

# SELFRIDGE FLYER

Volume 6, Issue 3

"127<sup>th</sup> Wing — Your Hometown Air Force"

May/June 2023





## READINESS

# 127 Wing deploys to German-NATO exercise

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

More than 200 members of the 127th Wing will have the unique occasion to participate in the largest air force redeployment exercise since NATO was founded, when they deploy to Germany in support of Air Defender 23. Led and hosted by the German Air Force, also known as the, "Luftwaffe," more than 110 U.S. Air National Guard, 14 Air Force, eight Navy and 134 allied and partner nation aircraft will be deployed to the European theater between June 13-23, 2023.

Air Defender 23 will put the 127th Wing in the lead position of the command and control element of approximately 2,600 total ANG personnel.

"We have this unique opportunity to join more than 44 of our fellow ANG units to showcase how organized, trained and equipped our Citizen Airmen are to support allied forces at a moment's notice," said Brig. Gen. Rolf E. Mammen, 127th Wing commander, who will also serve as the lead wing commander during the exercise. "We want everyone to know the 127th Wing stands ready to rapidly deploy throughout the globe when needed."

The 127th Wing was selected by Director of the Air National Guard, Lt. Gen. Michael A. Loh, to serve as the lead wing for the exercise. In this capacity, AD23 will give the Wing the opportunity to train as an Air Force deployment element referred to as an, "expeditionary air base," referred to using the acronym, "XAB." The XAB mission consists of taking command and control, also referred to by the acronym, "C2," establishing and then operating an air base in an unfamiliar and/or austere environment.

"AD23 strategically unites the United States and Germany," said Loh at a press conference at the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. in April. "[The exercise] tests not only our interop-



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. DAVID EICHAKER

U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Michael A. Loh, left, director, Air National Guard, speaks with Lt. Col. Shannon 'Monk' Vickers, A-10 instructor pilot, 127th Wing, Michigan National Guard, during Air Defender 2023 Media Day, Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, April 5, 2023. Members of the German air force and German media visited the U.S. in preparation for Air Defender 2023.

**"We have this unique opportunity to join more than 44 of our fellow ANG units to showcase how organized, trained and equipped our Citizen Airmen are to support allied forces at a moment's notice. We want everyone to know the 127th Wing stands ready to rapidly deploy throughout the globe when needed."**

— Brig. Gen. Rolf E. Mammen, 127th Wing commander

erability to work together, but it also tests our ability to rapidly deploy and rapidly employ [coalition air power]."

During AD23 the 127th Wing will also answer Loh's call to practice agile combat employment, generating A-10 Thunderbolt II missions between Germany and Latvia. In doing so, the team will practice setting up aircraft generation operations in

a contingency location, which is simply a location geographically separated from the primary unit.

"We want to demonstrate determined Allied Air Power," said Lt. Gen. Ingo Gerhartz, Chief of Staff Luftwaffe. "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."

## SELFRIDGE FLYER

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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: "Senior Airman

Christopher Faith, a boom operator assigned to the 171st Air Refueling Squadron, stands under the refueling boom of a KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft on May 10, 2023 at Selfridge Air National Guard Base. The 127th Air Refueling Group flies and maintains the KC-135 Stratotanker. The 127th ARG includes the 171st Air Refueling Squadron, 191st Operation Support Flight, 191st Maintenance Squadron, 191st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and 191st Maintenance Operations Flight." (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tom Demerly)



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## ACCOLADES

## 127th Wing Airmen named best in Air National Guard

By Master Sgt. Dan Heaton  
127th Wing Public Affairs

The 127th Forces Support Squadron's Services team received the Air National Guard's Senior Master Sgt. Kenneth W. Disney Award for operating the best dining facility in the ANG. In early March, a team of ANG inspectors visited Selfridge to observe food preparation, review records, interview Airmen and — perhaps most importantly — have lunch in the unit's dining facility. The award was announced in late March.

"Our Services Airmen take great pride in providing a nutritious and delicious meal to the wing every month," said Lt. Col. Lisa Boggs, 127th FSS commander. "Winning the Disney award is confirmation of the skill and the teamwork that our Airmen bring to every meal service."

