Jan Kozietulski

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Baron Jan Leon Hipolit Kozietulski (1781–1821) was a [Polish](#) [noble](#), [military commander](#) and an [officer](#) of the armed forces of the [Duchy of Warsaw](#) during the [Napoleonic Wars](#). He is best remembered as the heroic commander of the Polish cavalry charge at the [Battle of Somosierra](#).

Jan Leon Hipolit Kozietulski was born July 4, 1781 in [Skierniewice](#) in the [Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth](#). A friend of [Wincenty Krasiński](#), Kozietulski joined the Warsaw Honour Guard, with which he took part in the [Battle of Pułtusk](#) and the [Battle of Preussisch Eylau](#). A distinguished cavalryman, in April 1807 he became the commanding officer of the 3rd Squadron of the [Polish 1st Light Cavalry Regiment of the Imperial Guard](#), commanded by Krasiński. In March 1808 Kozietulski reached Spain with his unit, where he took part in the [Peninsular War](#).

During the [Battle of Somosierra](#), Kozietulski was the commander who led the Polish cavalry against the Spanish artillery and infantry. Although not the only commander present during the charge, he was credited with the victory after the battle and in Poland remains the best-known veteran of that campaign. He was also one of 18 Poles to be awarded the [French Legion of Honour](#) after the battle. Following the [Peninsular War](#) Kozietulski remained in the military and distinguished himself in the [Battle of Wagram](#), where he led the Polish cavalry unit against other Polish cavalry units fighting alongside the [Austrians](#). For his merits, in 1811 he became a [baron](#) of the empire.

During [Napoleon's invasion of Russia](#), Kozietulski again distinguished himself as a skilled commander during the [Battle of Maloyaroslavets](#) of October 25, 1812, where he saved the life of [Napoleon](#) himself, by charging between Bonaparte and the assaulting [Cossacks](#). His uniform, pierced with a lance and stained with blood, is preserved to this day in the [Museum of the Polish Army](#) in [Warsaw](#). After recovering from his wounds he returned to active

service and took part in all major battles of Napoleonic 1813 campaign in [Saxony](). He also took part in the [Battle of Nations](). In 1814 he was made the commander of the [French 3rd Scout Regiment]() of the [Imperial Guard]() ([French](): *3e régiment des éclaireurs de la Garde impériale*).

After Napoleon's defeat, Kozietulski returned to the Russian-held [Polish Kingdom](), where he became commander of the [Polish 4th Uhlan Regiment](). He died February 3, 1821 in [Warsaw]().

Awards

In 1811, Kozietulski became a [Baron of the French Empire]().

- [Order of St. Anna]() (Russian Empire)
- [Virtuti Militari]()
- Knight of the [Légion d'honneur](), awarded on December 13, 1809
- [Cross of Valour (Krzyz Walecznych)]()

References

1. **(Polish)** "Szarża pod Somosierrą: osoby dramatu". *Rzeczpospolita* **123** (2006-05-27). May 2006.