

## 127<sup>th</sup> WING



### LINEAGE

127<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing

Redesignated 127<sup>th</sup> Combat Crew Training Wing, Feb 15, 1951

Redesignated 127<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Wing, July 1, 1955

Redesignated 127<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Wing, July 1, 1955

Redesignated 127<sup>th</sup> Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 1966

Redesignated

Redesignated

Redesignated 127<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing

Redesignated 127<sup>th</sup> Wing

### STATIONS

Selfridge ANGB, Mt Clemens, MI

### ASSIGNMENTS

Air Training Command

Air Defense Command

### WEAPON SYSTEMS

#### Mission Aircraft

F-16

#### Support Aircraft

C-26B

### COMMANDERS

Col. Magnus Marks

Col Erick W. Kyro

Col Robert McMath 1966

Col Howard Strand, 1969

Col Richard Rann, 22 Apr 1974

BG Rudolph D. Bartholomew, 1975

BG Harold W. Rudolph, 1981

BG David T. Arendts, #1993  
BG Thomas G. Cutler 2002  
BG Robert H. Johnston 2002  
BG Richard Elliott 2004  
BG Michael L. Peplinski 2006  
Col Michael T. Thomas June 2011

November 1996—Col. Thomas G. Cutler assumed command of the 127th Wing from Brig. Gen. Allan W. Ness.

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

### **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

On February 15, 1951, the 127th Fighter Wing was redesignated the 127th Combat Crew Training Wing, transferred to Air Training Command jurisdiction and ordered to proceed to Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix, Arizona, with Col. Henry J. Amen as the Wing Commander. The 172nd Squadron from Battle Creek was assigned to Selfridge AFB, Michigan.

After being returned to state control in November 1952, the headquarters, 127th Fighter-Bomber Wing and 14 subordinate units were granted Federal Recognition. This marked the second time in five years the Michigan Air Guard had to build a force from scratch.

In November 1953, the units of the 127th Fighter Wing received F-86E. The Wing Mission trained hundreds of NATO Country pilots in Fighter-Bomber tactics. They graduated from Luke directly to Korean assignments.

In 1960, the 127th underwent a major organizational change. The wing was alerted on August 1, 1961 for possible activation for the Berlin Crisis. The Wing began assembling and packing equipment for the activation but the call up did not occur.

The Air National Guard Base at Detroit Metropolitan Airport was turned over to civilian

authorities of Wayne County in January 1971 and the 127th and 191st Groups and Wing Headquarters moved to Selfridge Air Force Base near Mt. Clemens.

The Michigan Air National Guard took over control of Selfridge on July 1, 1971 and the base was designated Selfridge Air National Guard Base with a separate detachment, Detachment 1 Headquarters Michigan Air National Guard, to act as host for operation of the base and to perform support functions primarily manned by Federal Civil Service civilians.

Off of Alert: The Michigan Air National Guard's 127th Wing at Selfridge ANG Base outside of Detroit formally relinquished its air sovereignty alert mission on Oct. 2 to the Ohio ANG's 180th Fighter Wing based in Toledo. Selfridge's F-16s have protected American skies and stood on alert around-the-clock since 9/11 as part of Operation Noble Eagle. But the unit is scheduled to stop flying its F-16s by the end of the year and transition to A-10s under BRAC 2005 decisions. The 127th held a ceremony on Oct. 2 to mark the end of its combat air patrols. "It's amazing to think how far we've come, from standing up this mission ... to protecting these skies for seven years," said Brig. Gen. Michael Peplinski, the wing's commander. He continued, "Thanks to all of you who made this mission successful; we couldn't have done it without the unending support of our families, our friends and our community." Canadian Brig. Gen. Andre Viens, deputy commander of NORAD's Continental Region, presented the wing with a commemorative plaque and thanked its members for their constant vigilance in spite of numerous deployments to Southwest Asia. Earlier in the year the 127th converted its C-130 airlift mission to flying KC-135.

June 1998—elements of the 127th WG, consisting of over 300 personnel, eight F-16s and four C-130s, deployed to the Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) in Alpena for a readiness exercise. During the exercise, wing members honed their mobilization and deployment skills.

September 1998—F-16s and 127th WG personnel deployed to Combat Readiness Training Center in Alpena to train on and evaluate Air Combat Maneuvering Instrumentation (ACMI) pods, which are carried by F-16s to record in-flight data during air combat training.