While a myriad of details

goes into operating a high-level food service operation, Master Sgt. Michael Kavalunas, dining facility manager for the 127th FSS, said it is the positive energy that his team brings to the job that sets them apart.

"The positive energy creates good morale in the unit and helps everyone work together as one team. That's what makes the difference," said Kavalunas.

While the 127th FSS boasts excellent equipment and a great dining facility, Kavalunas says that wasn't what the inspectors were looking at.

"What they saw was a team that was following all the health and hygiene standards, taking pride in a great meal and having a smile while they were doing it," Kavalunas said.

The Disney award is presented annually and honors the late Senior Master Sgt. Kenneth W. Disney, a services superintendent in the Tennes-

see Air National Guard known for providing outstanding customer service. According to the award citation, "achieving success in the Disney competition is a reflection of pride, commitment and motivation to be the best."

That motivation is readily found among the 25 Airmen who are assigned to the 127th FSS food services team.

"I just want to put out a good product, that's where the satisfaction comes for me," said Staff Sgt. Tyler Walker, a shift leader in the kitchen.

According to Services Airmen, meal preparation begins as soon as one meal ends. ANG Services teams have the added challenge of operating two days a month, making planning critical to the process.

"We start with an inventory of what's in the store room and start planning from there," Kavalunas said. "We want to serve

a great meal, but we also have to be mindful of our budget."

Once the plan is set, the Services team creates a menu and orders food for the next month, planning to serve between 200 and 500 Airmen at lunch, depending on mission requirements.

"We adjust all the time," explained Airman 1st Class Joshua Hatter. "I think that's part of what is good about this team — everyone is willing to be flexible and understands it isn't just about what I am doing, it's about the meal we are able to provide to the Wing, to keep everybody fueled up and able to do their job."

Hatter was a track athlete in college and said the team spirit he experiences in the military reminds him of team camaraderie embodied in team sports.

"I wanted to do something bigger than myself and we do that here," Hatter said.



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

Airman First Class Joshua Hatter, a Services Journeyman with the 127th Force Support Squadron, prepares the entrée during March drill Sunday lunch preparations at the 127th Wing Dining Facility, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, March 5, 2023.



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## CAPABILITY

# AIM-HI connects innovators to senior leaders

By Master Sgt. David Eichaker

127th Wing Public Affairs

WASHINGTON, D.C. » Academia Industry Military-Hybrid Innovations (AIM-HI) hosted a one-day capstone pitch event where teams presented solutions for emerging national defense problems to senior military leaders, on March 31.

“Since its inception in 2020, 24 AIM-HI teams consisting of more than 100 service members have impacted the Department of Defense operational challenges,” said Lt. Col. David F. Brewer, AIM-HI program director and Air Force Futures innovation officer. “AIM-HI is the Air National Guard’s Total Force Integration innovation certification program.”

“By resourcing AIM-HI initiatives for further development and field demonstrations, the Air Force and joint-services can fast track transformational change in preparation for the next fight,” he added.

The program partners with the University of Michigan, Duke University, and Michigan National Guard’s Kelly Johnson Joint All-Domain Innovation Center, to advance professional development education to military students attending AIM-HI. Industry partners were involved and worked alongside AIM-HI coaches and staff to evolve concepts into feasible solutions ready for prototype and demonstration.

The Cohort 4 pitch event provided the opportunity for senior leaders from the Pentagon, Joint Base Andrews, National Guard Bureau, the Pentagon, Michigan, and other organizations to hear real-world solutions to complex operational issues.



COURTESY PHOTO

“Lt. Col. John Rubin, 127th Wing, Staff Sgt. Lamar Porter, 175th Mission Support Group, Mr. David Rosen, U.S. Special Operations Command, Tech. Sgt. Gerald Pyszka, 127th Wing and Senior Master Sgt. Jonathan Borth, 129th Wing, pose for a photo, Washington, D.C., March. 31, 2023. The teams proposed solutions for emerging national defense problems during an academia, industry and military hybrid innovations’ event.

