

Vice Chief of National Guard Bureau Visits Illinois Training Areas, Illinois Servicemembers

Written by Illinois National Guard PAO
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SPRINGFIELD, IL (09/27/2013)(readMedia)-- Story by Sgt. Robert R. Adams, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs and photos by MSgt. Shaun Kerr, 183rd Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Air Force Lt. Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel, Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau, visited Illinois National Guard leaders and servicemembers Sept. 26 at the 183rd Fighter Wing and Camp Lincoln in Springfield, Ill.

The visit started at the wing with a presentation of the newly-fielded UH-72 Lakota helicopter. After the presentation Lengyel spoke to Airmen of the 183rd over lunch about the upcoming challenges the National Guard will be facing, but also emphasized the Guard's importance to the safety and well-being of the U.S. Lengyel listened to their concerns to take back with him to the Pentagon.

"Anytime you can give your opinion to someone who can make a difference, I think it's important and you should," said Senior Airmen Alicia Braun of Springfield, Contract Specialist and Warranted Contracting Officer with the 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield, Ill.

After lunch, Lengyel visited the wing's communications building and the Composite Repair Facility.

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"It is important for generals to go out into the field and visit to stay in touch with the Airmen and Soldiers of the National Guard and see what they do on a daily basis," said Brig. Gen. William D. Cobetto of Hillsboro, the Assistant Adjutant General Air for the Illinois National Guard. "Also, it is important so they can continue to tell the story about our professionalism and to get the views of Airmen and Soldiers on new policies that have come out and how they affect their lives."

Later, Lengyel toured Camp Lincoln where he shook hands and thanked Soldiers at the Central Issuing Facility (CIF).

"It makes us feel good that we are being recognized for all the hard work that my team and I do," said Army Sgt. Christopher Behrends of Virginia, Ill., materials handler for CIF, with the 1544th Transportation Company of Paris, Ill.

Lengyel also visited the United States Property and Fiscal Office, the Combined Service Maintenance Shop, the Allied Trades Building and the Illinois State Military Museum.

"For General Lengyel to get to interact with the Soldiers and Airmen today was a great opportunity for him to see what we do and how we accomplish our mission," said Army Col Christopher J. Hall of Mount Carmel, Ill., United States Property and Fiscal Officer for the Illinois National Guard.

Hall said it is important for servicemembers to see the level of care and concern from senior leadership.

"When you go to the field and see the people that are actually doing the work and that they are motivated and focused on their jobs, it motivates me to go back to the Pentagon and keep the right focus," said Lengyen. "It really is about the Soldiers and the Airmen and enabling them to do their jobs."

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Lengyrl said the National Guard is a part of the solution to improve the fiscal environment in the United States right now.

"We have proven ourselves over the past 12 years particularly since 9/11 that we are so well equipped and so well trained and ready to do all of our missions, which includes war-time mission and homeland defense and civil support mission," said Lengyel.