

February 2017

SELFRIDGE FLYER

127th Wing - Your Hometown Air Force



INSIDE

Former Marine has
special appreciation
for A-10s



SELFRIDGE FLYER

The Selfridge Flyer is a monthly publication highlighting the citizen Airmen of Selfridge Air National Guard Base. It is produced, printed and distributed in partnership with Digital First Media.

127th Wing
Selfridge Air National Guard Base, MI 48045
Phone: (586) 239-5576

Website:
www.127wg.ang.af.mil

127th Wing, Michigan Air National Guard
Commander: Brig. Gen. John D. Slocum
Vice Commander: Col. David Brooks
Command Chief Master Sergeant: CMSgt. Tony Whitehead

Public Affairs Staff
Chief of Public Affairs: C. Phillip Ulmer
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Public Affairs Staff: Master Sgt. David Kujawa, Tech. Sgt. Dan Heaton, Tech Sgt. Rachel Barton, Staff Sgt. Samara Taylor, Staff Sgt. Andrew Schumann, Senior Airman Ryan Zeski, Airman 1st Class Brandon Gifford, Mr. Terry Atwell, Mr. John Brandenburg

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Publishing Partner

Digital First Media / Michigan Group
19176 Hall Road, Clinton Township, Mich. 48038

President

Jeannie Parent
mipublisher@digitalfirstmedia.com

Vice President / Sales

Teresa Goodrich
tgoodrich@digitalfirstmedia.com

Design, Editing and Production

Tracy Beedy, Matt Mytciu

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COVER PHOTO BY U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD MSGT. DAVID KUJAWA
Tech. Sgt. Josh Kacharos (holds/stands with) a bomb ejector rack in front of an A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft at Selfridge. Kacharos works on the racks in the Armaments shop of the 127th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. A former Marine, Kacharos was once in a convoy in Iraq that was taking enemy fire – until a flight of A-10s arrived on the scene causing the opposition force to quickly disappear.

FROM THE COMMANDER

Working with the community to tell the Selfridge story

By Brig. Gen. John D. Slocum

127th Wing commander

Over the past month, the Selfridge story has been told, in part, by the Anton Art Center in Mount Clemens.



Slocum

Through a partnership with this community art gallery, paintings, photographs, and some artifacts highlighting 100 years of operations at Selfridge were on display. I'd like to thank Phil Gilchrist, executive director of the center, and his staff for including the Selfridge display as part of their Michigan Annual show.

Our work with the Anton Art Center is just one example of how our Michigan Citizen-Airmen, who live in and are part of our local communities, are able to build partnerships that simply do not exist in other branches of the Department of Defense community. These partnerships exist on not only the local level, but extend to state, federal, and even international programs. As an example, the Michigan National Guard has enjoyed a State Partnership for Peace relationship with the Baltic nation of Latvia for almost 25 years now.

While the Selfridge display at the Anton is winding down as I write this – the display concludes on Feb. 24 – there is some good news: Most of the material on display came from our own Selfridge Military Air Museum which is located on the base. The museum, which receives no tax dollars, is operated by



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY CAPT. ANTHONY LESTERSON

Brig. Gen. John D. Slocum, 127th Wing commander, examines some of the artwork during a special display at the Anton Art Center in downtown Mount Clemens.

the volunteers of the Michigan Air Guard Historical Association and is open to the public on weekends April – October. It is also open by appointment as volunteer schedules allow. This museum is a hidden treasure of local military and aviation heritage and I strongly encourage you to schedule a visit. You can reach the museum at (586) 239-6768 or via email at: info@selfridgeairmuseum.org.

In addition to the displays at the Selfridge Military Air Museum, the 127th Wing is engaging in a number of community outreach programs this year, as part of our centennial celebration. One of these events will be conducted in partnership with the Detroit chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen Association. I look forward to sharing more details about these events in the future.

