should not co-operate with the United Nations in the framework of peace missions, as “UN forces conducting peacekeeping missions neither are nor will in the nearest future be a factor increasing the military value of the American army”.²

Much like the American nation, the American army was shaped by immigrants. As far as the participation in the Revolutionary War is fairly well described and documented (although the mass American audience would probably remember only the French, while the memory about volunteers hailing from other nations is in the best case scanty), the effort of soldiers of all the nations of the Old Continent who fought in wars conducted by the USA at later times is, least to say, hardly known at all.

¹ After www.siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/ms1.pdf, as of late August 2007.

² S. Groves, *Sity pokojowe ONZ a wartość bojowa sił zbrojnych USA*, “Międzynarodowy Przegląd Polityczny” 2007, No. 3, pp. 63–66.

The situation in Poland is not dissimilar: while the participation of a few Polish officers in the War of 1776–1783 somehow made its way to general public awareness, the fact that large groups of Polish migrants, who moved to the US, participated in the Civil War remains known only to a small group of experts.

For reasons I shall try to explain below, this paper is not an attempt at a thorough definition of the entire Polish participation in the war between the North and the South. Nevertheless, I do hope that it shall grasp the reader's attention and at the same time provide a stimulus to undertake on research of the subject.

The title, naturally, makes reference to the popular monikers for the two opposing sides: "The Blues" soldiers of the Union, while "The Grays" Confederates. The Polish reader does not have to be told the "White-and-Reds" are.

First Poles in American armed conflicts

The subject of the presence of Polish armed forces on the North American continent from the earliest days of its colonization is worth devoting a few words. As it is now, the first Poles arrived there already in October 1608, being part of a group of colonists who arrived at Jamestown, Virginia. They are mentioned by one of the colony's founders, Captain John Smith, in his book entitled *The Generale Historie of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles with the names of the Adventurers, Planters and Governours*.³ They were chiefly craftsmen: carpenters, the burners, and glassblowers, the last of these founded America's first glass works in Jamestown. Their first joint effort, in the capacity of the close-knit group, was not of military character, as they organized a strike protesting against being disallowed – as non English – to vote for the Virginia House of Burgesses. The protest ended in a success, Poles were awarded the right to vote together with the obligation to take young colonists for apprenticeship, so that the skills that the colony found useful, would not perish with the craftsmen.⁴ The number of Poles was increasing and soon they were inhabiting also other settlements in Virginia. Despite the fact that they could hardly be called professional in military matters, together with other colonists, they were forced to fight off the attacks staged by e.g. indigenous peoples. The record's claim that the clashes of 1622, claimed, among other victims, the life of Mateusz Polak (Mathew a Polander) during one of the raids on settlements neighboring on Jamestown.⁵

³ B. Grzełoński, *Polacy w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki 1776–1865*, Warszawa 1976, pp. 5–7. See also by the same author: *Wkład polskiej emigracji do cywilizacji amerykańskiej*, [in:] *Dzieje Polonii w XIX i XX wieku. Materiały XI Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Toruniu*, ed. M. Drozdowski, Toruń 1974, pp. 48–57; A. Ławrowski, *Polacy w dziejach Stanów Zjednoczonych*, Warszawa 1977, pp. 5–7. In the English language, outstanding works on the subject were written by M. Haiman, *Polish Past in America 1608–1865*, Chicago 1974, pp. 3–20; J. A. Wyrtrwał, *Poles in American History and Tradition*, Detroit 1969, pp. 5–40.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ A. Ławrowski, *Polacy w dziejach...*, pp. 7; I. Rusinowa, *Za niepodległość Trzynastu Kolonii*, [in:]

Military ambitions, on the other hand, were in the mind of Daniel Liczko (Łyczko?), whose name has been preserved in the records as Litscho or Litchoe. One of the inhabitants of the Dutch colony near Amsterdam, Liczko or Łyczko arrived there before 1650 and the rank of the ensign in one of Dutch detachments that were stationed in the city. Soon after that, acting as Lieutenant of the City Garrison, he became famous as the owner of a highly praised tavern and pub. Despite his local duties, he took part in a raid on Swedish settlers in Delaware organized in 1655 by the governor of new Amsterdam, Peter Stuyvesant. It is said that it was to honor King of Poland, John Casimir (Jan Kazimierz) – who at the time was fighting King of Sweden, Charles X Gustav of Sweden – one of the forts defending new Amsterdam bore the name of Casimir, and was sometime under the command of the Deputy Mayor of New Amsterdam, a certain Marcin Krygier from Poland.⁶

The might have been some Poles in the Swedish garrisons of New World colonies, as attested by Wiesław Fijałkowski who speaks of a Polish orphan whose parents were killed during the Dutch attack on Christina Fort in Delaware.⁷

Scantiness of data and lack of clear criteria for defining nationality make it impossible to estimate the volume of Polish migration to North America in the 17th and 18th centuries. It is, however, certain that from the earliest days Polish settlers carried all the responsibilities related to the establishment of new colonies, the obligation to defend them from external threats not excluded.

In the American War of Independence

When in the 18th century 13 British colonies stood up to fight, they had no organized armed forces, while the few officers who supported the rebels had expertise in guerrilla warfare against Native Americans and the French, a skill they acquired during the American episode of the Seven Years' War, rather than in regular battles against the perfectly trained British Army. That is why the professional officers from Europe to the like of von Steuben and Kościuszko – whose expert knowledge combined with enthusiasm and self-sacrifice of American volunteers was able to ensure the victory of rebelling colonies – played a critical role in the formation of the new army.

The most notable names among Poles participating in the American Revolutionary War are of course Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski. The first was in America in the years 1776–1784 and turned out to be a most precious 'acquisition' for the Continental Army. A graduate of Szkoła Rycerska (Knights' School), known

B. Grzełoński, I. Rusinowa, *Polacy w wojnach amerykańskich, 1775–1783, 1861–1864*, Warszawa 1973, p. 17.

⁶ B. Grzełoński, *Polacy w Stanach...*, pp. 13; A. Ławrowski, *Polacy w dziejach...*, p. 7; I. Rusinowa, *Za niepodległość...*, pp. 20–22.

⁷ W. Fijałkowski, *Polacy i ich potomkowie w historii Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki*, Warszawa 1976, p. 8.

also as Akademia Szlachecka Korpusu Kadetów (Nobles' Academy of the Corps of Cadets), Kościuszko was well and formally educated officer. It was especially his knowledge of military engineering that turned out impossible to overestimate. It is hard to put an exact date on Kościuszko's arrival in America, but he offered his services to the Congress already in 1776, that is before La Fayette, von Steuben, and de Kalb.⁸ Owing to his expertise (and knowledge of the English language, which he mastered at the Knights' School), the young officer was commissioned a Colonel of Engineers in the Continental Army. His first appointment was to fortify Philadelphia and subsequently, after the escape of the Congress to Baltimore, he conducted the fortification of the banks of the Delaware River in December 1776. There he made friends with general Horatio Gates, who ordered him, among other tasks, to reinforce the defenses of Ticonderoga, and the construction of defense ramparts against Burgoyne's army at Saratoga, and design and construction of engineering works for the stronghold at West Point. Together with Gates's, and later Greene's, he fought in the South, participating among others in this siege of Fort Mifflin (where he was wounded) and Charleston. Kościuszko left very fond memories. General Gates wrote: "He [Kościuszko] is a skilful engineer and one of the best and most subtle draughtsman I have ever seen".⁹ Writing to the Congress, George Washington thus portrayed Kościuszko: "I take the liberty to mention that an engineer in the North Army (his name apparently being Kościuszko) is a man of knowledge and merit".¹⁰ Last but not least, this is how General Greene portrayed the Polish officer: "among the most useful and pleasant among my comrades-at-arms was Colonel Kościuszko. Nothing may exceed his passion for public service, nor can be of greater use than he is diligence, activity, and ingenuity in performing various tasks during our small but busy soldiering".¹¹

Yet, besides these words of praise, a negative opinion on Kościuszko – quite frequently quoted in American works – must be quoted. It came from Colonel Henry Lee, and American Revolutionary War veteran and father of Robert, who later became a general of the Confederation. He believed Kościuszko's errors resulted in the fiasco of the American siege of Mifflin. He spoke of the Polish engineer a second-rater devoid of energy.¹² Recent research, however, proves that Colonel Lee yielded to his private version rather than provided a realistic assessment of the situation, failing to consider the colonists' inability to lay sieges, and the unusually quick relief that forced American armies to withdraw.

