

SELFRIDGE FLYER

Volume 6, Issue 2

"127th Wing – Your Hometown Air Force"

March/April 2023



AWARDS

Selfridge Fire Department best in Air Force

By Penny Carroll

127th Wing Public Affairs

The Selfridge Fire Department has done it again.

The 127th Civil Engineer Squadron's Fire Department at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, has been named as the top mid-sized fire department in the Air Force. Only the second time an Air National Guard unit has been awarded this prestigious title, Selfridge also won the first for the ANG back in 2005.

Keeping watch at Selfridge around the clock, seven days a week, the staff of 47 civilians and 32 military members has a heart for the communities they serve. In 2022, their annual golf outing raised \$50,000 for Maggie's Wigs 4 Kids of Michigan, the organization's largest single donation that year.

They also were instrumental in supporting the 2022 Selfridge Open House and Air Show, coordinating firefighters, medics, advanced life support and medical aid tents for the safety and well-being of more than 100,000 people in attendance. During Fire Prevention Month in October, members of the Base Fire Department set up fire pre-

vention displays in front of the base commissary to pass along fire safety and prevention tips that protect property and homes, and help keep Team Selfridge members and their families safe.

"As an ANG fire department, we are a blended family of civilians and drill status guardsmen," said Fire Chief Christopher Ross, 127th CES. "We pride ourselves in supporting each other with the 'one team, one fight' concept, and this year was exemplary because of the stress we faced with our operations tempo on each front."

Selfridge firefighters regularly responded to emergencies both in and outside the base. The unit fulfilled 62 mutual aid requests supporting four adjacent jurisdictions outside the base during the past year, ranging from fires, to medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, rescue calls, and incidents involving hazardous materials. Firefighting Airmen from Selfridge were heavily involved with training seven Latvian firefighters on aircraft emergency egress actions as part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program. And, firefighters from Selfridge were also on scene for safety and pos-

sible emergencies during the 2022 U.S. Highway 28 landing in Michigan's Upper Peninsula when the 127th Wing conducted the Air Force's first highway landing integrated combat turns.

Ross went on to note, "We are just one department across the ANG enterprise of 54 states and territories that is consistently challenged by the same pace of play with less funding, personnel and resources than our active duty counterparts. We do it because we cannot fail and we excel at it because we care."

The unit now moves on to compete at the Department of Defense level against other military service branches.

About the 127th Wing

Comprised of approximately 1,500 personnel and flying both the A-10 Thunderbolt II and the KC-135 Stratotanker, the 127th Wing supports both the Air Mobility Command and Air Combat Command by providing highly-skilled Airmen to missions domestically and overseas. The 127th Wing is the host unit at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, which marks its 105th year of continuous military air operations in 2022



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. CHELSEA E. FITZPATRICK

Tech. Sgt. Danny Bowles and Master Sgt. Michael Rygwelski, firefighters with the 127th Civil Engineer Squadron, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., stand by to help fellow Airmen enter the second floor of a building during structural firefighting training in Macomb Township, Oct. 15, 2022. Firefighters regularly train in entering structures, extinguishing fires and practicing confined space rescue to keep their skills certified.



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY MUNNAF H. JOARDER

Members of the 127th Civil Engineer Squadron's Fire Department, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., Feb. 14, 2023. Selfridge Fire Department serves the Air Force mission as first responders on the flight line, but also routinely augment local municipal firefighting staff in the communities surrounding the base.

EDITORIAL

Selfridge Base Community Council supports local military

By Drema D. Isaac
Selfridge Base Community Council

The Selfridge Base Community Council, also called the BCC, works with Selfridge Air National Guard Base to benefit the joint military community in Macomb County. The Council's 250 members represent business and municipal leaders dedicated to helping foster relationships be-



Drema D. Isaac

tween the military population on base and the local community.

In 2022, the Base Community Council proudly distributed \$50,000 to several military units and charities. This was double the amount provided the year before, and the BCC continues to strengthen their efforts. This financial assistance helps promote the prosperity and quality of life for military defense and civilian communities.

