

# POLSKA ZBROJNA

DAILY

The first issue of "Polska Zbrojna" came out on October 5, 1921. The daily, as it was the formula of the magazine then, was addressed to soldiers. It informed about events important to them, described military reality and formed opinions. "Polska Zbrojna" had special meaning to Marshal Józef Piłsudski. Today, it is published as a monthly and still serves the army, promotes our armed forces and writes on their

activities, also for civilian readers. "Polska Zbrojna" is celebrating its 95th anniversary this year as the oldest Polish magazine. This special edition dedicated to World Youth Day contains information on initiatives, performances and exhibitions organized for pilgrims, which are worth visiting and seeing and which refer to the tradition and history of Polish arms.

PolskaZbrojna

World Youth Day, Kraków, July 26–31, 2016



The military banner is the most precious relic for a soldier.

Photo: Michał Niwičz

## Dear Readers, Dear Pilgrims!

I am extremely pleased that as the Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Poland I have an opportunity to address you – the participants of World Youth Day. You have gathered here, in Brzegi near Kraków, on the land which is close to every Pole. Kraków was one of the first capitals of the Polish state, which is celebrating the 1050th anniversary of its baptism this year. Not far from here, in Wadowice, the most outstanding Pole known to all people – Pope Saint John Paul II, was born.

Today, on the occasion of World Youth Day, I am recalling Saint John Paul II, as his life was inseparably linked to the Polish Army. His father was one of the Poles who joined the reborn Polish Army after Poland regained independence in 1918, and reached the rank of captain. The Pope himself always treated the Army and the uniform of a Polish Soldier with respect and esteem.

For every soldier, it is the highest distinction and honor to serve the Homeland. However, it also means being ready for sacrifice, including the ultimate sacrifice of their own life. A testimony to such readiness is an example of priest Ignacy Skorupka, who suffered a heroic death near Ossów in 1920, when he was charging together with soldiers at the Bolsheviks in the Battle of Warsaw. But this readiness has also been proven in more recent times by all those who, until 1963, engaged militarily against the communist occupation, and those who in recent years have served abroad and given their lives in the struggle for peace and security of the weaker.

The military banner is the most precious relic for a soldier. It contains the words "God," "Honor" and "Homeland," which confirm how important faith was and is for people wearing uniforms. Religion helps to survive the most difficult moments and overcome fear and anxiety. It is faith which allows to make the greatest sacrifice

and undertake heroic deeds. There is a reason why most of the highest military decorations are cross-shaped.

Dear Pilgrims,

I am glad that I can address you, young people, full of enthusiasm and love for God. You are the future of the world. Thanks to your religious upbringing and love for the Homeland, you guarantee that the world around us can be better. Your attitude brings hope that war and terror can pass into oblivion.

On the other hand, history shows that it is young people like you, gathered here in Brzegi, who can stand up to fight for the most important objectives when such need arises in the crucial moments of history. This is how young Poles behaved on the memorable days of August and September 1944, when they fought an unequal battle to defend Warsaw from Germans. The Warsaw Uprising is a symbol of sacrifice of young people – the flower of the Polish society – defending the Homeland and the free world.

Fortunately, today there is no need to fight for freedom with weapons in hand. However, people must do everything to make peace a paramount value. Strong faith and conviction that evil may be defeated with good come very helpful here. That is how you, the participants of World Youth Day, live.

I would like to thank you sincerely for that, joining you in prayer for a free and safe world.

*Antoni Macierewicz  
Minister of National Defense of  
the Republic of Poland*



## Concern for the Power of Spirit

Warsaw, July 14, 2016

"There are only two powers in the world, the sword and the spirit. In the long run the sword is always beaten by the spirit" (Napoleon Bonaparte). The power of the sword is determined by military potential and the strength of the army, its equipment, training and professionalism of commanders and soldiers. It is in prayer that a man develops the power of spirit, realizing that when fighting evil, he is not alone. God is on his side and helps "overcome evil with good." Taking part in the Eucharist also strengthens the human spirit, so that it could defend the highest values and make the greatest sacrifice. Finally, human history is shaped by the power of spirit. The Decalogue and the commandment of love of God and neighbor are a guidance on how to change oneself and the world. Holy Father Francis keeps underlining that in many dimensions of his ministry.