Finally, let me just take

a moment to update you on the status of the possibility that the F-35 Lightning II, the Air Force's newest fighter aircraft, may be stationed at Selfridge in the future. A number of local partner organizations, including our Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel, are joining with us to showcase the capabilities and advantages of not just Selfridge, but the Michigan National Guard as a whole. An Air Force team will be visiting Selfridge this summer as part of the determination process for where the F-35 will be based. We continue to believe that Selfridge makes the most sense for our nation's defense as a base for this advanced aircraft. You'll be hearing a lot more about the F-35 from us in the very near future.

If you have any questions for me, please do not hesitate to contact me via the email address provided.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR BRIG. GEN. SLOCUM?

The "Ask the Commander" feature on the 127th Wing's public web site allows for emails to be sent directly to the commander's office at Selfridge Air National Guard Base. There is a link to the feature on the web site, www.127wg.ang.af.mil; or emails may be sent directly at usaf.mi.127-wg.mbx.pa@mail.mil.

Brig. Gen. Slocum is the commander of the 127th Wing and base commander at Selfridge Air National Guard Base. A command pilot, he has logged more than 4,000 hours of time flying military aircraft. Currently, he flies the A-10 Thunderbolt II, an attack aircraft assigned to Selfridge.

FINANCIAL PROGRAMS

Tuition assistance plan changes made for National Guard troops in Michigan

By Angela Simpson
JFHQ Public Affairs

LANSING » Soldiers and Airmen of the Michigan National Guard who are attending almost any public or private college, university, vocational school, technical school or trade school located in Michigan can receive tuition assistance up to \$600 per credit hour (maximum \$6,000 per year), from the Michigan National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program.

Recent changes to the MING-STAP statute have made it easier and faster for funds to be disbursed. “The changes essentially allow us to pay the school directly, which in-

creases efficiency,” said Brig. Gen. Michael Stone, assistant adjutant general of the Michigan National Guard. “The new language increases efficiency and reduces manpower by eliminating the middle person in the process. A Michigan Guard member can complete an online application and have tuition paid directly to his or her school.”

“This is a tremendous tool for the Michigan National Guard to recruit and retain the Nation’s best Soldiers and Airmen,” said Maj. Gen. Gregory Vadnais, adjutant general of the Michigan National Guard, and the director of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Since the program began, more

“A Michigan Guard member can complete an online application and have tuition paid directly to his or her school.”

Brig. Gen. Michael Stone, assistant adjutant general of the Michigan National Guard

than \$5 million have been disbursed to support Michigan National Guard members’ educational efforts. Additional information about the program is available at michigan.gov/mingstap.

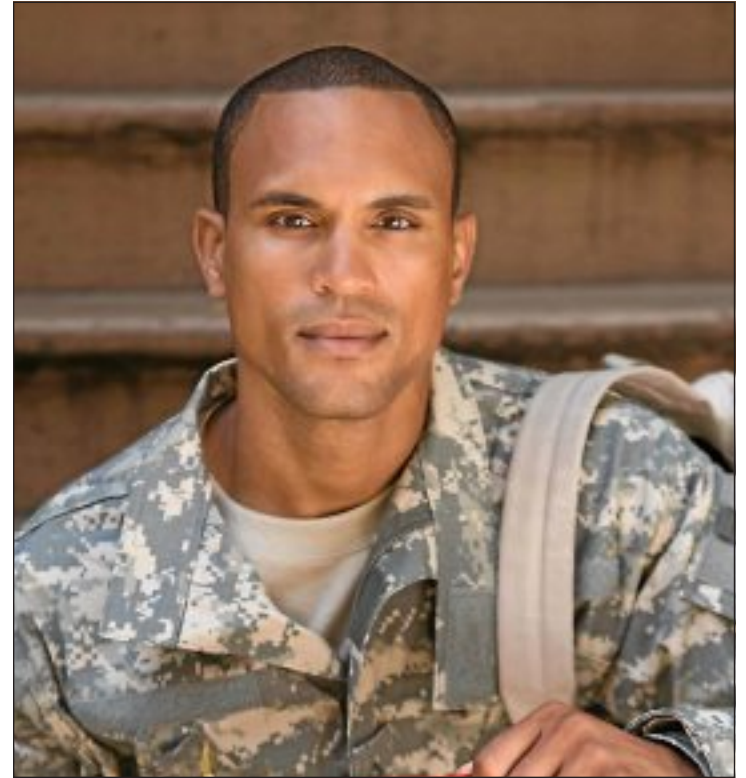


PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Changes in state law have made it easier for members of the Michigan National Guard to utilize state tuition assistance.