“This event aligns with senior leader objectives and provides solutions and perspectives for complex problems,” said Brig. Gen. Bryan Teff, assistant adjutant general-Air and commander of the Michigan Air National Guard. “This allows us to capitalize on departmental readiness, solve innovation initiatives, build readiness for the future, and enables service members and industry partners to solve crucial needs.”

The five teams consisted of 23 service members and two government civilians representing the Air Force,

Army, National Guard, U.S. Southern Command and Air Force Special Operations Command. Teams supported innovative initiatives including space order of battle and architectures, advanced battle management system and Joint All-Domain Command and Control, and Air, Ground, and Sea Surface moving target engagement.

“Our team is pitching drop-in autonomy where we can take a 400-pound electronics package and it becomes a preprogrammed autonomous aircraft,” said Air Force Maj. Soren Olson,

Headquarters Air Force Special Operations Command. “Specifically, we’re looking at using it for logistics as part of Agile Combat Employment and to provide the ability to generate more sorties that could help with the disaggregation problem we face.”

Prior to the capstone event in D.C., team members began this 10-week experiential learning course with three in-person sessions ultimately graduating following the showcase event. Members built a team, completed various assignments, and presented

real-world innovation initiatives to senior leaders that advanced emerging concepts impacting the warfighter.

“Completion of this course certifies each team member as a Department of Defense innovator,” said Brewer. “The program provides systematic practices necessary to stimulate and manage innovation in an organization and gives members the perspective and skill-base necessary to lead innovation-focused projects.”

“AIM-HI provides the Chief of Staff of the Air

Force, Secretary of the Air Force, and the Director of the Air National Guard the capability needed to execute Action Order No. 1 and the seven Department of the Air Force operational imperatives,” said Brewer. “We must identify attributes of Airmen the Air Force needs and review personnel and talent management systems to meet the identified needs. Senior leaders will see viable initiatives presented by the teams, allowing leaders to shape the culture of the Air Force and sister services.”



## TRAINING

# Michigan Airman earns Army Air Assault Badge

By Master Sgt. Dan Heaton  
127th Wing Public Affairs

A 127th Wing Defender completed the “10 toughest days in the Army” in March, becoming among the relatively few Air National Guard Airmen authorized to wear the Air Assault Badge on his uniform.

“The amount of information they packed into those two weeks — it was definitely a lot to take in, but I learned things I can bring back to the unit and share,” said Senior Airman Joe Fitzgerald, a member of the 127th Security Forces Squadron at Selfridge Air National Guard Base. Fitzgerald is the only member of the 127th Wing to earn the Army’s Air Assault Badge in recent memory.

During the two-week training at the Army Warrior Training Center at Fort Benning, Georgia, students were given instruction in how to transport supplies via helicopters in a contested environment, how to create and secure landing zones and how to conduct offensive and defensive operations. The course begins with an extensive physical fitness screening and obstacle course competition. According to an Army publication, typically only about two

thirds of those who attend the course ultimately pass and earn the badge. The publication also called the school the hardest 10 days in the Army.

Fitzgerald said with the relatively new Air Force Agile Combat Employment concept, Security Forces personnel may be called upon to operate in different environments for extended periods of time, meaning that the ability to re-supply and sustain operations becomes even more important.

“Senior Airman Fitzgerald brings a positive attitude with him to work every single day. Earning the Air Assault Badge is a rarity in the Air National Guard and this accomplishment speaks to Fitzgerald’s enthusiasm and professionalism,” said Col. Samuel Trappasso, 127th Mission Support Group commander. “He sought out this additional training and now brings back this knowledge that he can share with our Defender team here at Selfridge.”

Fitzgerald said his new Air Assault skills will first be put to use helping other Airmen in his squadron request a seat in a future course and to be physically ready for the course’s demands.

“This is training that definitely benefits me as



an individual and keeps me motivated, but benefits the squadron as a whole,” he said.

Fitzgerald has been a member of the 127th Security Forces Squadron for about three and a half years. A traditional member of the Michigan Air National Guard, he serves as a math teacher at Father Gabriel Richard High School in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in his civilian career.

