



For the first time in history Multinational Corps Northeast and 12th Mechanized Division from Szczecin celebrated the Polish Armed Forces' Day together. The ceremony took place on 14th August 2008 at the Baltic Barracks.

Celebrating Polish Armed Forces' Day

15th August, celebrated as the Polish Armed Forces' Day, is a date marked in each soldier's calendar. The event commemorates the battle known as the "miracle on the Vistula River", a battle, which decided upon Poland's independence in 1920.

It was the first time in history that soldiers from the Multinational Corps Northeast and 12th Mechanized Division stood shoulder to shoulder on this special day. Commander MNC NE Zdzisław Goral, also on behalf of acting Commander of the 12th Mechanized Division Brigadier General Andrzej Gwadera, welcomed the soldiers, civilian personnel of the MNC NE and honourable guests. Among them there were members of the Parliament, Mr Arkadiusz Litwiński and Sławomir Preiss, Vice Governor of Westpomeranian Province Mr Andrzej Chmielewski, Marshall of Westpomeranian Province Representative Mr Wojciech Drożdż, Chairman of Westpomeranian Council Mr Michał Łuczak, Chairman of City Council Mr Bazyl Baran, Secretary of the City of Szczecin Mr Ryszard Słoka as well as representatives of the police, fire

department, customs office and many others.

The ceremony began with music played by the Szczecin Garrison Military Band creating solemn atmosphere. All soldiers were giving a salute when the Polish anthem was played. Polish Armed Forces' Day as the most important day for soldiers is the best opportunity to be awarded with medals. The soldiers of MNC NE and 12th Mechanized Division were given Medals "Armed Forces Serving for the Homeland" and "Merits for Country Defence". It was extraordinary that Capt. Egidijus Timinskas (LVA A) was awarded "Polish Armed Forces' Medal", which is given only to foreigners.

The ceremony was accompanied with static display of military vehicles the 12th Mechanized Division is equipped with. Additionally, there were three exhibitions prepared for the participants. One of them focused on the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast presenting a collection of photos from the ISAF deployment to Afghanistan, recent training and exercises as well as social life of the Headquarters. The second exhibition presented the art of the Middle East from the collection of Jerzy Gawłowicz. The third one presented phaleristics of the Szczecin Garrison and the 12th Mechanized Division from the collection of Mirosław Borowski.

When the official part came to an end, a barbeque for MNC NE members from all countries, soldiers from the 12th Mechanized Division and honourable guests was organised. In a friendly atmosphere, with fine food and drinks, all participants spent a nice time together on chatting and enjoying one of last weeks of this year's summer.

"Miracle on the Vistula River"

In 1920 when the Red Army troops were approaching Warsaw while weakened Polish units were withdrawing from Kiev westwards, it seemed that only a miracle could save Poland from Bolshevik aggression. At that time, the Commander in Chief of the Polish Army, Marshal Józef Piłsudski decided to conduct a surprising and dangerous counter offensive. He attacked Bolshevik unprotected flank near Warsaw and defeated their forces. That was a turning point of the Polish-Soviet war. The Polish forces achieved decisive victory at the Battle of Warsaw. Several months later similar victory on the Niemen River ended the War and the Peace of Riga was signed on March 18, 1921.

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