

# WOLVERINE GUARD

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 3



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PHOTO BY: SPC RACHEL BAKER, 1<sup>ST</sup> BN, 125<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY



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**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**

**MICHIGAN NATIONAL GUARD JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS  
3411 N MARTIN LUTHER KING JR BLVD  
BUILDING 30, ROOM 230  
LANSING, MI 48906-2934**

**517-481-7735  
NG.MI.MIARNG.LIST.PAO@ARMY.MIL**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER**

**DEPUTY PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER**

**DEPUTY PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER**

**PRODUCTION TEAM**

**DIGITAL MEDIA**

**VISUAL INFORMATION**

**COMMAND HISTORIAN**

**MAJ. MEGAN BREEN**

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# TAG TALK

MAJOR GENERAL PAUL D. ROGERS

## SUCCESS THROUGH TEAMWORK



As we enter the height of summer, I am proud to welcome you back to this edition of the Wolverine Guard. The theme of this issue, 'Continuous Transformation,' is more than just a concept. It is a reflection of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs daily commitment to excellence, readiness, and innovation across all formations.

We are a force in motion. This summer, our Soldiers and Airmen have continued to raise the bar in training, capability, and mission execution. In June, the Michigan National Guard conducted its first Mobilization Exercise (MOBEX) in conjunction with State Annual Training, deploying infantry and engineer units to Latvia to participate in a bilateral exercise that reinforced NATO

interoperability and our enduring partnership through the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program. This milestone tested our strategic mobility, sharpened our warfighting skills, and deepened the strong partnership we share with our Latvian allies. It is a bold step forward in ensuring we remain ready to respond, at home or abroad, at a moment's notice.

Following that effort, we were honored to welcome our counterparts from Liberia, who visited Michigan to observe and engage with our forces during State Annual Training. Liberia's presence reflects the growing importance of Michigan's role in building global defense cooperation and capacity. These partnerships deepen mutual understanding, strengthen alliances, and allow us to grow together as strategic teammates.

Our transformation is also taking flight, literally. This summer brought the historic announcement that Selfridge Air National Guard Base has been selected as the future home of the F-15 EX Eagle II. This decision reaffirms the unmatched strategic value of Selfridge and the professionalism of the 127th Wing. This announcement secures Michigan's place in the future of airpower and ensures that Selfridge remains a cornerstone of America's national defense for generations to come.

The ability to evolve, while staying true to our values, is what sustains us as a force of choice for both state and nation.

Thank you for your dedication, your resilience, and your commitment to constant improvement. Together, we are shaping the future while honoring the legacy of those who came before us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul D. Rogers".





# LEADER SPOTLIGHT

## CMSGT MELANIE MCMANUS: MPMO FOR THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD



*CMSGT Melanie McManus, the military personnel office manager (MPMO) for the Michigan Air National Guard.*

**STORY BY 2ND LT. PAIGE BODINE,  
MICHIGAN NATIONAL GUARD**

LANSING, Mich. — As the military personnel office manager (MPMO) for the Michigan Air National Guard, Chief Master Sgt. Melanie McManus handles some of the force's most complex personnel and administrative matters. From working directly with the chief of staff to resolving issues that installations can't address at their level, she ensures that the right people are in the right place and ready to serve the mission.

Her role is a position historically filled by lieutenant colonels. In 2023, McManus became the first enlisted member to take on the role.

"When I heard the position was opening, I saw it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," McManus said. "A lot of people didn't think it could be done by someone enlisted, but the assistant adjutant general believed in me. I knew I had the experience, and I jumped at the chance."

That leap of faith didn't happen overnight. McManus began her military career on active duty in 2001. Over the next 12 years, she developed a foundation in leadership, administrative skills, and personnel management before joining the Air National Guard in 2013. Her years of experience, both in and out of uniform, prepared her for the pace and complexity of the MPMO role.

No two days look the same. One moment, McManus is coordinating with senior leaders on promotions and

retirements. The next moment, she is helping organize the governor's "State of the State" address or a joint forces command conference. Her team is responsible for balancing personnel systems, supporting career development, and maintaining the Guard's force structure in a smooth operation.

"The most rewarding part is knowing that what we do directly impacts the lives and careers of airmen and soldiers across the state," she said. "We help them navigate opportunities and challenges so they can get the most out of their service."

That support sometimes means adapting quickly. McManus recalled one instance when leadership from Michigan was scheduled to attend a senior command conference in Washington, D.C.. Still, a winter storm grounded flights across the Midwest.

"Our commanders and generals were already here, but we couldn't fly to D.C.," she said. "So we adapted. We built a completely new version of the conference here in Michigan. We were able to facilitate mentorship sessions, add virtual speakers, and ensure that our leaders' time was worthwhile." In addition to managing high-level personnel matters, McManus is passionate about helping service members understand the importance of preparation and self-investment. She sees it firsthand in the promotion process.

"A lot of people expect to get promoted just by showing up, but it doesn't work like that," she said. "Opportunity favors the prepared. Professional military education, civilian education, and seeking out leadership roles all add up. If something is within your control, take ownership of it."

Similarly, her mindset also shapes her approach to leadership.

"It's important to be approachable," she said. "People need to feel safe coming to you, and that means being real. We're all human. Leaders have tough days, too, but we don't need to pretend that they don't. Showing that vulnerability builds trust."

McManus also encourages service members to take advantage of state-level opportunities, including classes, certifications, and career development programs.

"Too often, people put themselves last," she said. "They think they'll get to it later. But now is the time. Whether you're planning to stay in for 20 years or transition out, setting yourself up for success starts today."

Outside the office, McManus spends time with her family and three dogs and enjoys golfing when she can.

Her path from active-duty airman to Michigan's first enlisted MPMO demonstrates that experience and initiative, combined with a strong commitment to the mission, can open doors regardless of rank.



# Family Programs



The Soldier & Family Readiness Program assists Service Members and their Families with:

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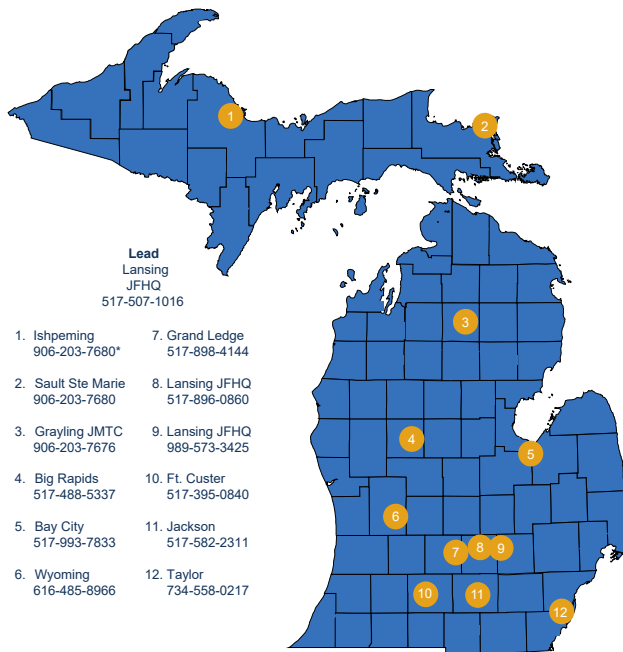
Non-Medical Administrative Casework, including:

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**Kristy Torsky**

Military & Family Life Counselor  
(734) 460-5000  
ktorsky9@magellanfederal.com  
Camp Grayling Bldg. 117

**Lia Hollis**

Military & Family Life Counselor  
(269) 361-7816  
hollisl@magellanfederal.com  
Joint Forces Headquarters, Lansing



Face-to-Face  
Virtual  
Telephonic



PERSONAL FINANCIAL COUNSELORS

**Dave Roberts**

Lansing  
571-424-4981  
pfc3.mi.ng@zeiders.com

**Ron McAllister**

Grayling  
571-422-5034  
pfc1.mi.ng@zeiders.com

**Gary Salach**

Selfridge  
571-421-6001  
pfc2.mi.ng@zeiders.com

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# SERIES: FROM THE FRONT LINES

## MSGT AIMEE PASCAS



**Capt. Tandi Bailey**  
110th Wing Public Affairs

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. — Michigan Air National Guard's Master Sgt. Aimee Pascas is making headlines as she competes at the national level for the prestigious Outstanding Airman of the Year award—one of the highest honors recognizing excellence and leadership across the U.S. Air Force.

Pascas, known among her peers for her steady leadership and commitment to service, says her decision to enlist was rooted in a

desire to serve something greater than herself. "My decision to enlist stemmed from a desire to fulfill a higher calling through service to the United States and contribute meaningfully to its collective well-being," Master Sgt. Pascas, the 110th Wing's Information Protection Officer, "I also valued the benefits of education, travel, and healthcare."

Throughout her career, Pascas has left a lasting mark through mentorship, citing her greatest



pride as helping shape the future leaders of the Air Force. "I find immense fulfillment in shaping the next generation of Air Force leaders," she said. "The ability to impart knowledge and mentor Airmen, observing their subsequent development and assumption of leadership roles, is a legacy I deeply value."

Her service in the Air National Guard allows her to blend duty and community - something she doesn't take for granted. "I am honored to contribute to the defense of our nation while simultaneously maintaining close ties to my family and establishing roots within the vibrant community of Michigan," Pascas said.

As she looks ahead, Pascas hopes to continue her impact on a broader scale. "I aspire to advance to the next echelon of service, where I can directly impact the health, morale, and welfare of Airmen on a larger scale," she said.

Pascas' nomination for Outstanding Airman of the Year stands as a testament to her dedication, leadership, and passion for service—qualities that exemplify the very best of the Michigan Air National Guard.