The crowning of Kościuszko's services for the army of the newly established United States was promoting him to the rank of brigadier general in 1783

⁸ B. Grzełowski, *Polacy w Stanach...*, pp. 29–58; A. Ławrowski, *Polacy w dziejach...*, pp. 8–9; I. Rusinowa, *Za niepodległość...*, pp. 40–68.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*.

(which was not an individual promotion, at the part of the general rule that all the officers and soldiers of the Continental Army were elevated to a higher rank on leaving the service) and admitting him to the prestigious Society of the Cincinnati. Besides these, Kościuszko received a laudation from the US Congress. Importantly, the Pole became very close friends with most commanding officers of the War of Independence, which were to help him in future.

The second most famous Polish participant in this armed effort, Kazimierz Pułaski, did not enjoy such a good repute as Kościuszko. A participant of the Confederation of Bar, aimed to curtail Russian interventionism in the affairs of Poland, Pułaski was portrayed throughout Europe as the “Kingslayer” by the agents of Tsarina Catherine II of Russia.¹³ Not a professional officer though born to a family of strong military traditions, Kazimierz Pułaski gained his experience on battlefields, where he fought against Russian armies in the years 1768–1772. Not only a talented commander of cavalry units, he became famous for defending a few fortresses, including Jasna Góra monastery in Częstochowa. Following the opinion of the Russian commanding officers (including that infamous Ivan Drevich, whose cruelty made its way into folk songs) Pułaski was among the most talented leaders among the Bar Confederates. On the other hand, Charles Dumouriez, working for the Confederates and later a famous general of the French Revolution, praised Pułaski for sincerity and daring, at the same time disapproving of lack of discipline among his troops.¹⁴

In July 1777, unable to find a safe haven for himself in Europe and knowing that the Russians may kidnap him and deport to Siberia, Pułaski arrived in America. Even though he did not know the English language, he offered his services to the Congress and suggested formation of cavalry units, whose command he was to assume single-handedly.

Not waiting for his nomination, he participated in the Battle of Brandywine and performed scouting tasks for George Washington’s army at Warren Tavern. Eventually, he was made brigadier general by the Congress and entrusted with the command of the “Light Dragoons”. Yet beginning with the 1777/1778 Winter spent in Trenton, not far away from George Washington stationed in Valley Forge, throughout the most of his stay in America, Pułaski strove against insufficient funds, and the lack of experienced cavalymen and horses of military value. In the spring of 1778, “Father of the American Cavalry” was allowed by the Congress to create an independent “legion” under his own command. It was to consist of lancers¹⁵ and light infantry soldiers, and specialize in “the small war”, that is scouting, forays, and small and sudden attacks on the enemy.

¹³ B. Grzełowski, *Polacy w Stanach...*, pp. 69–95; A. Ławrowski, *Polacy w dziejach...*, pp. 8–9; I. Rusinowa, *Za niepodległość...*, pp. 59–81.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ This was the first and one of the few cases when a lancer unit was formed in American army. The poor general training of the American cavalry, and lack of deeper tactical reflection on the weapon that let Polish, Russian, Austrian, and British cavalries defeat far more numerous enemies, made the US never recognize the lance.

Under Pułaski's command, the Legion fought a succession of battles, including the one at Egg Harbor, and – after a few months' idleness and transfer to South Carolina – the Siege of Charleston, Farr's Plantation, and numerous others, continuously seeing action against the enemy's patrols, while reconnoitering. His people continuously lacked supplies as the Congress failed to pay at the same time bickering with Pułaski about the flaws in his accounting.

Eventually, Pułaski reached Savannah together with his legion. Here, on October 9, 1779, together with his aide-de-camps the general himself joined the charge to maintain the momentum of the attack. Wounded heavily by a grapeshot during the attack, Pułaski was taken on board of a ship that was to sail him to Charleston. Never reaching the destination, he died on his way on October 11, 1779.

There were several Polish officers who fought hand in hand with Pułaski. Some of them, as Colonel Michał Kowacz, a veteran of the Seven Years' War fallen at Charleston and Captain Jan Zieliński fallen at Savannah gave their lives for the freedom of the newly established country. Others, as Captain Kotkowski (first name unknown, former Confederate of Bar), Karol Litomski (possibly Pułaski's aide-de-camp), Captain Józef Baldesqui (or Baldeski, whose name is present only in French spelling making it hard to guess whether he was a Pole), and Captain Fryderyk Paschke survived the war. Some, as Karol Litomski went to participate in Napoleonic Wars, while the future life of others (e.g. Paschke's) remains unknown.¹⁶

It is probable that any number from 110 to 120 Poles and Americans of Polish origin served in the Continental Army and state militias. The number included members of the Zabriski (Zaborowski) family, who had arrived in America in the 17th century, and descendants of other families from Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New York.¹⁷

Moreover, Poles were among the soldiers of the formation known under the name of *Volontaires Etrangeres de la Marine*, that fought under the command of Duc de Lauzun. There were at least three Polish officers serving there: Captain Jan Kwiryn Mieszkowski and Lieutenants Michał Grabowski and Jerzy Uzdowski. They later returned to France to participate in the French Revolution. Mieszkowski and Grabowski survived it; the first died in 1819, and the latter lived in Paris until 1814.¹⁸

A mention must be made of those who helped to supply the fighting colonies. One of them was a privateer, Feliks Mikłaszewicz, the captain of the vessels *Scotch Trick* and *Prince Radzivill* (Sic!). The latter name, suggests that we may be dealing here with a former Confederate of Bar who, fleeing Russian persecution, found refuge in America. Operating from Boston, Mikłaszewicz waylaid English ships in the years 1782–1783. He must have stayed in the US after the war, as there

¹⁶ B. Grzełoński, *Polacy w Stanach...*, pp. 16–39; I. Rusinowa, *Za niepodległość...*, pp. 82–117; for more on Paschke, see: M. Haiman, *Ślady polskie w Ameryce. Szkice historyczne*, Chicago 1938, pp. 19–25; T. Lachowicz, *Weterani polscy w Ameryce do 1939 roku*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 15–16.

¹⁷ B. Grzełoński, *Polacy w Stanach...*, pp. 16–39; found here is also a list of names which the author, after M. Haiman, believes to be Polish; I. Rusinowa, *Za niepodległość...*, pp. 82–117.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

are records about trade transactions he participated in.¹⁹ Among those catering for the smallish fleet that remained in the hands of rebel colonies, was a merchant of the name Samuel Hrabowski who lived in Charleston.

