

48 NEW MILITARY BANNERS

**text: Marta Topinska, Warsaw University Library;
consultants and exhibition: Lieutenant-Colonel Tadeusz Krzastek, Major dr Dariusz
Radziwillowicz, Ministry of National Defense, Department of Social Relations**

The regaining of state sovereignty by Poland in 1989 marked the beginning of a process of restoring centuries old battle traditions, symbols and emblems in the Polish armed forces. At the Ministry of National Defense the Unit for the Popularization of the Armed Traditions was established. As a result of research, the history of more than two hundred Polish armed forces units was recorded. The need also arose to design new military banners. Their legal framework is defined by an act of February 19, 1993 on Polish armed forces emblems published in the official gazette no 34 of April 30, 1993. Other legal documents also made it possible to design a set of 86 Polished armed forces banners. These included Order No 1 of January 2, 1991 on the hereditament and the cultivation of the armed traditions, published in the defense ministry gazette and the Defense Ministry Guidelines of October 13 1993 on procedures guiding military authorities in the founding of banners for military units. Banners presented in the 1993 – 1995 period, some of which are shown at the exhibition represent Polish units of all types of armed forces and military academies. They were funded by Polish society.

In compliance with the precited act of 1993 the banners are not only the signs of individual military units of Polish armed forces. They are also the symbols of military glory and tradition as well as loyalty, honor and valor of their soldiers. The banner of a military unit consists of a piece of cloth, head, flag-staff and sash. The rich ideological background of Polish banners finds expression in the variety of iconographic motifs.

In compliance with the 1993 law, the cloth used to make banners is a square, white piece of fabric adorned on both sides with a cavalry cross made of a red fabric. The decorative motifs are embroidered in gold and silver. The borders of the banner, with the exception of the side attached to the staff have gold fringes. On the main side of the banner, in the middle of the cavalry cross there is an image of the white eagle surrounded by laurel branches. In the white corners of the banner, within laurel wreaths the unit's number or the initials of the unit's name is placed. It is repeated four times. On the other side of the banner in the middle of cavalry cross there is an inscription GOD HONOR FATHERLAND surrounded by laurel branches.

In the white corners of the banner, there are coats of arms of provinces and towns and symbols linked with the history of the military unit together with emblems and initials of the founder of the banner.

Banners are usually designed by commissioned officers serving in particular units in consultation with officers from the Unit for the Popularization of Traditions of the Polish Armor at the Polish defense ministry.

The banner together with the act of foundation is presented to the military unit by the Polish President. The Defense Minister, a representative of the president or the Defense Minister are also authorized to carry out the presentation on the President's behalf.

Banner's Designs on Exhibition

1. 8th Command Battalion – banner scheme
2. Officer's High School Air Force – banner scheme
3. Antiaircraft Training Centre – banner scheme
4. Military Academy of Technology – banner scheme
5. 11th Repair Battalion – banner scheme
6. 11th Mechanized Brigade – banner scheme
7. 11th Artillery Regiment – banner scheme
8. Radiolocation Interference Regiment – banner scheme
9. 20th Anti Armored Artillery Regiment – banner scheme
10. 5th Artillery Brigade – banner scheme
11. Military Medical Academy – banner scheme

12. 4th Radiotechnical Battalion – banner scheme
13. 3rd Air Fighter “Poznan” Regiment – banner scheme
14. 11th Command Battalion – banner scheme
15. 15th Antiaircraft Regiment – banner scheme
16. 3rd Missile Regiment – banner scheme
17. Dive Training Center – banner scheme
18. Tadeusz Kosciuszko’s Officer High School – banner scheme
19. 11th Combat Engineer Battalion – banner scheme
20. 5th Armored “Skorpion” Brigade – banner scheme
21. 6th Independent Topographical Unit – banner scheme