

SELFRIDGE FLYER

Volume 6, Issue 6

"127th Wing — Your Hometown Air Force"

November 2023



YEAR IN REVIEW

Mission highlights from 2023

By Tech. Sgt. Chelsea E. FitzPatrick

127th Wing Public Affairs

In the military world, the acronym “OpsTempo” stands for “operational tempo.” This term is used to describe a unit’s activity level when conducting mission tasks over a time period. In 2023, as in recent years, the OpsTempo for the 127th Wing’s 1,607 employees was demanding, but not without incredible reward.

As we wind down 2023, we want to highlight and share a few of our proudest accomplishments from the year.

1. Selfridge Fire Department was named the best mid-sized fire department in the Air Force. Only the second time an ANG base was honored with this award, the first time was in 2005 when Selfridge also won it.

“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,” said Christopher Ross, 127th Civil Engineer Squadron fire chief.

2. The 127th Force Support Squadron’s services flight was named best dining facility operator in the Air National Guard when they were awarded the “Senior Master Sgt. Kenneth W. Disney Award.” That’s great for Wing members, who were served 5,612 outstanding meals at the dining facility last year.

“Winning the Disney award is confirmation of the skill and the teamwork our Airmen bring to every meal service,” said



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

Community and military members, including Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and a bipartisan delegation of elected leaders, met on May 15, 2023, for a commemorative groundbreaking ceremony at Selfridge Air National Guard Base to celebrate the start of construction on its newest building. The new 42,000-square-foot Hangar 4 will be a \$28 million facility to house fighter aircraft at Selfridge as the first step in an ongoing series of renovations to the base.

Lt. Col. Lisa Boggs, 127th FSS commander.

3. The 127th Maintenance Group’s “Agile Combat Employment (ACE)” team made history yet again when they participated in “Exercise Agile Chariot,” a high-way landing on Wyoming Highway 287. There, 15 ACE Team members supported landings and take-offs of MC-130J Commando II, MQ-9 Reaper and two of their own A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft.

“As part of the ACE team I’ve done things I never thought possible in my career,” said Master Sgt. Joshua Eby, aircraft and ordnance systems supervisor assigned to the 127th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

4. Community and military members, including Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and a

bipartisan delegation of elected leaders, ceremonially broke ground on a \$28 million fighter aircraft hangar, adding nearly 42,000 square feet to the Selfridge flight line. The construction is the first of eight projects planned to provide modern, efficient and world-class facilities for the future of Selfridge and the Michigan Air National Guard.

“We have been working with bipartisan and private sector partners to make more investments in Selfridge by making critical infrastructure upgrades, and we will keep fighting to bring home a new fighter mission,” Whitmer said. “Selfridge is an anchor of Macomb County and an economic driver for Michigan’s defense industry.”

5. The 127th Wing deployed 202 Airmen to

Germany where they stood up a notional expeditionary air base and served as command and control for approximately 2,600 Airmen representing more than 42 U.S. states. The worldwide muscle movement, nearly two years in the making, was the largest air deployment exercise to be held since NATO’s inception.

“We want to demonstrate determined allied air power,” said Lt. Gen. Ingo Gerhartz, Chief of Staff, German Luftwaffe (Air Force). “Together with the U.S. and our allies in Europe, the Luftwaffe will send a highly visible and powerful signal of credible deterrence in the air domain.”

Worldwide missions

The 127th Wing deployed 337 Airmen in support of 37 worldwide missions in

five countries and six U.S. states. In the last month, members of the 127th Air Refueling Group safely returned home and those assigned to the 127th Security Forces Squadron deployed overseas.

Domestic impact

The positive economic impact of the 127th Wing is undeniable. With a payroll of more than \$118MM, the Wing secured more than 100 contracts, contributing another \$35MM to the Michigan economy.

The 127th Wing’s success relies greatly on the embrace of our community stakeholders. Thank you for your support, for continuing to cheer at all 7,000+ annual take-offs and landings and for backing our 106-year history of military operations in southeastern Michigan. Here’s to 107!

SELFRIDGE FLYER

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SELFRIDGE BASE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Jonathan Vandenbossche (Current)

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:

An A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot with the 107th Fighter Squadron, Michigan Air National Guard, practices discharging signal flares as part of survival, evasion, resistance and escape (SERE) training at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, Oct. 13. The SERE training gave pilots hands-on practice in the usage of life support equipment, as well as land navigation and water survival. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Drew Schumann)

READINESS

Training to survive

By Tech. Sgt. Andrew Schumann

127th Wing Public Affairs

Aircrew from the 127th Wing sharpened their survival skills in October and prepared for any possibility that they, one day, may be forced to leave their aircraft in a hostile environment.