# FOREIGN EXCHANGE

*Michigan Guard, Latvia Strengthen Readiness in Cross Continental Exchange*

David Kennedy & 2nd Lt. Michael Sian  
Michigan National Guard

RIGA, Latvia—From May 31-June 14, 2025, the Michigan National Guard (MING) and the Latvian National Armed Forces (LNAF) reinforced their enduring partnership through a bilateral training exchange that spanned two continents, bolstering readiness and interoperability between NATO allies. Soldiers from Michigan's 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment, and 507th Engineer Battalion deployed to Latvia. At the same time, LNAF troops traveled

to Michigan to train alongside their MING counterparts at Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center and Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

The exchange marks the latest chapter in Michigan and Latvia's long-standing commitment to the State Partnership Program, which has connected Michigan with Latvia since 1993. Over the past three decades, their partnership has grown from occasional exchanges into a robust program contributing directly to

NATO's collective defense.

In Latvia, the 507th Engineer Battalion supported Exercise Selija Castle 25 at the Selija Military Range, contributing their technical expertise to construction and engineering tasks that enhanced the LNAF's training infrastructure. Engineers cleared and graded the terrain, supporting the construction of a staging area for vehicles and equipment. They plan to return in 2026 to continue the site's expansion.







*A bulldozer with the 507th Engineer Battalion, Michigan National Guard moves earth while Latvians observe at Selija, Latvia, June 2025. The site clearance is part of a joint engineering effort involving Latvian Zemessardze, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve engineers, and the Michigan National Guard. The cleared land will serve as a future NATO training site, enhancing allied interoperability and regional readiness. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Tech. Sgt. Bethany Rizzor)*

"Our engineers now have a deeper understanding of the far-reaching impact of their service," said 1st Lt. Brock Crystal, Logistics Officer for the 507th Engineer Battalion. "The SPP is a unique opportunity for our soldiers to share tactics and engineer expertise on the ground in real-world missions."

The engineers' efforts are part of a multi-year project to develop the most capable training center in the Baltics, which, when complete, will include ranges purpose-built for the integration of joint live fire and maneuver.

Simultaneously, soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment trained alongside Latvian forces at Adazi and Aluksne, focusing on live fire exercises, maneuver drills, and trench warfare tactics. In Aluksne, MING soldiers received instruction on trench construction, defense, and clearing techniques from Latvian instructors whose typical training audience includes Ukrainians headed for the front lines.

These skills are relevant given the widespread use and evolution of these tactics in Ukraine, particularly with the integration of drone technology.

***"Our engineers now have a deeper understanding of the far-reaching impact of their service,"***

***—1st Lt. Brock Crystal,  
507<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion,  
Michigan National Guard***

"Our understanding of what tomorrow's fight might look like continues to evolve, especially with the proliferation of drones and their integration into

trench warfare," said Capt. Joseph Enright, Operations Officer for the 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment. "The opportunity to work alongside our Latvian partners to prepare to address those threats is critical to our mutual success."

The LNAF received reciprocal engineer and infantry training from the Michigan Army National Guard in Michigan, with additional LNAF training on air traffic control and range operations from Michigan Army and Air National Guard units. Maj. Gen. Kaspars Pudāns, the Latvian Chief of Defense, also joined his soldiers in Michigan to observe part of the training.

During this training, the MING and LNAF also achieved a new level of multinational command and control between the two military organizations. From a low-profile command post in Camp Grayling, the multinational team tested a real-time common operating picture using SitaWare on a secured





Latvian soldiers receive marksmanship instruction at Camp Grayling, Michigan, June 4, 2025. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Catalin Bugan)



Soldiers assigned to Alpha and Bravo Companies, 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment, Michigan Army National Guard, train in trench warfare techniques near Alūksne, Latvia on June 10, 2025. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Bethany Rizor)

but unclassified network, which was transmitted back to Latvia through Starlink, all commercial-off-the-shelf technologies. This technology allowed leadership from the LNAF, the MING, and NATO's Multinational Division-North to monitor, communicate, and maintain situational awareness of Latvian forces training in Michigan and NATO forces engaged with MING units in Latvia. This integration highlights the growing capability of NATO partners to coordinate seamlessly across domains and borders using commercial-off-the-shelf solutions.

"The fact that our service members trained simultaneously in Michigan and Latvia allowed us to build tactical interoperability at the soldier level, exercise NATO's reception staging and onward movement process in Latvia and test a new communication capability that enabled Latvia and Michigan to share a digital common operating picture," said Maj. Catalin Bugan, State Partnership Program Director for the Michigan National Guard.

The bilateral exchange underscores the

strategic value of the State Partnership Program, which facilitates long-term relationships between the U.S. National Guard units and partner nations

*"Our understanding of what tomorrow's fight might look like continues to evolve, especially with the proliferation of drones and their integration into trench warfare,"*

*—Maj. John Wilkinson,  
Bilateral Affairs*



how these partnerships can translate into operational readiness and interoperability on the battlefield.

"This partnership and training strengthen security and stability in the region," said Maj. John Wilkinson, Bilateral Affairs Officer to Latvia for the Michigan National Guard. "It also provides a physical deterrence necessary to counter threats to U.S. interests while honoring our international commitments."

With Latvia continuing to serve as a critical NATO ally in the Baltics, the Michigan National Guard's efforts in supporting Latvian readiness contribute directly to regional security. The June 2025 exchange reaffirmed the tactical readiness of the forces involved and the strategic bonds that undergird NATO's deterrence mission in Europe.

To read this story online [click here](#).



*Soldiers from the 107th Engineer Battalion, Michigan National Guard, conduct a bridging exercise with Latvian soldiers at Camp Grayling, June 5, 2025. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Kyle Maki)*



*Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment, Michigan National Guard, conduct urban warfare training with Latvian soldiers at Camp Grayling, Michigan, June 7, 2025. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Daniel Garas)*



# GOING THE DISTANCE

## *Michigan Hosts Uncrewed Triple Challenge*



*The competition required autonomous drones to traverse air, land, and water while transporting a ten-pound package. (Courtesy Photo)*

### **Senior Master Sgt. Dan Heaton, Alpena CRTC**

The state of Michigan tapped into both its future and its legacy by supporting a unique competition designed to test the development of emerging technology that could drive the state's economy while bolstering national defense.

Nine teams, representing seven states and three foreign nations, competed in the state's first Uncrewed Triple Challenge (UTC) at the National All-Domain Warfighting Center (NADWC) in Northern Michigan on May 20, 2025. The challenge tasks competitors with using uncrewed, autonomous drones to traverse air, land, and water while transporting a ten-pound package.

"We are utilizing the water, land, and air resources we have as part of the National All-Domain Warfighting Center to help broaden our horizons and diversify our economy," said Michigan's Governor, Gretchen Whitmer.

Completing the course required the drones to travel five nautical miles in Thunder Bay on Lake Huron, fly 58.5 miles from Alpena to the Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center, and then drive 23 miles from the Combined Arms Collective Training Facility on Camp Grayling to the camp's parade ground. The NADWC was chosen for its complex terrain and facilities that mirror real-world challenges, making it an ideal setting for the UTC's first run.

Governor Whitmer said the event placed Michigan at the forefront of innovation and technology while speaking at the opening ceremony in Alpena. The race started after Whitmer fired a ceremonial howitzer at the Thunder Bay waterfront.

The competition was organized through a partnership among the Michigan National Guard, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

"For more than 100 years, Michigan has been a critical part of the defense of our nation," said Maj. Gen. Paul D. Rogers, Michigan's adjutant general and director of the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans





Affairs. “We were critical to the victory in World War II as the Arsenal of Democracy and now we are helping to develop new technology that will be critical to our efforts in the future.”

Both Whitmer and Rogers pointed out that technology driven by the UTC has both civilian and military applications. Increasingly, the military is seeking out ways that autonomous vehicles can perform duties that may tax military manpower or put soldiers at risk. The UTC served as a showcase for emerging technologies and was intended to push the development of those technologies via the creation of a unique challenge.

The day’s event took place on a cool, windy morning, with temperatures just above 40 degrees at the start of the event and wind gusts of 20 miles per hour.

*“We are utilizing the water, land, and air resources we have as part of the National All-Domain Warfighting Center to help broaden our horizons and diversify our economy,”*

*—Governor Gretchen Whitmer.*

“The weather is actually adding another layer of complexity,” said Geoff Douglas, a representative of Mythos AI, one of the participating

companies. “Our goal is not only to showcase our technology, but to continue to use it in different settings and environments so that we can continue to fine tune and improve it.”

Brig. Gen. Scott Meyers, Michigan’s assistant adjutant general for Army-Initiatives, said about 100 soldiers and airmen from the Michigan National Guard played a hand in supporting the event, in addition to soldiers from the 126th Army Band who participated in a community showcase event at the start of the challenge.

“We continue to develop and utilize the NADWC for events such as this that not only strengthen our National Guard, but our communities as well,” Meyers said.

To read this story online, [click here.](#)



# FORGING PARTNERSHIPS

*Michigan-Sierra Leone SPP moves ahead with multidisciplinary engagements*



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Shane Mills, readiness non-commissioned officer for the 246th Transportation Battalion, Michigan National Guard, discusses U.S. Army fleet management documentation processes with vehicle drivers from the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), April 17, 2025, at the RSLAF Joint Logistics Unit in the Murray Town district of Freetown, Sierra Leone (Courtesy Photo).

**Capt. Andrew Layton**  
Bilateral Affairs Officer

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone — The State Partnership Program between the Michigan National Guard (MING) and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) – established in 2024 – took another step forward April 11-18 with three separate engagements conducted at various RSLAF facilities in Sierra Leone's capital region. Cooperation focused on the areas of professional

military education, vehicle operations & fleet management, disaster response planning & interagency cooperation.