Credit Union President and CEO has Long History with Supporting the Military

Drema Isaac’s career in the credit union industry began in 1994. She served in several key executive roles before becoming President and CEO of FreeStar Financial Credit Union in 2002. About 25 percent of FreeStar Financial’s current membership consists of military members.

FreeStar Financial was founded in 1957 as Selfridge Air Force Base Credit Union, originally serving only members at the Selfridge Air Force Base. Throughout the years, it merged with other



Drema Isaac, General Slocum and Raymond White, Jr., Board Chairman

credit unions serving Kincheloe base, Custer Air Force Station, and K. I. Sawyer base. FreeStar Financial now serves military members in 49 states and around the world.

Ms. Isaac’s support of the military extends to the Selfridge Air National Guard Base Community Council where she serves as treasurer. “I am proud to assist the BCC in furthering their mission of strengthening ties between our military personnel and the communities they serve,” stated Isaac.

“I am also honored to be a volunteer member of the Macomb Military Affairs Committee,” added Isaac. “The committee advocates for military policy and the protection of our military installations in the southeastern Michigan defense community.”

Since 2013, Ms. Isaac has led FreeStar Financial Credit Union in its support to Pets for Vets. This charity is dedicated to rescuing animals from shelters and pairing them with veterans suffering from PTSD.

“Our credit union is proud of its long history of serving our military members as a full-service financial institution,” said Isaac. “FreeStar Financial offers a Military Line of Credit for veterans with limited to no credit history, VA Home Loans with no money down and no private mortgage insurance (PMI), military scholarships, Fresh Start checking accounts, and other resources for military members.”

Ms. Isaac would like to thank all military members for protecting and serving our country! FreeStar Financial looks forward to serving you.



AIRCRAFT

Former Marine has special appreciation for A-10s

Tech. Sgt. Dan Heaton
127th Wing

Tech. Sgt. Josh Kacharos knows a few things about the A-10 Thunderbolt II.

As armaments technician with the 127th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Kacharos maintains the systems that allow the A-10 to be the ground troops' preferred choice for close air support. And he should know.

As a Marine serving in Iraq, Kacharos was part of a convoy taking heavy enemy fire. As he and his fellow Marines became pinned down, they called for immediate air support. It was A-10s to the rescue.

"We heard the gun and we knew we were good to go," Kacharos said.

He and his fellow Marines were able to complete the mission that day and return to base safely.

"I wasn't always the guy in the Marine Corps that was in the heaviest fight, but a lot of guys I served with were," Kacharos explained. "They knew they could get on the radio and we'd see the people attacking us scatter because they would normally see the U.S. aircraft before we would. It made a huge difference on the ground."

Kacharos spent nine years in the Marine Corps and served on five combat deployments, each about a year long. He and his family decided that was enough, but he wanted to continue to serve in some capacity. He wanted to do so, however, in a way that allowed the Michigan native to be closer to home.

After leaving the Marine Corps, he decided to enlist with the Michigan Air National Guard and now serves at Selfridge, working on A-10s – not the



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTOS BY MSGT. DAVID KUJAWA

Tech. Sgt. Josh Kacharos with a bomb ejector rack in front of an A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft at Selfridge. Kacharos works on the racks in the Armaments shop of the 127th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. A former Marine, Kacharos was once in a convoy in Iraq that was taking enemy fire – until a flight of A-10s arrived on the scene causing the opposition force to quickly disappear.

same ones that lent him an assist in Iraq, but A-10s just the same.

In fact, when he decided to enlist in the ANG, his wife, Carmen Kacharos also decided to enlist. She also works on A-10s, as an avionics specialist.

"Tech. Sgt. Kacharos has been a great asset," said Master Sgt. Tom Bartjaktarovich, the armaments supervisor for the 127th AMXS. "He came in here and hit the ground running. He completed his career development courses and got qualified in record time."

