

# SELFBRIDGE FLYER

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"127<sup>th</sup> Wing – Your Hometown Air Force"

May 2019



## EDITORIAL

# Slocum: What an amazing journey this has been

By Retired Brig. Gen.  
**John D. Slocum**  
127th Wing, Former Commander

It's been 35 years of having the honor to wear the uniform of our great nation and the privilege of serving some of the most amazing men and women you could ever want to meet. I had a lot of mixed emotions as I passed the guidon of command at Selfridge and retired from military service. There's pride. Nostalgia. Certainly, a heavy heart. But mostly, I sit here feeling a tremendous sense of gratitude. I have learned to cherish the amazing power of partnerships, camaraderie, and family. This wonderful Michigan community has become a part of my family. Together we have moved mountains.

On May 5th 2019, I officially retired.

It seems like yesterday that I raised my right hand and repeated my commissioning oath. That was May 5th, 1984 – exactly 35 years to the day. 12,775 days. That oath began the journey of a lifetime. My career has given me amazing experiences and taken me to every corner of the world. But in late 2014 I landed at the pinnacle opportunity of my career as the Commander of the 127th Wing and of Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

The last four years have seen some remarkable milestones. Our hometown heroes have proven to be the best . . . and that's not hyperbole. I have the deepest admiration and respect for the men and women of

Michigan's Hometown Air Force, both those in and out of a uniform. They exemplify professionalism. Our extraordinary men and women epitomize the Air Force core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all they do. From accolades as the 2016 Best Wing in the ANG and third ANG Wing in history honored with the Meritorious Unit Award, to the 2017 award as the best Fighter Unit in the ANG, and now the 2018 most efficient Tanker unit in the U.S. Air Force – just to name a few. Thanks to the commitment, dedication, talent, and hard work of Michigan's Hometown Air Force we have flipped the prevailing narrative of the past. We are now enthusiastically discussing, planning, investing in, and



Brig. Gen. John D. Slocum, retired.



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The Selfridge Base Community Council's mission is to continue improving outstanding relationships between both the civilian and military-service communities centered at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

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**On the cover:** Michigan Air National Guard Airmen support Opening Day festivities at the Detroit Tigers baseball game, April 4, 2019. Airmen from the 127th Wing support patriotic events throughout the region. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Munnaf Joarder)

laying the groundwork for Selfridge's next 100 years as an economic, national defense, and government services cornerstone of southeast Michigan.

"Wingmanship" is fighter pilot speak describing indispensable mutual support, teamwork, and partnerships. A good wingman ensures mutual safety, security, and survivability. It's a partnership, trust, and a collaborative obligation of support. In my 35 extraordinary years, I have never experienced wingmanship like I have here in southeast Michigan.

Selfridge is not just the 127th Wing and our 45 tenant "Team Selfridge" associates, but is also a vast and wonderful coalition of community and business partners who enable, empower, and encourage the teamwork that makes the base and our organization not just viable, but vibrant. It's all about partnerships . . . and we have some incredible partners. From our extraordinary Base Community Council, Macomb

County government champions, all of the local townships, the Macomb Chamber, an amazing Congressional delegation at all levels, to the outstanding and supportive businesses and employers. Over 70 percent of our National Guardsmen are "traditional" (part-time) employees balancing work, life, and selfless service to our state and nation. We're the best because we have patriotic southeast Michigan employers/companies dedicated to supporting their Guardsmen employee's service and sacrifice.

Our scroll of great partners is boundless – and so is my appreciation. I stand in awe of this community.

It's our community support that gives us the advantage and stands Selfridge without equal. Today thanks to you, Selfridge ANGB and the 127th Wing stand as unrivaled and respected pillars of excellence, efficiency, and readiness.

Now more than ever, our country needs a strong military, efficient and effective

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## CHANGE OF COMMAND

# Mammen takes command of the 127th Wing

By Senior Airman Ryan Zeski  
127th Wing Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Rolf E. Mammen took command of the 127th Wing during a change of command ceremony at Selfridge Air National Guard Base during the May 2019 regularly scheduled drill of the 127th Wing.

The ceremony, which took place before most of the 1,700 Citizen-Airmen of the 127th Wing, saw Brig. Gen. John D. Slocum relinquish command of the wing to Mammen. The ceremony's presiding officer was Major Gen. Leonard Isabelle, the commander of the Michigan Air National Guard, of which the 127th Wing is the largest component.

As 127th Wing commander, Mammen also serves as the commander of Selfridge, which has more than 40 tenant military and Dept. of Homeland Security com-

mands, representing more than 4,500 personnel.

Several hundred of the 127th Wing's Airmen were on a deployment to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in Southwest Asia. Mammen noted that even as the 127th Wing changes command, the mission of the Wing continues, as demonstrated by the deployed Airmen.

