

June 2017

SELFRIDGE FLYER

127th Wing - Your Hometown Air Force



Citizen-Airmen bring diverse skills to Selfridge

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LETTER FROM THE CHIEF

Service Before Self = Mission Success!

By Chief Master Sgt.
David W. Myers

We've all heard the Air Force core values many times, but today I would like to touch on the second value, "Service Before Self". Whether it is a crew chief staying late to recover an aircraft and prepare it for the next day's mission, or a finance technician ensuring an order is not only certified in AROWS but also updated for MilPay and DEERS, we have all been faced with the choice to cut corners.

The crew chief could choose to recover the jet and "chalk-and-walk," leaving it for the next person to take care of. The finance technician could choose to complete the minimum by



simply certifying the order, but is either choice an example of the right thing to do? Each person can argue that they did what they were tasked to do, but is that putting the customer first? Is it choosing to live the Air Force value of "Service Before Self?" We are setting our customers up for failure by doing the minimum, which in turn means possible mission failure.

We have also all seen what doing the bare minimum can lead to: a maintenance non-delivery for Tuesday morning's flying schedule, or an individual's pay or health insurance lapsing. Both of those outcomes could have lasting ramifications and are a big deal. Lost sorties mean a pilot will lose required

We've heard from the Secretary of the Air Force down the chain-of-command say, "One team: One fight," or, "all of our jobs make the mission happen."

flight hours, hurting their qualification. Unqualified pilots could lead to a drop in SORTS reporting for the flying unit, as well as a loss of funding to the Wing. An individual who has a lapse in their pay and health-care benefits may have an emergency situation during that timeframe, although repairable, causes undue stress for that person. Although both examples are "worse-case" scenarios, we need to consider how important our jobs are and how they affect the Wing's mission and the lives of our

members.

We've heard from the Secretary of the Air Force down the chain-of-command say, "One team: One fight," or, "all of our jobs make the mission happen." It is true that we all make the mission happen!

The next time you have the chance to go the extra mile and put "Service Before Self," please do so. The choice will not only provide better care for your fellow Airmen, it will ensure mission success allow us to live up to our Wing motto, "We Stand Ready!"



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EXPERTISE

Team of Citizen-Airmen bring diverse skills to Selfridge

By Tech. Sgt. Dan Heaton

When America needs to flex some air power, it has a ready force of highly-skilled Citizen-Airmen here in the Michigan Air National Guard. Case in point: on a warm June morning, a computer expert from one of the world's largest manufacturing companies, another from a federal law enforcement agency and a third who has spent his entire career in the Air Force, huddled together on the flight deck of a KC-135 Stratotanker to upgrade some software in the on-board computer.

One weekend a month, all three Airmen come together with the 191st Maintenance Squadron as part of the Michigan Air National Guard. Tech. Sgts. John Kerschenheiter, Crystal Guetschow and Staff Sgt. Alex Bastow are all guidance and control specialists assigned to the KC-135 unit at the base.

Kerschenheiter is a full-time Airmen at the base. He initially worked on F-16 Fighting Falcons, a fighter aircraft, before switching over to the "heavies" – the far larger, multi-engine KC-135 Stratotanker. He was assigned to F-16s both in the active duty Air Force and as a full-time member of the Air National Guard, prior to making the transition.

Guetschow works on avionics systems for the U.S. Customs & Border Protection's Great Lakes Air & Marine Wing, also based at Selfridge, across the runway from the Air Force operations here. She's also recently home from an overseas deployment with the



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTOS BY SENIOR AIRMAN RYAN ZESKI

Tech. Sgts John Kerschenheiter and Crystal Guetschow, along with Staff Sgt. Alex Bastow, perform maintenance inside the cockpit of a KC-135 Stratotanker on the flight line at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., June 11, 2017. The three Airmen work together as a single unit, uploading software to the aircraft's central computing module.

"It makes for a good team, when we're at Selfridge or when we go on one of our trips."

Tech. Sgt. John Kerschenheiter

KC-135s, where she "picked up a lot of experience working on the jet."