The BCC actively raises funds through membership dues and events. They help to plan, promote, and execute the Selfridge Air National Guard Base Open House and Air

Show, one of the largest community events showcasing Team Selfridge. The BCC also hosts charitable and social functions to raise the thousands of dollars donated each year to support local military organizations. The Council also provides financial assistance for scholarships and educational programs for Team Selfridge members and their families as well as other armed service charities.

Base Council members offer military families a wide range of resources and expertise. Services include a Hometown Heroes Hot Line that assists families left behind. When a service member is de-

ployed, and their family at home needs a plumber, electrician, or something repaired, they can call the hotline, and the BCC will provide the resources to assist.

The Council also advocates for Selfridge Air National Guard Base, working with local, state and federal elected officials to promote the advancement of base operations to defend the country and preserve its economic impact on the local economy. The Selfridge Base Council's volunteer efforts demonstrate an endearing appreciation for military servicemen and women and pride in supporting the Team Selfridge mission.

The BCC has invested in upgraded technology to serve its members better. Recently, the board approved new software to host an interactive website, streamline membership sign-up, and allow for better dues collections. If you are a Macomb County business leader interested in membership, please contact me at disaac@frestarfinancial.com

For questions about luncheons and meeting venues, please call 127th Wing Public Affairs at 586-239-4735 or go to the Selfridge Base Community Council website, SelfridgeCommunityCouncil.com.



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

A heavy-duty snow blower cleans up an aircraft parking area at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., March 4, 2023. The base was hit with more than six inches of snow the night before, but flight operations resumed on time, thanks to a team effort that included the roads and grounds crew from the 127th Civil Engineer Squadron.

SELFRIDGE FLYER

Volume 6, Issue 2



SELFRIDGE BASE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Presidents

Drema Isaac (Current)
Jonathan Vandenbossche (Future)

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.

Wing Commander

Brig. Gen. Rolf E. Mammen

Vice Wing Commander

Col. David Spehar

Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant

Chief Master Sgt. Richard Gordon

127TH WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

Chief of Public Affairs

Mrs. Penny Carroll

Public Affairs Officer

Capt. Cammy Alberts

Base Visual Information Manager

Tech. Sgt. Andrew Schumann

Public Affairs Staff

Master Sgt. Dan Heaton
Tech. Sgt. Chelsea E. FitzPatrick
Tech Sgt. Samara Underwood
Airman 1st Class Nathan Wingate
Airman 1st Class Elise Wahlstrom
Mr. Bruce Huffman
Mr. Munnaf Joarder
Mr. Tom Demerly

PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

The Selfridge Flyer is a publication of the Selfridge Base Community Council and is not an official publication of the Department of Defense. Contents of the Selfridge Flyer are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the DoD, or Digital First Media. Published by MediaNews Group, a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Air Force.

On the cover: An A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft assigned to the 107th Fighter Squadron, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., departs on a training mission, Jan. 24, 2023. Pilots conduct training missions regularly to stay current with required certifications. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tom Demerly)

HERITAGE

127th Wing celebrates sorority's Selfridge connection, honors women

By Bruce J. Huffman
127th Wing Public Affairs

It was 1971, the song, "What's Going On," by Marvin Gaye topped the charts. We wore bell bottom pants, and platform shoes. The cool blue and hot pink Etch-A-Sketches were just hitting the store shelves and we gathered around the fondue pot for some sweet and savory treats. It was also a time when shocking images from the front lines in Vietnam aired nightly in America's living rooms. The Soviet Union launched its first space station into low Earth orbit, and the chaos of war protests, women's marches and political unrest dominated the headlines. As we reflect on the cherished, and not-so-cherished moments of 1971, we also pause to celebrate women's history and pay tribute to some extraordinary ladies with a Selfridge connection you probably never knew existed.

Selfridge was transferred to control of the Michigan Air National Guard, July 1, 1971, making it the first major active-duty Air Force Base to come under the control of the Air National Guard. Shortly after the MI-ARNG took over the base, the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. — Eta Lambda Zeta Chapter was chartered here at Selfridge, Oct. 31, 1971.

The charter members were a group of local sorors that were wives of Selfridge airmen, and one was a schoolteacher at the base. The Sorority has selflessly served Mount Clemens and Macomb County ever since.