Mammen had been serving as the director of operations for the Michigan Air National Guard prior to his promotion to the Wing commander's role. Slocum is retiring from the military.

"General Mammen isn't a stranger to most people here at the wing, he has served in many leadership roles over the years," Isabelle said during the ceremony. "He is my number one pick for this job, Gen. Mammen has the

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Brig. Rolf E. Mammen holds the 127th Wing guidon after taking command of the 127th Wing during a May 4, 2019, ceremony at Selfridge Air National Guard Base. A symbolic gesture, the transfer of a unit guidon ceremoniously transfers responsibility of command.

U.S. AIR NATIONAL  
GUARD PHOTO BY  
MASTER SGT. DAVID  
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## ROAD TO RECOVERY

# Veteran Selfridge Airman on road to recovery

By Tech. Sgt. Dan Heaton

127th Wing Public Affairs

A veteran Selfridge Airman is talking with his family and learning to walk again after suffering two debilitating strokes while serving in Afghanistan.

Master Sgt. Bill Scalf's recovery has been nothing short of miraculous, said his wife and his fellow Airmen at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

Scalf was deployed with several hundred Selfridge Airmen and their KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft to a base in Afghanistan when he suffered a stroke on Jan. 30. Today, he remains hospitalized, now at the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor. While a medical retirement from the military appears to be his likely next step, this week he told his commanding officer he's anxious to get back to Selfridge, check in with his co-workers, and, most importantly, give his aircraft a thorough check-up.

"I'm still a crew chief. I'm not retired yet," Scalf told the visitors, including Brig. Gen. John D. Slocum, 127th Wing commander; and U.S. Rep. Paul Mitchell.

As wing commander, Slocum has been keeping close tabs on Scalf's status. Mitchell helped cut through some of the red tape to get Scalf's wife, Cherie Scalf, to a military hospital in Germany in a hurry after her husband's initial stroke.

Scalf had been in Afghanistan supporting KC-135 refueling missions for about a month, working alongside his fellow crew chiefs from the 191st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, when he suffered the first stroke. It was about one in the morning, and he was on the job.

"He was out working on the aircraft," said Cherie. "I guess he was getting it ready for the next day's mission. One of the other guys, Mike Campbell, saw Billy's flashlight moving around in a way that wasn't normal and went out to check on him."

Scalf has been a crew chief on Air Force aircraft for about 30



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. DAN HEATON

U.S. Rep. Paul Mitchell, Master Sgt. Bill Scalf, Cherie Scalf, Rebecca Scalf and Brig. Gen. John D. Slocum visit at the University of Michigan hospital in Ann Arbor, April 23, 2019. Bill Scalf is undergoing treatment after suffering two strokes while serving with the Michigan Air National Guard in Afghanistan in January. Cherie and Rebecca are his wife and oldest daughter.

years. Those who know him are not surprised that when Campbell went out to check on him, Scalf tried to brush off suggestions he be taken to the base clinic for a check-up - he wanted to get the aircraft ready to go first.

"But the guys insisted he get checked. If they hadn't, I really don't know if he would be here today," his wife said. "Each of the people in his unit, they just were amazing at making sure he got the help he needed."

Scalf was administered with the drug known as the "clot-buster," used to treat stroke patients. With that treatment, he appeared fine, back to his normal self. But the military doctors in Afghanistan insisted that Scalf be air-lifted to a major U.S. military hospital in Germany for further care. Once there, Scalf was FaceTime chatting with his wife back home in Warren, letting her know he was feeling fine.

That's when a second, larger stroke happened. And things really became serious.

In Germany, doctors decided to quickly transport Scalf to a local civilian hospital that had more specialists to care for his condition. Back home, things quickly moved in to high gear at Selfridge and at the Scalf household, where Bill and Cherie live with their three children Rebecca, Emily and William.

"One of his commanders called me," Cherie said. "The next thing I know, I'm at Selfridge and having a meeting, and I counted and there were 14 people in the room. It was Gen. Slocum and all the top people. I don't even know who everyone was. But they, each one, were there to help."

One of the hallmarks of the Air National Guard is the concept of the Citizen-Airman. That means that people in the local community are the ones who also serve in uniform. Scalf's military career followed a path not uncommon for many in the Guard. He initially enlisted in the Air Force for four years out of high school. After he was discharged he came

home and was out of the military for a few years. But he missed it. After a while, he joined the Air National Guard, where he could stay in Michigan with his family and still serve. Eventually, he was hired on as a civilian technician at Selfridge, doing the same job as a civilian as he does in his military capacity. One of the great benefits of this is that when a challenge occurs, there is a sense of family in the Air National Guard as people have served together over many years. One of the challenges, however, is because Guard personnel don't live on a military base and are members of the local community, sometimes spouses and the immediate family have less direct connection with the military system.