August 1999—787 members of the 127th WG deployed to Combat Readiness Training Center in Alpena for a readiness exercise.

June 2000—From June through August of 2000, 303 members of the 127th WG made deployments to six different countries, including Italy, Germany, Turkey, Oman, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. This was a part of Aerospace Expeditionary Force 7.

September 2001—In early September, F-16s and personnel of the 127th WG made an Operation Southern Watch deployment to the Saudi Arabia to enforce the no-fly zone in Iraq. Later that month, C-130s of the 127th Airlift Group deployed in support of Operation Joint Forge, delivering personnel and supplies into Bosnia.

On the morning of Sept 11, 2001, two F-16s piloted by Lt. Col. Tom "Fro" Froling and Maj. Doug "Bubbles" Champagne were returning to Selfridge after completing their air to ground re-

currency training at the ranges in Grayling when Cleveland Center informed them that there was a Demon Watch in effect. This message essentially told the pilots to contact their base operations. Cleveland Center thought that the F-16s might be available to intercept the high-jacked United Flight 93 on that fateful morning. "We had jets airborne and the FAA asked if they had enough fuel or ammunition to intercept a flight in Pennsylvania," said Brig. Gen. Thomas G. Cutler, then commander of the 127th Wing. "I realized then our country was under attack."<sup>46</sup> "The Operations Group commander asked if we had expended all of our ammunition and specifically asked if we had strafed," said Maj. Champagne. "We replied that all ordnance was gone. I had assumed we had strafed without clearance and had injured someone down range. We had no idea what was happening on the eastern seaboard."

Throughout the day, the 127th WG launched F-16s armed with live missiles to perform combat air patrols (CAP) over the Detroit area. Col. Robert H. Johnston, an experienced air defense pilot, was the first to fly a CAP on Sept II.<sup>48</sup> In addition, KC-135s of the 927th Air Refueling Wing (Air Force Reserve Command) at Selfridge had aircraft in the air within one hour of the terrorist attacks to provide tanker assets for CAP fighters. The 927th would continue to provide aerial refueling assets in support of the Operation Noble Eagle homeland air defense mission, which would be formally established within the next few days.

August 2002—members of 127th deployed to CRTC for readiness training, including ATSO chemical warfare training.

October 2002—MSgt. Steven Gorski and TSgt. Robert Austin of the 127th WG became the first ANG members to become Air Force contingency contracting officers (CCO) in the theater of operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Their job was to assure forward deployed units received basic life support supplies, such as food, water, shelter and medical.

November 2002—Col Robert H. Johnston assumed command of 127th WG from Brig. Gen. Tom Cutler in a change of command ceremony on Nov 3. Cutler was wing commander since 1996. Maj. Gen. Gordon E. Stump Adjutant General Of Michigan presented Cutler the Distinguished Service medal. Johnston was noted as being the first pilot in the Midwest to be aloft following the September 11th attacks. Col. Richard Elliot assumed the vice commander's role.

January 2003—200 members of 127th WG deployed for temporary duty (TOY) to Incirlik AB, Turkey in support of Operation Northern Watch. Members of 107th FS, 127th Maintenance Squadron, 127th Operations Group, and 127th Logistic Group, were among those units that participated in the deployment. 107th FS F-16s flew combat air patrol missions to enforce the no-fly zone over Northern Iraq. The 107th was also assigned to provide support for combat search and rescue (CSAR) missions. During such missions, pilots would coordinate and direct CSAR operations of down aircrews and escort the rescue helicopters. The 107th achieved a 95% full mission capable status thanks to 127th Maintenance Squadron personnel. Pilots flew several sorties each day accumulating approximately 400 hours of flight time.

February 2003—members of the 127th wing returned from their Operation Southern Watch deployment on 1 February.

March 2003—127th WG received new and improved chemical warfare protective suits to better meet chemical and biological threats.

June 2003—The 127th WG, on orders from the USAF Chief of Staff Gen John P. Jumper, was reorganized into a Combat Wing Organization to better improve the wing's ability to participate in the Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF). This transition was implemented to improve combat readiness and expeditionary capabilities. This is part of a broader standardization of certain operations of the ANG, AFRC and USAF in order to create a consistent and cohesive structure between these organizations. The new 127th WG structure will consist of 5 groups: 127th Operations Group, 127th MXG (Maintenance Group), 127th MSG (Mission Support Group), 127 MEG (Medical Group) and 127th AG (Airlift Group).