Bastow works in data analytics for one of Detroit's three major automakers. He's also deployed several times with the Michigan Air National Guard.

"It makes for a good team, when we're at Selfridge or when we go on one of our trips," Kerschenheiter said.

Over the 127th Wing's June's drill weekend, the



three servicemembers worked together as a single unit, uploading software to the aircraft's central computing module. With Guetschow reading instructions from a technical manual, her two fellow sergeants sat in the

lot's and co-pilot's seats of the aircraft, performing the upload.

"I think it is the camaraderie really that keeps you coming back," Guetschow said. "You come out here and you get to serve with a great group of people."

SELFRIDGE FLYER

The Selfridge Flyer is a monthly publication highlighting the citizen Airmen of Selfridge Air National Guard Base. It is produced, printed and distributed in partnership with Digital First Media.

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On the cover: Airmen from the 127th Wing at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, launch their A-10 Thunderbolt II's from the 107th Fighter Squadron for exercise Red Flag at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., on June 8, 2017. Exercise Red Flag is an advanced aerial combat training exercise hosted at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. Since 1975, air crews from the United States Air Force, United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, United States Army and numerous NATO or other allied nations' air forces take part in one of several Red Flag exercises held during the year, each of which is two weeks in duration.

U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY MSGT. DAVID KUJAWA

TOURNAMENT

127th Wing welcomes female veterans, LPGA golfers

By Tech. Sgt. Chelsea E. Barber

The 127th Wing cheered on female veterans during the Selfridge Valor Cup LPGA Pro-Am event here on May 22. The event, organized by Eisenhower Center and Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation program, provided a unique opportunity to connect approximately 60 women veterans with 16 professional golfers and kick-started the week-long Volvik LPGA tournament.

"This is the first time ever where they have professional LPGA players paired with female veterans playing a pro-am," said John Cornack, president of Eisenhower Center. "We thought let's do something for the female veterans who want to be

seen and want to be heard."

Laura Chirio, program coordinator for Eisenhower's "After the Impact" program and coordinator of the pro-am event, also serves as a captain in the Michigan Army National Guard. She said the golf outing helps to empower a typically underserved population.

"A lot of times, female veterans don't identify as veterans, whether it be due to stigma or just not feeling identity to being a veteran," Chirio said. "This doesn't really happen very often where you have this many female veterans together, it's really empowering for the veterans in general."

Paula Creamer, an LPGA professional player, has close ties to the military. Her husband is an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III pilot in ad-

"We thought let's do something for the female veterans who want to be seen and want to be heard."

John Cornack, president of Eisenhower Center

dition to her father and a cousin having served. She said while travelling around the world for tournaments, she always tries to find the local base to thank service-members.

"I just think these are the real heroes in our world and if I can take the time out to anywhere I go to say thank you, then I take the opportunity to do that," Creamer said.



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY MSGT DAVID KUJAWA

Sixteen of the best female golfers from the Ladies Professional Golf Association teamed up female veterans at Selfridge Air National Guard Base for the Selfridge Valor Cup LPGA Pro-Am Tournament May 22 to help bring awareness to issues that female veterans face.

SELFRIDGE BASE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The purpose of Selfridge Base Community Council is to continue and improve the outstanding relationship between the civilian community and the military service community centered at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Macomb County, Michigan.



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TRAINING

U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY MSGT. DAVID KUJAWA

BEING PREPARED

Two emergency responders from the 127th Wing Fire Department at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, rush to a volunteer with simulated injuries during a Mass Accident Readiness Exercise at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich. on June 10, 2017. The annual exercise simulated a plane crash with approximately 100 victims.

CONGRATULATIONS**JRIC Detroit Sailors advance**

Leadership of the Joint Reserve Intelligence Center (JRIC) Detroit, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., takes deep pride in congratulating a select group of Sailors for their advancement and promotion. These Sailors are combat-ready information warfighters capable of winning wars, deterring aggression and maintaining freedom of the seas.