Each event supported the priorities identified for the SPP by Sierra Leone's senior military leaders in 2024. Following a formal signing ceremony in September, teams from Michigan visited Freetown

in November 2024 to establish the professional military education and vehicle operations lines of effort, as well as promote military justice and the rule of law.

"We are moving forward to deepen ties with our partners in the RSLAF and to support lines of effort that make both our organizations stronger, more fluent, and more





*U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Derek Smith, 177th Regional Training Institute, Michigan National Guard, leads a discussion with instructors assigned to the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) Armed Forces Training Center, April 16, 2025, at the RSLAF AFTC, Benguema, Sierra Leone (U.S. National Guard photo by Capt. Andrew Layton).*

prepared to conduct our respective missions,” said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Scott House, the Michigan National Guard’s executive integrator for the Sierra Leone SPP. “Less than one year into this relationship, we’ve already conducted six events in Sierra Leone, setting a foundation for mutual understanding that we will keep building upon.”

Planning is underway for members of the RSLAF to observe exercise Northern Strike in Michigan this August. Northern Strike is one of

the Department of Defense’s largest reserve component exercises, hosted annually at the National All-Domain Warfighting Center in Northern Michigan. This year’s iteration of Northern Strike is expected to draw approximately 7,000 participants from nearly every service component and branch of the U.S. armed forces.

“We appreciate this partnership with the Michigan National Guard and look forward to developing the full benefit of our cooperation,” said RSLAF Brig. Gen. Sahr David

Ngaujah, RSLAF Chief of General Staff. “There are more good things to come as our relationship grows.”

*“There are more good things to come as our relationship grows.”*

—Brig. Gen. Sahr David Ngaujah  
Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces

The SPP supports U.S. State Department and Department of Defense objectives by linking the National Guard of a U.S. state with the armed forces of a sovereign partner nation for mutually beneficial security cooperation. The SPP began in 1993 with 13 partners and has grown to include 105 partnerships with 115 countries.

To read this story online [click here](#).







# FUTURE OF AVIATION

## *Emerging at*

# SELFRIDGE

Story by Master Sgt. Chelsea E. FitzPatrick  
127th Wing

SELFRIDGE AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Mich.—Airmen assigned to the 127th Wing, Michigan National Guard, learned the future of their dual flying missions when President Donald J. Trump announced the F-15EX Eagle II aircraft will replace the A-10 Thunderbolt II mission when the latter is retired.

Trump, joined by the Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, The Adjutant General of the Michigan National Guard, U.S. Army Maj. General Paul Rogers and Michigan Air National Guard Assistant Adjutant General, U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Daniel J. Kramer II, declared the strategic basing decision to approximately 300 Airmen and

members of the media at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

“This is a huge, bipartisan win for Michigan, decades in the making, that will grow our economy and make our country safer,” Whitmer said. “Since day one, I’ve been laser-focused on securing a new fighter mission at Selfridge and supporting the brave Servicemembers who step up for our communities every day.”

The announcement relieved years of uncertainty about what airframe, if any, would replace the 127th Wing’s A-10 fleet after the Air Force began officially retiring the plane, nicknamed the “Warthog,” in 2022. The uncertainty was replaced with concern when, in 2024, the Air Force announced Selfridge ANGB was selected as the preferred location

to host the next KC-46A Pegasus refueling mission to replace both the A-10 and KC-135 Stratotanker.

“Divesting the aging A-10 fleet and KC-135s and replacing them with the KC-46 ensure Selfridge ANGB has an enduring and modern mission that meets the requirements of the National Defense Strategy,” the Air Force wrote in the Jan. 12, 2024, press release announcing the new mission.

Flown by Airmen assigned to the 107th Fighter Squadron and maintained by Airmen of the 127th Maintenance Group, the A-10 mission replaced the 127th Wing’s F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft, relocating the fleet from the 110th Fighter Wing in Battle Creek in early 2009. In 2011, the 127th Wing completed the typical three-year long aircraft conversion





*President Donald J. Trump arrives at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan, April 29, 2025. Trump announced the 127th Wing will receive 21 F-15EX Eagle II fighter jets to replace the A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft after the Air Force completes divestment. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Paige Bodine)*

process in 2.5 years when the Air Force fully certified the A-10 mission.

“For 15 years we’ve flown the A-10 with pride and unmatched skill and will continue to do so until the very last flight,” said Brig. Gen. Matthew Brancato, commander of the 127th Wing and Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

Selfridge Field was opened July 1, 1917, when the Michigan National Guard took possession of the former Joy Aviation Field, and transferred it to the Army a week later. After the Air Force became a separate military branch in 1947, its name changed to Selfridge Air Force Base. The Air National Guard took command from the Air Force on July 1, 1971, and

changed its name to what it is today.

In 1972, the predecessor of the 107th FS converted from a reconnaissance to a fighter mission and redesignated the unit as the 107th Tactical Fighter Squadron.

In more than half a century since taking on the “fighter” moniker, the 107th FS has operated three fighter and two attack missions: F-100 Super Sabre, A-7D Corsair II, F-16 Voodoo, F-16 Fighting Falcons, and the A-10. Converting the F-15EX will be a welcome challenge, one that generations of 127th Wing Airmen have accomplished time and again throughout the history of the enduring fighter mission.

Brancato says this defining moment is owed to many people committed to the continued excellence of Selfridge and the 127th Wing.

“This milestone is the result of years of dedication and advocacy and we are deeply grateful to the President, Governor Whitmer, our congressional delegation and our military leadership for helping make it happen,” Brancato said. “Their efforts have ensured not just a new aircraft, but continued mission strength and stability for our Airmen.”

To read this story online [click here:](#)

## AT A GLANCE: F-15 EX EAGLE II

The F-15EX can shoot from a significantly increased range – carry more payload than any other fighter – and provides the unique capability of holding 12 AMRAAMs or other large ordnance. Unlike its predecessors, the F-15EX incorporates advanced technologies that enhance its versatility and capabilities. Its airframe, while visually similar to earlier models, has been reinforced to support a service

life of up to 20,000 flight hours, nearly double that of older F-15s.

The aircraft’s cockpit features a state-of-the-art digital interface, including large-area displays that streamline pilot operations. These upgrades, paired with improved engines, allow the F-15EX to carry heavier payloads and operate at higher speeds than its forerunners.





# SHOTS FROM AROUND THE STATE

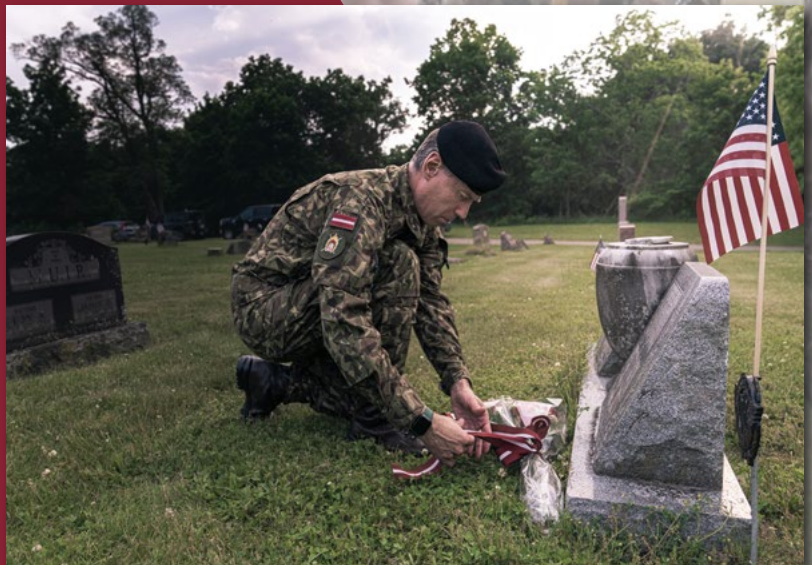
## IN THE TRENCHES

Michigan Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to Alpha and Bravo Companies, 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment conduct trench warfare training at a defensive position near Alūksne, Latvia, June 2025. The training, led by Latvian National Armed Forces instructor OF-1 Elars Tehts from the NAF Infantry School, focused on tactical movement, fighting position reinforcement, and defensive coordination in contested terrain. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Bethany Rizor)



## CHIEF PAYING RESPECTS

Maj. Gen. Kaspars Pudāns, Latvian Chief of Defense, accompanied by Brig. Gen. Daniel Kramer, Michigan Air National Guard Assistant Adjutant General - Air, visits the grave site of Pvt. Aivars Karlis Salenieks, a Latvian-American soldier, June 6, 2025 at Riverside Cemetery Kalamazoo, Michigan. Salenieks was killed in action during the Korean War, October 18, 1952 at the age of 20. Pudāns and his staff visited Michigan during the 2025 state-wide mobility exercise to engage with Latvian troops participating in the training. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sergeant Ryan Bishop)







## SENTRY NORTH

U.S. Air Force Maj. John Tilotson and Capt. Lukasz Bokun, pilots, and Master Sgt. Stacey Greening, flight engineer, 169th Airlift Squadron, Illinois Air National Guard, fly to support a forward arming refueling point mission to pick up a tactical airfield fuel disposing system and Marines with the Detachment, Bulk Fuel Company B, 6th Engineer Support Battalion, Green Bay, Wisconsin, on a C-130H Hercules aircraft assigned to the 182nd Airlift Wing, Illinois Air National Guard, to support Sentry North 25 at

Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center in Alpena, Michigan, June 2, 2025. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Scott Thompson)



## BEST WARRIOR

Michigan Army National Guard Spc. Logan J. Rutledge, an infantryman with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment, conducts his water treading evaluation during the combat water survival test event of the National Guard Region IV Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy, Wis., May 2, 2025. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Cesar Salazar Jr.)



