

SELFRIDGE FLYER

Volume 6, Issue 4

"127th Wing – Your Hometown Air Force"

Sept./Oct. 2023



EDITORIAL

2024 Selfridge Open House to honor 'STEAM'

By Jonathan
Vandenbossche
BCC President

The Selfridge Base Community Council is excited to join Team Selfridge in celebrating 100 years of aerial refueling! Since 1923 aerial refueling has played a crucial role in conflicts around the world allotting our airmen the increased range, flexibility and lethality to successfully fulfill their missions.

The first refueling aircraft to call Selfridge Air National Guard Base home came in the late 1950s with the 4045th Air Refueling Wing and the 500th Air Refueling Wing and their KC-97 Stratofighters. In 2007, the KC-135's were welcomed to Selfridge to be operated by the 127th Wing's 171st Air Refueling Squadron. We enjoy seeing them fly overhead to this day.

This milestone is another example of the rich and important history of Selfridge ANGB. This type of dynamic innovation has many ties to Selfridge as well as their community partners who help drive the technology through manufacturing, research, development, talent and support.

The Selfridge Base Community Council is proud of our role in supporting those who execute these game-changing innovations and we want Selfridge ANGB to continue to operate on the forefront of military technologies for decades to come.

To honor and bring awareness to this part of Selfridge ANGB's history, the theme of the 2024 Selfridge Open House and Air Show, scheduled for June 8-9, 2024, is "Innovation Focused: STEAM



Jonathan Vandenbossche

Driven." STEAM stands for "Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/Aerospace and Mathematics," the core principles behind innovation. The

Open House will feature a "STEAM Expo" where companies and organizations will be invited to display some of the technologies they have developed to drive progress throughout history.

Leading up to the Open House, we will be hosting off-base STEAM events at schools, businesses, and local airports to educate attendees and preview the STEAM Expo. If you are interested in learning more about these events, please visit teamselfridge.com to learn more and find contact information to get involved.

We are excited to welcome the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds as our head-

liner, along with aerial acts and static displays to highlight the history of aviation and Selfridge ANGB. Visitors will be able to see tangible examples of how aviation innovation has transformed our military by sitting in aircraft, touching history, witnessing unbelievable aerial maneuvers, enjoying hands-on learning opportunities and meeting the Airmen of Selfridge.

The 2024 Selfridge Open House and Air Show on June 8-9, is a free event. If you are interested in sponsorship opportunities, private charters, preferred seating or volunteer opportunities, again, please visit team-

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[selfridge.com](https://teamselfridge.com).

The Selfridge Base Community Council is a nonprofit, volunteer organization made of local business and political leaders who support Selfridge ANGB and the men and women of Team Sel-

fridge. If you are interested in learning more or getting involved with the BCC visit our website, selfridgecommunitycouncil.com or reach out to membership director John Kopusis at gtjohn@gmail.com.

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CHANGE IN COMMAND

Brancato takes command of 127th Wing

By Tech. Sgt. Chelsea E. FitzPatrick

127th Wing Public Affairs

U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Matthew Brancato took command of the 127th Wing and Selfridge Air National Guard Base during a ceremony here on Aug. 5, 2023, closing out Brig. Gen. Rolf E. Mammen's four-year term in the position.

The ceremony, presided over by Michigan Air National Guard commander Maj. Gen. Bryan Teff, was attended by nearly 1,500 Airmen assigned to the 127th Wing and numerous SANGB, community and elected leaders.

"Under Brig. Gen. Mammen's authentic leadership, Team Selfridge has been molded into a lethal, agile, and resilient force," Teff said. "Faced with a significant paradigm change, Brig. Gen. Mammen forged the path toward laying a new foundation, coupled with growing and developing wing capability."

Mammen, who will transition to a new position at the Michigan National Guard's, Joint Forces Headquarters, recognized the Airmen for whom he served and imparted praise to Brancato as he relinquished command.

"This job has been the best job I've had in the U.S. Air Force, and that's because of you," Mammen told the Airmen. "I feel like Brig. Gen. Brancato is the luckiest person in this room, because serving in this role has been the greatest honor."