Pilots from the 107th Fighter Squadron, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, participated in survival, evasion, resistance, and escape (SERE) refresher training during the 127th Wing's October drill weekend. The training was broken into several modules, which focused on honing survival skills after

leaving an aircraft in hostile enemy, and environmental conditions.

"SERE training is tailored toward high-risk of isolation personnel, training them to survive through conflict and contingency operations, allowing them to return home with honor," said Tech. Sgt. Alex Ribbens, a survival, evasion, resistance and escape air advisor assigned to the 818th Mobility Support Advisory Squadron, Joint Base McGuire Dix Lakehurst, New Jersey, who was at Selfridge to provide the training.

Developed by the United States Army Air Force after World War II, SERE training focuses on the surviv-

ability of individuals who may become stranded in the wilderness or at sea, forced to evade the enemy or survive while in their captivity, and return home with honor. The Air Force has since trained its aircrew members, pararescue men, and other Battlefield Airmen in SERE skills to prepare its Airmen for the unthinkable.

Carried out over the course of two days, the refresher training spanned multiple SERE areas of focus, including conduct after capture, combat survival techniques, and water survival. The training satisfied both the 36-month requirement for pilots to train in combat survival and water

survival, as well as the annual requirement of emergency parachute training.

"The training we accomplished this weekend was geared toward refreshing the skills these pilots learned during their initial Code of Conduct training," Ribbens continued, "as well as making sure the pilots are trained on the current tactics, techniques, procedures, and equipment."

During the first day of training, Selfridge pilots received closed-door instruction on conduct after capture before heading into the field for station training on aircrew flight equipment, tactics for surviving hostile environments, and evading the enemy.

Members of the 127th Operational Support Squadron Aircrew Flight Equipment office facilitated training stations that allowed pilots to demonstrate tactics, such as proper landing posture fol-

lowing an ejection, and releasing from parachutes.

"The importance of hands-on training is so that the pilots are able to operate all of their life-saving equipment should they ever have to eject from the aircraft," said Tech. Sgt. Jasmine Schaffer, lead aircrew flight equipment continuation trainer, 127th Operational Support Squadron. "This equipment is meant to save them, and if they are unfamiliar with it, it could have the opposite effect. ... A lack of familiarity with the equipment provided to them could cause injury to the member. It can also cause a delay in rescue of the member."

The second day of training brought the Michigan pilots to a local high school swimming pool to practice survival techniques while in the water. Training stations were set up there to simulate water-born parachute dragging, escape

from under the parachute canopy, and deploying emergency equipment, such as life rafts. The goal was to simulate a situation where a pilot lands in a body of water following an ejection from their aircraft.

"We do this refresher training so that aircrews are capable and confident in their equipment and skills, should they have to eject or crash land," Ribbens said. "The isolated person is typically the weakest link in the recovery chain, and by doing this training we make them stronger, and improve their survivability, as give them awareness of recovery procedures from the rescuer's perspective."

Training such as this enables the Airmen of the 127th Wing to be ready to mobilize around the globe at a moment's notice and maintain its tradition of being a premier expeditionary force.



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CAREER CLIPS



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

Airman 1st Class Eric Morgan, a power production specialist with the 127th Civil Engineer Squadron, participates in a gas mask fit test being conducted by Staff Sgt. Sean Kozara, a 127th Medical Group medical bioenvironmental technician, at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, Oct. 14, 2023. The lit candle adds particulates to the ambient air which is then compared to the air inside the mask during the test.

Selfridge Airmen ensure gas masks fit right

By Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Heaton
127th Wing Public Affairs

Tucked around the corner, at the end of the hallway, 127th Wing Airmen perform a little-known procedure that involves a candle and rotating their jaw. It could just save their life one day.

When Air National Guard Airmen are issued a MCU-2/P gas mask as part of the gear that would allow them to survive a worst-case chemical weapons scenario, the first order of business is to have that mask checked out and have a fit test performed by a medical bioenvironmental technician. At Selfridge Air National Guard Base, one of the people who perform that task is Staff Sgt. Sean Kozara.

“The mask is your first line of defense in a CBRN environment,” said Kozara, referring to a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapon attack.

During the fit test, technicians such as Kozara first light a candle. The smoke from the candle contains particulates, which a sensing machine detects in the ambient air. The machine also senses the air inside the mask while it is being worn by an Airman. The machine then computes the difference between the two and determines if any of the outside air — which could contain a biological agent — is able to leak into the mask. If there is any leakage, the mask either needs to be readjusted or the Airman may need a different size.