September 2003—The 127th WG received an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for its service from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2001. During this time, the wing was repeatedly called upon to serve in such operations as Northern Watch and Southern Watch in Iraq, Joint Forge in Germany, and a number of other missions and deployments. Following the 9/11 attacks, the 127th WG flew 24-hour combat air patrols. While serving in Operation Northern Watch in Southwest Asia, the 107th simultaneously stood alert in defense of CONUS as a part of Operation Nobel Eagle. The 127th Airlift Group also stood alert during this period and flew supporting missions in Germany, earning an excellent ORI rating in so doing. In addition to this accolade, the 107\* FS received the Air Force Association Air National Guard Outstanding Unit Award for 2002 and the National Guard Association of the United States Distinguished Flying Unit Award.

October 2003—127th members learned new techniques in dealing with chemical and biological threats. 480 members completed the 2 hour course during the UTA drill weekend.

May 2004—Col Richard Elliott vice CO of 127th WG assumed command of 127th WG from Brig. Gen. Robert H. Johnston. Col Michael Peplinski became vice CO.

July 2004—members of the 107th FS returned home from combat deployment to Kirkuk Iraq.

August 2004—127th Wing conducted an Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE) at the Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) in Alpena. 527 member of the wing participated in the exercise to measure the wing's combat readiness. Exercise included simulations of terrorist attacks, bombardment, chemical and biological warfare and conventional assaults.

September 2004—The Lakes Response 2004 exercise was hosted by the 127th WG. The exercise tested federal, state, county and local medical responses to simulated terrorist weapons of mass destruction attacks.

March 2005—Col Michael Peplinski, 127th WG vice commander, received the bronze star and air medal for meritorious and heroic achievement while deployed to Kirkuk Iraq. During the

deployment, he ensured that close air support and reconnaissance were given to coalition ground commanders, and ensured the safety of personnel and aircraft while under fire from the enemy.

April 2005—127th WG deployed 800 of its members to the CRTC in Alpena to conduct its 2005 Air Combat Command Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE).

August 2005—Two members of the 127th WG were awarded the bronze star for their actions in Iraq. As the deputy commander of operations of the 506th Expeditionary Operation Group, Lt. Col. Charles J. Dierkes Jr. ensured that fighter, airlift and helicopter flight operations in Iraq were flown safely and efficiently. He conducted his duties while under hostile fire. Lt. Col. Kasbow was another recipient of the bronze star for meritorious actions as a physician's assistant at An Numaniyah Military training base.

September 2005—127th members assisted in Hurricane Katrina relief. The 171st Airlift Squadron evacuated victims of the hurricane and brought critical supplies and personnel to the ravaged New Orleans area. 70 personnel deployed to the Gulf Region, while the rest of the unit remained on alert status. 105 Well over 500 missions were flown during this month where over 900 tons of supplies were airlifted. In addition, over 200 residents were also evacuated by the 171st AS. All of this was accomplished while parts of the unit were simultaneously deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

**2005 30 Aug** A C-130 and flight crew assigned to the 127th Wing, Michigan ANG, and an air evacuation crew assigned to the 137th Air Evacuation Squadron, Oklahoma ANG, evacuated 143 Veterans Administration hospital patients to Jackson, Mississippi.

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One C-130 assigned to the 127th Wing, Michigan ANG, flew to Nashville, Tennessee to pick-up an air evacuation crew assigned to the 118th Airlift Wing, to evacuate approximately sixty-eight medical patients from NAS New Orleans. the mission was delayed because of an in-flight emergency caused by an engine problem. The aircraft diverted back to Nashville, Tennessee.

January 2006—Brig. Gen. Michael L. Peplinski assumed command of the 127th WG from Brig. Gen. Richard G. Elliot, who became the assistant Adjutant General for Air of Michigan

October 2006—An emergency response exercise was held at the DNR boating access site in Harrison Township, MI. The exercise, involving an F-16 crash scenario, tested the ability of 127th WG members and community emergency response teams to work jointly for such contingencies.

January 2007—Over 250 members of the 127th WG were deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The deployments ranged from 45 days to 120 days. Members and aircraft of the 107th

FS were deployed, as well as members of the 127th Civil Engineering Squadron, 127th Military Personnel Flight and 127th Medical Group.