In addition to leading the Wing, as SANGB commander Brancato will lead what Teff referred to as, 'the last of the super bases, an installation critical to the national security of our country.' With more than 70 tenant, military and De-



U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Matthew Brancato, second left, commander 127th Wing, presents his first salute to the Airmen of the 127th Wing, during a change of command ceremony at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, Aug. 5, 2023. Brancato accepted command of the 127th Wing and Selfridge Air National Guard Base, succeeding Brig. Gen. Rolf E. Mammen, second right, who held that position for more than four years.

partment of Homeland Security commands, comprised of more than 5,000 personnel, SANGB is one of the oldest and most complex Air National Guard Bases in the country.

Despite the weighty responsibility, Teff says that Brancato is equipped to fill Mammen's shoes.

"Brig. Gen. Brancato is the right leader at the right time to build and grow upon what Brig. Gen. Mammen has done here at Selfridge," Teff said.

Brancato most recently served as the senior executive officer to the 29th Chief of the National Guard Bureau at the Pentagon. He has commanded at all levels of the Air Force, most recently as the commander of the 164th Airlift Wing,

Memphis, Tennessee.

"I look forward to working with the amazing team here at the 127th Wing and I want to continue to invest in you, your families and this base's future," Brancato said.

Brancato said that the 127th Wing's accolades have not gone unnoticed, and that outside of Michigan, SANGB is viewed as an asset - an asset worthy of the enduring fighter and air refueling mission, a 'super base,' critical to domestic security.

"Selfridge stands ready to receive future missions as well as ready to execute current tasks," Brancato said. "With all of us together, the nation will continue to see Selfridge as a National Guard treasure."



U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Schumann
U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Bryan Teff, left, commander of the Michigan Air National Guard, passes the 127th Wing unit flag, known as a guidon, to Brig. Gen. Matthew Brancato, center, during a change of command ceremony at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, Aug. 5, 2023. Brancato accepted command of the 127th Wing and Selfridge Air National Guard Base, succeeding Brig. Gen. Rolf E. Mammen, right, who held that position for more than four years.

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SELFRIDGE BASE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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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: Airmen assigned to the 127th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Michigan Air National Guard, prepare an A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft for a training mission at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, Sep. 10, 2023. The service members were doing their normal jobs while dressed in protective suits made for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and environmental hazards, simulating mission operation during a chemical attack. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Schumann)

Seen around Selfridge



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

Members of the 127th Wing meet U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Matthew Brancato, second from right, commander of the 127th Wing, and his wife, Col. Micaela Brancato, center, 217th Air Operations Group, 110th Wing, Michigan Air National Guard, during the unit'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.



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

U.S. Air Force 2nd Lt. Elise Wahlstrom, a public affairs officer from the 127th Wing, and her son, enjoy the unit'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.



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

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Ben Lemon, left, assists Senior Airman Charles Kupovitz, both members of the 127th Force Support Squadron, Michigan National Guard, in securing his chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, environmental protection gear during an exercise at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, Sept. 10, 2023. The exercise enhanced mission by allowing Airmen to practice their regular jobs while wearing the protective suit, ensuring mission continuity during a chemical attack.

TRAINING

127th Wing Medical Group exercises CCATT and ERPSS at Northern Strike 23

By Tech. Sgt. Drew Schumann
127th Wing Public Affairs

Citizen Airmen from the 127th Wing took part in advanced medical training to gain hands-on experience with patient staging and aerial transport while participating in exercise Northern Strike 23.

Michigan Air National Guardsmen from the 127th Medical Group conducted joint medical training at the Grayling Army Airfield in northern Michigan with soldiers from the Illinois National Guard and Nebraska National Guard. During the exercise, the Army and Air Force medics practiced the En Route Patient Staging System (ERPSS) and Critical Care Air Transport Team (CCATT), a joint maneuver which combines patient care, ground transport, and aerial evacuation in order to expedite treatment for critically injured patients.