“Conducting the fit test also gives the Airman confidence to know that his or her gas mask will work as advertised,” Kozara said.

During the test, the Airman wearing the mask rotates his or her head and jaw to ensure that the mask continues to fit properly during natural movements.

Testing on this day was Airman 1st Class Eric Morgan, a power production specialist with the 127th Civil Engineer Squadron, who was recently issued a gas mask for the first time.

“It fit great — no problems,” Morgan said.

A gas mask fit test is required whenever an Airman is issued a new mask or if an Airman has a weight gain or loss of more than 10% from when the mask was initially issued.

Network specialists keep Selfridge connected

By Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Heaton
127th Wing Public Affairs

Security and connectivity are the two watchwords for the Network Systems Operations team at the 127th Communications Flight at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan.

“Our task is to ensure security and connectivity to the Air Force network — without that, our units around the base can’t complete their missions and the planes don’t fly,” said Senior Airman Christopher Kim, one of several network security specialists who work on the team.

The team has three areas of responsibility — physically running the cables that connect military computers at Selfridge to the network; maintaining the base’s telephone and emergency telephone network; and operating

the routers, switches and other pieces of hardware that keep it all connected, said Senior Airman Alyssa Cross, another network security specialist in the flight.

“We’re continuously making infrastructure upgrades,” said Senior Airman Brock Mather, the network team lead. “We’re installing new equipment that makes our system more robust on a continuous basis.”

During the month of October, the Air National Guard highlighted the important role that military information technology specialists play in keeping the Air Force information connected. The ANG focus is part of a larger, governmentwide effort. Since 2004, the President of the United States and Congress have declared the month of October to be Cybersecurity Awareness Month, a dedicated month for the public and

private sectors to work together to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity.

This was the 20th Cybersecurity Awareness Month and it has grown into a collaborative effort between government and industry to enhance cybersecurity awareness, encourage actions by the public to reduce online risk and generate discussion on cyber threats on a national and global scale.

“That’s our mission — to make sure everyone has the connection to be able to execute their mission,” said Senior Airman Matthew Kott, also a network specialist at 127 CF.

Cross said the job brings her great satisfaction.

“If we do have an issue, to be able to troubleshoot that, hook it up and keep everybody running — we all have a role to play to support the Air Force mission,” she said.



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

Senior Airmen Brock Mather and Alyssa Cross, both network systems operations specialists with the 127th Communications Flight, 127th Wing, work in a switch room at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, Oct. 14, 2023. October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month which places focus on the work military information technology performs, as well as many other aspects of cybersecurity.



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

Staff Sgt. James Watson retrieves a piece of stock from the 127th Logistics Readiness Squadron warehouse at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, Oct. 13, 2023. Watson is a material management technician with the squadron.

Michigan Airman appreciates the order of the warehouse

By Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Heaton
127th Wing Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. James Watson appreciates the order and the organization of a warehouse.

“Everything is in its place. I appreciate the process,” he said. “When I can see the task list and I know where everything is, I know that I can succeed in my mission.”

Watson is a material management technician with the 127th Logistics Readiness Squadron. Along with a small team of fellow Airmen, his job is to manage the inventory of parts, equipment and gear that it takes to operate an air wing. In the LRS warehouse, you’ll find everything from spare parts for an aircraft engine to a new box of pencils for an administration office. New

boots are over there and there’s a spool of wire in the corner.

Watson has about 11 years of combined service between the active duty Air Force and the Michigan Air National Guard. He said he was pleased to discover the opportunity to continue his service in the Guard.

“When they gave me an option to keep going with the Air Force in a different capacity, I took it,” he said.

ANG launches Airman’s medical career

By Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Heaton
127th Wing Public Affairs

A career in the medical field is the goal and intention of Airman 1st Class Chloe Morgan, a member of the 127th Medical Group at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan. But where, exactly in that broad spectrum of possibilities will she ultimately land?

The Michigan Air National Guard is helping her chart her possible future.

Morgan joined the Michigan ANG at Selfridge about two years ago. After her initial training as a pharmacy technician, several months ago she took a full-time position with the Group as a health technician. Now, she is serving in the pharmacy capacity during her drill weekends and as a health technician during the week.

“I joined initially for the education benefits,” Morgan said. “When I started working in the career field, I realized how much I was learning being a part of the or-

“When I started working in the career field, I realized how much I was learning being a part of the organization. And it’s a good feeling, too, knowing that I can play a role in helping others.”