January 2008—The 127th Crashed, Damage, Disabled Aircraft Recovery Team (CDDAR) received training from members of the Canadian Armed Forces. The training program emphasized the expedient recovery of crashed, destroyed and disabled aircraft.

Members of the 127th WG participated in the Battle of An Najaf on 28 January. 107th FS F-16 pilots and support personnel were based out of Balad AB, Iraq as a part of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing. 332nd F-16s and A-10s gave close air support to ground forces who were under attack by insurgents brandishing RPGs, small arms and hand grenades. 332nd pilots delivered three and a half tons of precision guided munitions and fired thousands of rounds of 20mm and 30mm ammunition at their targets, resulting in over 200 enemy insurgents killed and 100 prisoners taken. The pilots were directed to their targets by combat controllers (known as Joint Terminal Attack Coordinators) from the 21st Special Tactics Squadron, Pope AFB, INC., who were embedded with the ground forces. The decisive battle raged for 36 hours.

Based at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich, the 127th Wing is composed of approximately 1,700 Citizen-Airmen and provides highly trained personnel and aircraft and support resources to serve the community, state and nation. The 127th Wing operates KC-135, providing global aerial refueling capability in support of Air Mobility Command, and the A-10 Thunderbolt II, flying the close air support mission in support of Air Combat Command. The Wing also supports the Air Force Special Operations Command with its 107<sup>th</sup> Weather Flight.

The 127th Wing was created in 1996 by the merger of the 127th Fighter Wing and the 191st Airlift Group. The 127th Wing is broken into five groups, each of which are composed of various flights and squadrons. The 127th Air Refueling Group flies and maintains the KC-135T 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. The 127th Operations Group which flies the A-10C Thunderbolt II. The 127th OG includes the 107th Fighter Squadron and 127th Operation Support Flight.

After a year of drawdown for the 127th Airlift Group at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., which included the loss of its C-130 airlifters, the Michigan Air National Guard (MIANG) received the first plane for its new refueling mission on Dec. 20, 2007 in a “passing of the aircraft keys” event. The ceremony marked the movement of the first KC-135 Stratotanker from the 927th Air Refueling Wing, Air Force Reserves, to the 127th Wing, MIANG. According to decisions made by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission, the 927th will move to MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., later in 2008 to become an associate unit of the active duty 6th Air Mobility Wing. As the unit tapers its missions in Michigan, they have been assisting the MIANG to undertake the new mission. The 127th is converting flying missions per the 2005 BRAC decisions, including flying the C-130 Hercules airlifters to the KC-135 refuelers. The unit

said farewell to the last of their C-130s in October 2007. At the December passing event, 927th Commander Col. Gary Beebe remarked, "This is the beginning of the end of an era of owning our own planes." Currently, the neighboring units of two separate Air Force components are working together to ensure training requirements are met as the 127th ramps up to this new mission. Beebe spoke of the joint training happening during their drawdown and the Guard's taking delivery of the mission. "Being at the same installation has allowed us, as two different wings, to come together," he said. "You've done a great job of recognizing that everyone who wears this uniform is an Airman – whether they're Guard, Reserves or active duty." "Total Force is working overseas in the War on Terror with the Guard, Reserves and active duty coming together to accomplish one mission," said Capt. Joseph Winchester, 127th conversion officer, and former member of the Air Force Reserves. "This is the first time we've come together like this here at our base." More than 220 ANG personnel are fully integrated with the Reserve component at Selfridge, including maintenance, operations, and command personnel. Brig. Gen. Michael Peplinski, 127th commander, also spoke to the Airmen. He acknowledged that the joint training began as a vision he and Beebe shared that would allow the 927th to continue their mission, even while decreasing in numbers, and offering outstanding training opportunities to the 127th as they learned a completely new mission. "Receiving this aircraft today is a tribute to the teamwork, the corporate knowledge and the patriotism of all involved," said Peplinski. "There can be no doubt at the 6th Air Mobility Wing that they're getting a great partner in the active association with the 927th Air Refueling Wing." Peplinski and Beebe agreed that the two units, in training and working together on a daily basis, is a great partnership in Total Force that could be mirrored by other Air Force units. Peplinski continued by offering words of his vision for the future of Selfridge, telling the crowd of community and congressional representatives, "We're losing our great partners with the Reserves and the 927th, so we're looking for new partners and in that, we are endeavoring to bring an active duty associate unit here to Selfridge." "The Guard really benefits here," said Winchester. "We get to learn from subject matter experts on these planes. We're getting to pick up on their years of experience and knowledge and learn from a bona fide experienced reserve forces unit," he said. The first ANG flight of the KC-135 from Selfridge took place later that week with another aircraft transfer occurring on December 27. In all, the 127th will obtain eight KC-135 aircraft from the Air Force Reserves by the end of 2008.