World Youth Day will gather young people from 187 countries around the world. Among them there will be Polish soldiers and representatives of a dozen or so armies of NATO. For people wearing a military uniform, meeting with Pope Francis in the royal city of Kraków will be a unique opportunity to strengthen the power of spirit, to better serve peace and security.

In the Holy Bible we read: "He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Is 2:4). Although keeping peace should be a concern of all of us, in particular those who serve in the armed forces of their countries, we must remember that God is a teacher, an arbitrator, a righteous judge, and a peacemaker.

In this particular time, we gratefully recall St. John Paul II, the initiator of World Youth Day. During his pilgrimage to Poland in June 1987, in one of his speeches he referred to Westerplatte – the place of heroic resistance of Polish soldiers who fought in World War II. The theme of World Youth Day 2016 in Kraków is: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt 5:7). May these words from the Gospel according to St. Matthew be our guide and source of hope. Let us experience this special time, when the youth from the whole world meet with Christ and Pope Francis, with an open and joyful heart. May God's blessing accompany you on your life journey.

*Józef Guzdek  
Field Bishop of the Polish Army*

# The Most Important Battle in History

**On September 12, 1683, the Muslim plans to conquer Central Europe were ruined.**



A fragment of the painting "Jan III Sobieski at Vienna" by Jan Matejko

Under the walls of Vienna, besieged by soldiers of the Ottoman Empire, a coalition of Christian forces (Polish, Austrian and German – in total about 65,000 troops) defeated the much more numerous enemy, whose strength at the beginning of the war reached 285,631 people; however, in the battle this number was definitely smaller, maybe even by half.

The Battle of Vienna was one of the most important in the world history. It stopped the Turkish pressure on Europe. From then on, the Ottoman Empire began to retreat and lose lands

seized from Christians in past centuries, to finally fall in the twentieth century.

Although the entire allied army contributed to the victory over Turks, the Polish troops played a special part in it. First, the commander-in-chief was the Polish King Jan III Sobieski. Second, it was the Polish Winged Hussars who led the charge of Christian soldiers which broke the Muslim lines.

Hussars were the last European knights. They wore armor with skins of lions, tigers, bears or wolves thrown on top and were armed with swords, sabers, broadswords and firearms, sometimes

also with blunt weapons and bows. However, their most important weapons were very long lances. They were so long that before adversaries reached the hussars with their weapons, lances had knocked them to the ground or pierced straight through. Sometimes one hit could pierce several enemies at a time.

However, not murderous lances became a symbol of hussars, but wings that hussar squires (that is privates) attached to their backs. They served, among others, to shy enemy horses.

The hussars were charging in a tight formation, close to one another. They were riding so close that their feet and knees touched. When such a "steel wall" with long lances, waving pennants, skins and wings on their backs began to gallop, no one was able to stand in their way. Only obstacles could stop the charge. To eliminate such risk, prior to the general charge, Jan III Sobieski sent a single hussar banner, a small unit numbering slightly over 100 horses, whose task was to check whether the site was suitable for cavalry. That seemingly suicidal mission (the knights broke in the middle of the enemy formation, where the Turkish commander-in-chief was standing) ended successfully. Despite the fact that the hussars were fighting enveloped by the enemy and suffered heavy losses, they came back to the forming-up place and informed the king that the charge may be



A hauberk and a basinet seized at Vienna in 1683 (Turkey, 17th c.). Photo: Votive Art Collection at the Jasna Góra Monastery

conducted in the area. In recognition of their commitment, Sobieski himself led that unit in the general charge. The Christian army under the Polish king swooped down on the Muslims and won!

"God and our Lord, forever blessed, gave such victory and fame to our nation as had never been heard of before in past centuries," this is how Jan III Sobieski began a letter to his wife after the victorious battle.

