

SELFRIDGE FLYER

Volume 7, Issue 2

"127th Wing – Your Hometown Air Force"

March 2024



INSPIRING SIGHT

Renewing and 're-bluing' the enlisted force

By Chief Master Sgt.
Richard Gordon
127th Wing

I recently had the honor of attending a graduation ceremony for the "Noncommissioned Officer Leadership Academy" course at McGhee-Tyson Air National Guard Base, Tennessee. If I were to sum up that experience in one word, I would say, "INSPIRED!"

The moment I walked into the graduation hall, I was beyond impressed by the crowd of sharply-dressed, young NCO's eager to walk across the stage after five weeks of professional military education.

The Airmen filled the room with a sense of positive energy, having been renewed and "re-blued" with innovative ideas, finely-tuned skills, and infinite possibilities for their futures.

After a culmination of 196 academic hours in the areas of team leadership, joint warfighting, and strategic thinking, the Airmen were prepared to return to the field and do that which our NCOs do so well: successfully lead teams, strengthen the organizational culture and solve problems collaboratively with a firm understanding of our nation's strategic imperatives.

I concluded the event flooded with emotion reminiscing of my own time, long ago, walking across this very stage.

I was amazed at how far the Air Force has come in the education of enlisted



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD COURTESY PHOTO

U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Richard Gordon, center, recognized Michigan National Guard's 127th Wing graduates of the "Noncommissioned Officer Leadership Academy" course at McGhee-Tyson Air National Guard Base, Tennessee, Sept. 28, 2023. Gordon traveled from Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan to support the members as they completed the five-week course in leading teams, strengthening organizational culture and solving problems collaboratively, while firmly understanding our nation's strategic imperatives.

Airmen, and inspired by this newest generation of warriors profoundly doing what so many Americans are unwilling to do.

I left the event confident that we have the leaders we need to meet the challenges of the future fight.

Professional military education is a critical facet of our broader developmental continuum, beginning with basic military training and

advancing with comprehensive training and support throughout an Airman's career, whether they serve four or 40 years.

The overarching goal is to cultivate well-rounded and capable Airmen who can effectively carry out their duties, adapt to ever-evolving and uncertain challenges and contribute positively to the mission of the U.S. Air Force — FLY, FIGHT, WIN!

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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: U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Sean Langlois, left, and Airman 1st Class Austin Wigglesworth, right, aerospace propulsion technicians with the 191st Maintenance Squadron, unfasten a KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft engine, Feb. 6.

U.S. AIR NATIONAL PHOTO BY TOM DEMERLY

ENLISTED PROMOTIONS

1ST QUARTER 2024

127TH AIR REFUELING GROUP

- SRA DONNA MILLS
- SRA HEATHER STALNAKER
- SRA MADALYN VANALSTINE
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- MSGT JORDAN KAMINSKI

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- MSGT GRANT KUMFER
- MSGT ROBERT ROBY, JR.
- MSGT JENNIFER SLADOVICH
- SMSGT SHAUN WEST

VALOR

127th Wing celebrates unit, base legacy

By Tech. Sgt. Chelsea E. FitzPatrick

127th Wing Public Affairs

Members of the Michigan National Guard's 127th Wing hosted a military ball in Clinton Township on March 2. The event brought more than 700 attendees, including Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief, National Guard Bureau, Tony Whitehead, in celebration

of the theme, "Legacy of Valor."

With a distinguished career, including tenure as command chief master sergeant of the 127th Wing, Whitehead gave the keynote address, sharing what he considers as Selfridge Air National Guard Base's "amazing legacy."

"[Selfridge] is where Airmen like Curtis Lemay and General Hap Arnold came

to train, the place where aces were created and where training happened for the Tuskegee Airmen," Whitehead said. "This is where some of the best training for people in the aviation community takes place: that's part of your legacy."

Chief Master Sgt. Rick Gordon, command chief master sergeant of the 127th Wing, presented Whitehead

with a memento of appreciation following his remarks.

"Events like these tighten our bonds of camaraderie, esprit de corps and build our shared vision for the 127th Wing," Brig. Gen. Matthew Brancato, 127th Wing and Selfridge ANG Base commander said. "Serving with you is an honor, and I'm proud of the 127th Wing and our accomplishments."