2008

Almost three years after the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) determined that the combat-experienced flying units of the 127th Wing, Michigan Air National Guard, would change aircraft, the 127th Airlift Group officially became the 127th Air Refueling Group - a tanker unit with eight KC-135s, as the first aircraft conversion is completed. At a military ceremony held at Selfridge Air National Guard Base during the April 2008 drill, Lt. Col. David Brooks was named the first 171st Air Refueling Squadron commander. Brooks told the crowd of about 400 Airmen and 100 community members, "As the new squadron commander, I am excited about the challenges that lie ahead for our unit. We are a nation at war with a diligent enemy and the Airmen of the 171st are committed to learning this new mission and are looking forward to making significant contributions to our community, state, and nation." For the citizens of southeast Michigan, the change will not be too noticeable, because the Air Force Reserves' 927th Air Refueling Wing has been flying these planes in local skies for years. Now, however, the global reach arm of the Air Force is part of the Michigan National Guard assets, providing tanker gas that gets U.S. military planes around the world. When asked about the mission change,

Brooks described the differences between the former C-130 airlift mission and the unit's new challenge. "This mission change to air refueling represents a monumental mind-set shift for the citizen Airmen serving at Selfridge. We are moving from what was largely a theater re-supply role to an assignment in which three Selfridge aircrew members could execute missions that directly impact key elements of the national military strategy," he said. In the coming months, the 127th Wing will also undergo a fighter conversion as the 107th Fighter Squadron transitions from flying F-16s to A-10 aircraft, which will complete the aircraft changes at Selfridge as directed by the 2005 BRAC commission. 2008

2008 Since that unforgettable morning on Sept. 11, the F-16s at Selfridge Air National Guard Base have patrolled the local skies and stood alert, ready to answer the nation's call to identify or intercept unresponsive or threatening aircraft. On Oct. 2, 2008, the 127th Wing officially handed off the alert mission to the 180th Fighter Wing, Toledo, Ohio, leaving the legacy of air sovereignty alert behind them. A ceremony was held to commemorate the 127th's service to the nation at the alert facility originally slated to be demolished in September 2001. About 200 Airmen, family and community members filled hangar 6. The ceremony was planned to be held outdoors with a final scramble of the 127th Wing F-16s, but rain, wind and cool temperatures forced the crowd indoors and cancelled the takeoff of the jets. A ceremonial ringing of the klaxon and taxiing of two F-16s marked the end of the 24/7 mission. After the ceremony, guests had the opportunity to see where 127th Wing Airmen had spent many holidays, birthdays and other important missed occasions while performing their duties around the clock behind the secure wires of the alert facility. 127th Wing commander, Brig. Gen. Peplinski, told the crowd during the ceremony, "It's amazing to think how far we've come, from standing up this mission where we had Airmen living in tents, to protecting these skies for seven years, including providing air defense support for events like the Super Bowl a few years ago. Thanks to all of you who made this mission successful. We couldn't have done it without the unending support of our families, our friends and our community." The deputy commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command, Brig. Gen. Andre' Viens, presented the 127th Wing with a commemorative plaque and remarked on the constant vigilance of the "107th Red Devils Squadron." He said, "In spite of being deployed for Operation Northern Watch; In spite of having to live in this old facility; In spite of numerous deployments to Operation Iraqi Freedom; And in spite of a runway reconstruction that caused you to be based out of Battle Creek, you did not stop protecting the country for seven years." Representatives from the Northeast Air Defense Sector also presented the wing gifts in tribute to the unceasing service of the Michigan Air National Guard. Many of the Airmen who answered the call to duty were traditional status Guardsmen who now will be returning to the civilian workforce, or will face unemployment. "I don't know how I'll react to having weekends off and not working 24-hour shifts!" joked Tech. Sgt. Harold Hayes, an aircraft armament systems specialist with the 127th Wing. "I was placed on active duty orders in November 2001, and I've been here for the past seven years. As far as my plans go, I hope to get a technician position with the upcoming conversion to A-10s." By Capt. Penny Carroll, 127th Wing Public Affairs Selfridge 9/11 alert mission ends Lt. Col. William Hargrove, a 107th Fighter Squadron F-16 pilot, prepares to launch in an alert jet as Tech. Sgt. Harold Hayes, aircraft armament systems specialist, goes over the procedures checklist. The alert mission at the 127th Wing passed to the 180th Fighter Wing, Toledo, Ohio, on October 2. Photo by John Swanson, 127th Wing "As we move from the F-16 to the A-10, our