Airmen from the 110th Wing Security Forces Squadron conduct a gate breach scenario at Battle Creek Air National Guard Base, June 6, 2025, Battle Creek Michigan. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sergeant Ryan Bishop)

# KEEPING THE EDGE SHARP

## *The 110<sup>th</sup> Wing Tests Response, Resilience During Combat Readiness Exercise*

By Tech. Sgt. Andrew Schumann  
Michigan Air National Guard

BATTLE CREEK AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Mich. — Airmen from across the wing sharpened their operational edge during a high-intensity Combat Readiness Exercise held during June drill weekend, designed to test rapid response, teamwork and mission sustainability under simulated real-world threats.

One of the key training moments came during a simulated gate breach, when opposing forces tested the installation's entry control point. Security Forces Airmen responded swiftly, demonstrating discipline under pressure and coordination with base-wide support elements.

"I found during this exercise with the gate breach our team learned to work as a group to prevent the simulated attack," said Airman Lincoln Kowalksi, "We assessed the threat, notified Base Defense Operations Center, and responded while our patrols were in route to our location. We responded in an effective manner by utilizing our weapons available to match their firepower. Our team utilized Tactical Combat Critical Care methods to keep injured members in the fight as well."

The scenario was part of a larger, multi-layered readiness event involving mission essential personnel, communications units, logistics and emergency management teams. Each section was challenged to



react in real time to disruptions in operations while maintaining continuity and safeguarding assets.

Lt. Col. Royce McKendry, the 110th Wing's Chief of Staff and lead planner of the exercise, said the intent was to push Airmen beyond routine responses.

"We wanted this to feel unpredictable—because that's the nature of real-world threats," said Lt. Col. McKendry. "This was more than a checklist exercise. It was about decision-making under stress, trust in teammates and staying focused when plans shift rapidly."

*"This was more than a checklist exercise. It was about decision-making under stress, trust in teammates and staying focused when plans shift rapidly."*

*— Lt. Col. Royce McKendry, 110th Wing Chief of Staff, Michigan National Guard.*

Leadership praised the efforts of all involved, noting the importance of exercises like these in preparing for future mobilizations and deployments.

"These events validate our ability to protect the mission and the force," said Technical Sergeant Douglas Davidson, Combat Readiness Exercise Planner and Security Forces Flight Sergeant. "My planning role in the Combat Readiness Exercise provided a firsthand look at all the training and preparation my team completed. It was amazing to see my team's trained response and successful defeat of the adversary."







# EYES IN THE SKY

## Military Drones at Camp Grayling

*Spc. Amber Hickman, and Vincent Omolon from the 294th Medical Company Area Support, 67th Troop Command, Iowa National Guard, transports a patient while a medical drone gathers crucial information in-flight such as vitals, blood pressure, and more during Exercise Northern Strike 2023, on Camp Grayling, Michigan, Aug. 7, 2023. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Paige Bodine)*

### 2nd Lt. Paige Bodine Michigan National Guard

CAMP GRAYLING, Mich. — From Fourth of July fireworks to local football games, one might have noticed a new spectacle in the skies: drones. These buzzing machines have become a common sight, and their journey from concept to reality is nothing short of fascinating. While the public was introduced to drones in 2006, the idea of pilotless aircraft dates back much further. According to the National World War I Museum and Memorial, the idea of pilot-less aircraft dates back to World War I. The U.S. Army's 1918 Kettering Bug, an experimental aerial torpedo, was one of the earliest examples of unmanned flight.

Today drones are commonplace in both civilian and military life thanks to their small size and advanced technology. Continuing the drive of

drone innovation is the Camp Grayling Drone Program, an initiative aimed at preparing soldiers for the evolving threat of small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and drones.

"Small UAS and drone systems are ubiquitous now," said Chris McNally, the head of the program. "Outside of the military, you see them everywhere: Amazon deliveries, real estate, construction. The military must adapt to this technology because it's simply too pervasive to ignore."

McNally's passion for drones started during his deployment to the CENTCOM area of responsibility in 2020, where he encountered a rise in enemy drone usage, even witnessing a drone swarm attack in Saudi Arabia. The experience fueled his determination to master drone technology. Post-deployment, he immersed himself in college courses to earn commercial certifications and a remote pilot license,

blending his military and civilian drone expertise.

"I learned a lot during that deployment," McNally reflected. "I wanted to learn more about the system's capabilities, so I pursued further education to understand civilian applications. Combining military and civilian knowledge gave me a fuller picture of the technology."

The Camp Grayling drone program's primary goal is to equip soldiers with hands-on drone experience and training, making the technology an integral part of military operations.

"Two years ago, after observing the drone use in Ukraine and Syria, the Adjutant General pushed for us to get ahead in handling and integrating this knowledge into our formations," McNally explained. "We began familiarization courses and selected soldiers from various units to learn about the technology," said McNally.





However, many military members are hesitant to embrace drone technology due to their experiences and perceptions.

"Many have a negative perception of drones. They've heard numerous times that these things (drones) are going to kill you. Our program takes the approach that these are also tools that can help you with your job," McNally notes.

Despite these concerns, McNally highlighted the versatile uses of drones and emphasized the numerous benefits they bring. His team is dedicated to tailoring drone training for each unit and establishing safe operational guidelines.

"The purpose of drones varies, they can provide aerial footage, carry medical supplies, and create detailed maps and 3D renderings. They are tools that enhance soldiers' capabilities," he explained. "Our training process is currently very ad hoc, focusing on operator training and familiarization courses. We're laying the foundation for more comprehensive integration of drones into military operations."

With the introduction of this new program, there have been several challenges. These include unclear

regulations and doctrine for small UAS and the vast need to educate units on drone capabilities and proper use. Despite these obstacles, leadership within the Michigan National Guard has been very supportive, helping to address initial resistance and working towards effective solutions.

"Currently, Camp Grayling operates over 300 drone systems and trains on the latest countermeasures," says Colonel Scott Meyers, post commander of Camp Grayling. "Often, this training occurs directly before units are deployed to contested areas where these systems are actively used. Camp Grayling is at the forefront of training and technology in the realm of autonomous systems," he said.

Looking to the future, McNally envisions a battlefield where drones are as common as any other tool in a soldier's kit.

"Drones will become ubiquitous, with every soldier potentially having their own drone," he predicted. "Even if we don't reach that level, drones will at least be present at the company or platoon level, becoming essential tools for soldiers."

The drone program at Camp Grayling is continually evolving, with McNally

and his team striving to integrate the latest technology and collaborate with other organizations. The future of drones in the military is promising, with advancements and increased adoption on the horizon.

"The ultimate goal is to create a robust network where drone video feeds and locations can be shared in real-time, enhancing operational efficiency and situational awareness," McNally concluded.

McNally's leadership and expertise are vital to this cutting-edge initiative, paving the way for a new era of military preparedness and capability.

Units, companies, and battalions can take advantage of the training and can request personalized training for their unit specifically. To submit a request, email [nadwc\\_uaus@army.mil](mailto:nadwc_uaus@army.mil).



*U.S. Army Spc. Curtis Briggs, of 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Battalion, 3rd Brigade, Michigan National Guard, launches a reconnaissance drone during Exercise Northern Strike 2023 on Camp Grayling, Michigan, Aug. 12, 2023. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Tegan Kucera)*





# MYCA

Michigan Youth Challenge Academy

## Michigan Youth Challenge Academy Graduation, 2025



LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan Youth Challenge Academy (MYCA) held a graduation ceremony for 117 cadets at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 14, 2025, at Marshall High School.

The graduating class consisted of cadets from across the state, hailing from 40 different counties: Allegan, Alpena, Baraga, Barry, Bay, Berrien, Calhoun, Cass, Clinton, Genesee, Hillsdale, Ingham, Iosco, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lapeer, Leelanau, Livingston, Macomb, Mecosta, Midland, Monroe, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oakland, Ogemaw, Osceola, Otsego, Ottawa, Sanilac, Schoolcraft, Shiawassee, St. Joseph, St. Clair, VanBuren, Washtenaw, Wayne and Wexford.

The voluntary academy is a cost-free alternative education program that offers at-risk youth the opportunity to change their future. As part of the curriculum, cadets participate in drill and ceremony formations, meet physical fitness standards, perform community service, and receive classroom instruction.

Of the 117 anticipated graduates in this cycle, 90 are earning their high school diploma, while the remaining cadets will continue their academic pursuits toward earning their high school diploma upon their return home. Over the past 22 weeks, cadets have performed more than 5,100 hours of community service to help individuals and organizations in the Battle Creek area.

Class #53 began on July 13, 2025, and the MYCA is encouraging interested cadets and families to submit their application as quickly as possible here: [Admissions Process](#).

For more information, contact Jayme Ham at 269-968-1397, Joan Miller at 269-968-1368, or Yasser Quadri at 269-968-1048.

Graduates of the MYCA are eligible for the Michigan Job Challenge Program, an extension program of the MYCA, which teaches workplace essentials, provides opportunities to learn a skilled trade and assists with job placement.





# MVAA

Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency

## Senate Memorial Day Session & Gold Star Family Luncheon 2025

WHEREAS, THE TERM "GOLD STAR" BEGAN DURING WORLD WAR I WHEN AMERICAN FAMILIES DISPLAYED FLAGS IN HOMES, BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, AND CHURCHES WITH A GOLD STAR FOR EACH LOVED ONE LOST IN MILITARY SERVICE; AND,

WHEREAS, TODAY, THE NATION RECOGNIZES THE SACRIFICE THAT ALL GOLD STAR FAMILY MEMBERS MAKE WHEN A LOVED ONE DIES IN ACTIVE SERVICE TO OUR NATION; AND,

WHEREAS, WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LOSSES OF OUR SERVICE MEMBERS AND ENSURE THAT THEIR FAMILIES ARE NOT FORGOTTEN; AND,

WHEREAS, DURING THE MONTH OF MAY, WE HONOR THOSE WHO LOST A FAMILY MEMBER IN THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES; AND,

WHEREAS, DURING THIS MONTH, WE REMEMBER OUR COMMITMENT TO GOLD STAR FAMILIES WHO CARRY ON WITH PRIDE AND COURAGE DESPITE THEIR TRAGIC LOSS;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GRETCHEN WHITMER, GOVERNOR OF MICHIGAN, AND GARLIN GILCHRIST II, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF MICHIGAN, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM MAY 2025 AS GOLD STAR AWARENESS MONTH IN MICHIGAN.