In addition to Whitehead, five former 127th Wing command chief master sergeants attended the event including Bill Live- say, Michael Dalton, Keith Edwards, and Dan McDow representing years between 1998 and 2003, 2008 and 2011 and 2015-2020.

"It says a lot when we have our former senior enlisted who continue to show up time and time

again, years later, because they believe in you," Whitehead said. "I challenge you to continue this legacy of greatness."

A video, produced by 127th Wing public affairs, highlighted the 127th Wing's legacy, missions and family, featuring a variety of personal stories told by Airmen from a variety of units within the 127th Wing.



U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY SGT. 1ST CLASS ELIZABETH PENA

Senior Enlisted Advisor Tony Whitehead, senior enlisted advisor to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, delivers the keynote address to the Michigan National Guard's 127th Wing, during their military ball, in Clinton Township, March 2, 2024. During the formal event, Whitehead emphasized the importance of family support and celebrating mission accomplishments.

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CHANGED PATH

Focus on family, career allows recruiter to connect twice with recruit

By Tech. Sgt. Chelsea E. FitzPatrick
127th Wing Public Affairs

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Eric Dalen can thank his recruiter for a lot.

In 2019, while a student at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Dalen was pursuing a bachelor's degree in nursing while taking Air Force Reserve Officer Training Courses, but didn't feel like he was on the right path.

"I'd switched my major from nursing to psychology, then realized all I cared about was the military side," Dalen said. "As much fun as college is, I just really wanted to be in the service."

After reaching out to the active duty Air Force recruiting station near his hometown in Rochester Hills, he was connected with recruiter Tech. Sgt. Kataryna Ostrowski who supported him over a three-month process. While the enlistments typically do not take three months, Dalen had to get in shape. He lost 50 pounds and kept in contact with Ostrowski on a weekly basis.

"She would check in, ask how it's going and I texted her every Friday with updates," Dalen said.

When Dalen and Ostrowski's paths crossed, he expressed his need for a change in what he had been doing. Ostrowski said Dalen's enlistment helped launch his Air Force career and lead him to education benefits for the future.

"I felt like we could get him 'a breather' and get him [education] resources to use, so even if he did a four-year active-duty contract and got out, he'd still have the \$80,000 G.I. Bill to use," Ostrowski said.

By June 2019, Dalen shipped out to basic military training and afterward was ultimately stationed at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana as a B-52 Stratofortress aircraft maintainer.

Ostrowski, also a Michigan

native, worked in civil engineering fields, including water fuel systems and dorm management for approximately 10 years before becoming an active-duty Air Force recruiter stationed at the Clinton Township office. In 2020, she received orders that would have sent her to Texas without her partner, separating her family. She did what she knew would keep her loved ones together and joined the Air National Guard.

"I thought, 'I'm not going to be a single mom with three kids in Lubbock, Texas,'" Ostrowski said. "Family is my No. 1."

Meanwhile, Dalen deployed to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia between October 2021 and April 2022, rounding out his last year of enlistment. Like Ostrowski, he knew when his contract ended he wanted to go home to Michigan to be close to his family.

"You just miss a lot, like my brother had a kid during the pandemic and I'd seen her only twice from afar in the beginning of her life," Dalen said. "I wasn't able to really see her until she was about two."

A story of the same recruiter and recruit duo enlisting together twice within four years may be an adage only the National Guard can provide. Both chose stability for their family as the driving force in their decision to transition from active Air Force to the ANG. The second factor was flexibility in their career path.

Thus, fate brought Dalen and Ostrowski together again last October when Dalen signed another contract, this time enlisting as a firefighter with the 127th Civil Engineer Squadron. Well, maybe fate and social media. Dalen had stayed connected to Ostrowski on Instagram and saw that she had become an ANG recruiter, prompting him to reach out the second time.

Ostrowski says social media is an important tool for re-

cruiting because it extends the reach beyond what they can do in person at a high school.

"I could go to a school and maybe they're not interested because they're eating lunch and the military isn't something they've given much thought to," Ostrowski said. "Social media is going to gain more interest and you have to be purposeful when you click on something."

Now that Dalen is home in Michigan awaiting his firefighting training course, he says he has plans to go back to school to finish his degree full-time.

"Now that I have had three years of school with the school that I have from Air Force, I think I'll try pushing it a little bit further, and go for physician's assistant or something like that," Dalen said. "I figure I have the tuition benefits, I might as well make the most of it."