"Zeta's mission has al-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHELLE WILSON-MERRIWETHER

Current members of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. — Eta Lambda Zeta Chapter.

ways been to affect positive change in the world, raise people's consciousness, encourage the highest standards of scholastic achievement, and foster a greater sense of unity among its members and the community," said Zeta member Y. Michelle Wilson-Merriwether.

According to Wilson-Merriwether, some of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc.'s programs include the endowment of its national educational foundation, com-

munity outreach services, and support for multiple affiliate organizations. Zeta chapters and auxiliaries have provided numerous hours of volunteer service to educate the public, assist youth, provide scholarships, support organized charities, and promote social and civic change legislation right here in the local community.

Over the years, the sorority has held, "Finer Womanhood," programs, honoring local women in Macomb

The charter members were a group of local sorors that were wives of Selfridge airmen, and one was a schoolteacher at the base.

County, and hosted numerous programs and events to provide services for underserved women, children, men, and seniors.

Other Zeta activities include "Adopt-A-Road," "Meals-On-Wheels," eldercare, honoring veter-

ans, supporting, "Wreaths Across America," providing school supplies for children, and providing support to local churches and community service projects.

Each year, Women's History Month is celebrated throughout March and the

Department of Defense joins the nation in honoring and celebrating the contributions of women to our nation and our Armed Forces. The theme changes each year, and DoD's theme for 2023, is "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories."

Please join the 127th Wing as we tell each other's stories and honor the ladies of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. — Eta Lambda Zeta Chapter for their service to Selfridge and the surrounding communities.

SEEN AROUND SELFRIDGE

Lt. Col. Christopher Salaniuk, right, assumes command of the 191st Operations Support Squadron on Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Feb. 4, 2023. The 191st Maintenance Squadron performs a variety of tasks to ensure that the KC-135s assigned to the 127th Wing are always ready for flight operations.

U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS NATHAN WINGATE



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS NATHAN WINGATE

Michigan Air National Guard pilots from the 107th Fighter Squadron and crew chiefs from the 127th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron prepare aircraft to deploy from Selfridge Air National Guard Base, March 4, 2023. Pilots are deploying for training course integration.



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. ANDREW SCHUMANN

Chief Master Sgt. Levi Shadle has Chief stripes tacked on by his two sons during his March 4, 2023 promotion ceremony, at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich. Chief Shadle became the most recent 127th Wing Headquarters element Chief Master Sergeant, and serves as the 127th Wing Command Post superintendent.

HISTORY

Blackbird midair collision: the story of a KC-135's survival

By Tom Demerly

127th Wing Public Affairs

As SR-71 Blackbird pilot Maj. Buddy Brown slid his aircraft off the first KC-135Q Stratotanker's boom, he told his backseat Reconnaissance Systems Officer, Maj. Matt Jarvis, how smooth the air was at 26,000 feet that morning over Texas.

It was early Wednesday, June 17, 1970. Brown and Jarvis had just completed their first aerial refueling high over the vast area outside El Paso. The special "Q" variant of the KC-135 used segregated fuel tanks to accommodate the SR-71's unique, low-volatility JP-7 fuel and its own conventional JP-5.

In clear skies and fair weather, Jarvis nudged Blackbird from beneath the first tanker to a second KC-135Q, for a final top-off before continuing on a classified mission to test high-powered jamming equipment over the Gulf of Mexico. Those tests would never take place that day.

"I moved to pre-contact position behind number two, reset my refueling system for contact and called that I was ready to refuel," Maj. Buddy Brown told author Paul L. Crickmore in his book, "Lockheed Blackbird: Beyond the Secret Missions" (Osprey, 2016). But almost immediately, subtle tremors foreshadowed calamity.

The Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird and its variants pushed the limits of engineering. Still the fastest publicly known production atmospheric aircraft, the Blackbird was first flown in the smaller A-12 version over 60 years ago in 1962. It later flew as the well-known SR-71 strategic reconnaissance aircraft in December, 1964. As avia-

tion fans know, the Blackbird was capable of Mach 3.3. Only experimental "X" planes and space shuttles have flown faster in the atmosphere.