Airman 1st Class Chloe Morgan

ganization. And it’s a good feeling, too, knowing that I can play a role in helping others.”

Master Sgt. Trina Ramos said Morgan was eager to learn and eager to contribute from day one with the unit.

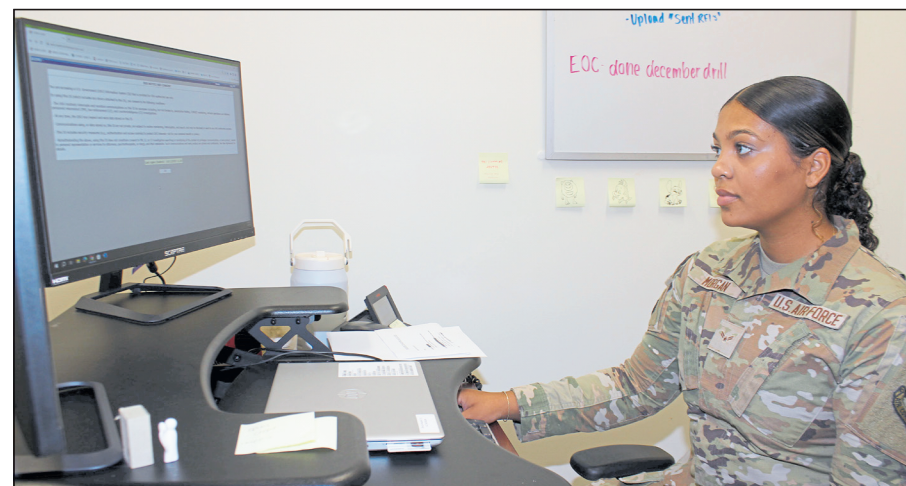
“She’s very motivated and driven herself, but she’s always looking out for the other person. She really is an excellent example of what it means to be an Airman in the medical field,” said Ramos, who serves as the medical support squadron superintendent at Selfridge and is Morgan’s supervisor.

Morgan said the structure of the military is part

of why she enjoys her job.

“Everything and everyone has a place and a role,” she said. “We have different people, with different backgrounds and different skills coming together to get the job done and that’s how we accomplish the mission.”

To learn more about opportunities that exist in the 127th Medical Group or any of the more than 180 career fields that are available in the Michigan Air National Guard at Selfridge, many of which come with a cash bonus upon enlistment, call the recruiting office at Selfridge at 800-432-4296 or visit <https://www.127wg.af.mil/Contact-Us/Join-the-ANG>.



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

Airman 1st Class Chloe Morgan works as a health technician and a pharmacy technician with the 127th Medical Group at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Oct. 14, 2023. Morgan said she appreciates working with and learning from different people across the Medical Group.

SUPPORT

Selfridge Family Readiness Group supports Airmen

By Airman 1st Class Nathan Wingate
127th Wing Public Affairs

Have you wondered how to bridge the gap between your family, home life, and your military service?

The Selfridge Family Readiness Group is a volunteer-run, donation-funded, private organization based at Selfridge Air National Guard base. It is responsible for supporting 127th Wing members, and their families.

The FRG works directly with the 127th Wing commander to accomplish his mission. It is funded through donations from community members, local businesses and organizations.

“We like to say they are ‘an arm of the commander,’” said Jean Wixom, military and family readiness program manager, 110th Wing, Battle Creek Air National Guard base. “Selfridge FRG is awesome. Through community support, they do a lot for the (127th) wing.”

The FRG accomplishes much of its mission to support Wing members by providing a variety of programs, resources, events and support and needs-based assistance, year-round. FRG-hosted events and recreational activities take place throughout the year to inform and educate families about their airmen’s service. Other events allow families to spend time with fellow Wing members to build cohesion and improve camaraderie, such as the annual “Family Appreciation” picnic.

“It’s important to have a Selfridge FRG for morale and connection,” said Chandra Graves, Selfridge

FRG president.

Children participate in events at their parent’s workplace during the annual “Halloween Spooktacular,” and “Breakfast with a Military Child.” These events provide breakfast, lunch, snacks and fun.

Graves, also an experienced military spouse, is committed to supporting service members because her now-adult children participated in the same FRG events.

“It’s my goal to help make happy memories for service members and their families,” Graves said.

The FRG also facilitates happy memories by providing military families in need during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons. Annually, the group is able to give away turkeys to more than 300 Wing members.

The group also is able to enrich Christmas holidays by personally delivering Christmas gifts to children missing their deployed parents, and by facilitating the “Adopt-a-Family” program.

