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June 21, 2019

Dear Acting Secretary Esper,

I am writing to ask that you urge the Government and Armed Forces of Poland to name any future military installation located in Poland to house U.S. troops after Staff Sergeant Michael Ollis, who perished in combat while defending his country alongside his Polish comrades-in-arms at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Ghazni in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan. Naming such a military installation in honor of Staff Sergeant Ollis would not only symbolize the United States' long-standing relationship with Poland, but also our countries' shared commitment to mutual defense.

As you know, President Trump and Polish President Duda recently met to discuss their shared commitment to bolstering Poland's defense and protecting its sovereignty. The Polish government has consistently met their NATO membership contribution and have been longtime participants in NATO's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan. In their joint declaration, Presidents Trump and Duda agreed to increase the U.S. troop presence in Poland by 1,000 service members, with the Polish government bearing the expense of basing this contingent on Polish soil. It is only fitting that an American base aimed at protecting Polish territory be named after an American hero who lost his life protecting Polish soldiers.

Staff Sergeant Ollis was serving in the 10th Mountain Division's B Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment in Ghazni, Afghanistan when enemy insurgents attacked FOB Ghazni with vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, suicide vests, and indirect fire and small-arms fire. When the enemy initiated indirect fire on FOB Ghazni, Staff Sergeant Ollis directed the soldiers under his command to take cover in a nearby bunker. As the attack unfolded, and realizing that the base faced a complex, combined-arms threat, Staff Sergeant Ollis directed his soldiers to remain in cover before moving to engage the enemy. Without time to retrieve his protective gear, Staff Sergeant Ollis moved towards the sound of battle, eventually linking up with Polish Second Lieutenant Karol Cierpica, who had already been wounded by shrapnel. Together, the pair engaged numerous enemy insurgents, helping to clear the base of attackers. At one point in the battle, an enemy insurgent armed with a suicide vest charged towards them. Staff Sergeant Ollis placed himself between the enemy and his comrade, shielding the Polish officer from further fire and neutralizing the insurgent shortly before the insurgent's suicide device detonated, inflicting mortal wounds to Staff Sergeant Ollis. According to the testimony of Second Lieutenant Cierpica, "if Michael Ollis had not joined me, it would have been a Polish flag draped over a coffin, not an American one."

For his heroism and sacrifice, Staff Sergeant Ollis was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Purple Heart, the Silver Star, the Audie Murphy Medallion, and the Polish Armed Forces Gold Medal—the highest honor the Polish government bestows upon a foreign soldier.

Staff Sergeant Michael Ollis embodies the powerful bond between American forces and our allies abroad. His sacrifice, in putting a Polish soldier's well-being above his own, exemplifies what it means to be an American Soldier. Naming this base after Staff Sergeant Ollis would be a powerful statement and genuine illustration of the bond between soldiers from all nations engaged in the global War on Terror. Further, it would ensure that Staff Sergeant Ollis' legacy continues to defend the people of Poland against all threats

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to working with your office and all related agencies to ensure that any planned U.S. base on Polish soil carry the esteemed name of Michael Ollis.

Sincerely,



Max Rose
Member of Congress