



## **CCSU and New England Air Museum to honor Kościuszko Squadron with new exhibit**

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NEW BRITAIN, Conn. - Donors and dignitaries will unveil a permanent exhibit on Thursday, Nov. 11, at 7 p.m. at the New England Air Museum.

Created under a second partnership between Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) and the New England Air Museum (NEAM), the exhibit honors the Kościuszko Squadron, one of the most active Polish squadrons in World War II. The new display replaces its 2007 predecessor.

“This partnership is another example of CCSU’s ongoing commitments to teach history, connect to our communities, and celebrate the diverse cultures we educate and serve,” says CCSU President Zulma Toro.

The CCSU Polish Studies Department spearheaded the project, and its members provided NEAM with expertise, support, and resources from the Connecticut Polish American Archives housed at the Burritt Library at CCSU.

The exhibit at NEAM traces the history of the Kościuszko Squadron, which was created in late 1919 by a group of American volunteers during the Polish-Soviet War. It is named after Polish military leader and engineer Tadeusz Kościuszko who aided the colonies during the American Revolution. The squadron later fought in World War II as part of the United Kingdom’s Royal Air Force.

“During World War II, the squadron further distinguished itself during the Battle of Britain by downing a record number of Nazi planes, earning deserved respect as Defenders of Freedom, the theme of the new exhibit,” says Dr. M.B. B. Biskupski, who holds the Stanislaus A. Blejwas Endowed Chair in Polish Studies at CCSU.

Guests will have time to tour the new exhibit, which features an interactive kiosk that details the pilots’ extraordinary bravery and flying skills, the aircraft they flew, personal histories, and more. Fighter plane models, pilot uniforms and journals, aircraft nose art, a restored Merlin engine, and soundtracks from two recent movies about the squadron complement the colorful exhibit panels. Kiosk information is provided in English and Polish.

In addition to President Toro and Dr. Biskupski, other speakers on Nov. 11 will include Adrian Kubicki, consul general of the Republic of Poland; 61<sup>st</sup> District State Representative Tami Zawistowski; Marek

Skulimowski, president of the Kościuszko Foundation; keynote speaker Dr. James Pula of Purdue University North Central (retired); and Maya Wieckowska, an award-winning student essayist. Governor Ned Lamont and Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz also have been invited to attend.

“We are honored by the attendance of our distinguished speakers. We are grateful to our partners at CCSU and members of the Polish community who so generously donated to make this exhibit possible.” says NEAM Executive Director Stephanie Abrams.

Exhibit leaders invite donations which may be made payable to the CCSU Foundation, P.O. Box 612, New Britain, CT 06050 and marked “For the Kościuszko Squadron.” Or, click [this link](#) to the exhibit’s CCSU Foundation online giving page.