Now, Kacharos, who works as a federal prison corrections office in his civilian capacity, said he's enjoying serving in a different aspect of military service.

"I deployed overseas with the A-10s [in 2015]. Just knowing that our aircraft were going out there and might be helping some Marine on the ground that day, that's a good feeling," he said.



Staff Sgt. Patrick Madish and Senior Airman Omari Castleberry, weapons crewmen with the 127th Maintenance Group, perform maintenance on an A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft's weapon system pylon, at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., Feb. 4, 2017.



Master Sgt. Thomas Barjaktarovich of the 127th Maintenance Group inspects the 30mm GAU-8 Avenger Gatling gun from an A-10 Thunderbolt II of the 107th Fighter Squadron, at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., Feb. 5, 2017. The GAU-8 Avenger requires an in depth inspection every 36 months.

RECOGNITION

Airmen of the Year

Master Sgt. Robin Cleaver and Senior Master St. Eric Bates were recently named Airmen of the Year in the state of Michigan by the Michigan Air National Guard. Cleaver was honored in the first sergeant category and Bates was honored in the senior noncommissioned officer category. Cleaver is assigned as the first sergeant of the 127th Security Forces Squadron at Selfridge Air National Guard Base. Bates is an aircraft maintenance specialist, supporting KC-135 Stratotanker operations at Selfridge as a member of the 191st Maintenance Squadron. Both Airmen were presented Airmen of the Year trophies by Major Gen. Leonard Isabelle Jr., the commander of the Michigan Air National Guard, during a Joint Military Service Ball in Grand Rapids on Feb. 4.

U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTOS BY SENIOR AIRMAN TIFFANY CLARK

Top left: Master Sgt. Robin Cleaver (left) being awarded Airman of the Year trophy by Major Gen. Leonard Isabelle Jr., in the first sergeant category. Cleaver is assigned as the first sergeant to the 127th Security Forces Squadron at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

Top right: Senior Master St. Eric Bates (left) being awarded Airman of the Year trophy by Major Gen. Leonard Isabelle Jr., in the senior noncommissioned officer category. Bates is an aircraft maintenance specialist, supporting KC-135 Stratotanker operations at Selfridge as a member of the 191st Maintenance Squadron.



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TRAINING



MICHIGAN AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO

Michigan Air National Guard first sergeants pause for a group photo at a training seminar in Battle Creek.

Michigan first sergeants gather at training seminar

Tech Sgt. Dan Heaton
127th Wing

Those who wear the diamond in Michigan are marching forward in unison after a recent first-of-its-kind gathering in Battle Creek.

Michigan Air National Guard first sergeants and potential first sergeants recently huddled together at the Team Michigan First Sergeant Additional Duty Seminar in Battle Creek. It was an opportunity for the first sergeants – who are distinguished by the diamond that appears inside their rank chevrons – to share best practices. A number of potential future first sergeants also attended to add to their skill base.

The meeting -- which drew about 30 participants from the 110th Attack Wing in Battle Creek, the 127th Wing at Selfridge Air National Guard Base and the Michigan National Guard Joint Forces

Headquarters in Lansing – was highlighted by a visit and briefing from Chief Master Sgt. Danny Doucette, a Connecticut Air National Guard Airmen who serves as the superintendent of the Air Force First Sergeant Academy.

“This showcases our efforts to bring Michigan together,” said Chief Master Sgt. Richard Gordon, who serves as the first sergeant of the 127th Wing headquarters group and the 127th Operations Group. “We have a group of experienced and motivated non-commissioned officers who have ideas and insights from around the state. The information was flowing in both directions.”

The seminar also allowed those who aspire to serve as a first sergeant in the future to gain insight into the position.

“I’ve got a pretty good mentor here in Chief Gordon, but this event allowed me to hear ideas from many different

“We have a group of experienced and motivated noncommissioned officers who have ideas and insights from around the state. The information was flowing in both directions.”

Chief Master Sgt. Richard Gordon

voices,” said Tech. Sgt. Matthew Brewer, a command post controller at the 127th Wing at Selfridge.

In the Air Force, first sergeants serve as special advisors to unit commanders. They are responsible for seeing to the health, welfare and morale of all enlisted personnel serving in a particular unit.