“Our members are very dedicated. We have been doing this training for several years now, and we have gotten better and better,” said Lt. Col. James Howell, 127th Medical Operations Squadron commander.

What started as an expeditionary medical package, comprised of Airmen providing medical care in the deployed and forward-operating environments, has evolved into En Route Patient Staging and Critical Care Aerial Transport Teams.

“This exercise has allowed us to see where we could improve, but overall has allowed us to see where we will shine in order to accomplish the mission and



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

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Brian Faulkner, left, Staff Sgt. Kimberly Lai, center, and Senior Airman Cameron Layne, right, all aerospace medical technicians with the Michigan National Guard's 127th Medical Group, simulate transporting patients for evacuation during an Exercise Northern Strike 23 joint medical training event at the Grayling Army Air Field, Grayling, Michigan, Aug. 15, 2023. NS23 is one of the National Guard's largest annual joint, readiness-producing exercises, held within the Michigan National Guard's, “National All-Domain Warfighting Center,” and designed to challenge the training audience in a variety many ways, including contested sustainment/logistics.

ultimately save lives,” Howell said of the medical operations at Northern Strike 23.

ERPSS is used for the temporary staging of patients between a field hospital and medivac transport to an advanced care facility. In addition to staging, patients receive casualty care while awaiting transport. Administrative actions then allow for patients to be checked-in and transported after an evaluation of the seriousness of their conditions.

Once a patient is moved from the ERPSS staging facility, they are prepped for critical care aerial transport. The CCATT provides advanced en route medical

care and capabilities to critically ill, injured or burned patients during their evacuation. The CCATT is equipped and trained to provide the needed medical care during patient transport to an advanced care facility.

The 127th Medical Group operated the ERPSS and CCATT portions of the exercise while Army medics from the 33rd Infantry Brigade, Illinois National Guard, operated a field clinic and transferred patients over ground to ERPSS. Aircrews and HH60 Blackhawk helicopters from the Combat Aviation Brigade, 28th Infantry Division, Nebraska National Guard, op-

erated rotary medivac, and the fixed wing medical evacuation was provided by the 133rd Airlift Wing, Minnesota Air National Guard.

Patient staging expedites the ability to transport the critically injured in a timely manner. After receiving initial treatment in the field, or at an expeditionary field hospital, the patient is transported to staging, where doctors will determine whether their condition is urgent, priority, routine, or low priority. Prior to being transported, a number is issued to the patient based on their condition, with urgent and priority cases being expedited.

“Our CCATT works in



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

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Sharmaine Hicks, an aerospace medical technician from the 127th Medical Group, Michigan National Guard, offloads a practice patient during an Exercise Northern Strike 23 joint medical training event at the Grayling Army Air Field, Aug. 14, 2023. Northern Strike is one of the National Guard's largest joint, readiness producing exercises, held annually within the Michigan National Guard's, “National All-Domain Warfighting Center,” a geographic area comprised of Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center, Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center, Battle Creek Air National Guard Base, and Selfridge Air National Guard Base among other areas.

partnership with the ERPSS and can take up to two critical care patients at a time for transport, to safely get them to a higher level of care,” said Maj. Patrick Frank, 127th Medical Group medical administrative officer.

Both the ERPSS and CCATT functions work together to receive patients and document their level of care needed. Once the level of care is established, CCATT members continue with medical treatment before and during aerial transport.

The concept of the joint ERPSS and CCATT mission began in 2016, when the Army and Air Force held discussions on the possibility of a joint medical evacuation process. The first exercise was held the next year, with the successful transfer

of one patient. From there, the concept grew into the mechanized process that it is now, saving lives by providing the most advanced medical care as quickly as possible.

“The best aspect of this whole exercise is the joint endeavor, working with the Army and Air Force, as well as the Marine Corps, who joined our training this year to help with the patient movement aspect of the training,” Frank added, “The joint effort is key to survivability.”

Northern Strike is the Michigan National Guard's premier reserve component training event that integrates readiness training building interoperability. More than 7,000 troops from all over the world participated in this year's event.

