

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ARMED SERVICES

ON

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TESTIMONY DRAFT

Selfridge ANGB Support of Northern Border Security

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, as the host base commander, it is my honor to host this field hearing and come before you today to discuss Selfridge Air National Guard Base (ANGB) agency interactions and contributions to northern border security. While the wing I command supports parts and pieces of the border security effort— when directed, we more actively assist civilian authorities to increase the security along our nation's borders, both north and south. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau, Lieutenant General Blum testified before you on May 24th this year regarding the National Guard's temporary assistance to the Border Patrol along the United States' southern border. He also described the history of the training and organization of the militia that continues today in the modern National Guard. As a Michigan Air National Guard unit, the 127th Wing's motto is "We Stand Ready" – ready to muster and answer our state's and our nation's call.

Currently, the 127th Wing is actively supporting the Global War on Terror with F-16 aircraft on alert. The 127th Wing is supporting Operation JUMP START, the National Guard support of the Border Patrol along the southern U.S. border. The wing's C-130 aircraft are providing airlift support and wing personnel are performing various support functions in the southwestern United States such as contracting, public affairs, and observation duties. Both the fighter and airlift units have extensive experience in Southwest Asia in Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM.

The critical location of Selfridge ANGB along the most active portion of the northern U.S. border makes it an attractive home to both military and homeland security agencies. The stretch of narrow waterways between Port Huron and Detroit in conjunction with the major lines of communication in this area creates a friendly and cooperative international border but also a border that has potential for exploitation by elements of crime and terrorism. According to Colonel Michael McDaniel, Michigan's Assistant Adjutant General for Homeland Security, "There is a known connection between drug / other smuggling on the Northern border and support to terrorist groups. The National Guard Bureau's Counter Drug (NGB-CD) program assists civilian Law Enforcement in combating illegal drug production, movement, and sales in Michigan. NGB-CD must be expressly authorized to assist Law Enforcement in border protection activities, acknowledging this drug / terror nexus." These counter drug programs are a successful example of National Guard assistance to civilian law enforcement. While this program is not based at Selfridge, as other forms of military-civilian authority cooperation develop, Selfridge is a particularly good option for basing border security missions.

Selfridge sits between the two most active northern border crossings in the U.S. for business and commerce, the Blue Water Bridges at Port Huron and

the Ambassador Bridge and tunnels in Detroit. The base's proximity to a major industrial population center and its location along the Great Lakes that form the world's largest source of freshwater, lends significance to Selfridge as a base of joint operations for homeland defense and homeland security. Selfridge, because of its size, border location, and diverse capabilities is designated as a staging area in many DoD deployment plans for land and air-based operations. A comprehensive review should be conducted to determine the further resource capabilities needed at Selfridge to support those plans.

In 2007, Selfridge will commemorate its 90th year of service to our nation's defense. Today, the base is a model joint military community. It is home to every military service, Active, Guard, and Reserve, and Department of Homeland Security agencies, the United States Border Patrol and the United States Coast Guard. The agencies on the base refer to themselves as "Team Selfridge." The commanders of the Team Selfridge agencies meet monthly to discuss issues affecting their units and a team approach is utilized to achieve cooperation. Whenever possible, resources are shared or pooled to realize common goals on the larger scale. Most of all, each agency understands the unique missions and contributions to the security of our state and nation. When directed or otherwise possible by authority resting at unit level, agencies cooperate to ensure the success of individual agencies in their unique missions.

The types of cooperation I am referring to typically involve resources such as equipment, buildings, and personnel. When Selfridge ANG security forces deployed overseas, the Naval Reserves at Selfridge provided personnel to augment the remaining ANG security forces by serving at gate posts. When a sizeable US Marine Corps contingent departed for duty overseas, ANG logistics personnel supported their deployment processing. Marine Corps Reserve and Army National Guard personnel have volunteered to support the Air National Guard for your visit to Selfridge and these hearings. Sometimes we pool resources for common mission requirements such as the state of the art joint dining facility where these congressional hearings are being held. This effort will benefit all services and was the result of the pooled resources of the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserves. Another example of a Total Force success will be the joint medical facility slated for completion later this year.

With the execution of BRAC law, the Army Garrison and the Air Force Reserve presence will diminish here at Selfridge. As that is happening, the 127th Wing as the host agency, is talking with both base assigned and non-base assigned Department of Homeland Security officials to make them aware of potential resources and areas that can bed down additional missions or handle expansion of current missions, if required.

Most agency interaction on this base is limited to shared resources and support, not coordinated operations. Operationally, we have on occasion, achieved a synergy because of the relationships DoD, DHS, and local law enforcement agencies have developed and the cooperation attained over the many years as a joint community. Of recent note was the successful security effort for the events leading up to and including the NFL Super Bowl in Detroit this year. The 127th Wing F-16s as well as other regional ANG F-16s sat alert or actually flew combat air patrols over the city of Detroit for this event. The Selfridge 127th Wing Command Post and Survival Recovery Center hosted the command and control element for the air coordination of law enforcement agencies. Representatives from the Department of Homeland Security, the Transportation Security Agency, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Air Marshall, the Michigan State Police, the Wayne and Oakland County Sheriff's Departments, Michigan Army National Guard, and the United States Coast Guard were all manning communications stations in the same control center at Selfridge so that airborne law enforcement assets and security issues could be coordinated and handled in a safe and efficient manner. In addition, many of these same agencies had airborne assets that utilized Selfridge ANGB airfield resources to support aircraft launch and recovery operations. The Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS), part of the command and control network of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), sponsored command and control exercises with 127th Wing F-16s and US Coast Guard Air Station Detroit HH-65 helicopters to practice intercept procedures and test communication equipment.

Local Selfridge agencies considered this security event a successful execution of interagency cooperation and operations. It served as a boost of confidence for local DoD, DHS, and other law enforcement personnel that this level of cooperation is possible in future scenarios.

That concept was further tested in the national homeland security exercise ARDENT SENTRY 06 (AS06). AS06 was sponsored by NORAD-USNORTHCOM. Selfridge again played a role in the bed down of command and control elements for homeland security response to the various scenarios of terrorist threats to government facilities and critical infrastructure. There were many firsts during AS06. It was the first exercise in Michigan with National Guard Quick Reaction Forces directly supporting county assets. It was the first exercise with active participation of the private sector. It was the first cross-border exercise in Michigan. It was the first exercise with the National Guard protecting private Critical Infrastructure. The exercise provided a venue for key relationships to develop between local, state, and federal agencies, as well as the private sector. Many valuable lessons were learned to include the need for more exercises of national significance and a need for DoD to fund as a USNORTHCOM requirement, state National Guard participation in these types of exercises.

In conclusion, Selfridge ANGB is a model joint military community that includes the Department of Homeland Security agencies based here as full partners and members of "Team Selfridge." Selfridge ANGB will continue to support DoD and DHS agencies and missions as required. The 127th Wing will continue to support the federal NORAD alert mission of homeland defense as long as the NORAD commander deems necessary. As for support of homeland security and civilian authorities, the 127th Wing is prepared to directly support homeland security agencies on border security matters as directed and authorized by the Governor and The Adjutant General of the State of Michigan.

Thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to answering your questions.