"It was an enormous defeat and failure [...], the most disastrous one to have taken place since the foundation of the Ottoman statehood," confirmed Sobieski's words an Ottoman historian Silahdar Findiklili Mehmed Agha. It has rarely happened in history that the opponents were so unanimous in assessing the significance of a battle. The Battle of Vienna changed the world history, and its commentators at the time were aware of that fact.

Radosław Sikora, PhD, a historian specializing in Polish Hussars and Old Polish military affairs. An author of several books and a number of articles on these subjects.

Historical spectacles connected with the legendary Polish Hussars will be shown from July 27–29, 2016, at the welcoming Horse Riding Club at Kobierzyńska 175 in Kraków. Visitors can see Hussar shows, the camp of King Jan III Sobieski, period clothing, and listen to stories and tales about the army, weapons, the history of the Hussars, the most important battles and military adventures. There will also be educational stands, open from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, such as: "Field Printing Presses of Polish Kings," "Polonia Militaria," "Military Field Smithy."

## On a Military Note

**The Representative Artistic Ensemble of the Polish Armed Forces enjoys great popularity and recognition both in Poland and abroad.**

The Ensemble is heir to almost one hundred years of tradition of theater and performing groups organized at Polish Soldier Houses in the period of the Second Republic of Poland, popularizing national traditions and glory of Polish arms in the military and civilian environment. It fulfills the wish of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, who envisioned the creation of a permanent military stage where "mainly optimistic and lighthearted plays should be performed, giving people faith and hope."

The Ensemble's main area of artistic activity is participating in national, military and church festivities connected with celebrating historical anniversaries and patriotic events. The repertoire of the Ensemble includes about 20 spectacles and historical programs. The Ensemble is made up of soloists, a choir, a ballet group, a symphonic orchestra and a concert orchestra. Currently, it employs over 200 people: singers, musicians and dancers, choir artists, as well as administration and technical personnel.

The Representative Artistic Ensemble of the Polish Armed Forces enjoys great popularity and recognition both in Poland and abroad. It has been on over 200 tours in many countries, including Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, South Korea, China, the USA and Canada. It also performed for Pope John Paul II during a special audience in 1994. It has given over 60,000 concerts in Poland.

On multiple occasions, the Ensemble has recorded for the Polish Television, Polish record companies and movies. Polish patriotic and religious songs have been released on 50 CDs, which include, among others, "Hymny i pieśni polskie" (Polish Hymns and Songs), "Pieśni staropolskie i rycerskie" (Old Polish and Knight Songs), "Najpiękniejsze dla Polaka" (Most Beautiful for a Pole), "Boże, coś Polskę..." (God Save Poland), "Żołnierskie kolędowanie" (Military Carol-



Artists of the Representative Ensemble during a photo session in Dobrzyca.  
Photo: Ireneusz Sobieszczyk

ing), "Solidarni" (Unified), "Biel z czerwienią" (White and Red), "Jak białe orły" (Like White Eagles).

Since 2006, the Representative Artistic Ensemble of the Polish Armed Forces has been run by Adam Martin, composer, animator and manager of culture (artistic name Adam Hetman).

During a 90-minute-long concert (divided into two parts) that will take place

on July 28, 2016 at 1 p.m., on the main stage at the Old Town Market Square in Kraków, the Ensemble will perform a patriotic-religious program, including songs such as: Marsz I Brygady (the March of the First Brigade), "Serce w plecaku" (Heart in a Backpack), songs from the time of the Warsaw Uprising, "Barka" (Barge), "Abba, Ojcze" (Abba, Father), and "Jak białe orły" (Like White Eagles). AM

# Military Service is a Dictate of Heart

**On June 2, 1991, Pope John Paul II met with the Polish Army at the airport in Kozalin. It was his first meeting with soldiers and marked symbolic changes that were taking place in Poland.**

Mister President, Minister of National Defense, Dear Soldiers, Non Commissioned Officers, Officers, Generals, Dear Field Bishop of the Polish Army.

All those "who are devoted to their homeland, who serve in the army, may regard themselves as servants to safety and freedom of nations."

