



The Michigan Reservist

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ventzel J. Potochnik, Captain, United States Navy (Retired), Department President

Welcome to fall and the start of the Holiday Season! Much has transpired over the summer, both nationally and within the Reserve Organization of America, that will affect all members.

First of all, ROA will have a new Executive Director as of 01 September 2025. John Hashem, Major General, USAR(Retired) will become the new executive director. He succeeds retired Major General Andrew B. Davis, US-MCR, who stepped down in August of this year. He brings over 40 years of military service, both as an enlisted soldier and a general officer, with extensive experience in command and policy roles. This will provide a comprehensive perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing America's citizen warriors.

The Department of Michigan Executive Committee has been holding planning sessions for the 2026 state conference. It will take place on Saturday, 18 April 2026, hopefully, at Mulligan's, Selfridge ANGB. The convention theme is still to be finalized and speakers need to be identified and contacted.

Another date of interest was that of the ROA National convention, 16-19 October 2025 at the ROA Minuteman Building, Washington, D.C.. MGEN Margaret C. Wilmoth, USA (Retired), was elected as the 84th President for the 2025-2027 term, replacing outgoing President Layne Wroblewski, followed by the installation of Army National Vice President Tony Kanellis, USA (Ret.), Air Force National Vice President Col Don Brown USAF (Ret.), and Naval Services VP CAPT Henry Plimack, USCGR (Ret.). MGEN Wilmoth has served in many and various positions in the area of Army medicine.

Now, an update on the health of the Department of Michigan. Of the national membership of 40,000, we currently have from 500 to 600 members depending on how you count the Snow Birds. Our cash position is good and we carry no debt. Member activities have moved to state wide rather than chapter specific. The topic of folding the Department of Michigan in to an association of neighboring states is open to consideration as our membership and participation is on a downward trend.

We push to maintain and increase membership. We must maintain our voice at the table. LTC Lou Wilson is spearheading efforts to engage the ROTC units around Michigan. We have an ongoing engagement with the ROTC/NROTC units at the University of Michigan, the Working Together program, and hope to spread to MSU, CMU and Michigan Tech. National has cancelled their free membership program for 5 years for those under the age of 34 as it was not yielding new memberships.

Again, our thoughts and prayers go out to those going in to Harm's way.

The best of the Season to all.



Ventzel J. Potochnik, Captain, US Navy (Retired)





Beyond the Classroom Arnaldo Huertas, Instructor, Contractor

Mount Pleasant, MI — Central Michigan University's Chippewa Battalion, part of the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), continues its proud tradition of developing future military leaders through a rigorous and rewarding program that blends academic excellence with military discipline.

Established in 1951, CMU's ROTC program has commissioned over 1,200 officers, including 126 general officers, into the U.S. Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve. The program is open to students at CMU and its partner institution, Ferris State University.

The Army ROTC program at Central Michigan University offers far more than classroom instruction. Through a wide array of events, training exercises, and leadership opportunities, cadets in the Chippewa Battalion gain real-world experience that prepares them for military and civilian success. Each summer, CMU cadets participate in Cadet Summer Training (CST), including Advanced Camp, a 35-day leadership development experience at Fort Knox. CST is the Army's largest annual training event, hosting over 10,000 cadets nationwide.

The Cadets participate in multiple events scheduled throughout the academic year. CMU calls on all Alumni who have reached the General Officer ranks to discuss topics such as strategic leadership, ethics, and global security at an annual Flag Officer event. It's a rare opportunity for cadets to engage directly with high-ranking officers. Simultaneously, we support the solemn observances to honor Prisoners of War (POW) and those Missing in Action (MIA), reinforcing the importance of remembrance and respect for those who served. We uphold the tradition of hosting the Nolde Lecture, a series featuring distinguished speakers who share insights on military history, leadership, and service in remembrance of Lt Col Nolde, a former instructor who died in Vietnam.

A selected group of CMU cadets could also go off campus for the Army 10-miler and the Staff Rides. They travel to Washington, DC, to proudly represent the university in one of the largest military races in the world. While the Army 10 Miler challenges their physical fitness, the Staff Ride challenges their intellect. Cadets participate in immersive staff rides, including trips to historic battlefields in France, Perryville, or Gettysburg.

