

# The Polish Army Veterans Association of America (PAVA)



The Polish Army Veterans Association of America (PAVA) is an independent, mutual aid organization of former Polish soldiers operating continuously since 1921. It is the oldest institution of this type in the world. The headquarters is located in Manhattan, New York City in the "Polish Veterans Home" that is owned by PAVA District 2, at 119 East 15th Street. Its organizational archives are housed here, as also the Polish Military Heritage Museum founded in 1996. PAVA promotes Polish culture and Polish-American traditions, and also organizes celebrations of Polish national holidays and historical events.

**Weteran [The Veteran]** is the press organ of the Polish Army Veterans Association of America, established by a vote of the PAVA Founding Convention in Cleveland, OH, in May 1921. Throughout the entire period of its existence The Veteran has been supported with SWAP organizational funds. The organization has never received grants from the American or Polish governments.

Today, The Veteran reaches readers in 10 countries on three continents (America, Europe, Australia). Most recipients of this magazine live in the United States and Canada, and also Poland (mainly university libraries). Smaller numbers of copies of The Veteran go to Great Britain, France, Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Lithuania, and also Australia. **The Veteran is the oldest Polish magazine of its kind in the world, continuously published for 94 years!**



**THE PAVA FOUNDATION.** Its scope includes providing scholarly grants and funding for the publication of historical works related to the topic of Polish Arms. **The following projects were implemented thanks to the Foundation's support:**

- Construction of the monument "The War Effort of the Polish American Community" in Warsaw, Poland
- Organization of a fundraising campaign for the renovation of historic graves in the Montmartre cemetery in Paris, France.
- Co-organizing a charity event for the benefit of the "Wounded Warriors" project.



**The publication of books and films including:**

- Czyn Zbrojny Wychodźstwa Polskiego w Ameryce (The War Effort of the Polish Emigration in America)
- Weterani Polscy w Ameryce do 1939r. (Polish Veterans in America until 1939)
- Financing the production of "Gabby Remembered", a documentary film.

**THE POLISH MILITARY HERITAGE MUSEUM** was founded in 1996 in New York at the headquarters of the Polish Army Veterans Association of America. The aim of the museum is to preserve and display objects related to the history of Polish Arms, with special emphasis on the military effort of the Polish American Community in World Wars I and II. The displayed objects relate mainly to the recruitment of Polish volunteers from the United States and Canada for the Polish Army in France in the years 1917-1919. Historical flags of PAVA Posts, uniforms, posters, paintings and documents are exhibited in the museum. A large part of the exhibits are memorabilia of World War II veterans. Of particular interest is the collection of uniforms, elements of armament, equipment, and decorations.



#### PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS:

- The Military Effort of the Polish American Community during World War I
- Participation of Polish soldiers in battles on the front lines of World War II
- Historical flags of the Polish Army Veterans Association of America.

**ARCHIVES.** The PAVA Archives resources come from the years 1917-2000. The total amounts to more than 160 linear feet of documents. Among the archival collections some of the most valuable are the personal files of more than 20,000 veterans from World War I and World War II who were or are members of PAVA; a list of more than 38,000 volunteers from the United States and Canada for the Polish Army in France during the years 1917-1919; and a rich collection of photographs and audiovisual recordings, mostly narrations by soldiers. The biggest in this section is the collection of recordings by more than 150 veterans who were Polish soldiers during the Second World War. An important group of archival records consists of documents concerning PAVA contacts with American and Polish American authorities and organizations, and prominent politicians. The most valuable in this group include: correspondence and other materials relating to contacts with General J. Haller, I. J. Paderewski and Polish diplomatic posts in the United States and Canada.

**The Ladies Auxiliary Corps** The beginning of this worthy, charitable organization dates back to 1925, when it was officially founded in Detroit, MI at the Third General Convention of the Polish Army Veterans Association of America. One of the most distinguished members of this organization was Agnieszka Wisła, one of 42 women – volunteers from the United States, who as nurses of the Polish White Cross in the years 1918-1921 cared for wounded soldiers in military hospitals in France and Poland. The extent of the work undertaken by the Ladies Auxiliary Corps was and is very broad: care for war invalids, the sick, homeless and unemployed. This auxiliary organization has always been and continues to be a great support for the Polish Army Veterans Association of America. For this reason the Ladies Auxiliary Corps at PAVA deserves universal respect and recognition.

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**119 East 15th Street, New York, NY 10003**

Phone: 212-358-0306  
 e-mail: info@pava-swap.org  
 web page: www.pava-swap.org



**SWAP/PAVA**

is a sponsor organization for the Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union

[www.pava-swap.org](http://www.pava-swap.org)

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\* The information above was prepared by The SWAP/PAVA