For the first time I have an opportunity – during a visit to my Homeland – to address soldiers at an official meeting. This evokes many memories, reflections, and feelings that reach deep into the past – my personal history and the history of my nation, the history of Poland.

[...] the words: "from the Italian land to Poland" come back to my memory. As you can see, these words come true also in case of the pope when it comes to a meeting with the military.

It is hard not to think about the past. History shows that Poles have always been a knightly nation. They have not sought war, on the whole they have not waged invasive wars; however, they could fight heroically to defend threatened freedom and independence. The victories of the Polish arms mark particular stages of our history, from the Piast era, through Grunwald, up to Vienna in 1683. The knightly, military tradition was passed to the insurgents during the partitions. This tradition revived with new strength at the beginning of our century. Independence of the Republic of Poland

was won with weapons in hand, and this military epic ended with the victorious Battle of Warsaw on August 15, 1920, which had a crucial meaning not only for Poland, but also for Europe. In this regard, it is compared to the Vienna victory, and earlier – in the times of the Piast dynasty – to the Battle of Legnica in the 13th century, when the flood of Tatars towards Europe from Asia was stopped. [...]

Military service is not only a job or a duty. It must also be an inner dictate of conscience, a dictate of heart.

Throughout the ages, military traditions of Poles have tied military service with love for the Homeland. The events of 1989, the inauguration of the Third Republic of Poland means here "a new beginning" for the entire nation. However, as in so many other areas, also here this "new beginning" still has to mature and gain strength in our attitudes, in the collective consciousness. [...]

Generals, Officers, Non Commissioned Officers, Soldiers, you are successors of those soldiers. May then love for the Homeland, sense of justice, concern for safety and freedom of Poland drive also your military service.

*Speech by John Paul II delivered during the meeting with the Polish Army*

The word gorget has two meanings in Polish. First, it is a tin, crescent-shaped sign, usually carrying an image of an eagle, worn below the neck in the old-time Polish Army, from the 18th century up to the time of the November Uprising, exclusively by officers on duty (in infantry, artillery, engineering forces). Second, it is a tin sign in the shape of a triangular shield, with an image of Holy Mary, worn on the chest by Polish nobility, and later also by soldiers, as an expression of faith.

The officer sign called a gorget appeared in the European military forces at the end of the 17th century. After abandoning armor, officers started wearing a large collar instead, to protect the neck (the name comes from the French gorge, meaning throat). The collar later evolved into a smaller gorget, which with time began to resemble a crescent moon, worn on top of a uniform below the neck (thus the semicircular shape of the upper side facing the neck). The arms or the cypher of the reigning monarch was placed in the middle of a gorget. The decorations were gilded to stand out against the background of polished steel or silver, in order to send a clear message in whose service the soldier was employed. In the 18th-century Poland, under the Saxon kings, the heraldic decoration on gorgets was the same as the one put on military flags. It was a cartouche with Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth arms and a cartouche with Saxon-electoral arms, with a royal crown above and the king's cypher below. Under the reign of Stanisław August, there was one cartouche with the White Eagle and one with the Lithuanian horseman, and below them, in the middle, there was the royal cypher – SAR.

Gorgets ceased to be worn in the time of reforms introduced by the Great Sejm,

## Polish Gorgets

**The officer sign called a gorget appeared in the European military forces at the end of the 17th century.**



*Polish patriotic gorgets from the period of the reborn Polish Republic, the 20th century, carrying the image of Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn with the White Eagle in the background, and the image of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa enclosed by wings of the White Eagle, usually hung in Polish houses, and after the Second World War also worn by soldiers of the Independence Underground*

when western-style infantry uniforms were replaced in 1789 by national (in style and color) uniforms.

Gorgets, as an indication that officers were on duty, returned to the Army of the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807. They were small, gilded, in the shape of a shallow crescent, with the White Eagle in the middle. Gorgets similar to those used in the Duchy of Warsaw infantry, but silver-plated for lower level, and golden-plated for higher level officers, with a silver Eagle, were kept in the Kingdom of Poland (1815–1830). Lat-

er, in the irregular units of the November Uprising of 1831, gorgets were used only sporadically.