For honesty's sake, one must add that Poles were fighting also on the British side, believing that they are fighting "rebels" in the defense of the holy and inviolable rights of the British Crown to its colony. Their number included Paweł Grabowski of the Topór coat-of-arms, a colonel in the Polish Army and officer in Russian. He is the only Pole to be known to have volunteered to the British Army. An aide-de-camp of General Sir Henry Clinton, he was killed in battle on October 5, 1777. Among the English engineers and military topographers, there was Karol Błaszkwicz, considered to be Polish, and there were also John and Albert Zabriski fighting on the Loyalist side.²⁰

Polish military in North America in the earlier half of the 19th century

Although Tadeusz Kościuszko no longer served in American army, he returned to the continent in the years 1797–1798, freed from Russian captivity, after he had been taken prisoner after the defeat in the Battle of Maciejowice (October 10, 1794). Kościuszko was pardoned and set free only in 1796, when the Russian throne was assumed by Tsar Paul I of Russia. Together with his secretary, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Kościuszko arrived in Philadelphia in August 1797 and received a very warm welcome. Nevertheless, already in May 1798 you left the US under an assumed name and set sail to France, possibly acting on the orders of Thomas Jefferson, quizzed generally believed to have ordered him a secret, diplomatic mission.²¹

Yet American army was present once again in the life of Kościuszko. Asked by the American Envoy to France, General William R. Davie, Kościuszko is believed to have written the rules and regulations for horse artillery. The development of this mobile formation in the French army left General Davie under great impression, and Kościuszko – who had an opportunity to see the formation in mock action – agreed to establish its counterparts in America. The result of this was the work entitled *Manoeuvres of Horse Artillery*, originally written in French, and passed to General Davie.²²

It was brought to light only as late as 1808, as a result of deteriorating relations between the US and Great Britain. In the same year, the manual was translated into English by the Commander of West Point, Colonel Williams, and published to become (in 1812) the official book of regulations for American artillery. Used by the regular army until 1821, it is believed to survive much longer in state militias,

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ B. Grzełoński, *Polacy w Stanach...*, pp. 16–39; I. Rusinowa, *Za niepodległość...*, pp. 82–117.

²¹ B. Grzełoński, *Polacy w Stanach...*, pp. 98–99.

²² M. Haiman, *Ślady polskie w Ameryce. Szkice historyczne...*, pp. 29–95.

who also made use of it.²³ A large group of Polish officers found their way to the United States after the defeat of French forces in San Domingo (Haiti) in 1803. Their number included two Polish demi-brigades, namely the 113th (former Second League, that is the Danubian League) and the 114th (formerly the second Demi-Brigade of the Italian League). The British allowed officers – but only those who could afford it – to return to France via the United States. One of them was General Kazimierz Małachowski. Almost the entire group who arrived in the United States returned to France.²⁴

A few refugees from San Domingo joined the crews of pirate ships sailing in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. Lieutenant Kazimierz Lux and captains Ignacy Blumer and Wincenty Kobyłański are known to have been among their number. The latter two even “earned” own vessels, which they used to hold up other ships, mostly British. They might have been joined even by a few score of soldiers staying under their command.²⁵ We do not know for sure if in their raids and voyages they happened to make port in the United States.

It is certain, however, that there was a large group of Poles participating in the following war, conducted in the years 1812–1815 between the United States and Great Britain.²⁶ Much like in the previous war, they entered the conflict on both sides of the front and wore uniforms of both the armies. What differed, however, were their motivations and numbers.

In his research, Mieczysław Haiman found approximately 30 Polish names among those who fought for the United States. They are found in the documents pertaining to military formations from Massachusetts, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, Maryland, and Ohio.²⁷

There were, however, far more Poles joined the ranks of ‘red coats’ in Watteville’s (nearly everyone) and De Meuron’s regiments stationed in Canada. Having analyzed the documents of the British War Office, Haiman estimates the number of Poles fighting in the British Army in Canada at approximately 600 (Sic!), quoting 529 names of Polish soldiers.²⁸ The Poles who found their way to these regiments were in most cases, prisoners of war. Following the line of reasoning of Stanisław Kirkor, who researched the problem of Polish prisoners of war in Great Britain, most of these were taken captive by the English, while fighting in

²³ *Ibidem*; see also: I. Rusinowa, *Za niepodległość...*, pp. 129.

²⁴ J. Pachoński, *Polacy na Antylach i Morzu Karaibskim*, Kraków 1979, pp. 190–197; F. Stasik, *Polska emigracja polityczna w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki 1831–1864*, Warszawa 1973, p. 14.

²⁵ A. Ziółkowski, *Pułk Jazdy Legionowej. Pułk Lansjerów Nadwiślańskich. 1799–1815*, Warszawa 2006, pp. 68–69.

²⁶ Although peace had already been concluded in Ghent (December 1814), due to problems with communication, the English General, Sir Edward Pakenham, did not know about it while leading an assault on New Orleans on January 8, 1815.

²⁷ M. Haiman, *Ślady polskie w Ameryce...* The author provides a list of all the names together with a short description of each soldier’s service. See also: T. Lachowicz, *Weterani polscy...*, pp. 21–22.

²⁸ *Ibidem*. The two regiments were foreign units in the British Army. Initially composed of the Swiss, they were purchased to serve the English.

Calabria, and especially after the defeat of Napoleonic forces at Maida on July 4, 1806.²⁹ De Watteville's Regiment, stationed at that time in Sicily, was reinforced with prisoners of war who came to serve in the British Army forced by the outrageous conditions they were forced to suffer: due to the lack of prisons and POW camps, they were grouped on the so-called "pontoons", that is all ships anchored in quays, were the horrible living conditions resulted in frequent epidemics and numerous deaths. Later, it must have been reinforced with prisoners of war taken captive in Spain, who found it the only salvation from "pontoons" in Cadiz or a detention on the rocky Isle of Cabrera, which became the grave to 13 000 POWs from Napoleonic armies.

De Watteville's regiment took part in the siege of Fort Erie in 1814. However highly praised was the courage and industriousness of Polish soldiers, some of whom must have benefited from the grants awarded for valor mainly to the soldiers of the grenadier company (They were given land in Canada, Quebec, and Ontario.), desertion was spreading. It was desertion that resulted in the execution of private Danielkowicz in Kingston in 1813, while privates Żeleźniak and Szubacki were sentenced to life servers at the rank of a private in the king's army.³⁰

A veteran of the previous war in America, Karol Błaszkwicz, served in the Army for quite a short time due to his age and ailments. Enlisted in the provincial Canadian forces were also three Głębiński brothers: Maksymilian, Filip and Fryderyk Eugeniusz, all of whom joined the officers' ranks.

The outbreak of the November Uprising was received with great enthusiasm in the United States. The Poles' involvement in struggle aimed at the defense of their constitution, being broken by the tsar, was something for those US citizens who followed the fates on the Old Continent to identify with. On the wave of the brief fascination with Poland, the Polish American Committees were established. The collected money for financing further fight, and even an idea to create a volunteer unit to fight in Poland was put forth. Interestingly, even Edgar Allan Poe³¹ himself considered participation in the Uprising. Nevertheless, not unlike many similar ideas, these glorious designs never went beyond declarations, rallies, and addresses.

The only US citizen who participated in the Uprising was a physician, Paul Fitzsimons Eve, who was studying medicine in Paris at the time. Together with a group of approximately 600 French physicians, he arrived in Poland, where he served as a field doctor first in Warsaw, and later with the 19th Infantry Regiment. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari for his services, and returned to the

²⁹ S. Kirkor, *Polacy w niewoli angielskiej w latach 1803–1814*, Kraków 1981, p. 114. For the Battle of Maida, see: J. Pachonński, *Bitwa pod Maida 4 VII 1806*, "Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości", Vol. XI, part 2.

³⁰ M. Haiman, *Ślady polskie w Ameryce...*

³¹ F. Stasik, *Polska emigracja...*, pp. 27–28.