Michigan Guardsmen pursuing higher education programs can qualify for different levels of tuition assistance benefits, with a bachelor's degree eligible for up to \$14,400. Last year, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer expanded tuition benefits when she signed "Public Act 33 of 2023" into law, granting tuition benefits for eligible spouses and dependents of National Guard members.

Ostrowski enjoyed getting to work with Dalen twice and says she enjoys watching Airmen grow within the organization.

"I want to hear when you go to basic training, if you got an award, I want to celebrate all those successes," Ostrowski said. "That's another thing that made it so exciting to work with Eric again because it's another milestone in his career and it's special to be a part of that."

Those interested in joining the Michigan Air National Guard at the 127th Wing can call 586-239-5511 or go to www.127wg.ang.af.mil/Home/Join-the-ANG.



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO COURTESY OF TECH. SGT. KATARZYNA OSTROWSKI

Maj. Jason McNally, judge advocate general, 127th Wing, stands with Senior Airman Eric Dalen, a firefighter apprentice, after a swearing-in ceremony at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Oct. 5, 2023. Dalen completed an active duty tour and joined the 127th Wing, choosing to be closer to his family and hometown.

RETENTION

127th Wing asks, 'What's your why?'

By Senior Master Sgt.
Daniel Heaton

127th Wing Public Affairs

Master Sgt. Chandra Corrado wants to know your “why.”

Now the retention manager for the 127th Wing, Corrado has spent most of her 20-plus year career with the Michigan Air National Guard serving in various capacities in the recruiting or retention offices. As the retention manager, her primary responsibility is discussing career options with 127th Wing Airmen who are on the fence about continuing their military career.

“I want to know, ‘What’s your why?’” Corrado said. “Why do you want to leave the military, what are your future goals? When people enlist, they have a ‘why.’ As you grow and move into a different phase in your life, your why changes. And a lot of times, there’s a path in the Air National Guard that can answer that why, but you may not be aware of it.”

For example, Corrado said, Airmen often do not know about educational benefits that may be available to them — or to their children.

“I think most people know that there are educational benefits from being in the military, but a lot of people don’t know exactly what those benefits are or how to plug in to them,” she said.

Corrado was recently joined in the retention office by Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Sladovich. The two NCOs have very different career paths. While Corrado has been in recruiting and retention almost her entire career, Sladovich has had a more varied background.

She started with an initial enlistment on active



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

Senior Airman Mohammed Alkhuzabee, a member of the 127th Civil Engineer Squadron, completes some paperwork with Master Sgt. Chandra Corrado at the 127th Wing Retention Office at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, Jan. 27, 2024. Corrado is the wing’s retention manager and she works with Airmen to tap into benefits or new opportunities to allow them to continue their military career.

duty in the Navy. After a break in service of more than 10 years, she enlisted in the Michigan Air National Guard, primarily seeking assistance to go back to college. She then worked on a joint assignment at state headquarters, completed a short tour

working in an administrative position in England and then joined the retention office at Selfridge in 2023.

“I tell people to ask about the opportunities, to be open to it,” she said. “The Air National Guard has many different opportunities and I don’t think that

people are always aware of the options that exist. Talk to your leadership. Is there a different schedule that works for you or maybe it is to cross-train into a new opportunity? We have so many good people out here on the base and we need those people to continue their ser-

vice.”

To help Airmen better understand their educational benefits, Corrado offers an annual briefing on everything available.

“There are state benefits and several types of federal benefits that individuals may be eligible for. We

want to help Airmen maximize their benefits,” she said.

The wing’s retention office is a component of the 127th Force Support Squadron. The office is located on the main floor of Building 304 and may be reached by calling 586-239-4031.

FULL STEAM AHEAD

Selfridge announces 2024 air show plans

By Penelope Carroll
127th Wing Public Affairs

The Michigan National Guard's 127th Wing will host the 2024 Selfridge Open House and Air Show on base June 8 and 9. This free event is open to the public and will feature the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds.

The event's theme is "Innovation Focused: STEAM Driven" and will include a science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics expo dedicated to enriching the audience's experience through hands-on exhibits. Notable participants include NASA's Glenn Research Center and the Air Force Research Laboratory. In addition, the art community is asked to compete in the event's commemorative military challenge coin design contest.