# ***Military Retiree Appreciation Day***

***at Selfridge ANG Base  
Hosted By Retiree Affairs Office***



**Saturday 20 September 2025 8AM - 4PM**



## **Participating Services**

**Walk-In ID Card Services - Retirement Services Office -  
Tricare/Humana - Medicare - Commissary/AAFES - County VA  
Office - DMVA - MVAA - County Sheriff Department - Legal  
Assistance - Flu Shots**



**Open to all military retirees, those transitioning into retirement,  
and their spouses. For more information please contact the  
Retiree Affairs Office at [selfrao@yahoo.com](mailto:selfrao@yahoo.com) or at (586)  
239-5580. Please RSVP NLT 14 September 2025.**

***This event is limited to the first 375 registrants.***

**A valid military ID card is required to enter the base and to  
purchase anything in the commissary or exchange.**

## **Location:**

**Joint Dining Facility,  
43156 Wagner St. BLDG 164  
Selfridge ANG Base, MI 48045**

**To register please scan the QR code and fill out the  
registration form or go to the following website  
<https://forms.osi.apps.mil/r/2j0kvYZbti> or call  
the Retiree Affairs Office at (586) 239-5580.**





SAVE THE DATE!

# MVAA's Women Veterans Conference

★ ★ ★ 2025 ★ ★ ★

**Oct. 16–19 | Grand Rapids**

Sheraton Grand Rapids Airport Hotel



## LEARN MORE:



Visit [bit.ly/WomenVeterans25](https://bit.ly/WomenVeterans25) or scan the QR code with your camera app to learn more about this year's conference or to view sponsorship opportunities.



LANSING, Mich. — Registration for the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency's (MVAA) fourth annual Women Veterans Conference is now open. This premier event held in Grand Rapids from Oct. 16-18, for women veterans is dedicated to honoring their service, fostering meaningful connections and empowering them for their future.

"Michigan's 47,000 women veterans have traveled a very different path than their male counterparts," says Andrea Norton, MVAA women veteran and underserved populations coordinator. "Its vital that we celebrate the women who have served, those still serving, and all those who support women veterans and service members from across the state of Michigan."

This year's conference theme is Sisters in Service: Thriving Beyond the Uniform. Throughout the three-day event, attendees will explore their shared history while cultivating personal growth and strengthening connections to help women veterans thrive in both their personal and professional lives.

The 2025 Women Veterans Conference will kick-off Thursday, Oct. 16, with an evening reception for the opportunity to connect with other women veterans and advocates. On Friday, Oct. 17, attendees should expect

engaging presentations, a variety of vendors, information-sharing and chances to connect and build community with other women veterans. On Saturday, Oct. 18, conference attendees can 'choose your own adventure' with a variety of activities taking place both on and offsite. To enrich the experience, volunteers who specialize in wellness services will donate their time and talents to help attendees learn best practices in self-care.

Sponsorships help create an impactful conference and provide scholarships for women veterans with financial barriers to attend. For more information on becoming an event sponsor, review the sponsorship packet. To become a sponsor, contact Andrea Norton at [NortonA9@Michigan.gov](mailto:NortonA9@Michigan.gov).

Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency - The MVAA is the central coordinating agency, providing support, care, advocacy and service to veterans and their families. As a state agency, MVAA works to identify and break down barriers veterans face in employment, education, health care and quality of life, to make Michigan a great place for veterans and their families to call home.

More information about MVAA is available at [Michigan.gov/MVAA](https://Michigan.gov/MVAA).





# STRENGTHENING ROOTS

*Michigan-Liberia State Partnership Program marks 15 years of enduring cooperation, commitment*

## Capt. Andrew Layton Bilateral Affairs Officer

CAMP GRAYLING, Mich.—The Michigan National Guard (MING) and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) celebrated the 15th anniversary of their partnership under the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program (SPP) in a series of special events held June 10-13 at Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center, Michigan.

These activities, which coincided with the MING's annual training exercises, began with a ceremonial tree planting and culminated with the MING's annual Pass-In-Review parade. Maj. Gen. Davidson Forleh, the AFL Chief of Staff, served as a distinguished reviewing official.

"In the business of defense and security, we can never rest on our laurels. Our profession demands vigilance and action in a dynamic and ever-evolving environment," said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Paul Rogers, MING adjutant general. "That does not mean, however, that there is never time for reflection – it is important to take time for perspective, honor, and appreciation. That is what these events with our Liberian partners are all about."

In addition to Forleh, the Liberian delegation included AFL Lt. Col. Francis Gbodi, military advisor to the chief of staff; AFL Lt. Col. Stephen Tarplah, chief of public affairs; and AFL Maj. Urias Zogaa, chaplain general.

On June 10, Zogaa joined Col. Brian Martinus, MING State Chaplain, to dedicate a white pine – Michigan's state tree – near the Camp Grayling chapel. The dedication symbolized the strength of the Michigan-Liberia partnership. Zogaa also participated together in the annual MING prayer breakfast on June 12, delivering the benediction.

"The tree is a symbol of life, growth, fertility, and a legacy for the next generation," said Zogaa. "As the roots deepen, a tree can withstand strong winds and harsh weather. That resiliency is what defines a strong partnership." During the tree ceremony, participants reflected on the partnership's history.

The SPP was established in 1993 to foster security cooperation between U.S. states' National Guards and partner nations in a mutually beneficial relationship. Liberia formally requested to join the program in early 2009 through then-Minister of Defense Brownie J. Samukai. Later than year, Liberia was paired

with Michigan due in part to the strong Liberian-American community in the Detroit area, including U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Paulus Obey, a Liberian-American serving in the 127th Wing at Selfridge ANG Base, Michigan

Michigan received official notification of the partnership in December 2009. In September 2010, an AFL delegation traveled to Michigan for a familiarization with MING facilities and leadership. The next month, then-Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Tom Cutler led a MING delegation to Monrovia, Liberia, where the partnership was formally inaugurated during a meeting with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on Oct. 27, 2010.

During this year's visit, Forleh observed annual training events across Northern Michigan, including drone operations with MING's 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment; medical readiness activities with MING's Medical Detachment, which is directly aligned with the AFL's 14 Military Hospital; and a patient extraction exercise on Lake Huron, conducted under the Air National Guard's Medical Readiness University program at the Carmeuse Calcite Quarry in Rogers City. Approximately 2,900 service members





*Michigan National Guard leadership and delegation members from the Armed Forces of Liberia dedicate a white pine— Michigan's state tree — near the Camp Grayling chapel to mark 15 years of enduring cooperation and commitment of the Michigan-Liberia partnership. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sergeant Teagan Kucera)*

participated in the exercises, which take place annually in June to support overall readiness and proficiency of the MING.

Forleh also engaged in key leader discussions with Rogers and Brig. Gen. Ravindra Wagh, assistant adjutant general — Army. Wagh has a deep history with the SPP, having served as a mentor during the U.S. Africa Command-led Operation Onward Liberty (OOL) mission in Liberia from 2014-2015. Between 2011-2016, the MING supported multiple OOL rotations, establishing close ties and relationships as the AFL established itself as a professional military organization following 14 years of civil war.

“When I was a captain, we had an American mentor at the AFL brigade who was a lieutenant colonel,” said Forleh. “That man is now Brig. Gen. Wagh. How amazing that we are here today, both as general officers.”

Before the June 13 Pass in Review parade, Forleh met with Michigan Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II, who praised the SPP and Liberia’s growing leadership role in West Africa. Earlier in June, Liberia was elected to a non-permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council for the 2026-2027 term. The AFL also started the second iteration of its Non-Commissioned Officer Academy Basic Leader Course on June 9, another important step toward professional development for an organization rebuilt

and rebranded as a “Force for Good” less than two decades ago.

Between 2013 and 2023, the AFL solidified its reputation for adherence to the rule of law and respect for human rights while participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations in Mali. In 2021, Liberian peacekeepers trained at Camp Grayling as part of

*“The tree is  
a symbol of  
life, growth,  
fertility, and  
a legacy for  
the next  
generation,”*

*—Maj. Urias Zogaa, chaplain  
general, Armed Forces Liberia*

Northern Strike, the National Guard’s largest readiness exercise.

Throughout the commemoration, Forleh expressed profound appreciation on

behalf of the people and government of Liberia to the people and government of the United States — especially the Michigan National Guard — for their continued support to Liberia’s post-conflict defense transformation.

“What makes the AFL strong is our focus on discipline, training, and welfare,” said Forleh. “The record established by the AFL in peacekeeping operations was only possible through our pre-deployment preparation from our U.S. partners.”

“From where the AFL is coming from, where we are, and where we are going, it comes down to this: we are focused on doing the right thing,” he added.

MING leaders emphasized that the partnership with Liberia remains strong and active, referencing recent engagements supporting the medical, human resources, legal, chaplains, and family programs lines of effort.

“There was tremendous foresight in establishing this partnership,” said Rogers. “Reflecting on our strong foundation increases Michigan’s resolve to be the best partners we can be for our Liberian counterparts. We will never take our foot off the gas pedal to work together, share ideas, and listen.”

To read this story online click [here](#).





# A Testament

*June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1889: Michigan Day at Gettysburg*

By Mr. Adam Betz  
Michigan National Guard Command Historian

Some days become more than days; moments that slip loose from being just a date on a calendar and become something greater: a testament. June 12, 1889, was such a day for Michigan soldiers.