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ANDREW LOCHMANN	IS2	IS1	DEARBORN, MI
RACHAEL PECKENS	IS3	IS2	FOWLerville, MI
KIRK PETERMAN	IS3	IS2	TOLEDO, OH
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U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. DAVE KUJAWA

Inspiring the Next Generation

DETROIT, MICH.» Maj. Gen. Leonard Isabelle, assistant Adjutant General and Commander of the Michigan Air National Guard, poses with Tuskegee Airman Lt. Col. (ret.) Alexander Jefferson, at Coleman A. Young International Airport on May 26, 2017.

Jefferson and Isabelle attended the 127th Wing's third and final event in the "Inspire the Next Generation" series. The Tuskegee Airmen were featured, among several other groups and exhibits, to expose the students to job opportunities in military aviation. Jefferson, who received his commission from the Tuskegee flight school during World War II, wants students to make education their priority.

"Be smart, be a nerd!" Jefferson urged students.

RECOGNITION

Air Station Detroit flight crew member nominated for Perchard Trophy

By Lt. Robby Chavez

Twice a year each U.S. Coast Guard Air Station nominates an outstanding enlisted flight crew member for the Lt. Robert A. Perchard Memorial Trophy. This award was established in 1963 by the parents and friends of the late Lieutenant Perchard, who gave his life along with his fellow crew while executing a search-and-rescue mission in Alaska. This award allows pilots at aviation units to recognize flight me-

NOMINATION » PAGE 7

ALL SYSTEMS GO



BRING THE F-35 TO SELFRIDGE ANGB

Macomb County understands the tremendous impact the military, our service members, their families, and veterans have on the State of Michigan. At the direction of County Executive, Mark Hackel, the Macomb County Department of Planning & Economic Development partnered with the Michigan Defense Center to perform a comparative economic analysis of the five candidate communities competing to be one of two Air National Guard beddown locations for the F-35A Lightning II aircraft.

The candidate locations are:

Selfridge ANGB, Detroit, Michigan

Dannelly Field, Montgomery, Alabama

Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho

Jacksonville ANGB, Jacksonville, Florida

Truax Field, Madison, Wisconsin

The Air Force will use its strategic basing process to make this basing decision. They will consider cost, mission optimization, the installation's capacity to support with infrastructure, and impact on the environment. Macomb County pursued 'the rest of the story' when it comes to determining which community is best prepared to support the mission when considering industry accepted economic indicators.

"Macomb County is the defense capital. We build things to protect those who protect us." Mark Hackel, Macomb County Executive

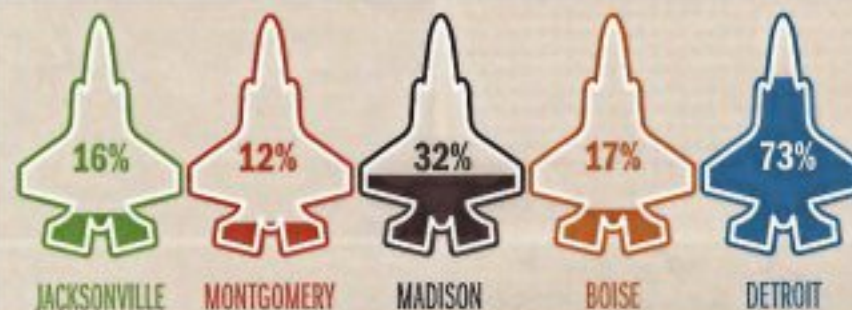
DETROIT HAS THE EXPERIENCE

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

Detroit has nearly **six** times the number of defense sector jobs than the rest of the competition combined. Meaning Detroit has the necessary defense sector experience to support the F-35 mission at Selfridge from **day one**.



DETROIT MAKES MORE



TOTAL DEFENSE SECTOR DEMAND

Detroit meets **73%** of its defense sector demand locally. The competing locations, on average, can only meet **20%** of the defense sector demand. This indicates a vastly more mature market capable of supporting the F-35 at Selfridge.