SELFRIDGE FLYER

Man on the Street

Q: What was your favorite TDY/trip? and why?

A: Latvia – “I was able to see somewhere I would have never had the opportunity to visit.”
—Staff. Sgt. Aaron James, 127th Civil Engineering Squadron



James

A: Al Dhafra – “I learned a lot, the camaraderie was great and I was able to experience a different country and culture.”

—Senior Master Sgt. Greg McWhorter, 127th Civil Engineering Squadron



McWhorter

A: St. John's, Canada – “It’s a nice town with really friendly people.”

—Tech. Sgt. Jordan Flaga, 127th Force Support Squadron



Flaga

A: Kuwait – “I was able to save money and go somewhere new.”

—Senior Airman Kyle Bansberg, 127th Maintenance Squadron



Bansberg

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AIR NATIONAL GUARD

HISTORY

171st marks 75th Anniversary

Tech. Sgt. Dan Heaton
127th Wing

Depending on what date one chooses to use, Michigan's 171st Air Refueling Squadron turned 75 years old either this month or last. Born into combat in a world-encompassing war, the milestone anniversary passed relatively unnoticed, with a significant portion of the squadron's current members deployed to the Middle East, engaged in combat operations against ISIS.

Today's 171st - known informally as the Michigan Six-Pack - was first constituted as the 374th Fighter Squadron on Jan. 28, 1942, and activated on Feb. 10, 1943, for service in World War II. Initially assigned the P-47 Thunderbolt, the 374th spent the war providing fighter escorts to American bombers in the European Theater. The unit was de-activated after the war, on Oct. 24, 1945, and re-designated as the 171st and allotted to the Michigan Air National Guard on May 24, 1946. Today's 171st flies the KC-135 Stratotanker, which primarily serves as an air-to-air refueling aircraft.

While that World War II service is but a distant memory now, two distinctives from the old 374th days are still part of the 171st of today. During World War II, yellow paint around the engine cowling and tails helped identify the 374th squadron. Today, the 171st uses a yellow and black checkerboard design on its aircraft. The 171st's squadron patch and logo, a Native American chief in headdress, was designed by 374th Airmen on a bus ride from Maryland to New Jersey before the unit was shipped to England for combat operations in late 1943.

The 374th was part of the 361st Fighter Group during the war, as was the 375th and 376th squadrons. Following the war, the 375th became the 172nd Fighter Squadron and was assigned to the Michigan Air National Guard for assignment in Battle Creek on the same day the 171st was assigned to the Detroit area.

The 374th was among the final fighter squadrons created by the



Above: Lt. Col. Roy A. Webb, Jr., commander of the 374th Fighter Squadron, sitting on the wing of his P-51 Mustang nicknamed "Sweet Thing IV." It was the fourth aircraft Webb flew during the war he had nicknamed Sweet Thing - two P-47s and two P-51s. It was in this aircraft that Webb destroyed five enemy aircraft and damaged one more during a series of strafing runs against an enemy air field. He was awarded the Silver Star for that mission.

Below: The logo of the 171st squadron has remained essentially unchanged, other than wording around the edges of the patch, since it was created by Airmen in the 374th squadron on a bus ride between two training bases on the U.S. East Coast in late 1943.

U.S. during World War II and didn't fly its first combat mission until Jan. 21, 1944, when it was part of a combined total of 531 fighter aircraft escorting a combined total of 198 B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberator bombers from England on a bombing raid against V-1 Missile sites and other targets in and around Pas De Calais in northern France.

The 374th would fly a total of 441 combat missions in the next 454 days, flying its last mission about two weeks before the final German surrender. Pilots from the 374th were engaged in all of the major European battles of 1944 and early 1945, to include D-Day, "Big Week" and the Battle of the Bulge. During that time, 21 pilots from the 374th were killed in the line of duty and scores more suffered injuries. The squadron also recorded a total of 53.5 aerial combat victories against enemy aircraft.