But like many exotic aircraft flying on the bleeding edge of physics, the Blackbird wasn't optimized for medium-speed, medium altitude flying. As she became bloated with special JP7 fuel behind a tanker, she became a handful. Add relatively poor visibility, a cramped, analog cockpit and a full, high-altitude pressure suit, and taking on fuel behind a tanker was in the least glamorous, and perhaps most dangerous, corner of the Blackbird's flight envelope.

Like foreshadowing in a horror movie, Maj. Buddy Brown said his aircraft hit "sort of a bump, and shook as if it had just flown through turbulent air." He briefly queried Maj. Matt Jarvis in the back seat of the Blackbird: "Did you feel that?"

For seemingly no reason, the nose of the SR-71 suddenly pitched downward, as if entering the vertical oscillations of a sine wave. Then, the nose pitched up farther and more violently.

Reflexively, Maj. Brown shoved the control stick forward, but aerodynamics had taken over. At low aerial refueling speeds the control surfaces on the big SR-71 designed for Mach 3 had less purchase. The Blackbird slammed into the bottom of KC-135Q.

In an instant the nose of the SR-71 sheared off in a grinding midair collision. Maj. Brown's canopy and forward cockpit, including his instrument panel, disintegrated and caved inward from the impact with the KC-135Q. Both his legs were shattered. The tanker's boom



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY TOM DEMERLY

A KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft, flown by the 171st Air Refueling Squadron, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, departs on a training mission, Feb. 3, 2023. The same aircraft survived a midair collision while refueling a SR-71 Blackbird aircraft, June 17, 1970.



PHOTO COURTESY OF 9TH MISSION SUPPORT GROUP

A KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft, taxis at Beale Air Force Base, Calif., pre-June 17, 1970. The same aircraft now flies as part of the 171st Air Refueling Squadron Fleet at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan.

was heavily damaged and wrenched into the fully extended position.

With the canopy caved in, the nose of his SR-71 and all flight control gone, Brown and Jarvis instantly became passengers

on their way to becoming victims.

Whatever the boom operator and the flight crew inside KC-135Q were experiencing, history fails to reveal. But it must have been horrifying, especially for

the boom operator who had just taken a chest full of Blackbird, almost had their boom torn off and was no doubt tossed a few feet up from the prone refueling rest in the back of the KC-135, and this special "Q" variant was no exception. She had taken a serious tail strike from the SR-71 that didn't survive the collision and still performed a safe landing at Beale AFB near Marysville, Calif. While the crew of the KC-135Q was likely shaken by the midair collision over Texas, their aircraft returned them safely back home to Beale.

Decades later and after structural repair, inspection and certification, KC-135Q was updated to KC-135T Block 45 status and is now part of the tanker fleet here at Selfridge ANGB as part of the 171st Air Refueling Squadron.

Battered but still flying, the KC-135Q and its crew limped back to Beale AFB in California, a nearly 1,000-mile flight. The crew were unsure if they could

BASH Bulletin

Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard Program

Where did the birds go?