On that day, the men of the Michigan regiments who had fought at Gettysburg returned to sanctify the ground on which they preserved the Union. At this point, some 20 years after the Battle of Gettysburg, many arrived leaning on canes. Others brought their unit battle flags from Michigan with them. They all carried the invisible burden that comes with surviving when others did not. They had once stood as young men on the hills and fields of Gettysburg in 1863. Now, a generation later, they stood on that same ground of combat, but this time for dedication, not combat.

They came to dedicate monuments to the units they had served in, each carefully carved in granite stone, placed on the fields where they had witnessed one of the

major turning points in American and world history. From that day forward, June 12th would always be known as “Michigan Day” at the Gettysburg National Military Park, and it remains so today.

In June 2025, as part of the Civil War Institute (CWI) Summer Conference at Gettysburg College, I had the honor of retracing the footsteps of those veterans. On June 12, 2025, exactly 136 years later, I was able to visit every Michigan



*Veterans of the 24th Michigan Infantry on Michigan Day in Gettysburg, back in 1889.*





*Michigan Cavalry Brigade veterans with Michigan governor Cyrus Luce (center in top hat) at the monument dedication in East Cavalry Field at Gettysburg on June 12, 1889.*

monument on the battlefield, reading aloud the original 1889 dedication speeches at the approximate times each one was first delivered by the survivors of those units.

Our soldiers' stories were there in stone: The 3rd Michigan Infantry near the Peach Orchard, the 5th Michigan Infantry on the edge of the Wheatfield, the 7th Michigan Infantry on "The Angle" where the Army of Northern Virginia nearly broke the U.S. position. The 16th Michigan Infantry held the far right of Vincent's Brigade at Little Round Top, a place where tactical leadership by NCOs, Company Grade officers, and a handful of Colonels made instant leadership decisions that would literally impact the trajectory of global history. The 24th Michigan stood on the firing line of the Iron Brigade with old John Burns, a War of 1812 veteran and Gettysburg civilian, suffering terrible casualties on the first day of battle but never faltering. The 4th Michigan Infantry, positioned in a small piece of terrain called "the Wheatfield", would lose its Commander in hand-to-hand combat as he fought to grasp the colors of his Regiment out of secesh hands. He would die among that wheat and become the highest-ranking officer of either side of that war to die of wounds received from a bayonet.

Then there was the thunder of the 9th Michigan Battery and the cavalry raids

of the Michigan Brigade under George Armstrong Custer—1st, 5th, 6th, and 7th Michigan Cavalry Regiments where Custer memorialized Michigan's work at Gettysburg in an un-planned "L shaped" ambush when he yelled, "Come on you Wolverines!" as he led the mounted charge. Last was the famous 1st United States Sharpshooters (1 USSS), which was comprised of three Michigan Sharpshooter

***"To those who wear the uniform of the Michigan National Guard today: these men were your forebears."***

Companies. These men inflicted heavy casualties on the approaching Confederate formations as they approached the extreme left flank of the Army of the Potomac.

Each unit, each stone, was a chapter in a larger story of duty, sacrifice, and a kind of unshakable grit that has come to define



*The state seal that is on all Michigan monuments at Gettysburg*

*The state seal that is placed on all 10 monuments dedicated to Michigan at the Gettysburg National Battlefield.*

Michigan Soldiers. To those who wear the uniform of the Michigan National Guard today: these men were your forebears. Not in the abstract sense of shared nationality, but in a very real, lineal way.

The 3rd Michigan Infantry traces its modern lineage to the 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment. The 1st Michigan Infantry finds its continuation in the 1225th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. Other regiments like the 5th, 7th, 16th, and 24th form the patchwork of Michigan's military heritage, their banners now forever entombed in the Michigan Capitol building.

These connections are not just ceremonial, but they are a charge. They remind us that we experience the same leadership challenges, the same staffing burdens, the same desire to serve the American people.

This is my call to action. Go to Gettysburg. Stand where your predecessors stood. See what they saw. Walk the same key terrain they traversed and defended. Read their monument inscriptions. Let the silence speak to you.

June 12, Michigan Day, should not be forgotten. Rather, it should become a living tradition for our force. Each year, a group of Michigan Guardsmen should return to the battlefield on this date, not just to commemorate, but to connect and renew the sacred thread that binds past and present.

Whether as part of a formal staff ride, a personal pilgrimage, or a weekend of



reflection with family, Gettysburg waits for you. And if you listen closely among the rocks and trees, you just might feel the commands of First Sergeants and Commanders holding their men in line in an impossible mission, saving the nation and keeping America whole.

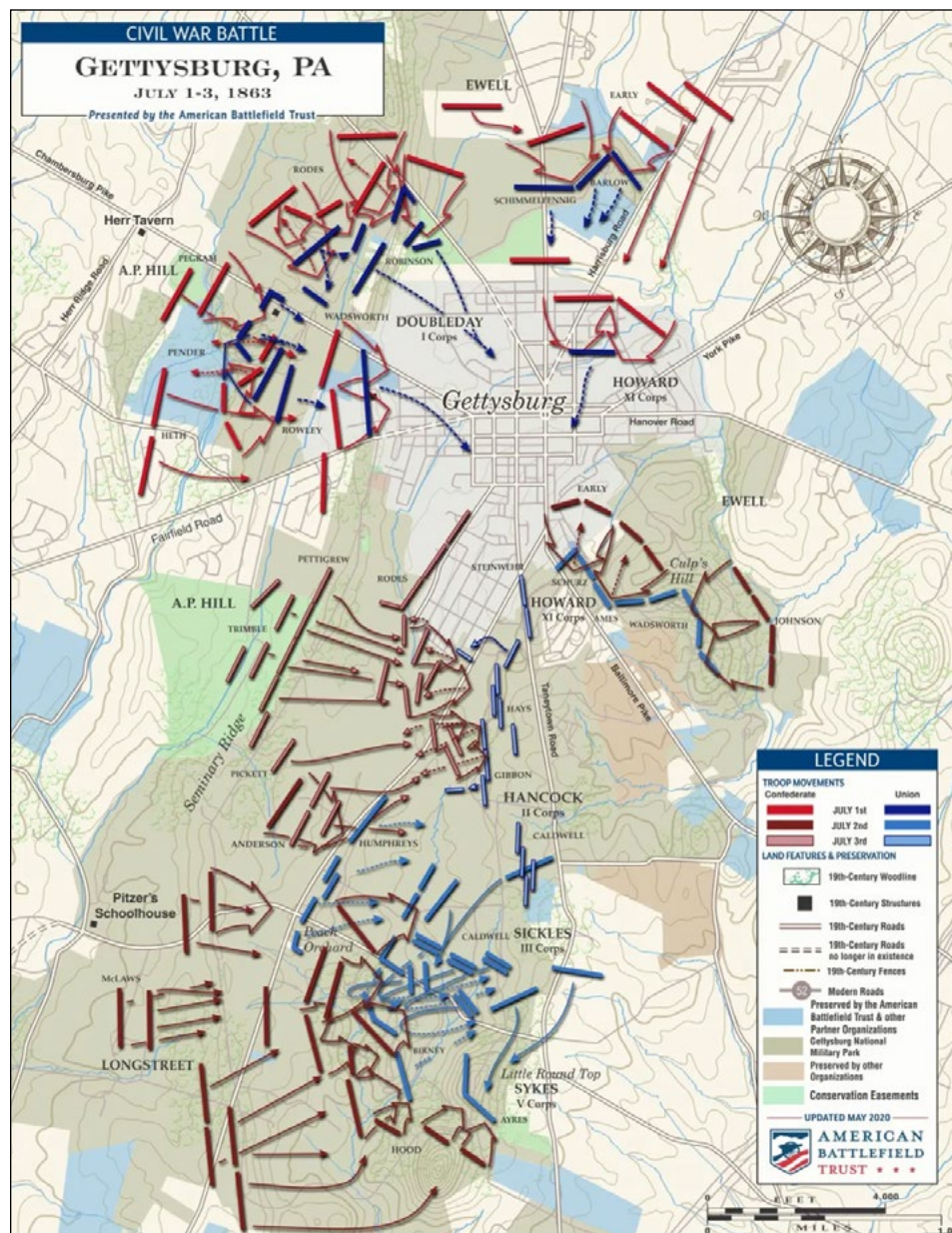
In his own time, Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, Commander of the 20th Maine Infantry, predicted what this battlefield would mean to future generations of Americans in 1889:

“In great deeds something abides. On great fields something stays. Forms change and pass; bodies disappear, but spirits linger, to consecrate ground for the vision-place of souls. And reverent men and women from afar, and generations that know us not and that we know not of, heart-drawn to see where and by whom great things were suffered and done for them, shall come to this deathless field to ponder and dream; And lo! The shadow of a mighty presence shall wrap them in its bosom, and the power of the vision pass into their souls.”

Now it is our turn to remember those who fought here. To honor their courage. To learn from their operational and tactical missteps. To ensure that June 12 never fades from the hearts of those who bear the patch and lineage of Michigan Soldiers today.

Let us re-mark Michigan Day at Gettysburg not just in thought but with presence.

We are the living lineage.