For much of the squadron's combat period Lt. Col. Roy A. Webb, Jr., from Indiana served as the squadron's commander. Webb

was also the squadron's leader in terms of enemy aircraft kills. He finished the war with four aerial victories and a record of destroying five more that were on the ground, a feat which earned him the distinction of being a "strafing" ace. On June 29, 1944, just a couple of weeks after the allied D-Day invasion, Webb led an attack on the German airfield at Oschersleben following an attack by American bombers on several factories in that city. Webb, by then flying a P-51 Mustang to which his squadron had earlier converted, destroyed five German fighter aircraft on the ground and damaged another. Webb was awarded the Silver Star for that mission. After the war, Webb returned home to Indiana and died in 2010.

Another 374th pilot of note was Lt. Robert J. Stolzy, a Grand Rapids area native who was a charter member of the squadron. Stolzy kept a detailed journal during the war, a key primary source of information about the early days of



PHOTOS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE AMERICAN AIR MUSEUM IN ENGLAND

Lt. Col. Roy A. Webb, Jr., commander of the 374th Fighter Squadron, sitting on the wing of his P-51 Mustang nicknamed "Sweet Thing IV." It was the fourth aircraft Webb flew during the war he had nicknamed Sweet Thing - two P-47s and two P-51s. It was in this aircraft that Webb destroyed five enemy aircraft and damaged one more during a series of strafing runs against an enemy air field. He was awarded the Silver Star for that mission.



The 374th Fighter Squadron area at Chièvres air field in Belgium while in March 1945. The 374th was briefly assigned to the base following about a year of operations at bases in England.

the 374th. Stolzy and fellow pilot Lt. James R. Golden were awarded commendations for their efforts to aid a damaged B-17 that ditched in the English Channel following a raid on Belgium on April 13, 1944. Due to the actions of Stolzy and Golden, the 10 crewmembers of the B-17 were rescued from the water. On June 19, 1944, Stolzy and four other 374th pilots were killed in crashes over France during a bomber raid that was aborted due to bad weather. A final entry in Stolzy's diary, made by a fellow pilot, details the hope that he was able to successfully bail out of his damaged aircraft. Instead, Stolzy died in a crash. His remains were

eventually returned to Michigan for burial in Kent County.

Today, the 171st's flag carries the campaign streamers from those long-ago actions. The 171st and the related 191st Maintenance Squadron have been assigned to the 127th Air Refueling Group as part of the 127th Wing since 1996. The unit operates from a home station at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in suburban Detroit.

This article is part of a series of heritage articles created as part of the commemoration of the centennial of Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, which began operation as a military air field on July 1, 1917.

PROGRESS

Fuel system construction ahead of schedule, reaches halfway point

Tech Sgt. Dan Heaton

127th Wing

SELFRIDGE AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, MICH. » The largest single construction project in the 100-year history of Selfridge Air National Guard Base is running significantly ahead of schedule.

The \$32.6 million jet fuel storage and delivery system is now approximately 50 percent complete and is running about two months ahead of the initial construction schedule. Most notable at the work site has been the erection of twin 315,000-gallon capacity storage tanks. The tanks are connected to an underground delivery system that will allow large aircraft at the base to “pull up to the pump” to take on fuel.

In another significant milestone, all work on the base’s east aircraft ramp has now been completed, with the exception of painting stripes and other markings on the concrete. This means that aircraft parking and ground movement will no longer be disrupted by the ongoing construction, said Dan Frick, an engineer with the 127th Civil Engineer Squadron who is serving as the base’s liaison with the Army Corps and Engineers, which designed the project, and Garco Construction, the lead contractor.

“The entire team that has been working on this project has been excellent,” said Brig. Gen. John D. Slocum, commander, 127th Wing. “It has been amazing to watch this project take shape – particularly when you appreciate what this means for Selfridge in the future. This new fuel storage and distribution system will help make our operations safer and more efficient, as it replaces a system built almost 60 years ago.”

The new fuels system will feature three primary components:

- An above ground, 630,000 gallon storage complex.
- An eight-station hydrant refueling system that will allow even the largest Air Force aircraft to “pull up to the pump.”
- A new, remote fuel truck un-



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTOS COURTESY OF MASTER SGT. DAVID KUJAWA

Fuel tanks are being erected as part of a new storage system being built at Selfridge Air National Guard Base. The system is expected to be completed in early 2018.



