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The Great Independence Defilade

- Thank you for your daily dedication and commitment. Thank you for the possibility to hear from the highest NATO commanders about your professionalism. The soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces you are the pride of the Polish nation. You are the defenders of Polish freedom and you are also the ones who guard our security - said Mariusz Błaszczak, the Minister of National Defense during the main celebrations on the occasion of the Polish Armed Forces Day.



On 15 August, the Great Independence Defilade took place in Warsaw and it was the highlight of the celebrations. The ceremony was attended by the President of the Republic of Poland and the Head of the Armed Forces Andrzej Duda, representatives of the Ministry of National Defense and the commanding staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland and representatives of state authorities.

For the first time on the „Wisłostrada” – main street along the Vistula river in Warsaw over 2 thousand participants including soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces and allied countries, reconstruction groups and scouts marched and over 100 aircraft flew ion the flypast during defilade. The modern and historical military equipment was shown in the parade.

- We are meeting today at the Great Independence Defilade in the special year, in the centennial of Poland regaining its independence. 98 years ago, the Polish Army showed extraordinary heroism, valor and sacrifice. The Polish Army has astounded the world. The Battle of Warsaw has gone down in history as one of the battles that has saved the world. Today we are active in NATO. Today, our task is to ensure the security of our homeland. And today we also need this battle spirit from 1920. We also need a strategy like the one of Marshal Józef Piłsudski. Today, modern equipment is needed and unwavering solidarity is needed within the North Atlantic Alliance. These are our common tasks. My task, as the minister of national defense, is to make the Polish Army well-trained, armed and efficiently commanded - the head of the National Defense Ministry said during the speech.

During the ceremony, the words of gratitude for the service to the soldiers were also directed by President Andrzej Duda - Thank you for your service, thank you for your efforts, for the great responsibility you take for yourself, for the security of our homeland, for our security. (...) On the Polish

Armed Forces Day, I wish you to come home safely from every day of your service, from any of your missions - said the president.

*** PHOTO GALLERY - 15 AUGUST - POLISH ARMED FORCES DAY ***

This year, during the central celebration of the Polish Armed Forces Day, the parade was divided into three main parts: marching troops, military vehicles and historical reconstruction groups.

The parade started with the march of the 16 Polish Armed Forces and military universities representative units with their flagship posts and 60 flagships of the units of the Polish Armed Forces. They were followed by American, British, Romanian and Croatian soldiers from the NATO Battalion Battle Group stationed in Orzysz and by more allied countries flagships.

They were followed by the flagship posts of pro-defense organizations, uniformed classes, the Cavalry Squadron of the Polish Army.

The vehicle parade was composed by over 200 wheeled and tracked vehicles, including Rosomak armored personnel carriers, Rak mortars, Krab howitzers, humvee cars, Stryker transporters and Abrams, Twardy and Leopard tanks, as well as Kroton overhead mining transporters, assault ramps and more.

In historical parade participated over 900 reconstructors from various eras. About 650 marching reconstructors and about 260 horse-riding in five marching columns presented: early Middle Ages, Middle Ages, XVII century, XIX century - period of national uprisings and the 20th century.

The air parade with the units of the Air Force and of the Land Forces Aviation, as well as the aircraft of our allies – including US F-22 Raptor aircraft. Above Warsaw, a flight along the Vistula as part of made over 100 aircraft and helicopters. During the air parade it was possible to see in the low flypast over the Vistula river helicopters: SW-4 Puszczyc, Mi-2, W-3 Mi-14, Mi-8, Mi-17, Mi-24 and aircraft: TS-11 Iskra, PZL-130 Orlik, M-28 Bryza, An-28 , C-295M, C-130, M-346, F-16, G550 and B737.



As part of the celebration of the Polish Armed Forces Day, Mariusz Błaszczak, the Minister of National Defense together with the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda, laid flowers in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the monument to Marshal Józef Piłsudski.