"I have to admit that I really didn't know how the military system worked, but that's where everyone has been so helpful," Cherie said.

After Scalf's second stroke, Slocum appointed another 191st crew chief, Senior Master Sgt. Erik

Wolford, to be the Scalf family advocate.

Wolford traveled with Cherie to Germany, helping her to understand military processes along the way.

"Honestly, without Erik, I think I would still be stranded at the airport in Frankfurt (Germany), trying to figure out what to do next," she said. "I just ask if I have questions and I have answers."

Scalf spent about a month in the hospital in Germany, most of which time he was in a medically-induced coma. Meanwhile, the couple's three young adult children were on their own back home. The couple's youngest, William, is a senior in high school. Scalf then spent about a month or so at Walter Reed Army Hospital near Washington D.C. He's been at U-M since early April.

"It has been a long road, but they are a great family. Everyone who knows Bill, likes him, so we are all in his corner," said Wolford. After spending about a month in Germany with the Scalfs, Wolford continues to serve as the family's chief liaison with the 127th Wing. He makes regular runs down to Ann Arbor to check in.

"The kids and I know what kind of guy Bill is. But to witness the way his co-workers have rallied behind him, it has really been something to see," Cherie Scalf said.

The deployed Selfridge Airmen have all since returned home, marking the end of another overseas deployment. Many of them have been to Ann Arbor to check in on Scalf.

Slocum said taking care of Airmen and their family is a foundational element of service in the 127th Wing.

"We count on our Airmen to do their part in a very important mission, being a part of the defense of this great country. To be able to do that, we want their families to know they can also count on us. Master Sgt. Scalf is an important part of our family, so we are doing all we can to let his family know we are there for them," Slocum said.



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## SELFRIDGE HISTORY

# Learn about Selfridge, aviation history at the Military Air Museum

By Russ Dyer  
Contributing Writer

An aviator knows he's growing old when he visits an aviation museum and finds airplanes he once flew.

This disconcerting thought occurred to me as I approached the Selfridge Military Air Museum near the main gate and glanced nostalgically at five aircraft that appear on various pages of my flight logbooks.

Reminding myself

that my current mission did not include room for maudlin sentimentality, I continued to the office of the museum's executive director, Lou Nigro.

In response to my question as to how he became associated with the museum, Nigro produced a copy of his whimsical, "Unofficial and Abridged Biography," in which he states he was, "... born in Texas, raised in New York, joined the Air Force after flunking out of college, got stationed in Michi-

gan and has been here ever since."

The "ever since" timeframe spans 48 years and includes college completion, flight training, 6,000 hours of flight time and promotions leading to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Michigan Air National Guard.

Nigro took over the museum shortly after his retirement from the Guard in 2000. Referring to his flying career and retirement decision, he said: "My landings equaled my



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

The Air Park at the Selfridge Military Air Museum is seen on May 12, 2016. The Museum's holdings include more than 30 military aircraft – all with a Michigan connection – and thousands of artifacts in the museum and library. The museum, which is open to the public, is located at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

## COMMUNITY

## AIRMEN ON THE STREET

We asked members of the 127th Wing: **What does leadership mean to you?**



"Not needing to depend on people, but showing appreciation when you find people you can depend on."

— SrA Torrey Gray



"Showing core values and being someone who your troops can look up to."

— TSgt Brandon Hamm



"Taking care of people."

— CMSgt Tim Warchuck



"Showing people how to be better versions of themselves without telling them exactly what to do."

— AIC Jacci Sherry

takeoffs and so I hung up my flight suit and called it a day."

The Air Guards loss was the museum's gain.

The museum is an outreach arm of the Michigan Air National Guard Historical Association that was established in 1975. Its mission is to collect, preserve and display military artifacts and memorabilia relevant to all past and present military units at Selfridge, in the Air Guard and in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties.

Indoor exhibits and features span history's 100 years of powered flight. Displays include aircraft paintings, drawings and photographs, memorabilia from all military services and hundreds of scale model aircraft in display cases and hanging from ceilings. Also exhibited are aircraft engines, an F-16 cockpit, a Korean War-vintage jeep, military aviation artifacts and histories of significant indi-

viduals and events associated with Selfridge. An aviation research library is also available by appointment.

The outdoor, "Air Park" exhibits include craft and fire-response vehicles, Army missiles and vehicles, a mobile control tower and 31 vintage aircraft, "All younger than me," Nigro interjected.

The aircraft in the Air Park were flown by all military branches beginning as early as the World War II era and as recently as present day.

In addition to the museum's main building, four smaller buildings on the 14-acre site are used for aircraft restoration, storage and equipment maintenance. A World War II / Korean War Navy-Marine Corps Corsair aircraft is currently in restoration.