COMMUNITY

‘Chaplain Team Michigan’ supports Northern Strike 2023

By Senior Master Sgt.
Daniel Heaton

127th Wing Public Affairs

While chaplains from across the Michigan Air National Guard supported Airmen, Soldiers, Marines and other participants in Exercise Northern Strike 2023, they also utilized the exercise as an opportunity to build up a new concept they are calling “Chapel Team Michigan.”

The concept is bringing together all the chaplains and religious affairs specialists from Michigan’s two air wings — the 110th at Battle Creek Air National Guard Base and the 127th at Selfridge Air National Guard Base — to better allow the team to meet the needs of Michigan’s Airman and Soldiers who serve in the National Guard.

“We have resources in Battle Creek and we have resources at Selfridge. Together, we can ensure that we are able to best meet the needs of the force, rather than individually sticking to our silos,” said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Kurt Taylor, the wing chaplain at the 110th.

To facilitate their operations at Northern Strikes, the chaplain team all checked out bicycles from the Morale, Welfare and Recreation office at Alpena to allow them to easily move to location to location.

“Just call us chaplains on bikes,” said Staff Sgt. Chris Mershon, a religious affairs specialist from the 127th Wing. “We’re working together, sharing ideas — like riding bikes to stand out, so people are aware that we are available — and really building one strong chaplain team for the state as a whole.”

During Northern Strike, chaplains from one wing intentionally partnered with



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

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. John Slocum, left, Staff Sgt. Chris Mershon, chaplains assistants and Lt. Col Kurt Taylor, a chaplain, all members of the Michigan Air National Guard, ride bicycles at the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center during Exercise Northern Strike 2023, Aug. 9, 2023. Exercise Northern Strike 2023 is a premier reserve component training event that integrates both U.S. and partner nation readiness training to build interoperability and strengthen partnerships in an all-domain environment.

enlisted religious affairs specialists from the opposite wing to help each better get to know each other.

While the team was making rounds and visiting military personnel from across the nation who were participating in the exercise, they made a special point to visit personnel assigned to the Alpena Combat Readiness

Training Center, where many of the exercise’s activities were based.

“This is their biggest exercise of the year and therefore their most stressful time of the year,” Taylor said. “We want them to know we are here for them, too.”

Military chaplains focus on three principal pri-

orities:

1. To provide religious services and to ensure that religious services are available for people of all beliefs.

2. To provide counsel to commanders, based on what they are hearing from people in the unit. Individual comments made to chaplains are 100% confidential, but chaplains can

synthesize that information to help commanders know where problem areas may exist.

3. To provide an avenue for mental health support for military members — the only such avenue that is 100% confidential — by regulation — in all scenarios.

“We are here for the Airmen, Soldiers and others to

support them as they support the mission,” Taylor said.

Exercise Northern Strike 2023 is a premier reserve component training event that integrates both U.S. and partner nation readiness training to build interoperability and strengthen partnerships in an all-domain environment.

INNOVATION

Kelly Johnson Center encourages Airmen to ‘AIM-HI’

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

A Michigan Air National Guard-sponsored program is helping Citizen-Airmen to focus the power of innovation to find solutions to the wicked problems that can cause issues at all levels of the Air Force enterprise. Perhaps the biggest difference, however, between the AIM-HI program and other innovation programs is that AIM-HI then teaches the students — not only Airmen in the Michigan Air National Guard — how to pitch those ideas to senior leaders and to find the funding required to put the programs into practice.

AIM-HI stands for Academia, Industry, Military Hybrid Innovations. It is a partnership led by the Michigan National Guard's Kelly Johnson Joint All Domain Innovation Center with support from the University of Michigan, Duke University, and several partner organizations from inside the Air Force, such as ARCWERX and Air University.

“The program teaches students how to look at a problem, build a solution and then teaches them how to implement that solution in the real world,” said Michigan ANG Col. Michael Whitefoot, director of the KJJADIC. “We are educating, informing and empowering Airmen to innovate at their level, take that innovation forward and make a difference in their shop, in their Wing or for the entire Air Force or Dept. of Defense.”