DETROIT ATTRACTS THE BEST TALENT

EARNINGS POTENTIAL

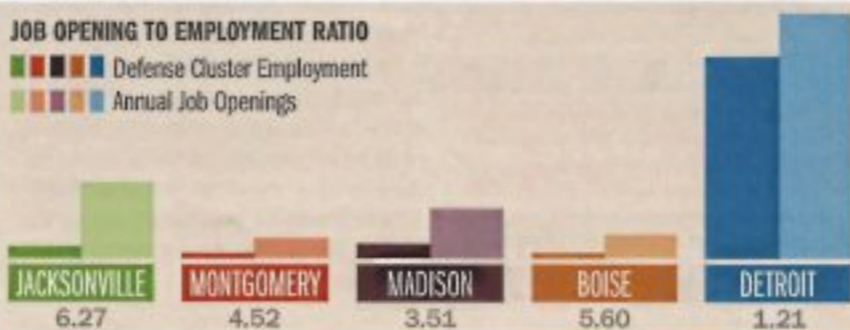
The average earnings of a defense worker in Detroit is at least 23% higher than its competition. Detroit's defense cluster generates higher earnings due to its highly skilled workforce. Because of this **highly skilled workforce**, Detroit is more than capable of supporting the requirements of an F-35 mission.



DETROIT CAN FILL THE NEED

JOB OPENING TO EMPLOYMENT RATIO

Legend: Defense Cluster Employment (Green, Red, Purple, Orange, Blue), Annual Job Openings (Light Green, Light Red, Light Purple, Light Orange, Light Blue)



OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND

The competition is currently struggling to fill the workforce needs of their defense industry. Detroit has 1.21 job openings per defense worker compared to the competition who maintain between 3.51 and 6.27, indicating a workforce that has the **capacity** and **capability** to fill the workforce demand generated by the F-35 mission at Selfridge.

DETROIT IS READY TO GO

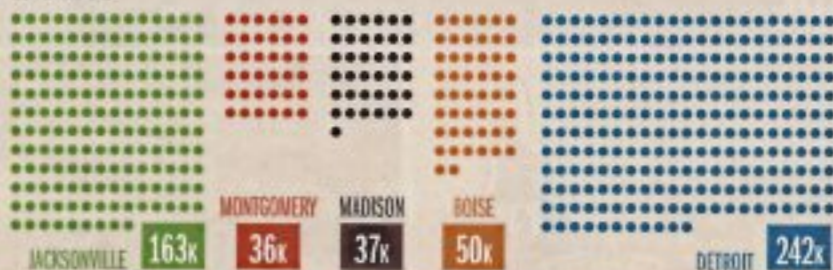
DEFENSE CONTRACTS PERFORMED

Detroit leads all regions with nearly **\$2 billion** in defense contracts annually. Detroit fulfills **33% more** contracts than its closest rival. Detroit has the necessary defense infrastructure in place to support the F-35 mission at Selfridge today.



DETROIT VALUES ITS VETERANS

● = 1000 Veterans



VETERAN POPULATION

With a large veteran population, Detroit has a more developed workforce with the required experience to service the defense sector. Detroit is home to **32% more** veterans than competing locations, indicating its defense workforce and **support for the military** far surpass the rest.

Nomination

FROM PAGE 6

chanics and rescue swimmers who demonstrate exemplary performance, superior technical aviation acumen, as well as professional, and leadership skills while conducting flights.

This period, Petty Officer 2nd Class Alyse Corle, an aviation electrical technician, has been selected by Air Station Pilots. She was instrumental in conducting both ground and flight operations while demonstrating mature and highly evolved operational risk management skills.

While returning from an exhausting search-and rescue case in the extreme eastern reaches of the Coast Guard's Ninth District, she picked up a faint mayday call over the radio and quickly plotted the position, fortuitously near the aircraft's location. Upon sighting the vessel in distress, Corle urgently directed the pilots and rescue swimmer to prepare for hoisting. Just before sending the rescue swimmer down to the water, she noticed a U. S. Coast Guard 45-foot boat approaching from behind the helicopter and quickly recognized the potential danger in the developing situation. She determined that the 45-foot boat was a better platform to conduct the rescue, ensuring the safety of the rescue swimmer and survivor.