United States in January 1832.³² After the defeat of the Uprising, more than 50 000 of its participants escaped from the Kingdom of Poland, and found shelter in the Prussian and Austrian Partitions. Although some returned home, following the amnesty announced by Tsar on November 1, 1831, there were around 13 000 former soldiers who decided to remain emigrants. Initially, the majority of the Polish forces (together with the last high commander, General Rybiński) stayed within the borders of the Prussian Partition, while others took to the Austrian Partition. As the partitioning powers did nothing to assist those in need, they were helped by Polish émigrés and a great variety of people of good will, whose number included an American Samuel Gridley Howe.³³

After some time, the partitioning powers considered the Polish insurrectionists to great effect for the internal security, and the stay of such large groups of people within their territory – too large a financial burden. They began to exert different forms of pressure on Poles to make them leave their countries. Most Poles would move to France and German states. Poor knowledge of English and the fact that hardly anyone had at their disposal funds sufficient for such a long journey were the obstacles that made leaving for the United States impossible.³⁴

After Colonel Zaliwski's failed expedition to the Kingdom of Poland, which the Polish émigrés hoped to become the beginning of a new uprising, the partitioning powers (especially Austrian) increased the pressure on the former insurrectionists to make them leave the realms of Habsburgs. They were given a choice: either being delivered into the hands of Russians (which spelt certain exile) or departure to the United States at the expense of Austrian government. The Prussian authorities, cooperating with Austrians on the power of the Munchengratz Convention, followed a similar course. The Convention conducted by Russia, Prussia, and Austria in September 1833, was aimed against the Polish independence movement.

These efforts resulted in transporting former insurrectionists to the ports of Trieste (and that time in Austria) and Gdańsk (at the time in Prussia). By the end of 1833, the total number of Poles forced to leave for the US had reached 929. Those deported from Gdańsk were far more lucky, as unfavorable weather forced the ships to make port in Portsmouth or Le Havre, when most of them simply disembarked.³⁵

Altogether, approximately 530 former Polish insurrectionists had arrived in the United States by 1838.³⁶ Due to their inability to communicate, many of them suffered poverty. Worth remembering is also the fact that most of the émigrés were officers who, hailing from the landed gentry knew nothing about crafts or trade and

³² *Ibidem*, see also: T. Lachowicz, *Polscy weterani...*, p. 24.

³³ *Ibidem*; F. Stasik, *Polska emigracja...*, pp. 39–75; see also: A. Chwalba, *Historia Polski 1795–1918*, pp. 288–291.

³⁴ A. Chwalba, *Historia Polski...*, quotes detailed data on Polish emigration in individual countries.

³⁵ F. Stasik, *Polska emigracja...*

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 126.

were forced to the hardest physical labor to bear and their keeps. Due to the poverty, they were even unable to benefit from the donation from the US Congress that the Polish Committee, established by Polish émigrés, obtained for them not without considerable effort. The donation consisted of properties in Illinois that were awarded to the newcomers. Many of them, however, were unable to reach Illinois, due to lack of funds, while those who set forth on foot would reach their properties two years later only to find them occupied.³⁷

Despite all these hardships, Poles participated in wars conducted by the United States as well as in plenty of unofficial military actions conducted from the US territory.

After the fall of the November rising, Poles became a nation without a homeland. Therefore, much like the Irish, they would enlist into all and sundry revolutionary movements, and join any army fighting anywhere on the globe. To quote Andrzej Chwalba: “Throughout the period of Romanticism, Poles participated in European revolutions. They were professional soldiers, and in your circumstances they would become professional revolutionaries”.³⁸

A similar observation was made by *Times* in 1863. Describing another Polish uprising, it claimed that “Poles are the Irish of the Continent”.³⁹

As Mieczysław Haiman claims, there was a Pole, Doctor Józef Aleksander Czyczeryn participating in Doctor James Long expedition to Texas remaining at the time in Mexican hands. Later, the number of Poles who joined the struggle to liberate Texas, included F. Piotrowicz, M. Dembiński, L. Dębicki, and J. Kornicki were killed in the massacre of Colonel Fannin’s troops at Goliad in 1836. Felix Wardzinski is known to have fought at the Battle of San Jacinto.⁴⁰

Poles participated also in the war conducted in Florida against the militant tribe of Seminoles inhabiting the region. When in 1834, President Jackson decided to displace Seminoles to the other side of the Mississippi, the first wave of Polish emigrants fleeing the country in the wake of the fall of November Uprising had already arrived in the US. Some of them must have enlisted entertaining the illusion that the army may open to them a career. Falling back on the preserved documents of American army, Mieczysław Haiman estimates the number at 25, and quotes the names of six Polish soldiers lost their lives in that campaign. Apart from one who earned the rank of corporal, they were all privates. All of them died from the diseases that tormented the army is fighting in 1842 in the rotten climate of Flori-

³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 76–170; an outstanding source of information about the history of Polish emigration at the time are the memoirs of Julian Juźwikiewicz, lieutenant in the insurrectionist forces, deported by the Austrians from Trieste to the USA. In 1835 he left for France, where he published a book entitled *Polacy w Ameryce* [Poles in America]. Its fragments are reprinted by M. Haiman in his *Ślady polskie w Ameryce...*, pp. 99–152.

³⁸ A. Chwalba, *Historia Polski...*

³⁹ N. Davies, *Zachód i Wschód, czyli Piękna i Bestia*, [in:] idem, *Smok wawelski nad Tamizą*, Kraków 2001, p. 150.

⁴⁰ M. Haiman, *Polish past...*, pp. 84–85; F. Stasiak, *Polska emigracja...*, p. 115; the name of F. Piotrowicz is at least dubious, as Haiman has him among those killed in Goliad, while Joseph Wyrwał claims that he served in the American army in war against Mexico in 1846–1848 (see footnotes 43 and 44).

da everglades⁴¹. Besides the soldiers mentioned above, also Aleksander Bielawski, a graduate of office, School of engineering in St Petersburg and a veteran of the November Uprising, stayed in Florida as railway engineer. Although he was involved in the making of civilian measurements, his name and will later turn up in the annals of American armed forces.

Colonel Gustaw Szulc, also a veteran of the November Uprising, participated in an expedition to Canada of November 1838 that marched to participate in the burning out guerrilla skirmishes in Upper Canada. Szulc took part in the Battle of Windmill, were on November 16, 1838 he was captured by the British and hanged in Kingston on December 8 as a rebel on the order of Canadian authorities.⁴²

Polish military participated also in the War against Mexico (1846–1848). Besides the sons of old Polish settlers (e.g. the Zabriski family) approximately 50 former insurgents enlisted in the American army.⁴³ Among those who distinguished themselves were captains Karol Radziwiński and Napoleon Kościalkowski, and Sergeant Ignacy Szumowski. Private Soliński of the 2nd Pennsylvania Regiment was promoted to Junior Lieutenant for bravery he showed while fighting in Mexico City. Józef Szulakiewicz of the 2nd Dragoons Regiment received an order from President Polk, and Adolf Wengierski's services during the siege of Puebla were "beyond value". Participating in the fight were also Hipolit Oladowski (former insurgent) and Felix Wordzinski (veteran of Texas conflict in 1836). Captain Jacob Zabriski of 1st Regiment Illinois, was to relatives also served in the American army, died at Buena Vista on February 23, 1847. Second Lieutenant Maurycy Małachowski of the 2nd New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment was wounded at Churubusco. Doctor Paweł Feliks Wierzbicki, later the author of the first guidebook to California, served as a field doctor.⁴⁴

Despite the atmosphere built up in the Army under the influence of commanding officers hailing from among American WASPs that was, needless to say, highly unfriendly for migrants arriving from countries with Catholic majority, Poles would not deflect to the Mexican side. (While Irish soldiers gathered into the so-called St Patrick's Battalion: a unit of the Mexican army solely composed of deserters from US forces.) There were, quite naturally, Polish officers serving in Mexico, as for example General Konstanty Tarnawa-Malczewski or field surgeon Seweryn Gałęzowski.