*The Battle of Gettysburg Battlefield in 1863 (American Battlefield Trust)*

## MICHIGAN UNITS THAT FOUGHT AT GETTYSBURG

*24th Michigan Infantry – McPherson Ridge*

*5th Michigan Infantry – Stoney Hill & Rose Woods*

*1st Michigan Infantry – Stoney Hill*

*3rd Michigan Infantry – Peach Orchard*

*4th Michigan Infantry – Wheatfield*

*16th Michigan Infantry – Little Round Top*

*1st Michigan Sharpshooters – Little Round Top*

*7th Michigan Battery – Cemetery Ridge*

*9th Michigan Infantry – Cemetery Ridge*

*1st, 5th, 6th, 7th Michigan Cavalry – East Cavalry Field*



# MICHIGAN ARMY NATIONAL GUARD PROMOTIONS

COL ANDREW BRENNAN

MAJ BENJAMIN SATTLER

CPT WILLIAM RICHARDSON  
CPT PHILLIP HALAMKA  
CPT THOMAS MERKEL

1LT SHAWN STEWART

CW3 KRISTA GEBHARD  
CW3 BRIAN VARELA

CW2 JAMES BIRK  
CW2 GREGORY OSMER

SGM STEPHANIE RANDOLPH

MSG JOSEPH CRESTO  
MSG BRIAN GAIGNARD  
MSG DONOVAN KLEMKOSKY

SFC KILEY ALBERT  
SFC DAVID ALDRIDGE  
SFC CHRISTOPHER BOLLINGER  
SFC KRYSTAL BRATCHER  
SFC SETH CARON  
SFC MARK EHAUSE  
SFC ALEXANDER KORTE  
SFC ADAM MOSLEY  
SFC THOMAS PEELER  
SFC JUAN POSADA  
SFC HUNTER SMITH  
SFC RYAN STARICHA  
SFC JEREMIAH STEPP  
SFC JOSHUA TOWNS  
SFC JESSICA YOUNG

SSG DAMON ADAMS  
SSG COLLIN ANDERSEN  
SSG JAMIE DOTSON  
SSG ZACHARY EARLES  
SSG DYLAN EMERY  
SSG JOSEPH GLEFFE  
SSG TYLER GRAVES  
SSG BRETT HANLEY  
SSG KEVIN JONES  
SSG TOBYN KIRBACH  
SSG NICHOLAS KUMKE  
SSG CODY LANE  
SSG NICHOLAS MENDENHALL  
SSG TREY NEIBERT  
SSG DYLAN OBRYANT  
SSG LUKE PAGE  
SSG NICHOLAS RITTLER  
SSG JESSICA SCHULTE  
SSG SKY VANHOUTEN  
SSG CONNOR WOODMAN  
SSG RUDOLPH ZELINSKI

SGT MAXX ALBRECHT  
SGT GABRIELLE BARKELL  
SGT TAUREAN BENN  
SGT ANDREW BRINK  
SGT BRANDON BUGAI

SGT ALEXIS CAMPBELL  
SGT SAMUEL DAVIS  
SGT BRYCE DEWITT  
SGT DYLAN FESNICK  
SGT MACKENZIE FIELDS  
SGT NYCHELLE FOURMENT  
SGT MAXIMILIAN GARCIA  
SGT CONNER GEKLE  
SGT ASHTON GOOD  
SGT SETH GRAVES  
SGT KEVAUGHN HENDERSON  
SGT LILLIAN HENSLEY  
SGT DAVID HERNANDEZ  
SGT RAM HMUNG  
SGT ANDREW HOLBROOK  
SGT AALIYAH LEWIS  
SGT JERRY MEJIA  
SGT CHANDLER NAULT  
SGT ROSS OLSEN  
SGT JAVON OSTERHOUT  
SGT MATTHEW PORTER  
SGT ALEXANDER QUACKENBUSH  
SGT WESLEY SMITH  
SGT JAMES SPENCER  
SGT CHRISTIAN TOWERS  
SGT TREVOR UNDERHILL  
SGT JOSE VALDEZ

CPL JOSHUA COLLEY  
CPL JOSHUA MARTIN

SPC MUHAMMAD ABDULQUDDUS  
SPC JULIA ABRAHAM  
SPC ADAM ALARAGY  
SPC TIMOTHY ALEXANDER  
SPC ABBAS ALI AKBAR  
SPC KYLE AMOS  
SPC ZACHARY BARNES  
SPC DAVID BATAQ  
SPC CHRISTOPHER BENDICKSON  
SPC SARA BENSEN  
SPC KENNETH BICKFORD  
SPC BENJAMIN BILLINGSLEY  
SPC KALEEMA BOBO BYRD  
SPC JEREMY BORNHEIMER  
SPC HUNTER BOSMA  
SPC ANTHONY BOWMAN  
SPC JEREMIAH BROWN  
SPC JUAN CIENFUEGOSRAMIREZ  
SPC KYLE COCKREL  
SPC CANDICE COLEMAN  
SPC EDWIN COLOMO  
SPC THOMAS COTTER  
SPC TRENT DOREY  
SPC HASAN EL HAJRAS  
SPC MOHAMED ELOMDA  
SPC LAWSON FAIRFIELD  
SPC ASHLEY GARRIDO-TAPIA  
SPC GIROD GERMAINN  
SPC DAVEON GILBERT  
SPC MAKIAH GLADSTONE  
SPC MAX GLANVILLE  
SPC KORBIN GRIDER  
SPC HAYDDEN GROENEVELD  
SPC JOSHUA HANNER

SPC JOSE HERNANDEZ  
SPC BRAYLON HUFF  
SPC KATHERINE JAUREGUI  
SPC ETHAN JOLLEY  
SPC SHAKYRA JONES  
SPC KEEGAN KINNE  
SPC ANTHONY KRYCH  
SPC DANA LANGIN  
SPC JOSEPH LIAN  
SPC JORDAN LIEBER  
SPC JOSEPH LING  
SPC JACKSON LOCKWOOD  
SPC DEVINA LOPEZZAMORA  
SPC KHALIF LOVE  
SPC DERECK MATOS LONGORIA  
SPC EDUARDO MAZARIEGOS AMBROSIO  
SPC CORBEN MOHR  
SPC BRIAN MYGRANTS  
SPC CONNOR NITKA  
SPC TYLER NORTON  
SPC ALAN PASCUAL  
SPC DYLAN PENNINGTON  
SPC MELIESHA PETTIS  
SPC ALIX PIPPINS  
SPC KNOAH POLLARD  
SPC THOMAS QUASARANO  
SPC NICHOLAS RADER  
SPC JACOB RECTOR  
SPC JORGE RIOS MC NUTT  
SPC NOLAN ROBINSON  
SPC ZION ROBINSON  
SPC MEAGHAN ROSE  
SPC JONATHAN SCHANTZ  
SPC WOLFRAM SCHMIDT  
SPC LILLIANNE SHATTUCK  
SPC BRYNN SHAW  
SPC JAMES SIEK  
SPC LANAYA SIMPKINS  
SPC JORDAN SMITH  
SPC MYKING SMITH  
SPC JACKSON STARNES  
SPC CARMELO TAYLOR  
SPC STEVEN THERRIEN  
SPC JASON THOMPSON  
SPC JACQUES TONYE  
SPC GABRIEL TORIZ  
SPC EDISON TRAN  
SPC NATAIA TROTTER  
SPC MICAH TRUCKENMILLER  
SPC DANA VAZQUEZ ROSAS  
SPC EIAN VEAL  
SPC ALEXANDER VRHEL  
SPC CAMERON VUN CANNON  
SPC DONALD WATTS  
SPC REMEL WEBB  
SPC CHOLEY WILLIAMS  
SPC STEVEN YORKS  
SPC KAP ZO

PFC LEX AIKENS  
PFC SAJAD AL-GHAZALY  
PFC MOHAMMED ALKHATIB  
PFC ALITAHIR ALWATAN  
PFC ALEXANDER ASBRIDGE  
PFC AMBIKA BANAVARA



# MICHIGAN ARMY NATIONAL GUARD PROMOTIONS

PFC AUSTIN BANNER  
PFC CARSON BAUGHER  
PFC NICHOLAS BINGAMAN  
PFC XAVIER BLANTON  
PFC TREVOR BUNTING  
PFC JAMES CAIN  
PFC KATHERINE CAMPBELL  
PFC RENEE CANTY  
PFC GAVYN CARDEN  
PFC ALEX CARGILL  
PFC DERIC CHUPURDY  
PFC KYLEE COFFEY  
PFC OWEN CORBIN  
PFC CURTIS CRIVEA  
PFC ASHLEY CUEVAS  
PFC JOSEPH CUNG  
PFC RYAN DELAVAN  
PFC MBUYU DIEUDONNE  
PFC CY EICHENBERG  
PFC HUNTER EMMENDORFER  
PFC FRANCISCO ESPARZA ESCOBEDO  
PFC JACKSON FARRAR  
PFC ADAM FITZGERALD  
PFC JAMISEN GAGER  
PFC MALACHI HERZOG  
PFC REBEKAH HILL  
PFC QIERA HOLT BEY  
PFC NICHOLAS INGRAM  
PFC KENYON JACKSON  
PFC ALHASANA JALLOW  
PFC DAVID JUDGE  
PFC KEITH KRAUS  
PFC JAMES KRUSZYNSKI  
PFC VAN LIAN  
PFC ANDREA LUNA ROJAS  
PFC Saidi Lundy  
PFC JONATHAN MAURICIO MARTINEZ  
PFC RYAN MCCOY  
PFC JOHN MENDEZ BABILONIA  
PFC KIMBERLY MENDOZA  
PFC ABBY MILLER  
PFC JEFFERY MONTGOMERY  
PFC KYLE MUNTIAN  
PFC JACK ORDWAY  
PFC GUILLERMO ORTEGA SANTANA  
PFC AUSTIN PARKER  
PFC NADIA PEREZ  
PFC ALASIA PRICE  
PFC LUCIANO PROVENZOLA  
PFC DAVID PURIFOY  
PFC JUSTIN ROGNER  
PFC MUSA SHERIFF  
PFC JONATHAN SMITH  
PFC TARA SNIDER  
PFC TYLER STATLER  
PFC AUSTIN TROMP  
PFC DARIUS WADE  
PFC DESTINY WALLAG  
PFC MATTHEW WENDT  
PFC JORDYN WILLIAMS  
PFC ISABEL WINGO  
PFC SAMUEL WOODBURY  
PFC EMMANUEL YERENAS  
PFC LUKE ZASTROW