Senior Airman Dalton Sweet a fuel distribution operator of the 127th Logistic Readiness Squadron and Senior Airman Taron Warrior, a crew chief of the 127th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, distributes fuel into a KC-135 Stratotanker from the 171st Air Refueling Squadron at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., Feb. 4, 2017. Soon the tanks in the background for the flight line fuel hydrant project will hold the fuel needed for the aircraft and eliminate the need for fuel tucks.

loading site that will further enhance safety and security on the installation.

The new system will greatly facilitate fuel delivery to the 127th Air Refueling Group’s fleet of KC-135s, which are primarily used for air-to-air refueling operations. Currently jet fuel is trucked from the base’s fuel storage area to the KC-135. Once the new fuel hydrant system is oper-

ational, the KC-135s will be able to “pull up to the pump” to receive fuel.

Fuel trucks will continue to be used for smaller aircraft, such as fighters or helicopters, which take on significantly less fuel than the KC-135s at the base. In addition to Air Force operations at Selfridge, the Army, Coast Guard and Customs & Border Protection all have aircraft assigned to Selfridge.

RECOGNITION



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. RACHEL BARTON

Two new recruits swear in at Selfridge

Brig. Gen. John D. Slocum administers the oath of enlistment to new members of the 127th Wing, Senior Airman Ian Eakins and Staff Sgt. Justin Nabarrette, on Jan. 30, 2017 at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich. Both Eakins and Nabarrette are Palace Front recruits. Palace Front is an option for active duty Air Force members to transition into the Air National Guard or Reserves when they separate from active duty.



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AIR NATIONAL GUARD

SPOTLIGHT

ROTC Cadet finds college experience challenging, rewarding

By Michael Maddox
U.S. Army Cadet Command
(Army ROTC)

EAST LANSING, MICH. » Being a member of a team can be a challenging, yet rewarding experience with lots of lessons to be learned and trials to overcome. Michigan State University Cadet Austin Wolfe has found this out doubly by being a part of two teams simultaneously – the ROTC program at his school and the college’s football team.

Wolfe, who graduates this year, played on the Michigan State football team as a wide receiver and is completing his training to be a newly minted Army officer. Even though that wasn’t how the former high school football player planned to complete his education, he said all of the work from being a dual-hatted college attendee has educated him in several ways.

“I went to Michigan State purely on an ROTC scholarship, and I thought that was just going to be it. But once I got there, football was still a passion of mine,” he said. “I had played up until my senior year of high school where I thought it was going to be over, but I got a chance to walk-on the team. In my first month I was doing ROTC, academics and football. It’s been a challenge but it’s been a great challenge that keeps me on my toes and busy.”

“I got on the team and I was told by many people that it just couldn’t be done – to do ROTC and football at the same time. But it is something that can be done,” added Wolfe. “It’s not easy – you wake up every day and you’re doing something. It’s challenging, but I told myself when I first got there that I wanted to be the best person I could be and graduate in the best stand-

ing I could, so I pushed myself.”

Capt. Matthew Kabat, Assistant Professor of Military Science at Michigan State, said Wolfe handled that challenge with dedication, planning and the support of both sets of his “coaches.”

“He handled it very well – but it was because he worked at it,” he said. “We developed an informal contract between Cadet Wolfe and his coaches. This ensured he would be where he needed to be, and both ROTC and the football team were aware of his requirements.”

“One of the traits we emphasize here is time management. Cadet Wolfe gravitated to that ideal very well, his schedule even included written in ‘study time’ which ensured he met all academic standards,” added Kabat. “Cadet Wolfe did a great job managing all aspects of his college life, and made it successfully through his academic career because he planned and managed his time very well.”

Wolfe’s attitude also played a large role in his success, said Kabat.

“His motivation to succeed is what seems to drive his success, and he has been successful by way of getting assessed to active duty in the aviation branch,” said Kabat. None of this would have been possible for him without his strong motivation and dedication to the Michigan State AROTC program, as well as his positive attitude.”