unit is feeling the loss of standing ready at a moment's notice to serve our nation," said alert facility commander, Lt. Col. William Hargrove. "But as we begin our transition to the missions of the A-10 Thunderbolt, and many of us transition back to our civilian occupations, we will maintain our readiness to answer the call from our nation again - at a moment's notice." This transition is one of the last of the changes brought to the 127th Wing from the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure commission. Earlier in the year, the wing converted its airlift mission to the KC-135 refueling mission. By the end of 2008, the wing will no longer be flying the F-16 as it finalizes conversion to the A-10 Thunderbolt

A mere six months after officially taking on the A-10C Thunderbolt II flying mission, the 127th Wing successfully completed its first deployment of the jets to Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., for a winter-basing exercise dubbed "Operation Demons to DM." On February 6, all ten jets and more than 100 support personnel returned to Selfridge Air National Guard Base after spending a month in warmer weather to develop confidence, enhance competencies and cultivate camaraderie. The four-week deployment proved that the 107th Fighter Squadron, 127th Operations Group and the 127th Maintenance Group are ready and able to position their combat capabilities wherever needed in the world. "This deployment sets us up for taking the organization to the next level in preparation for the AEF," said Lt. Col. Doug Champagne, 107th FS commander, referencing the Wing's impending deployment in support of global operations in 2011. The unit spent its first deployment focusing on training to be combat ready wingmen with the newest A-10 pilots completing their initial mission qualifications training. More experienced pilots with the unit previously flew the F-16; these Airmen focused their training on achieving flight lead upgrades in the A-10. The former F-16 mission took off for the last time from Selfridge Air National Guard Base in 2009 when the 127th Wing underwent conversion to the A-10C per the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission. Col. David L. Augustine, 127th Wing vice commander, indicated that the change in aircraft has somewhat affected the unit's tenor, stating, "Although we remain the 107th Fighter Squadron, we do feel like a brand new unit." Augustine, who has been flying the A-10 for a decade now, credited the 127th Operations Group Commander Col. Leonard Isabelle, 127th Maintenance Group Commander Lt. Col. Greg Holzhei and the 107th FS Commander, Lt. Col. Douglas Champagne, with the successful conversion. "This Wing has done an amazing job in transferring a renowned F-16 unit into a top-notch A-10 unit," he commented. The journey to Arizona offered the Michigan Guardsmen better winter weather in which to train. It also simulated the desert environment where current combat taskings are taking place in southwest Asia. The Arizona ranges allowed the flexibility for the 107th's "Red Devils" to drop all the munitions that the A-10 can hold in a single sortie - something that cannot be done in Michigan. "A lot of the stuff we struggle to train on here, we are unlimited with there," Champagne explained. The pilots practiced flying tactical maneuvers at low levels through mountainous terrain. The larger ranges in Arizona also allow jets to drop different munitions and shoot live rockets, flares, and missiles. New A-10 pilot Lt. Wes Gregory had the chance to shoot a Maverick missile for the first time in his career on this trip. Usually, pilots train at home station using simulators and see how they perform on corresponding video screens. Gregory commented, "It was great to shoot the Maverick for real because I could validate the weapons effect of the missile itself - how it impacts the target. Normally we just do it on video, but it worked as advertised." The 127th Maintenance Group proved their capability to deploy 10 aircraft and maintain an intense flying schedule for four weeks. Keeping the jets