Interestingly, in 1853 Major Józef Jerzmanowski and a few other Poles living in the United States (supported by Prince Adam Czartoryski's faction) submitted to Jefferson Davis, then U.S. Secretary of War, a project of developing autonomous

⁴¹ M. Haiman, *Ślady polskie w Ameryce...*, pp. 155–158; T. Lachowicz, *Polscy weterani...*, p. 34.

⁴² M. Haiman, *Polish past in America 1608–1865...*, pp. 85–86; T. Lachowicz, *Polscy weterani...*, pp. 34–35; J. Wytrwał, *Poles in...*, p. 121.

⁴³ T. Lachowicz, *Polscy weterani...*, pp. 43–44.

⁴⁴ M. Haiman, *Polish past in America 1608–1865*, pp. 86–89; T. Lachowicz, *Polscy weterani...*, pp. 37–44; F. Stasik, *Polska emigracja...*, pp. 167; J. Wytrwał, *Poles in...*, p. 145.

Polish Corps that was to be deployed in the Crimea so as to assist Turkish army in their war on Russia. For reasons of legal and financial nature, the project was never put into practice.⁴⁵ of consequence here was also the fact that the relations between the US government and tsarist Russia were improving, mostly thanks to the joint anti-British position.

Poles in the United States on the eve of the Civil War

Any attempt at precise calculation of the number of Polish citizens (or those with Polish roots) in the United States at the turn of 1850s, is doomed to failure. This results from a number of factors that require presentation.

First, that was the time when the modern notion of a nation, based primarily on shared ethnicity, was only being born. In the days preceding the fall of the Commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania, that is before the end of the 18th century, the notion of the nation was primarily perceived in the category of a “political nation”, and was related mostly to the nobility. All who aspired to Polish culture and/or followed Polish customs, independent of their ethnic origin, were referred to as Poles. This was especially true in the eastern marches of the Commonwealth, where the term ‘Pole’ referred for example to the German burghers of Kamieniec Podolski. In such a country, one could easily refer to oneself as “*natione Polonus, gente Lithuanus, originae Judaeus, religione catholicus*”. It goes without saying, that the multiethnicity of the former Commonwealth was highly conducive to this, as besides Poles the state was inhabited by Ukrainians, Germans, Jews, Lithuanians, Armenians, Tartars, and representatives of many other nations.

Secondly, being partitioned, Poland ceased to exist as a political entity, and its citizens became subjects of the neighboring powers. For that reason, when they arrived in America from those parts of the Poland that were annexed by Prussia, they would often be considered Germans. Needless to say that their knowledge of the German language, enforced by the conquerors, encouraged such treatment. The situation was similar in the case of immigrants from the other two partitions.

The third major problem is the fragmentary character and lack of precision in American data on the number of immigrants. Mieczysław Haiman, who examined official American data for the 19th century, states that in the records speak of only 1 659 persons in the years 1820–1860. (On the other hand, the data from the Department of Treasury, speak about 1164 Poles, but the number they quote most probably refers only to the inhabitants of the former Kingdom of Poland.) As the same time, the federal government recorded as many as 60 000 persons coming from Prussia in the period in question. Haiman has found numerous occurrences of incoherence in these records. It is enough to look in to the yet 1834: according to

⁴⁵ M. Haiman, *Polish past in America 1608–1865...*, p. 89; F. Stasiak, *Polska emigracja...*, pp. 230–232.

the data provided by the US government, there were only 54 Polish migrants who reached the USA, while it was in that year that two Austrian frigates brought from Trieste 234 Polish insurrectionists from their previous detention in Brno (Moravia).⁴⁶ Materials of the New York State Emigration Commission claim that in the period 1851–1860 as many as 1 980 Poles were recorded. In the period beginning with 1847 (the year when the Commission was established) and ending in 1860, that Commission found 2 406 Poles only in the state of New York.⁴⁷

The problem that renders the research of American files and records much more difficult is the vast difference in the phonetics of the two languages. What follows, the Polish names, transcribed phonetically by American civil servants, may differ to an extent making their recognition impossible. Moreover, it was frequently the case that both the first and last names were purposefully Americanized.

The last problem pertains to the group of family names that did not sound Polish from the very beginning. The multi-ethnic and multicultural Commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania was inhabited by plenty of foreigners who, considering themselves Poles, would maintain the original names. Little wonder then that the family name Denhoff was common to Polish Grand Commanders and Prussian cadets. The Bibersztajn (alternatively spelt Biberstein) and Kotwicz (Kottwitz) coats-of-arms are present in the books of heraldry in Poland and in a large part of Germany. The names of bourgeoisie were a similar case, with such names as e.g. Brandt, Dekert, and Dietl being popular in both the countries.

Considering the total number of Poles in the US, the general census of 1870 (being slightly more precise than the previous ones) defines it at 14 436. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the number pertains only to those people who not only deliberately presented themselves as Poles but also stood fast by being recognized as such in the census, as those who only stated that they arrived from e.g. Poznań would end up being considered Prussian. A well-known researcher of Polonia, Father Waclaw Kruszkka estimates the number of Poles stained in the United States in 1870 at 50 000 persons. With this in mind, Mieczysław Haiman believes that during the Civil War there might have been approximately 30 000 Poles in the US.⁴⁸ It is to be remembered that his approximations refer only to the Polish immigrants who settled in the USA in the 19th century, thus excluding the descendants of Poles who had settled there earlier.⁴⁹

This shows how impossible is the task of defining the exact number of Poles serving in the armies of the Union and the Confederation. Based on the rolls of officers of the Federal Army, Mirosław Haiman believes there were around 160 Polish

⁴⁶ M. Haiman, *Historia udziału Polaków w amerykańskiej wojnie domowej*, Chicago 1928, pp. 24–41; F. Stasik on immigrants who reached the US in 1834, *Polska emigracja...*, pp. 61–106.

⁴⁷ M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ Haiman considers political émigrés who settled After the November Uprising and the defeat of Zaliwski's expedition, those fleeing from the defeat of European Spring of Nations, and eventually the phenomenon that originated at that time, namely, emigration for profit.

officers serving in it. As in the armies of the Union the ratio between officers and soldiers was 1 to 20, the researcher arrived at the number of 3200 persons. Having added a few hundred of those who he believed to have been missed from the official rolls, he estimated the total number of Poles in the armies of the Union at 4 000 persons.⁵⁰

Of great importance here is the fact that the search criterion assumed by Haiman was Polish-sounding family name. For the reasons concerning the sound of names and listed earlier in this paper, such an estimation may be burdened with a high error margin, which the researcher himself was aware of.

His computations concerning Poles serving under the Confederate flag turn out the number of 1000. Thus, following Haiman, there were all together approximately 5000 Poles soldiers participating in the Civil War. To quote the researcher. "This number is definitely not exaggerated; on the contrary, I would rather believe that to be too modest".⁵¹

Nevertheless, it is questioned by other historians. Marian Kukiel, for example, believed (though without conducting any deeper study), that no more than 500 Poles could have participated in the Civil War⁵². Bogdan Grzełoński in turn believes that the number of Poles in the USA in 1860 did not exceed 16 000 persons, which makes him estimate the number of Poles participating in the war at around 2 500.⁵³

The figures provided by Mieczysław Haiman are accepted by Joseph A. Wyrwał, who however remarks that some researchers believe that the involvement of Poles in the war might have been greater than the studies show.⁵⁴

An interesting point in this discussion is put forth by an American scholar, James S. Pula. In his monographic work on general Krzyżanowski's brigade, he states that the number of Poles participating in the Civil War was closer to 10 000.⁵⁵

Due to difficulties with proper estimations, the offer of this paper is inclined to subscribe to the point of view of the last of the authors quoted above, believing that the American author sufficiently justifies his position in his study.

