

Specialized Illinois National Guard unit mobilizes for Afghanistan

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois National Guard's Bilateral Embedded Staff Team (BEST) A21 held a deployment ceremony at the Illinois Military Academy, Camp Lincoln, Springfield, Illinois on May 9.



The Soldiers will train for a short time at Fort Bliss, Texas, before deploying to Afghanistan. This unique mission allows Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers to train and deploy side-by-side with their Polish counterparts. The Soldiers are from various parts of Illinois and were selected for the mission based on their training and skills. BEST A21 is commanded by Lt. Col. Donald West, of Petersburg, Illinois.

The deployment is in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel, during which the team will assist the Polish Military Contingent in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

The partnership between Poland and the Illinois National Guard dates back to 1993. In 2018 the partnership celebrates its 25th year.