By Megan Denean

U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Biologist

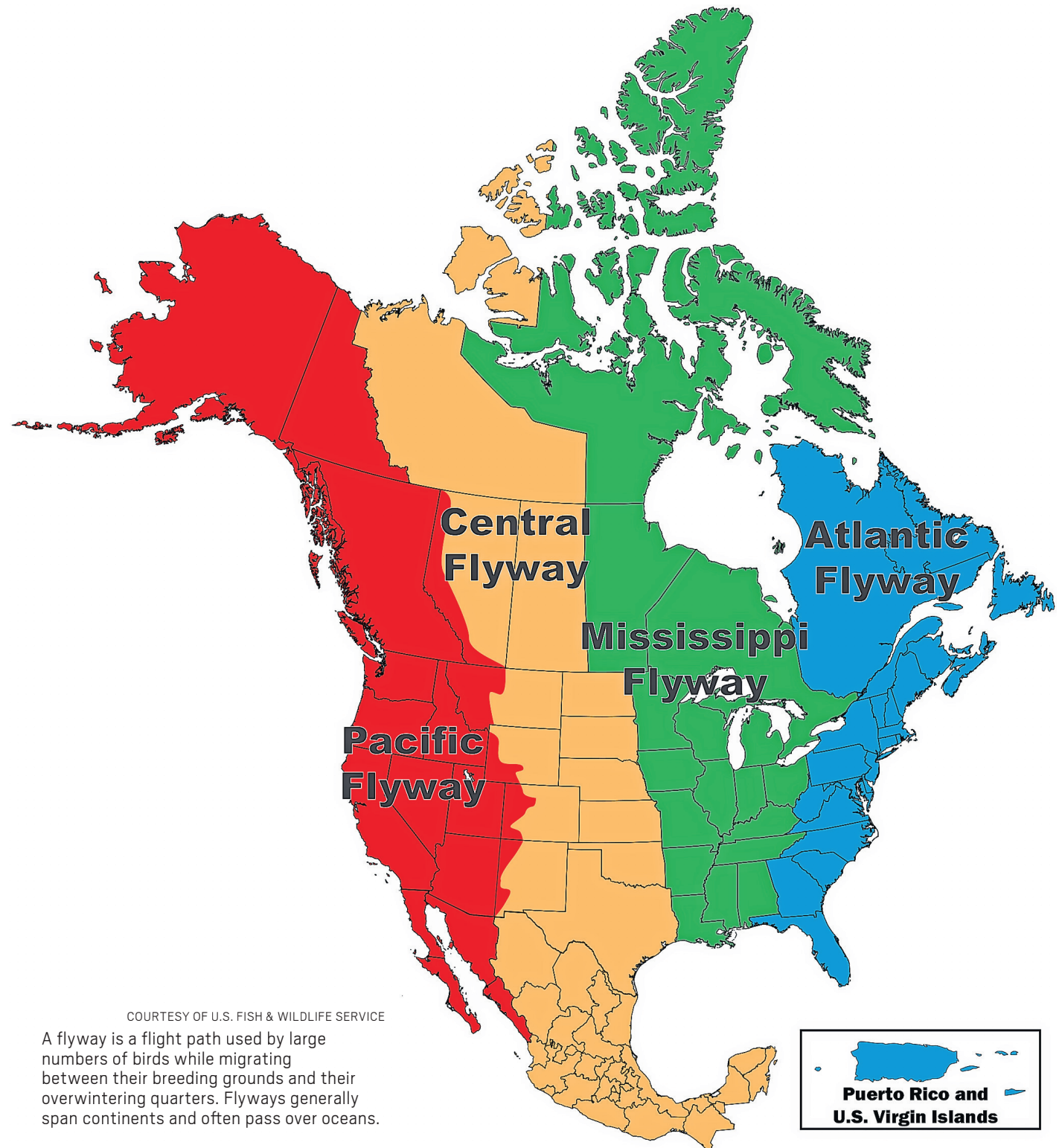
Have you ever wondered where our birds go in the winter?

Many of the birds at Selfridge ANGB take part in the annual migration traveling along the Mississippi Flyway from northern regions of the U.S. and Canada to settle in the Gulf of Mexico, Central, and South America. Most birds migrate at night and at high altitudes — some will even fly over 30,000 feet! Fall migration starts in late summer and peak in September and October.

Birds will begin to return to the Great Lakes Region starting in March, with migration peaking in April and May. At SANG, our BASH team works diligently at the airfield to keep both the birds and our aircraft safe, especially during these high activity periods. You may hear the use of pyrotechnics and propane cannons more during migration periods as an effective and humane way to deter birds off the airfield.

Did You Know?

The longest migration of any animal in the world is made by the Arctic Tern. These terns' nest in the Arctic Circle and migrate over 18,000 miles to the Antarctic Circle every year!



Macomb County Schools Students and Staff

Anchor Bay Schools, Armada Area Schools, Center Line Public Schools, Chippewa Valley Schools, Clintondale Community Schools, Eastpointe Community Schools, Fitzgerald Public Schools, Fraser Public Schools, Lake Shore Public Schools, Lakeview Public Schools, L'Anse Creuse Public Schools, Mt. Clemens Community Schools, New Haven Community Schools, Richmond Community Schools, Romeo Community Schools, Roseville Community Schools, South Lake Schools, Utica Community Schools, Van Dyke Public Schools, Warren Consolidated Schools, Warren Woods Public Schools



With Gratitude for our U.S. Servicemen and Women who Sacrifice for our Freedoms



For more information about Macomb County Schools, please visit www.misd.net