HEIDELBERG, Germany -- Two leaders from the Europe Regional Medical Command were awarded the Polish Armed Forces Medal at a ceremony here, Dec. 15.

On behalf of the Polish Minister of Defense, Col. Stefan Walowski, the Polish senior national representative for Ramstien, presented Polish Armed Forces Medals (Silver) to Col. John M. Cho, the 30th Medical Command commander, and Lt. Col. Rachele Smith, the Mannheim Army Health Center and Coleman Troop Medical Center commander, for their work while serving at LRMC and their support to the wounded Polish service members receiving treatment there.

"On behalf of the minister of defense I would like to express our appreciation for the service that was provided to the hundreds of Polish Soldiers," Walowski said. "Hundreds of them were able to return back to Poland, back to their country, back to their families and back to the service. From the bottom of our hearts we would like to thank you for this medical support."

The award, which was established in 1999, is intended to recognize service to the Polish Army by foreign civilian and military personnel.

Cho, who served as the LRMC commander before taking command of the 30th MEDCOM, said that he will treasure this award and accepted it on behalf of the LRMC workforce.

"On behalf of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Civilian personnel at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center who are also our doctors, nurses, technicians, and administrators, I accept this award," Cho said. "In many ways they are the heroes I just feel blessed to have and the opportunity to have served at Landstuhl during that time."

Thousands of service members from both U.S. and Allied forces have received care at LRMC during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Polish troops exemplified the warrior ethos during their time at the hospital, according to Cho.
"The wounded warriors at Landstuhl are very special in many ways and our polish wounded warriors provided inspiration to everyone for their tenacity and their humility. We know that we have a tremendous partnership with our Polish partners and we look forward to our continued relationship in the years to come," Cho said.

Smith served as the chief of the patient administration section at LRMC and worked closely with the liaison teams from the various countries that make up the coalition forces.

"It's a patient-centric service organization that is resonated throughout the hospital and that is also resonated within the liaison teams. This truly is an honor and it was an honor to serve at Landstuhl alongside the polish liaison team," she said.

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Fincham, 30th MEDCOM Public Affairs Operations NCO. For more information please contact him at 30thmed.pao@us.army.mil.

**About us:** U.S. Army Europe is uniquely positioned to advance American strategic interests across Eurasia and has unparalleled capability to prevent conflict, shape the environment and, if necessary, win decisively. The relationships we build during more than 1000 theater security cooperation events in more than 40 countries each year lead directly to support for multinational contingency operations around the world, strengthen regional partnerships, and enhance global security.