Corle is well-deserving of this award and continues to be a great ambassador for Air Station Detroit.

During the most recent hurricane season, Corle was given less than 24 hours notice to deploy in response to Hurricane Matthew. During the deployment she ensured the helicopter was prepared with the necessary equipment to conduct rescues in almost any condition. After arriving in the operating area, she coordinated secure aircraft parking, fueling operations, and tools-and-maintenance facilities so the crew could continue to be postured for search-and-rescue missions.

Not only is Corle an amazing flight mechanic and aviation electrical technician, she continues to foster the growth of junior flight mechanics by mentoring them through the unique challenges Air Station Detroit faces each summer. She is always a go-to for difficult aircraft electronics troubleshooting and is a common face in the downtown Detroit volunteering community. Corle is well-deserving of this award and continues to be a great ambassador for Air Station Detroit.



FOR MORE INFORMATION: <https://mif35.org/>

Source: EIASI, 2017.1 Class of Water - All Work Classes

TEAMWORK

Selfridge seeks to inspire next generation

Base hosts event for county high schools

By Tech. Sgt. Chelsea E. Barber

Twelve teenagers scrambled into a large orange life raft as chilly gusts of wind blew against their backs. They rolled around inside trying to regain balance, sat upright and looked toward fellow passengers while laughing.

“You need to work as a team,” shouted Chief Master Sgt. Anthony Liggins, chief boom operator with the 171st Air Refueling Squadron here. “It’s amazing what you can do when you get ten people working together towards a common goal.”

The life raft was on exhibit as part of the 127th Wing’s second event in its “Inspiring the Next Generation” series here on May 19. The series of three events was organized to inform area high school students on career opportunities in the military, each with a unique theme. The event focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics career fields in the military.

The events’ organizer, Lt. Col. Brian K. Davis, told the students that many people believe if they meet a job’s minimum qualifications then they should be automatically hired. Davis, commanding officer of the 127th Operations Support Squadron wants the students to understand that meeting the minimum criteria doesn’t guarantee anyone a job.

“To become an A-10 pilot the minimum score is 52, but the last several

we’ve hired were in the 90’s,” Davis said of the Air Force Officer Qualification Exam. “You need to talk with someone who’s already doing the job to figure out how to become competitive.”

Representatives from the Academy of Model Aeronautics, Department of Homeland Security, Civil Air Patrol, Misty Blues Skydiving team and others spoke with students about career opportunities as well as volunteer service and leadership programs. Students, many of whom were members of their high schools’ Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs, were able to interact with flight simulators, remote-controlled helicopters and even soldered small parts to build robots.

The Civil Air Patrol recruits students to develop leadership skills, participate in search and rescue programs and learn about aerospace. Events like “Inspiring the Next Generation,” and the upcoming 100th anniversary celebration and air show in August, give members an opportunity to reach out to their target demographic.

“We are very excited to be a part of the upcoming 100th anniversary celebration and air show as volunteers,” said 1st Lt. Jenna Gleason, cadet commander of the 176th Selfridge Composite Squadron. “The air show gives us a great opportunity to do some more recruiting so we can train for our next generation.”

The centennial celebration will connect the community with Selfridge’s organizations on a much larger scale when it kicks off on August 19. The event will showcase the history of the last 100 years, in ad-



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTOS BY MSGT. DAVID KUJAWA

Staff Sgt. Vang Yang from the 127th Air Refueling Group, suits up a student from Centerline high school with an aircraft survival vest, body armor and flight helmet at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich. on May 18, 2017. Students from Macomb County area high schools were treated to a variety of aircraft static displays, simulators, and activities with a focus on inspiring the next generation in the areas of Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM).