"We believe that STEAM ed-

ucation is essential for preparing our youth for the challenges of the 21st century," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Kraig Lohse, an A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft pilot assigned to the 107th Fighter Squadron, and the 2024 Selfridge Open and Air Show director. "We want to use these events as an opportunity to showcase the positive impact that STEAM can have on young people."

"We are reaching out to organizations, public and private, to solicit participation, with hopes that the event will be mutually beneficial. We are open to any and all ideas that would help us achieve our goal of inspiring young people to pursue careers in STEAM fields," Lohse said.

Aerial demonstrations include the Thunderbirds, U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team, Bill Stein Airshows, Franklin's

Flying Circus, A-10 Thunderbolt II, KC-135 Stratotanker, the Misty Blues parachute team, U.S. Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin, Swamp Fox and his P-51 and F-86 aircraft.

In addition, there will be ground displays showcasing dozens of military vehicles, including the 127th Wing's own aircraft, U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook and numerous military ground vehicles.

Activities will be available for children of all ages, with a Kids Zone and multiple bouncy

houses, arts and crafts. Food and drinks will be available for purchase.

The gates to the base will open to the public at 8 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday, June 8-9. More information including links to the art contest, chalet purchase opportunities, preferred seating options, prohibited items and more can be found at TeamSelfridge.com.

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 107th year of continuous military air operations in 2024. For updates and to learn more about the Selfridge 2024 Open House and Air Show, like and follow the 127th Wing on Facebook.

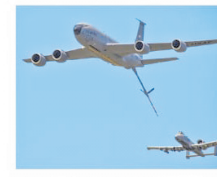
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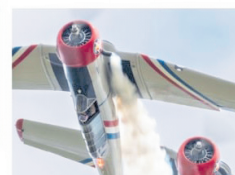
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STAY TUNED FOR MORE UPDATES AS WE CRAFT AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENT BRIMMING WITH EXCEPTIONAL TALENT.

ALWAYS READY

Coast Guard Air Station Detroit winter proficiency trip

Courtesy story by U.S.C.G. Air Station Detroit

Coast Guard Air Station Detroit recently returned from its annual Winter Proficiency Trip to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

During this trip, two MH-65E's deployed, along with a ground support team, to conduct hoist training operations with Coast Guard boat stations and a local fire department.

This deployment ensured the unit's readiness and proficiency in advance of the upcoming search and rescue season. In total, Air Station Detroit's 32 pilots, aircrew and rescue swimmers completed 100 training flight hours during a three-and-a-half-week period.

Coast Guard boat crews from Station Emerald Island, Wrightsville Beach, Oak Island and Georgetown were able to exercise their skills on their 47' Motor Life Boat and 45' Response Boat-Medium.

These boat crews facilitated over 115 training hoists and provided on-scene cover while helicopter crews deployed their rescue

swimmer.

Air Station Detroit also completed operations with the Murrells Inlet Fire Department.

Training with the Fire Department allowed for aircrews to develop a different sight picture while hoisting to boats smaller than Coast Guard vessels.

More importantly, this continued a partnership developed in 2023, during Air Station Detroit's first Winter Proficiency Trip in 2023. Murrells Inlet Battalion Chief Jim Edbrooke spoke to News13 about the opportunity: "I'm very proud of the crews that are out there operating, they operate at the highest level all the time."

While hoist training opportunities in the Great Lakes are rare between December and March, the unseasonably warm winter has kept ice from developing as much as normal. By conducting the Winter Proficiency Trip, Coast Guard Air Station Detroit is ensuring that they remain proficient to answer the call of any distressed mariner in the Great Lakes region, and will be Always Ready.



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

A U.S. Coast Guard Rescue Swimmer is received back onto a MH-65 Dolphin helicopter by a flight mechanic while conducting hoist rescue simulation training at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, Jan. 7, 2023. Selfridge Air National Guard Base is a joint military service installation, home to Coast Guard Air Station Detroit, the 127th Wing of the Michigan Air National Guard, and dozens of state and federal tenant units.



A U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft, assigned to the 127th Wing, gets final checks before departing on a training mission during Exercise Agile Rage 2024 in Savannah, Georgia, Feb. 28. Agile Rage is a National Guard Bureau-led exercise, bringing Air National Guard units together to practice joint, counter-land and combat search and rescue operations in a simulated-medium-to-high threat environment.

U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. SEAN MADDEN

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