Presence of Poles in individual detachments of Unionist and Confederation armies

As listing of all the detachments where Poles served would be too difficult the task, I shall limit myself to naming only those known best.

⁵⁰ M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁵² M. Kukiel, *Dzieje Polski porozbiorowe, 1795–1921*, London 1961, p. 482.

⁵³ B. Grzełoński, *Za Unię i skonfederowane Stany*, [in:] B. Grzełoński, I. Rusinowa, *Polacy w wojnach amerykańskich, 1775–1783, 1861–1864*, Warszawa 1973, pp. 156–159; B. Grzełoński, *Polacy w Stanach...*, p. 142.

⁵⁴ J. Wyrwał, *Poles in ...*, p. 149.

⁵⁵ J. S. Pula, *The History of a German–Polish Civil War Brigade*, San Francisco 1976, p. 2.

The first Polish unit served in the Company C of the 31st New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment, and was formed by Captain Aleksander Raszewski. Polish officers serving in its ranks included: Lieutenant Ludwik Domański and Second Lieutenant Wincenty Kochanowski. It was to be a predominantly Polish unit that together with another Company of the 31st Regiment was to wear Polish peaked caps (*rogatywki*) until the standardization of Unionist army uniforms.⁵⁶

There were large number of Poles fighting in other New York infantry regiments: 7th (“Steuben Guards”), 8th (“First German Rifles”), 20th (“United Turner Rifles”), 29th (“Astor Rifles”) 39th (“Garibaldi Guard” – a highly international unit, it gathered veterans of Italian wars including a large group of Poles), 41st (“De Kalb Regiment”), 45th, 46th, 52nd, 54th (“Schwarze Jager”), and 55th.⁵⁷

Already on July 2, 1861, Julian Allen (who referred to himself as “a Pole of the Mosaic faith”) connected with the pre-war Democratic Society of Polish Exiles (*Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Wýgnańców Polskich*) received a colonel’s commission and undertook to put out a “Polish legion”. As recruitment did not go smoothly, Allen resigned from the post, and was replaced by Captain Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski, a participant of the Poznań events of 1846 hailing from Wielkopolska. As he was to recruit another infantry regiment, used the human resources gathered by Allen, and reinforced the unit with soldiers of non-Polish origin. That was the origin of the 58th New York Infantry Regiment, which officially continued to be known as “The Polish Legion”.⁵⁸ A preserved print portrays a warrant officer of this unit, wearing *rogatywka*, that is the Polish peaked cap, yet it should be believed that when the uniforms were standardized, it was replaced by the Unionist chasseur cap (*kepi*).⁵⁹

And the very beginning of the Civil War, at least 200 Poles From St Louis joined the Unionist army. Most of them were enlisted to the Company A of the 1st Missouri Volunteer Infantry Regiment, under the command of Captain Władysław Koniuszewski.

Of all the Ohio’s infantry regiments, most Poles were serving in the 9th and 28th, and in those from Illinois – in the 24th. In Wisconsin’s army, most Poles served in the 9th and 26th infantry regiments.⁶⁰

Information about Polish units would not be complete without mentioning the attempt to form a regiment of “United States Uhlans”, by Colonel Józef Smoliński, Knight of the *Virtuti Militari* Order, the veteran of the November Uprising, the French Foreign Legion, and the British Army. In the latter he fought at Sevastopol⁶¹. The unit was finally disbanded, possibly as a result of the complaints of American

⁵⁶ M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*, p. 35; confirmed by J. S. Puła, *The History...*, p. 8.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 35–39. Haiman claims that Emil Schoenig from Poland was a colonel of the 52th Regiment.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, here and further, unless stated otherwise.

⁵⁹ J. S. Puła, *The History...*, p. 8.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 54.

⁶¹ For an extensive biogram of the colonel, see: *Polski słownik biograficzny* (henceforth referred to as PSB), Vol. 39, Warszawa–Kraków 2000, pp. 300–305.

officers against harsh discipline introduced in it. Its formations were incorporated into the 9th Regiment of New York Cavalry, with the exception of the Squadrons A and B which became part of the 4th Regiment of Heavy Artillery. There were also Polish troopers in Colonel Karl Schurz's 1st Regiment of New York Cavalry, and in the 4th Mounted Regiment from the same state.⁶²

In the fall of 1861, an attempt was made at St Louis to establish "Independent Company of Sobolewski's Uhlans" to be commanded by Łukasz Sobolewski. Early in 1862 it was merged into other units to increase the military power of the weak Unionist cavalry. Poles served also in the 16th Regiment of Illinois Cavalry.

Finally, there were such artillery detachments as the 9th Independent Battery, New York Light Artillery, from the name of its commander, Wojciech Morozowicz, called "Morozowicz Battery". Fighting in the 2nd Regiment Light Artillery of Illinois was "Hulanicki's Battery", while that of Captain Stanisław Młotkowski was stationed in Pennsylvania.

In the words of Mieczysław Haiman. "It can safely be said that there were hardly any foreign regiments in the Unionist army. That would not have at least few Poles at its service".⁶³

The situation is much more difficult when it comes to finding Confederate regiments where Poles served. The largest group of Poles must have been that in the 14th Infantry Regiment of Louisiana. It was formed by a veteran of the November Uprising and Knight of the Order of Virtuti Militari, Kasper Tochman. He settled in the United States in 1837, quickly becoming a highly recognized attorney. At the same time, he was actively supporting the Polish case, traveling all over the country with presentations and publishing articles about the situation of Poland in popular press. He was frequently invited to gatherings of states' legislative assemblies, where he delivered speeches portraying the tragic situation of Poland and Russian repressions. Beginning from 1852, he lived in his own estate in Virginia, but he was equally often staying in Washington where he had numerous contacts among the local high society. The number of his friends included the future president of the Confederates, Jefferson Davis, Samuel Tilden – future US presidential candidate, Levi Woodbury and John McKinley – justices of the United States Supreme Court, Jared Sparks – an American historian very popular at the time, Horace Greeley – publisher of the "New York Tribune", and William H. Seward, later Secretary of State.

Tochman felt himself to be primarily a citizen of Virginia, and considered Lincoln's actions a violation of US Constitution. He defended the claim that although the states passed some of its prerogatives to the Union, they were capable of revoking them at any time.

This is why, already in May 1861 he offered the Confederates his services and those of his former client, a distant descendant of Kościuszko and former captain of tsarist army, Władysław Wańkiewicz. At the same time in a most polite

⁶² *Ibidem*, see also: M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

manner, with assurance of his friendship, he notified Seward that he was unable to assume the post of the US Consul in Paris that had been offered to him.

Tochman was offered the command over the Regiment at the rank of Colonel. Moreover, the Confederate States of America Department of War and Davis ensured him that he would be awarded the rank of brigadier general if he recruits two infantry regiments.

Tochman operated in New Orleans, a city with a fairly large Polish population. His considerable expenditure soon rallied the 1st Polish Infantry Regiment which was soon renamed into the 14th Infantry Regiment of Louisiana. It marched into battle already on June 29, 1861 commanded by Colonel Walerian Sulakowski.