The 127th SFS is responsible for base security and law enforcement functions at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

Senior Airman Joe Fitzgerald, 127th Security Forces Squadron, wears an Army Assault Badge after becoming one of the few Air National Guard Airmen to earn the award following a training course at Fort Benning, Georgia, March 24, 2023. Fitzgerald is the only Airman in the Michigan Air National Guard in recent memory to earn the badge.

U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD  
COURTESY PHOTO

**Fitzgerald said with the relatively new Air Force Agile Combat Employment concept, Security Forces personnel may be called upon to operate in different environments for extended periods of time, meaning that the ability to re-supply and sustain operations becomes even more important.**



It is **illegal** to fly an unmanned aircraft in this area without prior approval from the FAA and proper certification.

COURTESY U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD



## AGILITY

# Maintainers make history during AFSOC mission

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

While the world was sleeping and the sun was just rising above the horizon on a Spring Sunday over Wyoming, 11 members of the 127th Maintenance Group's, "ACE" team watched Air Force Special Operations Command Airmen parachute out of the MC-130J Commando II aircraft they were flying in.

The Selfridge Air National Guard-based team of Citizen-Airmen were invited by AFSOC to participate in exercise Agile Chariot, a training event that was historical, in part, due to the number and type of aircraft involved. The ACE team supported landings and take-offs of the MC-130J, MQ-9 Reaper and two of their own A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft on Wyoming Highway 287.

ACE, an abbreviation for, "agile combat employment," is an operational concept adopted into Air Force doctrine in 2022, in response to the global reduction of Air Force presence dating back to World War II. From then until 2018, the Air Force overseas footprint reduced by 65%. In addition to reduction in physical presence, the threat of a variety of new adversarial technological advances puts remaining air bases at significantly increased risk of attack, according to, "Air Force Doctrine Note 1-21."

"To generate combat power from a number of locations to create dilemmas for an adversary... I just need a runway, a ramp, a weapons trailer, a fuel bladder and a pallet of [meals ready to eat.]," said Gen. C.Q. Brown, Jr., Chief of Staff of the Air Force in September 2019. "That's maybe a little bit bold, but the point

is, we've got to be light, lean and agile.

The ACE Team from Selfridge has taken Brown's call to heart.

Already deployed as part of a 100+ member temporary duty mission to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, in support of an A-10 weapons instructor course, the 11 ACE team members loaded up their weapons trailer, and the accoutrement necessary to receive, launch and turn attack jets on a highway into a C-130 Hercules aircraft.

This wasn't the first ACE opportunity for the team, who made history in June 2022 when they successfully received, refueled, armed and launched multiple aircraft on a Michigan highway during exercise Northern Agility 22-1, including AFSOC aircraft and operators from Hurlburt Field, Florida.

"After working with AFSOC during Northern Agility [22-1], we were able to demonstrate our high-level of professionalism," said Capt. Charles DiCiuccio, ACE team officer-in-charge, 127th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "[AFSOC] invited us to support Agile Chariot and we jumped at the chance, not only to exercise our mission, but to work with such a great team."

The ACE Team checked off a new item on their "bucket list," during Agile Chariot when they loaded and unloaded their equipment and arrived on the remote landing site by way of MC-130 aircraft. The concept of packing up the equipment you need and delivering aircraft maintainers to austere locations around the world, is a key component to solving the reduced Air Force footprint. In doing so, maintenance Airmen are cross-trained



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN NATALIE FIORILLI

Tech. Sgt. Derrick Mason, an aircraft armament systems technician, 127th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and ACE team member, offloads bombs from an MC-130J Commando II, as part of Exercise Agile Chariot, near Rawlins, Wyoming, April 30, 2023. Agile Chariot tested Agile Combat Employment capabilities, including using smaller, more dispersed locations and teams to rapidly move and support aircraft, pilots, and other personnel to wherever they are needed.

in multiple disciplines, for instance weapons troops with crew chief and refueling skills. The result of this cross-training is referred to by the Air Force as, "multicapable Airmen." The ACE Team members are definitely multicapable.

"The ability to grow and strive towards becoming an MCA has opened up more learning opportunities," said Master Sgt. Joshua Eby, an aircraft armament systems technician assigned to the 127th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and ACE Team member. "As part of the ACE team I've done things I never thought possible in my career."