RIGHT: Students from Macomb County area high schools participate in a robotic programming exercise with instructors and exhibits from Saint Clair Technology Education Center (TEC) at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

dition to showing the diverse range of aviation and military career opportunities that will continue to exist here in the future. Chief Master Sgt. Tony Whitehead, 127th Wing Command Chief believes opening the base to the students, and ultimately to the public, is a great opportunity to garner support from the community.



PRESENTATION

127th Wing SAPR Office hosts, “Got Your Back”

By Orvie B. Baker, Jr.

The 127th Wing’s sexual assault prevention and response office hosted Catharsis Productions to conduct, “Got Your Back” training here on June 9 and 10.

“Got Your Back,” an interactive conversation that integrates the research on sexual predation and bystander intervention into a discussion about sexual violence, fulfilled the triannual equal opportunity training requirement for Wing members. The training addressed how sexualized language and a tolerance for coercive cultural norms, contribute to an environment that allows perpetrators to offend against both female and male victims, while avoiding accountability.

After the training, members were refreshed on several key points of equal opportunity education, specifically in regards to how to identify the impact of sexual violence on victims and the military’s mission.

The training also drew attention to male victims of sexual assault, the ways in which they are victimized and the unique challenges they face when identifying as a victim.

The “Got Your Back” training does not use power point slides, but interactive activities and explicit language that people may encounter in certain environments. Catharsis Productions has a saying that they, “fight fire with funny,” a proven technique that allows the audience to open up and share without feeling their input doesn’t matter.

U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO
BY TERRY ATWELL

The Selfridge Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office hosted the interactive “Got Your Back” seminar here June 9 and 10. Got Your Back is a new way of training people to understand, identify, and combat sexual harassment through bystander intervention.



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ACCOMPLISHMENT

CCAF graduates presented with certificate of graduation, June 11

Thirty Airmen from the 127th Wing pose for a group photo after being presented with a certificate of graduation from the Community College of the Air Force during a ceremony at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., on June 11, 2017. The CCAF concept evolved in the early 1970s as a means of gaining accreditation and recognition for Air Force training.



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY MSGT. DAVID KUJAWA

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CAMARADERIE

National Guard partnerships support EUCOM theater objectives

By Sgt. 1st Class
Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

RIGA, LATVIA » The friendship struck between then U.S. Army Maj. Greg Vadnais and Latvian Army Capt. Raymonds Graube in 1993 strained conventional logic.

Almost one-quarter century later, the impact of their professional relationship seems just as improbable.

"You're the guy I was training to fight," Vadnais recalls telling Graube in 1993 when the two met at the Michigan National Guard's Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center. Latvian forces were taking part in one of the very first exchanges between the Baltic nation

and the Midwestern state.

What made the meeting extraordinary was that until the fall of the Berlin Wall just four years earlier, on Nov. 9, 1989, and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Bloc of communist nations allied with the former Soviet Union, Vadnais and Graube had been on opposite sides in a 44-year Cold War.

Instead, the two became acquaintances and, over time, firm friends through the pairing of Michigan with Latvia through the National Guard's State Partnership Program.

Maj. Vadnais became Maj. Gen. Vadnais, the adjutant general of the Michigan National Guard.

And Capt. Graube?

He became Lt. Gen. Graube, commander of

Latvia's National Armed Forces until his October 2016 retirement.

Meanwhile, the budding National Guard State Partnership Program - endorsed in 1993 by chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Colin Powell and U.S. European Command commander Army Gen. John Shalikashvili as a way to build partnerships with non-NATO countries as they embraced democracy and market economies - blossomed from its initial three partnerships on the Baltic coast to 79 nations worldwide, and is still growing.

"It's one of the premiere programs not only in the National Guard, but in the Department of Defense," Vadnais said during a visit here this week. "The bang

"Our allies and partners are vital to U.S. national security."

Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel, chief, National Guard Bureau

for the buck, the juice you get for the squeeze, is incalculable. It's a great fit - something we can support and we can sustain."

Vadnais accompanied Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, and other senior National Guard leaders, on a visit to the partner nation and to see National Guard troops taking part in Saber Strike 2017, the latest iteration of a longstanding U.S. Army Europe-led cooperative training exercise amongst U.S., Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and other allied and partner nations.

