Unveils Portrait of a Soldier Memorial Exhibit at Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

SPRINGFIELD – May 27, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn today joined Gold Star families to honor the sacrifices that Illinois servicemembers have made in the global war against terrorism since Sept. 11, 2001. Governor Quinn unveiled the Portrait of a Soldier Memorial exhibit today at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library in Springfield.

“As we approach Memorial Day, we must never forget the contributions our servicemembers have made around the world to ensure America remains strong and free,” said Governor Quinn. “We honor their sacrifices and stand with our Gold Star Families to make sure we keep the memories of their loved ones alive.”

The Portrait of a Soldier Memorial exhibit, which has been viewed by thousands of people throughout Illinois, is a series of hand-drawn portraits of more than 250 Illinois men and women who have died in service to our country since Sept. 11, 2001.

Artist Cameron Schilling of Mattoon drew the first portrait of a soldier in August 2004, after Army Spc. Charles Neeley, also of Mattoon, was killed in Iraq. Schilling presented the portrait to Spc. Neely’s parents to convey his sympathy for their loss. In Oct. 2005, while a student at Eastern Illinois University, Schilling decided to draw a portrait of every Illinois servicemember who has fallen during the Global War on Terror.

Governor Quinn also encouraged Illinois residents to view the exhibit at Daley Plaza or O’Hare Airport in Chicago, where it will be on display through next week, recognizing the servicemen and servicewomen who have lost their lives fighting for freedom and democracy overseas.

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