An unusual phenomenon are Polish devotional gorgets, which became popular in the Bar Confederation period (1768–1772). They were used by Confederates fighting on horseback. Initially, the gorgets were large, and instead of royal arms they carried painted images of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa on one side and the crucified Christ on the other. They became the symbol the Confederates' other type of service, undertaken

## Exhibitions

The exhibition entitled "Saint John Paul II and the Polish Army" will be located at the Main Square, near the statue of Adam Mickiewicz. The exposition presents the teaching of Saint John Paul II, mainly regarding military ethics, patriotism, meaning of military priesthood and military service. It also presents military traditions of Karol Wojtyła's family and the most important events in the 27-year-long pontificate of the Polish Pope, including his meetings with the soldiers of the Polish Army during the pilgrimages to his Homeland.

\* \* \*

At the Main Square, near the statue of Adam Mickiewicz and the exhibition devoted to Saint John Paul II, there will also be an exhibition entitled "Famous Poles." It will tell stories of the most distinguished daughters and sons of our nation, whose achievements in the field of literature, fine arts, music, science, politics, and many others, are a source of great pride for our country.

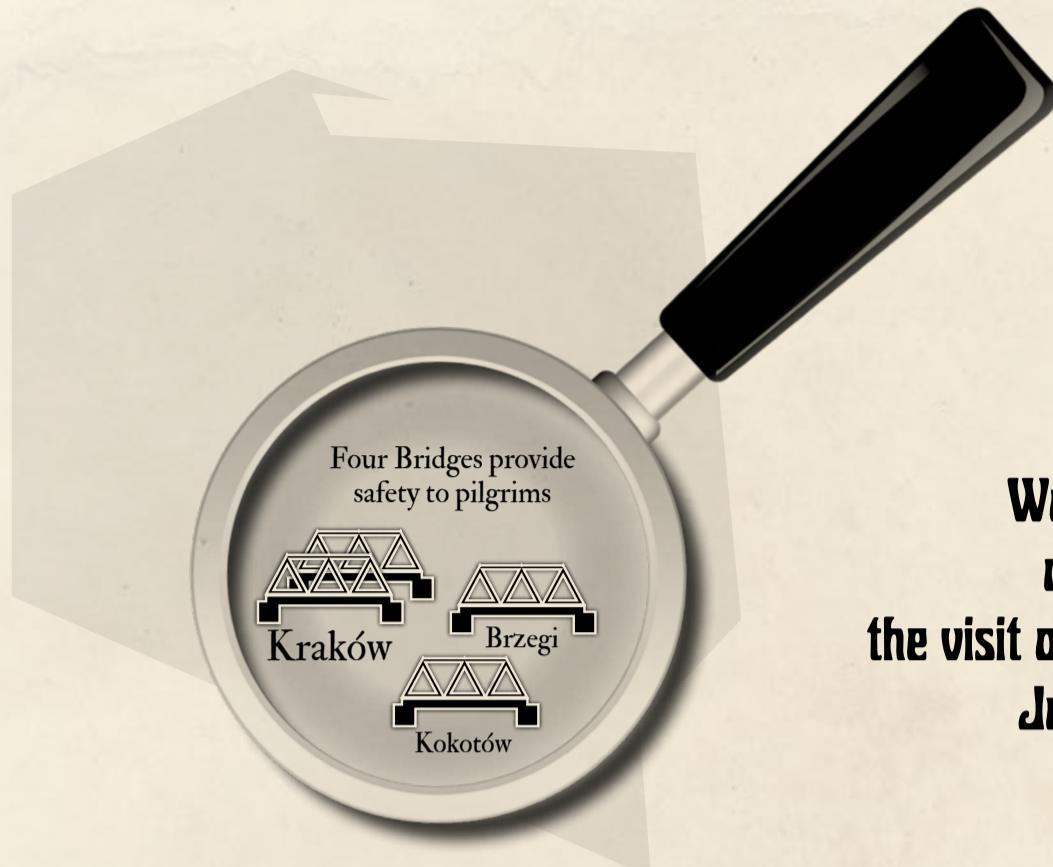
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At the military campus, we will show how to bake bread – food that is symbolic to our culture. We will also demonstrate military equipment which helps to protect life and health – there will be a medical evacuation vehicle, a tent with medical equipment, combat engineering equipment. Thus, we will show very important, although usually little seen aspects of the army's functioning, which have grown from the Christian imperative of providing help and saving human life. The Polish Army invites you to visit the Kraków Main Square from July 27–31, 2016.