While Tochman was already organizing a battalion for another regiment, the Confederate government refused approving his rank of brigadier general due to political pressure from Louisiana legislature, who Tochman was fell out with for reasons today unknown. Rebuffed, Tochman handed in his resignation and to the end of the war tried to regain the expenses he had made.

Another battalion was formed as the 15th Infantry Regiment of Louisiana, and the two units were merged under the name of “The Polish Brigade”, yet the Polish presence (especially in the 15th Regiment) was relatively low.

Another stronghold of Polonia in the South, second only to Louisiana, was Texas. This is where the Polish migrants escaping from Upper Silesia, at that time under Prussian occupation, continued to settle since early 1850s. The first of these settlements was Panna Maria (literally: Virgin Mary) founded in Texas by Father Leopold Moczygemba.⁶⁴ Poles hailed mostly from the counties of Opole, Strzelce, Toszek, Lubliniec and Oleśno, and from the municipality of Opole. According to the 1867 census, there were approximately 1080 Poles living in a few hamlets.

Farmers were not eager at all to serve in the Confederate army, the more so as many of them escaped from the compulsory draft to Prussian army. Moreover, at the outbreak of war they were struggling with the consequences of the tragic drought that the area experience. It was only after Confederate States introduced drafting in 1862 that some of them went to join the army. Although records have been preserved in the Poles around Martinez in Texas refused military service.⁶⁵

According to the frequently cited article by Gertrude Harris Cook (1932), an entire Polish company was supposedly formed in the Karnes District. This does not find any confirmation in the sources, while the roll of the Company “Virgin Mary Grace” formed in the district included only four Polish names in the summer of 1862, with only one earlier in that year.⁶⁶

Most Polish Texans are believed to have served in the 6th Infantry Regiment of Texas and 24th Cavalry. Single soldiers are believed to have found their way to

⁶⁴ T. L. Baker, *Historia najstarszych polskich osad w Ameryce*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1981, pp. 10–40.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 107.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 111.

the 2nd and 8th infantry regiments of that state, and in the 2nd, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, and 36th cavalry in regiments formed in Texas.⁶⁷ Poles would be more eagerly recruited to the troops that defended Texans from Mexican and Native American attacks, as e.g. the 30th Militia Battery. The best testimony to their negative attitude to the Civil War is a what of Silesian peasants wrote in a letter to his family remaining in Poland: “And eventually the Lord had mercy on us, the local Confederates lost.”⁶⁸ (Sic!)

Wartime stories

The literature I quote describes in detail the wartime biographies of Polish soldiers and officers, whose names could be identified. A number of monographic works on individual regiments published in the English language make it possible to retrace their combat histories. So as not to repeat too much of what has already been recorded, I would only point at a number of interesting facts related to the lives of military units and persons I mentioned earlier.⁶⁹

“The Polish Legion” made its way into Bohlen’s Brigade in Blenker’s Division. It fought in a campaign of General Fremont against “Stonewall” Jackson in Shenandoah Valley in the spring of 1862. It was then that Colonel Krzyżanowski distinguished himself for the first time, leading a bayonet counter-charge of his regiment at Cross Keys on June 8, 1862.⁷⁰

Soon, the corps went under the command of General Franz Sigel, with General Karl Schurz receiving the command over the division. It may be claimed that the “foreign corps” was the best and most experienced of the Unionists armed formations. It was so as its officers and the large share of soldiers had served in various European armies (mostly, however, Prussian), participated in the Spring of Nations or in the wars for Italian independence. Unlike their comrades-in-arms from the US, who had not yet had an opportunity to smell the gunpowder, Sigel’s corps was a unit standing at much higher level.

In the summer of 1862, Krzyżanowski, in his capacity of the commander of the brigade that included “The Polish Legion” participated in Pope’s campaign in Virginia that ended with the Battle of Manassas (Second Battle of Bull Run) on August 30. Krzyżanowski’s Brigade proved great courage in that battle, much like a day earlier at Groveton, where they beat off the attacks of Confederate forces for eight hours. At Manassas, Krzyżanowski was covering the retreat of the defeated Unionist forces. The colonel earned a commendation from general Schurz, yet he never received his brigadier general nomination, as the Senate never approved it.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 122–129.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 129; See also by the same author: *Polish Texans*, San Antonio 1982, pp. 47–54.

⁶⁹ I suggest that aficionados of online information, research the Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System database at: <http://www.civilwar.nps.gov/cwss>.

⁷⁰ J. S. Puła, *op. cit.*; see also: M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*, pp. 42–61.

The reason was the name of the colonel that sounded too foreign. After the campaign, Sigel left the corps and was replaced by Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard, a feckless puritan. Together with the high commander of the Union Army, Major General Joseph Hooker, they brought about the significant defeat of the army at Chancellorsville on May 2, 1863. Their actions were not only erroneous in the terms of the art of war, but verged on lack of common sense characteristic for reasonable man. These were only the foreign units that distinguished themselves in the battle, not yielding to panic despite being surrounded, and to that end, covered the retreat of American units. These were the soldiers of the brigades fighting under Gilsa, Krzyżanowski, Schimmelfennig, and Buschbeck that were the true heroes of the day. Yet, to cover up for the incompetence, generals Hooker and Howard, spread the story about the escape of foreign troops, a version which came down well in the aggressive and xenophobic WASP milieu. It was insisted that every tenth soldier of the XI Corps (that was the name of Howard's foreign corps) be executed.

The 58th Regiment fought also at Gettysburg (June 1–3, 1863). Already on the first day of the battle, two companies of the regiment distinguished themselves (with the remaining ones being stuck in the camp), when the brigade was engaged by prevailing Confederate armies and, unlike the neighboring American units, did not yield to them, before withdrawing to the Cemetery Hill in the evening. Equal valor was displayed by the 26th Infantry Regiment of Wisconsin, a unit in Krzyżanowski's brigade, when numerous Poles served. On the second day of the battle, the 58th and 119th New York regiments commanded by Krzyżanowski made a daring charge on positions of Confederates threatening the Federal artillery. Only selected units of the 58th Regiment participated in the third day of the battle. Today, there is information about only two killed Poles on the monument of the regiment erected in the Gettysburg National Military Park. Yet, as James Pula correctly remarked, at least three officers of the regiment died from wounds received in the battle.⁷¹

Later, Krzyżanowski's brigade fought in Tennessee. With the three years it was commissioned for being over, Krzyżanowski persuaded its soldiers to continue their service. The brigade finished its wartime involvements guarding the Nashville–Chattanooga train line from raids by Confederate guerilla troops.

The wartime history of the "Polish Brigade" fighting under Confederate flag is not equally well documented. The 14th Regiment in whose ranks Poles served, fought at Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Yorktown, Williamsburg, Seven Pines, and in a number of other battles.⁷²

The Texan regiments (6th Infantry and 24th Cavalry) were moved to Arkansas, where they defended the massive earthworks known as Arkansas Post. Early in 1863 it was captured by Unionist troops, and soldiers of the regiments were

⁷¹ J. S. Pula, *The History...*, pp. 90–91.