“We want to be able to have arms around our people and support them,” said Graves. “I just want you all to know you are supported and loved.”

“Adopt-a-Family” allows donors to adopt a military family who may be facing challenges. Gifts are distributed for the holiday season to members’ families who apply and meet the eligibility criteria.

These events and programs also give the community an opportunity to demonstrate their appreciation to servicemembers.

“We are gifted with gift cards to distribute if



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

U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Matthew Brancato, commander of the 127th Wing, and his wife, Col. Micaela Brancato, 217th Air Operations Group, 110th Wing, Michigan Air National Guard, stand with Family Readiness Group members during the opening ceremony of the Wing’s family appreciation day, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, Sept. 9, 2023. The Selfridge Family Readiness Group sponsored the event, giving 127th Wing members the opportunity to spend time together and with their families.

someone needs food, but there are also times when a member’s refrigerator or stove may go out and we are here to support,” Graves said.

As Airmen leave for or return from deployments, the FRG is always there with food and gift bags. Even a contribution as small as a sandwich before a long flight can have a large impact.

While those Airmen are deployed, the FRG provides a sense of community for their families.

Graves’ job is to coordinate volunteers and act as a conduit between the members, their families and donors. The FRG leadership consists of a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and

many other volunteers.

“The Selfridge FRG’s support services are dependent upon the availability of volunteers and the battle rhythm of the 127th Wing,” Wixom said.

The FRG is always searching for more volunteers and donors to support its mission.

“If we could leave a legacy, I would love for people to say this group on base helped me at a time when my family member was serving,” Graves said. “This group is a benefit to us.”

Anyone interested in information, volunteering, sharing with family, or participating in any capacity may email the Selfridge FRG at selfridgefrg@gmail.com.



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

Volunteers for the 127th Wing Selfridge Family Day event assist a Wing member and his family in registering at the event on Sept. 11, 2021. Sponsored by the 127th Wing Family Readiness Group, the event was held to thank the family and members of the unit, for all the sacrifices they make.

TECHNOLOGY

Coast Guard upgrades multi-mission helicopters to Air Station Detroit

By U.S. Coast Guard Lt. William Colomb

Air Station Detroit

U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Detroit is completing the process of upgrading its MH-65 Dolphin helicopter fleet from the legacy "D" model to the new "E" model.

The avionics upgrade to the "E" configuration provides enhanced search and rescue capabilities, including a glass-cockpit-like technology that increases pilot and aircrew situational awareness and provides commonality with the USCG's MH-60T Jayhawk fleet.

The Dolphin upgrades also include reliability and capability improvements for the automatic flight control system, enhanced digital weather and surface radar, and multifunctional displays with more accurate fuel calculations.

"The updated flight control system adds an extra layer of confidence while flying on search and rescue cases late at night and over the water," said Lt. Rachael McGhee, an MH-65 pilot assigned to Air Station Detroit. "This allows more of our attention to be spent searching."

The upgrades comply with the Federal Aviation Administration's "Next Generation Airspace Transportation System" requirements and extend the aircraft service life into the late 2030s.

During the upgrade period, more than 20 of Air Station Detroit's pilots have completed a three-week transition course at the Aviation Training Center in Mobile, Alabama. Aircrew and mechanics were formally trained by a team from the Aviation Technical



U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Detroit, at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, received its first upgraded MH-65E Dolphin helicopter on Sept. 12, 2023. The upgraded helicopter replaces a former MH-65D Dolphin with avionics upgrades that include a glass cockpit display for increased pilot and aircrew situational awareness.

U.S. COAST GUARD COURTESY PHOTO

During the upgrade period, more than 20 of Air Station Detroit's pilots have completed a three-week transition course at the Aviation Training Center in Mobile, Alabama.

Training Center in Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

"The upgrades and advanced training will enhance the situational awareness of our aircrews and improve our mission planning capabilities," said Cmdr. Christian Polyak, commanding officer of Air Station Detroit. "The replacement and inspection of key aircraft components as a part of the upgrade also extend the aircraft's service life and enable us to continue ensuring maritime safety, security and stewardship far into the future."

Air Station Detroit Dolphin helicopters and air-

crews perform search and rescue, maritime law enforcement and marine environmental protection, and provide aids to navigation and ice patrol support throughout the Great Lakes region. These teams also provide support to augment the North American Aerospace Defense Command's airspace security mission in Washington, D.C., and throughout the country as required for national security.

For more information regarding the Coast Guard Unit, visit our Facebook and Instagram pages at "Coast Guard Air Station Detroit."

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