

Polish President and Governor Quinn Visit Soldiers at Marseilles Training Center

Written by Leslie Wertheimer
Wednesday, 23 May 2012 07:37

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Governor and Maj. Gen. Enyart receive Commander's Cross award from President Bronislaw Komorowski

MARSEILLES— May 20, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn and Major General William Enyart of the Illinois Army National Guard (ILARNG) welcomed President of Poland Bronislaw Komorowski today at the Marseilles Training Center, where they visited with ILARNG soldiers and Polish officers in training. Governor Quinn and Maj. Gen. Enyart, of Belleville, Adjutant General for the ILARNG, were presented with the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, which is bestowed upon foreigners for distinguished contribution to international cooperation with Poland. Thirteen of the soldiers were also presented with the cross.

"We welcome President Komorowski to Illinois and thank him for the continued economic and military partnership with our state and the Illinois Army National Guard," Governor Quinn said. "This visit is a show of solidarity and support for our troops, and a testament to the great friendship that we have with Poland. I am honored to accept the Commander's Cross with Illinois' outstanding servicemembers."

In addition to maintaining a strong military partnership with Poland, Illinois exports to the

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country totaled nearly \$200 million in 2011, an 11% percent increase over 2010. Overall, Illinois ranks 5th among U.S. state in exports to Poland. Approximately 1 million Polish-Americans live in the Chicago-Area, the largest gathering of people of Polish Heritage outside of Warsaw.

The visit by Polish dignitaries coincides with the NATO Summit, taking place in Chicago May 20-21. In the past day, Governor Quinn also met with world leaders including the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Prime Minister of Belgium, Foreign Minister of Greece, President of Turkey, Prime Minister of Italy and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to strengthen economic partnerships and increase trade opportunities for Illinois.

“It was important for President Komorowski to see what training happens here in Illinois before his Soldiers deploy to a combat zone with Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers,” said Enyart. “We truly value the great relationships we have developed with Poland since 1993 and today’s visit only enhanced those relationships.”

The Soldiers honored with the Commander’s Cross included: Brig. Gen. Johnny Miller of Tamms, Col. Albert Cox of Newark, Lt. Col. Drew Dukett of Roodhouse, Lt. Col. Joseph Schweickert of Peoria, Maj. Eric Davis of Mount Pulaski, Maj. Stanley Manes of Champaign, Capt. Andrew Adamczyk of Springfield, Capt. Douglas Coop of Jacksonville,, Master Sgt. Richard Schap of Sycamore, Master Sgt. Terry Martin of Dunlap, Master Sgt. David Ray of Millstadt, Sgt. 1st Class Ryzano Perez of Springfield, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Markham of Glenarm.

Komorowski and other Polish dignitaries witnessed various training including firearms and vehicle rollover simulations, as well as assembling and disassembling of military equipment. ILARNG Soldiers have co-deployed with every Polish rotation to Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003. Prior to deployment, Polish Soldiers travel to Illinois to conduct training at MTC. Governor Quinn visited Afghanistan on a mission led by Polish troops and supported by the ILARNG in 2009. As governor, he serves as the commander-in-chief of the ILARNG.

The Illinois National Guard State Partnership Program with Poland is one of the oldest and largest of all the state partnerships in the nation. Poland has been a state partner with the Illinois National Guard since 1993. It was originally created to assist Poland with military transformation and acceptance into NATO.

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