healthy and in the air also allowed 127th Operations to meet their sortie requirements for the first time since climbing into the A-10C cockpits. "We've struggled with the health of these jets since we acquired them," said Lt. Col. Greg Holzhei, 127<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Group commander. He made clear that the A-10s have been undergoing significant challenges in maintenance over this past year with fixing the fleet-wide wing crack issue as well as getting each jet through many upgrades. However, the Airmen flew a vigorous flying schedule keeping to about 16 flights a day - a heavy 8-turn-8 schedule. "A lot of the A-10 community at Davis-Monthan didn't think we could do it with only 10 aircraft," said Maj. Kurt Ring, 127th Maintenance officer. "A couple of things went in our favor: a dedicated work force, working long hours and we didn't have many hard breaks." The 288 sorties flown allowed the pilots to achieve their upgrades while logging almost 650 flying hours in the Warhogs. The pilots expended almost 3,000 flares, hundreds of dummy bombs and close to 10,000 rounds of 30mm ammunition from the A-10's large Avenger Gatling gun around which the jet is built. "This was our first opportunity to deploy with the A-10, so we were able to gain knowledge in the A-10 specific mobility requirements," Ring said of his maintainers. "We were also able to gain insight into sortie generation timelines and requirements. Overall this deployment was a major success for Maintenance." "This trip was a pivotal moment in not only the conversion, but in preparing the unit for combat operations that are just 16 months out," Augustine emphasized. "We've proven we are more than adequately prepared as a combat organization to succeed wherever we may be needed in the future." Brig. General Michael Peplinski, 127th Wing commander, commented on the success of the A-10 deployment and underscored the readiness of the 127th Wing stating, "With the Wing in the midst of two simultaneous mission conversions, these success stories are critical to morale. The Wing continues to steadily move forward toward a combat ready status as it meets the nation's airpower needs." 2010

2011 The Airmen of the 127th Air Refueling Group have begun a series of rolling mobilizations that is anticipated to keep dozens of members of the Michigan Air National Guard on duty at least for the next year. The new mobilizations are in addition to two ongoing taskings that are keeping local Airmen busy both at home station and abroad. The Airmen, who fly, maintain and support the KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft based at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, will begin rotating aircraft, aircrews and support personnel to the 340th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron, which operates in southwest Asia, in support of U.S. Central Command. From there the Selfridge Airmen will be called upon to fly missions in and around Afghanistan and other areas in the Central Command Area of Responsibility - a region that covers about 20 countries. The KC-135 can be used for a variety of missions, most notably, as an air-to-air refueler. "The Airmen of our refueling group are among the best trained and most highly-motivated people in our military," said Col. Michael Thomas, 127th Wing commander at Selfridge, a KC-135 pilot and former commander of the 127th ARG. "I have no doubt that they will continue to make all of us proud as they represent the very best of our home state of Michigan." To support the needs of CENTCOM, the 127th ARG will be sending an aircrew and various support personnel to the 340<sup>th</sup> EARS for two-month deployment rotations. The rotations will include anywhere from 10 to 25 people and will often include an aircraft from Selfridge. The first rotation begins in early November. The rotations are expected to continue at least through the end of 2012. Tanker air crews and maintenance personnel from Selfridge have been on day-to-day call by the Air Mobility Command's Tanker Airlift Control Center (TACC) since the unit began flying the KC-135 mission in 2008. "It is pretty rare for us not to have a crew on the road somewhere to support