The museum is a non-profit organization staffed entirely by volunteers and receives no federal or state funding. Operational expenses are

generated solely by admission donations, individual or corporate sponsorship, Historical Association membership donations and gift shop proceeds.

Visitors may tour the museum from noon until 4:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays beginning in April and through October. The museum is also open on both the Memorial and Independence Day holidays. Group tours may be arranged at any time. Admission is \$5 for visitors older than 13 years, \$4 for senior citizens older than 65 years, and all types of military members. Children between 5 and 12 years old are \$3 while children under 5 years are free. For more information, go to [www.selfridgeairmuseum.org](http://www.selfridgeairmuseum.org).

Nigro accomplished this all with a bare-bones budget and a platoon of volunteers. Not bad for a kid who once flunked out of college.

## Slocum

FROM PAGE 2

government, and we need to diligently care for our retirees, veterans, and their families. Our country, our State, and our citizens need Selfridge — and Selfridge Stands Ready. We have a rich legacy. Today we have proven and tested readiness. The 127th Wing leads the way. That said, I also believe Selfridge's best years are yet to come. The future is exciting and the possibilities are limitless!

From flying fighter jets at twice the speed of sound to world trav-

els to exotic places, this has been one heck of a ride. In my 35 years' experience I have learned one enduring lesson . . . it's always about people. It's the men and women who make all the difference. And it's all of them, and you, that I will always remember most. It's people who have left an indelible mark on my life and have made me a better person as a result. My life has been enriched by my experience, encounters, and relationships of the amazing men and women I've had the distinction to serve and partner with through these 35 years. I have indeed been blessed.

This will be an emotional transition, but I'm looking forward

to spending some make-up time with my family. I have intentionally not called out individuals by name, but I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge and thank my amazing wife Jen, who has stood by my side throughout this incredible journey. My talented and wickedly smart daughter Keira has supported and sacrificed throughout her formidable years. Their influence and love have meant the world to me. I love you girls!

I keep getting asked: "What's next?" I've actively considered writing a book. Trust me when I tell you it would have some "interesting" chapters. But in real-

ity, I'm a long way from knowing what the future holds. But whatever it is, I know it's going to be amazing!

I still get chills when I hear the National Anthem as I salute our flag rustling in the wind. It's moving to me. So many have sacrificed so much for us to enjoy our freedom today. Our flag is a symbol of that sacrifice and for our freedoms we hold so dear. I will always honor and respect everything it stands for. The last two lines of our National Anthem are a question: "Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?" I always like to answer

that question . . . You're absolutely right it does!

In my commissioning oath I took a vow to uphold and defend the constitution as well as to bear true faith and allegiance to this country. I will never un-take that oath. I love this country and what it stands for. I love Michigan and its unbridled opportunity. I have considered it one of the greatest honors of my life to have the privilege and opportunity to serve in uniform. All this is why I'll never say goodbye to you. I'm just changing how I will serve. So, for now please accept my sincerest thank you for this opportunity to take this amazing journey!



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. DAVID KUJAWA

Maj. Gen. Leonard W. Isabelle, Jr., commander of the Michigan Air National Guard hands the 127th Wing guidon to Brig. Gen. Rolf E. Mammen as Mammen takes command of the wing during a May 4, 2019, ceremony at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

## Mammen

FROM PAGE 3

best understanding of the 127th Wing of anyone in the state."

Mammen was commissioned in 1986 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps at Michigan State University. After spending several years on active duty as a pilot with the Air Force, he joined the Michigan Air National Guard in 1994. Prior to his most recent posting at Michigan Joint Forces Headquarters in Lansing, Mammen previously served as the 127th Wing vice commander, commander of the 127th Maintenance Squadron and in other leadership roles. He is a command pilot with over 3,000 flight hours, primarily as a C-130 Hercules pilot.

"I was so excited to come back to this organization," Mammen said. "Gen. Slocum has done a great job connecting the Airmen to this community, I plan to keep doing the same."

During Slocum's tenure, the 127th Wing earned the Spatz Award, presented to the top flying wing in the Air National Guard; earned an Air Force Meritorious Unit Award; and celebrated milestone anniversaries of the base (100 years) and the 127th

Wing's two flying units, the 107th Fighter Squadron (100 years) and the 171st Air Refueling Squadron (75 years).

"Being able to work with the Airmen here has been a highlight of a 35-year career," said Slocum, the outgoing commander. "Everyone has done a fantastic job and it has been my

pleasure to serve you."

Mammen expressed his gratitude for the members of the 127th Wing, going on to say he couldn't do his job at Selfridge if it weren't for all the Airmen doing their job so proficiently.

"The way I see it, it's my job to help you do your job," said Mammen. "It's my honor to work for you."

**After spending several years on active duty as a pilot with the Air Force, he joined the Michigan Air National Guard in 1994.**



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