in defense of faith and freedom, in line with the Confederation's motto: "Jesus, Mary." The gorgets, hung on the wall together with the saber after returning home, bore witness to the fight – also for Polish independence, since the image of the Mother of God showed the Queen of the Polish Crown. The message conveyed by the gorgets became the reason for their popularity during the revival of the Polish State in the 20th century. However, they were smaller, single-sided, metal casted, hung on a chain, and carried the image of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa or Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn surrounded by panoplies of national flags and weapons, and the supplication: POD TWOJĄ OBRONĘ (UNDER YOUR PROTECTION). In the period of the Second Polish Republic gorgets were a memento of the service in the Polish army and were often additionally decorated with military badges. Small gorgets were given as christening gifts, and such were also worn on uniforms by the soldiers of the Independence Underground after the Second World War, who stood up against yet another enslavement of Poland. Therefore, when we now hang a gorget with the image of the Mother of God in baby strollers or in our cars, we continue the Polish tradition of relying on the "Holy Virgin who shelters our bright Częstochowa and shines in the Gate of Dawn."

Tadeusz Jeziorkowski is a member of the Heraldic Commission at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration.

On the Wawel Hill, at the viewing terrace, there will be an exhibition entitled "Gorget – the Religious Shield of the Polish Soldier."



**World Youth Day  
connected with  
the visit of Pope Francis  
July 26–31, 2016  
Kraków**

## Polish Army at WYD

760	360	100	200
military police officers	soldiers	soldiers	soldiers
ensure security	control vehicle and pedestrian traffic	have helped to build the facilities	have organized ten food distribution points
5,000	7,500	1,500	10
military tents	camp beds	folding beds	water cisterns

## Respect for the Flag

Men of the military take part in WYD under the motto "God Is My Flag". It represents both the military duty to have the highest respect for the flag, and the Christian obligation to go through life complying with the guidelines of Christianity and bear witness to faith in every situation. After the end of "Days in Dioceses," soldiers will relocate to Kraków and build a military camp for World Youth Day.

## Safe with the Military

In order to provide the participants of World Youth Day with appropriate level of security, the Minister of National Defense has appointed a ministerial team responsible for the participation of the Ministry of National Defense within the framework of supporting activities of national entities in charge of ensuring security during WYD 2016. The head of the team is Brigadier General Andrzej Tuz from the Operational Command of the Branches of the Polish Armed Forces.

## Guests from NATO

About 400 officer cadets and troops from several countries will be present at the ceremony and church service with the participation of Pope Francis. They include soldiers from Australia, Austria, France, Ireland, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, the USA and Italy. Also, about 300 Polish soldiers take part in World Youth Day. Military pilgrims are guests of the Field Ordinariate

of the Polish Army. Their itinerary includes visiting, among other things, the Field Cathedral of the Polish Army, the Polish Army Museum, the Warsaw Uprising Museum and the Katyń Museum, the Old Town, the Royal Castle and Wilanów (all in Warsaw), as well as trips to Wadowice, the Jasna Góra Monastery and Oświęcim.

You can find more information on current issues at:

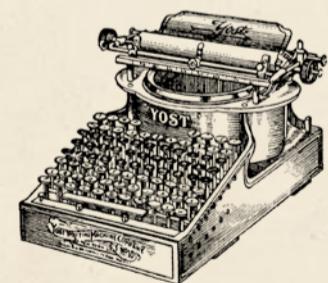
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