the TACC,” said Lt. Col. David Brooks, commander of the 127th ARG. “This is a good tasking for us, because it keeps our air crews sharp, flying a variety of types of missions and it is a benefit for the Air Force because it increases the capabilities available to our senior leaders.” Generally, about a dozen and a half members of the Michigan Air National Guard are on active duty status at any given time operating from Selfridge to support TACC taskings domestically and globally. Many of the TACC missions flown by Selfridge crews and aircraft are in support of aeromedical evacuations. In those missions, the KC-135s pick-up a specially trained Air Force medical team and related equipment and then are used as essentially a cross between an ambulance and a flying hospital to move wounded or injured military personnel from one location to another. The aeromedical evacuation missions can range from transporting wounded warriors from Afghanistan to locations in the U.S., to helping injured personnel relocate from one U.S. location to another. “There are few things that are more satisfying than flying the med-evac mission,” said Lt. Col. Jim Rossi, director of operations for the 171st Air Refueling Squadron at Selfridge a KC-135 pilot. “It is an important mission that ensures that we are providing the best possible care for our wounded warriors.” In yet another deployment tasking, the 127th ARG will be sending aircraft and about four dozen people to a forward location in the U.S. Pacific Command region in March 2012 for about a month. The 127th completed a similar mission for PACCOM in March of this year. From the Pacific Command location, the Selfridge tankers support a variety of flying missions all around the Pacific Rim. “When you start adding up a dozen people here, a couple of dozen people there, people who have to get their regular training accomplished and maintain our aircraft for any possible additional missions, it gets to be a complex puzzle with lots of moving pieces,” Rossi said. The 127th ARG begins to serve in this new series of deployments even as another major unit of the Michigan Air National Guard is already serving in Afghanistan. About 300 Citizen-Airmen of the 127th Operations Group and 127<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Group, which flies and maintains A-10 at Selfridge, deployed in late September for a roughly four month period. A smaller contingent of that group will be working on a six-month deployment. Michigan Air National Guard security forces, civil engineers and services personnel have all been forward deployed at various times over the past year, in various-sized groups. The unit began flying KC-135s in 2008 as a result of new missions instituted by the 2005 Base Re-alignment and Closure Commission. Prior to taking on the KC-135 mission, the 127<sup>th</sup> ARG was known as the 127th Airlift Group and flew C-130 for about 15 years. The unit’s final major deployment with the C-130 came when most of the group spent the last six months of 2006 in Afghanistan. In 1946, after the conclusion of the war, the unit was redesignated as the 171st and assigned to the Michigan Air National Guard. In the 1970s, the unit flew the F-106 Delta Dart and picked up a distinctive nickname – the Michigan Six-Pack. The 171st flew fighter aircraft from the time of the unit’s inception through 1994, when it made the transition to the C-130. The Six-Pack nickname - and the unit’s black and yellow checkerboard tail markings - continue to be used by the 127th ARG. The 127th ARG is a component of the 127th Wing. Composed of approximately 1,700 Citizen-Airmen, the 127th Wing of the Michigan Air National Guard is the host organization at Selfridge, flying the KC-135 and the A-10.

Selfridge Supports KC-135 LAIRCM Testing: Members of the Michigan Air National Guard's 127th Wing at Selfridge ANG Base, northeast of Detroit, are installing a new version of the Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures System called Guardian on a KC-135 tanker for testing, announced unit officials. "The work being done by our airmen on this project will have a direct

impact on the future safety of not only aircraft, but the airmen, soldiers, sailors, and marines aboard those aircraft," said Col. Michael Thomas, 127th WG commander, in the base's Feb. 4 release. The Selfridge maintainers began work in mid-January to prepare one of the wing's KC-135s for the prototype LAIRCM pod, states the release. Once modified, the Air Guard will conduct tests with the KC-135 at a range in another state. The testing is expected to conclude by late spring or early summer, states the release. LAIRCM is designed to defeat man-portable surface-to-air missiles by jamming their guidance systems in flight using a laser beam. The Air Force has not finalized plans for how many of its KC-135s it will modify to carry the pods, states the release. 2013

#### 3600th Flying Training Wing (Fighter)

The command discontinued the 127th Pilot Training Wing at Luke on 1 November 1952 and established the 3600th Flying Training Wing (Fighter).

#### ***Luke AFB, Arizona***

The command placed Luke on active status on 1 January 1951 to augment jet fighter combat crew training in operation at Nellis. The program was to be conducted by the 127th Fighter Wing, which had transferred from Continental Air Command to ATC, effective 10 February. The wing moved from Romulus, Michigan, to Luke on 23 February, and on 1 March ATC established the USAF Air Crew School (Fighter-Bomber/Escort) at Luke. Fighterbomber training began here on 1 March 1951. Effective 5 March, the 127th was redesignated as a pilot training wing.

Some 200 airmen and 10 A-10s from the Michigan Air National Guard's 127th Wing left Selfridge ANG Base northeast of Detroit to train at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., according to a unit release. This two-week deployment is part of Operation Snowbird, under which northern-tier Air Guard units have the opportunity to drill in warm-weather conditions in southern Arizona during the winter months. "Training at Davis-Monthan in Snowbird is like a scrimmage before playing in the big game," said Lt. Col. Shawn Holtz, commander of the wing's 107th Fighter Squadron. "Everybody gets a chance to sharpen their skills and build up the team," he said. The Selfridge airmen departed for Arizona on Jan. 23; they will focus on search-and-recovery training during their stint at Davis-Monthan, states the release. While there, they will be able to nearly double their normal daily sortie rate. 2015



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Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 8 Oct 2010

Updated:

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