AIM-HI is a semester-long program, based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, literally across the street from the main campus of U-M. The students, a mix of ANG personnel along with a smattering of others from across



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JACOB CESSNA

U.S. Air National Guard Maj. Broc Nichelson, a chief nurse with the 110th Medical Group, receives a package from an unmanned drone during a field exercise as part of Exercise Northern Strike 23 (NS23) in Alpena, Michigan, Aug. 14, 2023. Exercise NS23 is a reserve component training event that integrates both U.S. and partner nation readiness training to build interoperability and strengthen partnerships in an all-domain environment.

the U.S. military working in a cohort group, meet on-site periodically throughout the semester as well as virtually during the length of the program. Over 130 Airmen and Soldiers have graduated from the program in its first two-plus years of operation.

“We were given a list of problems that senior leaders had developed that they needed a solution,” said Master Sgt. Shaun West, the senior enlisted leader for the KJJADIC program and a student in the program's first cohort in the spring of 2021.

West's cohort, which began meeting about a year after the start of the COVID pandemic, focused on creating a remote work policy for the Air National Guard. No comprehensive policy existed before the pandemic and the cohort had to review the myriad of federal and state laws and policies, as well as military regulations that guiding work at-

tendance in the National Guard. The cohort also had to develop a means where remote work could be utilized while still ensuring military readiness could be maintained.

“A couple of months after we pitched our proposal to our senior leaders, the Michigan National Guard implemented a new remote work policy,” West said.

Since that first cohort completed its work, another cohort looked for ways to increase the reliability of communications networks during times of major national disasters — events when the National Guard is often mobilized to provide support to local authorities. Another developed processes to better drive customer service principles into the Air National Guard at all levels to improve the experience of individual Airman — an effort that can have a direct impact on retention of military personnel.



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JACOB CESSNA

U.S. Air National Guard Senior Airman Jacob Lowell, a medical technician from the 110th Medical Group use innovative technology to treat simulated patients during a field exercise as part of Exercise Northern Strike 23 in Alpena, Michigan, Aug. 14, 2023. Exercise NS23 is a premier reserve component training event that integrates both U.S. and partner nation readiness training to build interoperability and strengthen partnerships in an all-domain environment.

“This is a graduate level program that is not only providing direct results as the students work on the problem that their particular cohort tackles, but now these Airmen have these skills and the mindset to know they can look at problems, identify solutions and they have the tools needed to implement positive change,” Whitefoot said. KJJADIC was launched on Sept. 11, 2020, to focus and synchronize innovation efforts in the Michigan National Guard and beyond. In addition to the AIM-HI program, another major KJJADIC focus is the SPPIN (State Partnership Program Innovation), which brings together innovation efforts from multiple states.

During Exercise Northern Strike 2023, KJJADIC invited several industry partners to demonstrate

new technologies for potential use by the Michigan National Guard, including the use of an unmanned aerial system that was utilized to deliver medical supplies to medics operating at a remote location from the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center, one of two northern Michigan facilities where the exercise was based.

Whitefoot said with the KJJADIC approaching its third anniversary, the program is increasingly bringing in more input and partnership with the Michigan Army National Guard, which was the intention of the program from the start.

“We built a foundation with KJJADIC, training a cadre of people to help us expand ideas outward. As that foundation has grown, we can bring in more peo-

ple and harness their energy as well,” Whitefoot said.

The innovation center is named in tribute to Michigan native Clarence “Kelly” Johnson, Lockheed's master aeronautical engineer. He contributed to the successful design of dozens of U.S. military aircraft including the F-80 Shooting Star, the U-2 Dragon Lady, and the SR-71 Blackbird.

Exercise Northern Strike is a premier reserve component training event that integrates both U.S. and partner nation readiness training to building interoperability and strengthen partnerships in an all-domain environment.

Military personnel interested in learning more about AIM-HI, or to apply for the program, can visit innovatrium.org/aim-hi.

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