The senior leaders also joined the European Command's State Partnership Program Conference in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, where participants in the command's 22 SPP security cooperation relationships attended.

The enduring relationship between Latvia and Michigan is just one example of pairings between nations and National Guard states that thrive throughout EUCOM.

Army Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, EUCOM commander and Supreme Allied Commander Europe of NATO Allied Command

Operations, has characterized the European area of responsibility as a theater in transition.

EUCOM's renewed emphasis on deterrence and defense is aimed at offsetting Russia, neutralizing violent extremist organizations and destabilizing Iranian influence. The SPP Conference focused on more fully and broadly integrating the National Guard program into EUCOM's theater strategy.

"Our allies and partners are vital to U.S. national security," Lengyel said. "The long-term, enduring relationships that National Guard SPP states have fostered with our European allies and partners has been critical in developing the strategic foun-

EUCOM » PAGE 12

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FROM PAGE 11

dation upon which to further develop interoperability and integration. Our challenge now is to innovate the next phase of the SPP in Europe in light of the evolving strategic environment.

“Based on the discussions I saw taking place in Garmisch,” the CNGB added. “I am more than confident we will collectively rise to the challenge.”

Long-term relationships are the secret to the success of the SPP’s contributions to combatant commands’ security cooperation strategy.

Whereas most military assignments are limited to two to three years, National Guard officers and noncommissioned officers interact with their foreign counterparts, in some cases, for decades - as was the case with Vadnais and Graube.

“Raimonds and I kind of grew up together,” Vadnais said. “It’s the personal relationships as well as the professional relationships that allow you to have the frank and honest conversations so we’re not wasting time and, more importantly, resources. That’s foundational to trust. You can’t surge trust.”

More than two decades since that first meeting, Vadnais is recognized on the streets of Riga like a celebrity, the personification of Latvia’s partnership with the United States — a relationship that has seen Latvia transition from security consumer to security provider.

Michigan Guard combat forces have also co-deployed with Latvian soldiers to Afghanistan three times. Three Latvian soldiers — Edgars Ozolins, Voldemars Ansevics and Andrejs Merkusevs - died fighting shoulder-to-shoulder

with Michigan’s Minutemen.

Latvia’s President Raimonds Vejonis has dined at Vadnais’ Michigan home, and the adjutant general escorted Gen. Lengyel for a meeting at the president’s residence during this week’s visit. The two also met with U.S. Ambassador to Latvia Nancy Pettit, Latvian Defense Minister Raimonds Bergmanis, Chief of Defense Maj. Gen. Leonids Kalnins, and other senior leaders.

Like the adjutants general who lead the National Guard’s other SPP relationships, Vadnais said his state’s relationship with Latvia has been a win for Michigan’s Guard.

“You get myopic in your view of the world if you never leave your home,” he said. “The SPP really contributes to the overall readiness of our Army and our Air Force.”

It’s a two-way relationship that has helped Michigan improve its mission to secure the homeland. To use just one example, Vadnais said his state’s cyber presence has been strengthened because Latvia is a world leader, in part because the Baltic states have been targeted by cyber-attacks.

“They have some tactics, techniques and procedures we’ve adopted,” he said.

“I love the SPP and what it does,” Lengyel said. “Our foreign partners repeatedly tell me how grateful they are for all they gain from their SPP relationships. They are more proficient than they were in 1991 - and so is the National Guard.”

“There is no doubt our SPP experience is one of the factors that has contributed to our growth,” he continued. “In turn, it better enables us to execute our missions fighting America’s wars, securing the homeland and building partnerships while enhancing our contribution to the Joint Force.”



U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY SGT. 1ST CLASS JIM GREENHILL

Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel, chief, National Guard Bureau; President Raimonds Vejonis, president of Latvia; and Army Maj. Gen. Greg Vadnais, adjutant general, Michigan National Guard, in Riga, Latvia, June 12, 2017.

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