Playing football and being a future Soldier require two different uniforms, but Wolfe said he’s seen they share a lot of the same qualities.

“You kind of have two families in ROTC and football. You’re busy and it takes a lot of time management,

but that teaches you a lot of awesome values that will help you in the future,” he said. “There are so many attributes that you are instilled with as an ROTC Cadet that coexist in football – teamwork, leadership, discipline – it’s a leadership program just like football. You learn lifelong lessons that will benefit you for years to come.”

Wolfe was recently invited to attend the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in San Antonio Jan. 8 and spent the days leading up to the game sharing his experiences with football players and their parents.

“Surprisingly, I’ve mainly been speaking to parents who are asking questions and wanting know how I did and what the options are for their child. I’ve been providing a different perspective for people to understand how I’ve done both and how you can truly exceed some of your limits,” he said.

Wolfe said he also felt fortunate because he was able to spend time with and share his experience with the commander of U.S. Army Cadet Command, Maj. Gen. Chris Hughes.

“To be around someone like that, with that much influence, is really a great learning experience,” he said. “I’ve been trying to be like a sponge and soak up as much as I can from being around all of the leaders in the military I’ve met.”

Wolfe rounded out his visit to the All-American Bowl by getting the opportunity to step onto a football field one more time.

“I was right there on the sidelines as the players were warming up. Just doing that and getting to be on the field of the Alamodome definitely brings back memories,” he shared. “I hope they cherish it, because it goes by fast.”



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MADDOX

Criminal justice senior Austin Wolfe poses for a photo at the ROTC Spartan Battalion headquarters on Nov. 18, 2016 at Demonstration Hall in East Lansing. During his time at MSU Wolfe was also a wide receiver (26) on the MSU football team.

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SELFRIDGE FLYER

Active shooter exercise



Left: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Declercq, Security Forces specialist at the 127th Wing Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, searches a building for suspects and victims on base during an active shooter exercise on Feb. 7, 2017.



PHOTOS BY TERRY L. ATWELL/MICHIGAN AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Above: SSgt Jeffrey Declercq, a security forces specialist for the 127th Wing Security Forces Squadron at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich. is first to respond in an active shooter exercise on Feb. 7, 2017. This exercise affords unit members the necessary experience in responding to an active shooter scenario.



Above: 127th Wing Security Forces Airman Staff Sgt Shawn Gray hands hand cuffs to Security Forces Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Declercq in order to restrain Communications Specialist Master Sgt. Jamie Heinzelman, during an active shooter exercise at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

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SAFETY

Air Station Detroit keeps watch over Michigan residents

By Lt Robby Chavez
Air Station Detroit

Despite freezing temperatures during the months of December and January, Coast Guard Air Station Detroit found themselves quite busy. Air station personnel kept 24-hour a day watch over 1,100 miles of shoreline encompassing the southern portion of Lake Huron, Lake St Clair, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario.

“As Michigan temperatures plummet, ice fishermen are increasingly taking to lakes and ponds to seek out fish,” said Lieutenant Addison Allen, MH-65 helicopter pilot.

Since December, Air Station Detroit search and rescue ready crews have already responded

to nine separate possible persons in the water, one emergency locator beacon detection, two flare sightings, one partially submerged ice fishing hut, and two ice huts adrift on ice floats that separated from land.

“Going out on the frozen lakes is not only dangerous, it can be deadly because so many people misjudge the conditions of the ice,” said Allen. “Use sound judgment when surveying and choosing a fishing spot, and always be prepared for a worst-case scenario.”

Before heading out on the ice always check the weather and ice conditions. Remember, just because it's below zero today doesn't mean it was yesterday, give ice the

“Use sound judgment when surveying and choosing a fishing spot, and always be prepared for a worst-case scenario.”

*Lieutenant Addison Allen,
MH-65 helicopter pilot*

time to freeze. Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back. Wear proper anti-exposure clothes. Have the proper equipment such as anti-exposure clothes and a marine band radio, or a personal locator beacon.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Lt. Addison Allen, a MH-65 crew helicopter pilot at Coast Guard Air Station Detroit, stands with one of the rescue helicopters at the station at Selfridge.



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