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. CARLY KAVISH

An A-10 Thunderbolt II assigned to the 127th Wing, lands on Highway 287 during Exercise Agile Chariot, April 30, 2023, honing capabilities linked to agile combat employment. Instead of relying on large, fixed bases and infrastructure, ACE uses smaller, more dispersed locations and teams to rapidly move and support aircraft, pilots, and other personnel to wherever they are needed. There are millions of miles of public roads in the United States, including federal, state, and local roads — with ACE concepts, these roads have the capability to become millions of miles of public runways, if necessary.



## ACCOLADES



ARMY AND AIR FORCE EXCHANGE SERVICE COURTESY PHOTO

Pictured left to right: Exchange Director/CEO Tom Shull; Selfridge ANGB Exchange General Manager Ken Lowell; Exchange Senior Enlisted Advisor Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Osby; and Exchange Chief Operating Officer Jason Rosenberg.

# Selfridge Exchange named among top in the world

## By Army & Air Force Exchange Service

The Selfridge Air National Guard Base Exchange has been named among the best in the world, receiving the Army & Air Force Exchange Service's highest honor, the Director/CEO Cup.

The Selfridge ANGB Exchange — which encompasses a main store, Express, Military Clothing store and more — was recognized for its exceptional service to the military community during the Department of Defense

retailer's managers' conference in Frisco, Texas.

127th Wing Commander Brig. Gen. Rolf Mammen wrote a letter in support of the Selfridge Exchange's nomination.

"The Exchange has not only carried out its duties serving more than 40 different tenants of the installation, to include components of the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Customs & Border Protections, but they have also continually worked with the installa-

tion to maintain the highest quality of service and commitment," Mammen wrote.

Mammen also commended the Exchange for being an active participant in installation initiatives and a collaborative partner with other installation organizations.

"Selfridge Exchange associates are incredibly passionate about taking care of our shoppers," said Selfridge ANGB Exchange General Manager Ken Lowell. "We're honored to be recognized and look forward to

continuing to provide the best service to the best customers in the world."

One winner and one runner-up were awarded the Director/CEO Cup in each of four size categories, based on sales volume: Super, Large, Medium and Small. The Selfridge Exchange was the winner in the Small category.

The winners were chosen from among 94 eligible stores based on customer experience, leadership, business results, marketing efforts and community presence.

## COMMUNITY BULLETIN

# Save the date: Retiree Affairs Day

By Penny Carroll

127th Wing Public Affairs

Mark the calendar and save the date: The annual Selfridge Retiree Appreciation Day event will take place Saturday, September 16, 2023.

The RAD provides a "one stop shop" to get military retirement questions answered. The RAD is FREE to military retirees and their spouses, and a continental breakfast will be provided. During the Retiree Appreciation Day event, guest speakers from Tricare, Medicare, Military Officers Association of America, the Veterans Administration and an elder law attorney will address issues pertinent to military retirement. A legislative update will be provided, as well as an opportunity to obtain flu and pneumonia vaccinations. The RAD also provides its attendees free legal services for the retiree for simple legal documents, such as a will, to be drawn up. Retirees can also update their military ID card.

The event is sponsored by the Selfridge Retiree Affairs Office, staffed by voluntary military retirees Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., located in the Base Dining Facility, Building 164 at 43156 Wagner.

The RAO is a phone and walk-in military resource for military retirees (or soon to be retirees) and their spouses and can refer retirees out to veterans services organizations in their respective counties. Many of the RAO volunteers are experienced in various aspects of military service to include active duty, reserves, and civilians. The RAO also provides brochures on Tricare, dental and vision coverage, and veterans benefits, in general. Unfortunately they do not have access to military software systems, so they cannot access military personnel files or records such as DD214's, chronological record of retirement points, or 20 year letters, but can point customers in the right direction for obtaining such files.

The Retiree Affairs Office is always looking for volunteers with prior military service to help out in any capacity they can — from answering phones during the week to planning and assisting with the annual RAD event. Those interested in volunteering with the RAO or registering for the upcoming Retiree Appreciation Day can call 586-239-5580 to gain more information.



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