Vigilant Shield Homeland Defense Exercise Set to Begin

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), in conjunction with the Canadian Joint Operations Command, will conduct its 13th annual homeland defense exercise, Vigilant Shield 19, Oct. 24-28.

This is a binational exercise between the United States and Canada designed to assess and enhance the readiness of NORAD and USNORTHCOM, its components and mission partners to defend the homelands from attack. More than 5,500 personnel from across the United States and Canada will participate, including the three commands' headquarters, the Alaskan and Canadian NORAD Regions, USNORTHCOM components (U.S. Army North, U.S. Navy North, U.S. Marine Forces North and Special Operations Command North), and other subordinate units and mission partners.

"The homeland is no longer a sanctuary and conducting exercises like Vigilant Shield is just one example of the many active measures taken every day by NORAD and USNORTHCOM as we continue enhancing our ability to defend our nations," said Air Force Gen. Terrence O'Shaughnessy, NORAD and USNORTHCOM Commander.

The Continental NORAD Region and U.S. Air Force North continue conducting their homeland defense missions from Langley Air Force Base (AFB), Virginia. However, they will have minimal participation in Exercise Vigilant Shield 19 in order to allow service members and families to focus on recovering from Hurricane Michael damage at Tyndall AFB, Florida, which is the home station of both organizations. While most facilities at the base were damaged, NORAD and USNORTHCOM have well established contingency plans that account for such events to

allow the Department of Defense to execute its mission without interruption. Vigilant Shield 19 will go forward with some changes to the exercise.

Vigilant Shield 19 provides NORAD and USNORTHCOM opportunities to examine and refine strategies, evaluate processes and procedures, and demonstrate the ability to address threats in various environments and domains. It is primarily a Command Post Exercise using simulated forces and involves the commander, the staff, and communications within and between headquarters. While the overall exercise scenario is classified, it is designed to assess and enhance NORAD and USNORTHCOM's ability to defend the homeland across all domains, which include air, land, maritime, space and cyber.

NORAD provides aerospace warning, aerospace control and maritime warning for North America. USNORTHCOM conducts homeland defense, civil support and security cooperation to defend and secure the U.S. and its interests. The two commands have complementary missions and are co-located together on Peterson AFB.

Canadian Joint Operations Command leads most Canadian Armed Forces operations in Canada, North America and around the world. It directs Canadian Armed Forces missions from planning to closing, to meet national and international strategic goals.