



For Immediate Release:

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Contact: Abby Ottenhoff (312) 814-3158

Rebecca Rausch (217) 782-7355

Gerardo Cardenas (312) 814-3158

Jill Burwitz (ALPLM) (217) 558-8970

Illinois Soldier donates American flag to the State of Illinois

Flag that flew in Iraq to be displayed at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum

SPRINGFIELD, IL: Governor Rod R. Blagojevich announced today that a very special American flag will fly over the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum to celebrate Lincoln's birthday. On February 11th and 12th, a U.S. flag that flew over an Army camp near Baiji, Tikrit in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom will be on display at the museum.

Army Specialist James Wagner, who returned from Iraq last summer, presented the flag to Governor Blagojevich on November 11th, 2005, during a Veterans Day ceremony in Chicago's Little Village Neighborhood. The American flag flew over Spc. Wagner's camp. Wagner decided to donate the flag to the state of Illinois in recognition of the state's first-rate treatment of veterans. Spc. Wagner feels a special connection to Abraham Lincoln as he shares the sixteenth president's birthday, February 12.

"The American flag is a symbol of freedom whether it's displayed over the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum or a camp in Iraq," said Gov. Blagojevich. "To know that this particular flag flew over a country that suffered under the rule of a brutal dictator gives it an even richer meaning. I thank Specialist Wagner not only for this touching gesture but for his service to our country."

Boy Scout Troop 202 will raise the flag in a brief ceremony on Saturday, February 11 at 10:30 a.m. outside the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. Other activities in celebration of Lincoln's birthday taking place at the ALPLM include: music, children's activities, book signings and history classes. Author and presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin will sign copies of her new best seller, *Team of Rivals*, in the Library Atrium from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm on Sunday, February 12.

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