⁷² M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*, p. 130.

taken captive by the Unionists, at which time some of them changed sides.⁷³ It is obviously a paradox that Poles were among the first victims of the Civil War. It was still at the time of the “armed peace” early in 1861 that Tadeusz Strawiński Jr. enlisted in the Confederate army, together with his father (insurrectionist of 1831). Tadeusz Strawiński Jr., born already in Charleston and a student of South Carolina University, died as a sentry on duty on January 27, 1861 when accidental shots were exchanged with the Fort Sumter garrison.⁷⁴

In the Unionist army, one of the first victims was Konstanty Błędowski (Blandowski), an officer with the 3rd Volunteer Regiment of Missouri. He was badly wounded on May 10, 1863 at camp Jackson and died on May 25. This made him the first Unionist officer mortally wounded in battle, while the first victim among Unionist officers was Captain Ellsworth.⁷⁵

Florian Stasik writes that there were 2 generals, 2 colonels, 5 majors, and 60 captains among Poles fighting in the Unionist army. These numbers cannot be precise, as at times they are hard to classify properly. For example, General Albin Franciszek Schoepf, born in 1822 in Podgórze (at that time still a city independent from Kraków) from Hungarian father and Polish mother. Schoepf was a professional Austrian officer who went to Hungary to fight at the side of Kossuth in 1848, yet he enlisted not to Hungarian Army but to the Polish Legion. Nevertheless, having arrived in the United States, he called himself Hungarian.⁷⁶

It seems that Schoepf was the only full general in the federal army, as the other two Poles (i.e. those counted by Stasik among generals) were only generals of volunteers and not regular army. Moreover, they were nominated through the so-called a brevet that is an honorary warrant authorizing the holder to a higher rank (but without receiving the higher pay). After the war, such ranks were verified if the given officer did not command a detachment problem for his rank.

Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski and Józef Karge (both hailing from the Prussian Partition) were brevetted brigadier generals. Born in Oleandry Terespolskie, Karge was an officer of Prussian cavalry imprisoned by Prussians after he had fought on the Polish side in 1848. He fled from captivity, and reached the United States via Holland, France, and England. A passionate teacher, he presided over a small scientific institute in New York. When the war broke out he joined volunteer cavalry in New Jersey. He was first the deputy commander, and later commander of the 1st Cavalry Regiment of the state despite controversies with American officers who were not used to military discipline. Despite the diseases and wounds suffered, he fought throughout the entire war, in the summer of 1864 commanding temporarily, a cavalry division in Tennessee. He fought against “Jeb” Stewart (e.g. Edinburgh and the station in August 1862), the armies of General Forrest in spring 1864, and

⁷³ T. L. Baker, *Historia najstarszych...*, pp. 112–113.

⁷⁴ Mentioned also by J. Wytrwał, *Poles in...*, p. 149.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 150; M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*, p. 41.

⁷⁶ T. Lachowicz, *Weterani polscy...*, p. 59; J. Wytrwał, *Poles in...*, p. 169; PSB, Vol. 35, pp. 591–592.

other enemies. Having been praised as an outstanding, battle wise commander of cavalry, after the war Karge fought for some time in American cavalry in the west to become later a professor in Princeton, where he was in charge of the Chair of European Languages for 22 years before he died in 1892.⁷⁷

The other general was naturally Włodzimierz Krzyżanowski who had not received to the brevet to his rank until March 2, 1865⁷⁸ (Sic!). Despite that, he had not become disgruntled towards his new homeland, and his post-war memoirs are pervaded with the fascination with the political system of the United States. “the prime own their land, the United States to its today’s power is its constitution – one whose equivalent no race has produced.”⁷⁹

After the end of the war which found him the commander of Bridgeport garrison, she worked for the Department of Treasury. Having participated in negotiations with Russia on Alaska purchase, he later worked in its American administration. For a time, he represented the Department of Treasury in Panama (1879). Krzyżanowski died in 1887, and since 1938 his mortal remains have been buried at Arlington Cemetery, being a major American military necropolis.

Those who reached higher ranks in the Confederate Army, besides Tochman, included Walerian Sulakowski, a colonel, and staff officer of General Magruder’s, who received the Confederate Government’s approval for feeding CSA’s army with soldiers from Poland. Yet the ship used to transport cotton, which was to be sold to pay the soldiers, was captured by the Union’s fleet, and Sulakowski found himself in Mexico.⁸⁰ Lieutenant Colonel Hipolit Oladowski, was the head of supplies in the army of General Bragg.⁸¹ Ignacy Szymański, a soldier of 1831, commanded the Chalmette Regiment defending New Orleans in the rank of Colonel.

Lower-ranking Polish officers often served as the so-called additional aides-de-camp, which meant that as professionals and graduates of military academies of St Petersburg, Vienna, and Berlin. They were to offer their assistance to American generals who had no idea about the work of military command. There are number included Captain Aleksander Bielawski, a veteran of the November Uprising, aide-de-camp of General McClermand, killed at Belmont, where – with a banner in hand – he was rallying soldiers to a charge on November 7, 1861 and Captain Wilhelm Kossak.⁸²

Poles fought bravely, even though – especially Unionist – armies were not a friendly place for them. Let us remember that when the January Uprising broke out in Poland in 1863, Russia – endeavoring to have it considered its internal affair,

⁷⁷ M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*, pp. 62–75; J. Wytrwał, *Poles in...*, pp. 161–169.

⁷⁸ M. Haiman, *Polish past...* p. 122; J. Wytrwał, *Poles in...*, p. 160.

⁷⁹ W. Krzyżanowski, *Wspomnienia z pobytu w Ameryce Gen. Włodzimierza Krzyżanowskiego, podczas wojny 1861–1864*; “Roczniki Historyczne Polskiego Muzeum w Ameryce” 1963, Vol. 1, p. 20.

⁸⁰ M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*, pp. 131–140; J. Wytrwał, *Poles in...*, pp. 198–201.

⁸¹ M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*, pp. 141–151; J. Wytrwał, *Poles in...*, pp. 202–211. Both the works contain a fairly complete list of Polish officers and some soldiers serving in Confederate army.

⁸² M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*, pp. 94–119.

and careful not to provoke an English or French intervention – allied with the United States, afraid that France and England will support the Confederates. Hence the numerous formal letters sent by Lincoln to Tsar Alexander II, and hence the visit of Russian fleets in the US in 1863.⁸³

During the visit, an act of exceptional atrocity and violation of international law by the American Government took place. Early in January 1864, a Polish sailor, Aleksander Milewski, escaped from one of the men-of-war of the Russian Baltic Fleet spending the winter in New York. He enlisted with the one of New York artillery regiments and went to fight in Virginia. The Russian command notified the Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, who ordered to have the soldier found. Milewski was extradited to the Russians and after a short trial hanged on a spar of one of the ships.⁸⁴

Eager to return to his homeland fighting for independence, Ludwik Żychliński, a lieutenant in the Union's Army, was forced to feign illness and asked the treatment in Europe. Under an assumed name, he reached Poland and fought a victorious battle against Russian troops at Ossa. Sentenced to exile in Siberia after the defeat. In Poland he participated in the uprising of Polish exiles in Trans-Baikalia in 1866.⁸⁵

Józef Smoliński, who left his son in the Union's Army, tried to reach Poland too, but was detained and interned in Olomouc. Later he participated in the Irish Fenian raids of Canada in 1866 and in the preparation of another in 1870.⁸⁶

As it is impossible to portray here all the Poles who participated in the war of 1861–1865 and referred to in available materials, let the finish with quotations from the General Krzyżanowski, who thus explained why he went into combat:

[...] I went where I was summoned both by the duty of gratitude towards the foster homeland, and by the memory true to the ideals of my fatherland.⁸⁷

⁸³ For more on US and Russian Polish policies of the period, see: S. Bóbr-Tylingo, *The January Uprising and the American Civil War*, "Antemurale" 1976, Vol. 20, pp. 51–73.

⁸⁴ F. Stasik, *Polska emigracja...*, pp. 288–289.

⁸⁵ M. Haiman, *Historia udziału...*, pp. 76–93; *Ameryka w oczach Polaków – antologia*, ed. B. Grzełowski, Warszawa 1975, p. 147; J. Wytrwał, *Poles in...*, pp. 181–184.

⁸⁶ See footnote 61.

⁸⁷ W. Krzyżanowski, *Wspomnienia...*, pp. 65–66.