PV2 EMMA LEIGH ACKELS  
PV2 ALFREDO ALEJANDREZ REGAL  
PV2 DHELAL ALTAMEEMI  
PV2 JOSE ALVAREZ PEREZ  
PV2 KURTIS BERNARD  
PV2 DAVON BROWN  
PV2 STEVEN BURDETTE  
PV2 AIDEN CAMPBELL  
PV2 GABRIEL CARLSON  
PV2 BRADY DICKMAN  
PV2 FRANCIS DOMINGUEZ CRUZ  
PV2 DEVIN ELLIS  
PV2 JOVANTE FREY  
PV2 LOGAN GARVELINK  
PV2 DYLAN JACKSON  
PV2 CAMEREN KELLY  
PV2 DALE LEMASTER  
PV2 KASH MARTIN  
PV2 MARIAH MAYES  
PV2 DESHAWN MCDUFFIE PORTER  
PV2 CAIDON MOSHER  
PV2 PADMA NEUPANE  
PV2 MACDONALD NGU  
PV2 ULISES PINEDO MONJE  
PV2 CHRISTOPHER RODRIGUEZ  
PV2 RUBY SALES  
PV2 GRAYCIE SCHROEDER  
PV2 ANDREW SEYMOUR  
PV2 MAXWELL SYNHA  
PV2 ISAIAH TALON



# AIR NATIONAL GUARD PROMOTIONS

SMSGT ALEX EBY  
SMSGT MELISSA SMITH  
SMSGT BRIAN BEST  
SMSGT DEREK LEPPEK  
SMSGT JOHN MCGOUGH  
MSGT ASHLEY MUNIZ  
MSGT CHRISTOPHER KABZINSKI  
MSGT ELLIOTT LOVELACE  
MSGT JUSTIN DAVIS  
MSGT NICHOLAS MARLOW  
MSGT EDWARD PEACOCK  
MSGT COLIN ROBERTS  
MSGT CHASE WOOD  
MSGT EMILEE WILSON  
MSGT AMBER SCHMAY  
MSGT SHANE CANNON  
MSGT TARA JOHNSON  
MSGT BRANDON PRITCHETT  
MSGT KENNETH DUPRE  
MSGT PAUL WELLMAN  
MSGT JEFFERY BARRON  
TSGT ASHLEY EMSWILER  
TSGT DALE KELLER  
TSGT JASON UTTER  
TSGT SARAH MURPHY  
TSGT SETH LITTLE  
TSGT HEATHER BURKS  
TSGT LEON SMITH  
TSGT JESSE KLINE  
TSGT ALEXANDER ROTH  
TSGT KEVON JOHNSON  
TSGT ERIC RASKA  
TSGT MARK SOLO  
TSGT JAMES PELKEY  
TSGT BRIAN MITCHELL  
TSGT LAWRENCE WALTERS  
TSGT JANAY SWANINGAN  
TSGT TODD COOPER  
TSGT TYLER BEGG  
TSGT KIMBERLEY LAI  
TSGT JENNIFER CASBAR  
TSGT MICHAEL SHRUM  
TSGT KATELYN WILLIS  
TSGT NICHOLAS MAPLEY  
TSGT DEWON LEWIS  
TSGT FORREST DIXON  
TSGT BRANDAN SMITH  
SSGT DAVON BARKER  
SSGT PRESTON GREW  
SSGT DEREK MILLER  
SSGT FILLIP POD  
SSGT TAYLOR WIRSING  
SSGT TREVOR RICH  
SSGT DUANE WERDON  
SSGT CADE SPONSELLER

SSGT NOEMI ZUBIA  
SSGT EISEN WUELFING  
SSGT JACK STAPLETON  
SSGT BENJAMIN GREGG  
SSGT JULIA MARQUARDT  
SSGT ADAM MCCORMIC  
SSGT BRANDON MCINTYRE  
SSGT JAMES STORK  
SSGT HEATHER STALNAKER  
SSGT JOSHUA BISHOP  
SSGT CASSIDY MACK  
SSGT LATYRA MUMFORDLYONS  
SSGT MATTHEW HORNE  
SSGT MADELYNN AMARA  
SSGT STEVEN KELLY  
SSGT ALYSSA MILITELLO  
SSGT CHARLES BRINKER  
SSGT AUSTIN PALMER  
SSGT WAICHA GONDWE  
SSGT AUSTIN ALMYDA  
SSGT MARGIE HARMS  
SSGT ALTEENA O'NEAL  
SSGT AMANDA PARYASKI  
SSGT ANTHONY BURLEY  
SSGT JOSHUA BARJAKTAROVICH  
SSGT BRUNO CERI  
SSGT MITCHELL GRAMS  
SSGT RANDALL CAUGHELL  
SSGT JOHN MIKOLAIZYK  
SSGT DYLAN FROLING  
SSGT CHELSEA SCHROEDER  
SRA JAMES DAVIS  
SRA CASSANDRA HORNE  
SRA KENDLALL SCHILLER  
SRA ROBERT DINKENS  
SRA FRED HUNTER  
SRA AFTON BROCKOPP  
SRA SHAUN WEST  
SRA BROOKE EARL  
SRA SHANNON CARPENTER  
SRA ERIC MORGAN  
SRA LAILAH FOSTER  
A1C GISELLE QUINTANA  
A1C JOSE GENOVEZ  
A1C DANUELLE RUDD  
A1C DYLAN TIPKEN  
A1C JACK CARSON  
AMN MICAH CMEYLA  
AMN EZRA RIX  
AMN GIOVANNI PARDO-KEEGAN  
AMN HUNTER BLACK  
AMN DILLON ROSE  
AMN HAILEE ARNOLD  
AMN KAHLIL MCLEOD  
AMN JANAYE HELDORE



# NATIONAL GUARD RETIREMENTS

## MICHIGAN ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

COL DAVID KELLEY

LTC JENNIFER MCLEAN  
LTC RANDALL KNOWLES

CPT FRANKLIN CORNIELLE

CW5 JESSICA ULREY  
CW3 WILLIAM HASKIN  
CW3 TERRANCE KINNEY  
CW3 JONNIE KWIATKOWSKI

CW2 JAMES TCHORZYNSKI

CSM JEFFREY HAUGER

SGM LARRY PRIDE

1SG MARK SPROVIERO

MSG JUSTIN FRUCHEY  
MSG MAC WINIARSKI

SFC JOSEPH BARRETT  
SFC CECIL ROGERS  
SFC PATRICK SCHAFER  
SFC ERIKSEN TRYGSTAD  
SFC BRENTON BENNINK

SSG BRANDON SIMMONS

SGT STEVEN CARR  
SGT CHELSEA WALKER

## MICHIGAN AIR NATIONAL GUARD

COL MATTHEW ROBINS

LT COL RUSSELL OVERTON

CAPT JAMIEE STUMP

CMSGT MAURICE GRAVES  
CMSGT ROBERT SUTTON  
CMSGT DAVID WHYNOT

SMSGT NICK BENSCHOTER  
SMSGT JOHN HARVEY  
SMSGT DIONN MARSHALL  
SMSGT SKATCH PERUSKI

MSGT NATHAN BROWN  
MSGT JUSTIN FLETCHER  
MSGT ANDREA GRABNER  
MSGT GLENN HARDY  
MSGT ERIC HENDERSON  
MSGT NATHAN HENKEL  
MSGT ROBERT KAARLELA  
MSGT JERRY MCCARTHY  
MSGT ERIC MCCULLEY  
MSGT RYAN SEDLOW

TSGT STANTON AMOS  
TSGT STEVEN BATES

SSGT ERIC HERDELL



# TAPS

LTC SMITH GRANT 16-JAN-25  
SGT JAMES R. BURDICK 20-JAN-25  
SGT TERRENCE J. BOUCHER 25-MAR-25  
SPC DANIEL W. COOK 31-MAR-25  
COL KENNETH BLANFORD 2-APR-25  
SGT STEPHEN ERICKSON 25-APR-25  
SSG LARRY SALMONS 25-APR-25  
SSG JAMES CASEY 26-APR-25  
PFC HAROLD R. KIRKLAND 12-MAY-25  
SGT THOMAS KING 28-MAY-25  
SGT GERALD M. NEVINS 31-MAY-25  
PVT MICHAEL E. WALKER 19-JUN-25  
SFC JERRY MARINELLI 21-JUN-25  
SPC DONOVAN R. EASON 25-JUN-25  
PFC EDWARD R. DURGA 27-JUN-25  
SGT JEFFREY L. FOLLETT 29-JUN-25





# 2025 Annual TAG Golf Outing



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## DMVA Military & Veterans Gala

November 8, 2025

Fort Pontchartrain Hotel

2 Washington Blvd, Detroit, MI, 48226



This Year's Military and Veterans Gala Will Be One for the Record Books — You Won't Want to Miss It.

Join us this November for the Annual Michigan Military & Veterans Gala — an extraordinary evening of honor, legacy, and celebration like never before. Hosted by the National Guard Association of Michigan, in proud partnership with the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, this year's gala is shaping up to be a landmark event you'll be talking about for years to come.

Together, we'll pay tribute to the unwavering courage and selfless service of our military heroes — past and present — through powerful moments of reflection, heartfelt recognition, and a

dynamic program filled with inspiring speakers and special guests. From a beautifully curated dinner experience to the stirring stories of service and sacrifice, every detail of the night is crafted to honor those who've given so much for our freedom.

Make plans now to attend this unforgettable celebration of patriotism, pride, and purpose. This isn't just another gala — it's a night to stand united in support of our veterans, to celebrate their impact, and to reaffirm our shared commitment to those who serve.





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ALWAYS READY

ALWAYS THERE