Our program hosts various Cadet Clubs, including the Queen's Guard, Ranger Challenge, Rifle, Cannon, and Tactics. These teams build camaraderie and technical skills among cadets and expose them to many community events. The Queen's Guard performs color guard duties at university and community events. Carrying this tradition and pride also requires tactical knowledge, which the Cadets can acquire in the Rifle, Tactics, and Ranger Challenge. Cadets engage in tactical training at various locations, simulating missions and learning to lead under pressure. Shooting the rifle is still an important task for each Cadet; they can practice at Kulhavi's indoor rifle range in Finch Hall.

Cadets are regularly honored for academic excellence, leadership, physical fitness, and community service. These awards celebrate the hard work and dedication of individuals who exemplify Army values. The ROA sponsors awards for our Cadets every year, going beyond the classroom!



ROTC / JROTC

Louis Wilson, LTC (RET), US Army, Vice-President

Working Together Program Continued Success

The ROA & ROTC Working Together Program (WTP) is something special. It provides ROTC Cadets the opportunity to interact with senior military officers in seminars and individual one-on-one discussions. It affords officers with opportunities to share their hard won leadership experiences with



UM Army ROTC Cadets at the September Seminar Meeting.

a new generation of officers and to enjoy continued involvement with old and new military friends.

In April 2024, LTC (RET) Louis Wilson attended the University of Michigan Tri-Service Awards Ceremony and met the newly assigned professor of military science (PMS), CPT Louis Goldstein, the UM Army ROTC Wolverine BN professor of military science (PMS). Informal discussions sparked an idea to bring experienced officers into contact with students.

CPT Goldstein met with Cadets to gather their input and assess their interest. LTC Wilson recruited officers to participate and serve as officer mentors. He was greatly helped by MG Joe Marsiglia and BG (RET) Mark Montjar. To allow time to organize, the first meeting was set to take place in January 2025.

provides a solid base of technical skills. The Working Together Program provides an additional level of leadership skills in working with people, real world experience, and military careers.

CPT Goldstein provided the UM meeting rooms, ZOOM meeting administration, and coordination with the cadets. The program agendas are flexible and consist of introductions and cadet questions. The cadets were asked to contact one or two officers outside of the meeting times, where the officers could serve as career mentors and information resources. The officers provided informal guidance and wrote reference letters for admission to civilian graduate and military programs. The ROTC curriculum provides a solid base of technical skills. The WTP provides an additional level of leadership skills in working with people, real world experience, and military careers.

Many positive outcomes resulted for both the cadets and officers. The cadets gained leadership skills and created connections with officers to assist their careers. The officers enjoyed involvement with military friends and shared their experiences to develop future leaders. The ROA benefited from increased involvement in ROA events with the recruitment of *continued on page 4*



ZOOM Meeting screen. MG Marsiglia and BG (RET) Montjar attended the meeting via Zoom Video Conference

ROA memberships. The WIP was enthusiastically received by both Cadets and officers. BG Montjar commented, “This program was really fun.”

With the enthusiastic cadet support, CPT Goldstein and LTC (RET) Wilson offered the Working Together Program at the UM ROTC Building starting in Sept through Nov. 2025. For more information, interested officers of all service branches can contact LTC Wilson at louis-wilson@sbcglobal.net.



CPT Louis Goldstein and LTC (RET) Louis Wilson

New Affiliate Groups Enhance Student-Alumni Connections

ROTC Alumni and Muslim Alumni are the newest Alumni Association affiliate groups open to all.



The University of Michigan ROTC Alumni Association helps ROTC alums stay connected to the University and each other after graduation.



Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, NOAA

Commander James Semerad, USN (Retired), Sea Services, Vice President

Sea Services Vice President

US Navy funding is planned to be restored for maintenance and repair. Shipbuilding is taking a bit of a hit. Emphasis is on shipbuilding and shipyards. The US Navy wants to modernize some of the shipyards. Currently, we have Newport News, VA (Norfolk) for carriers and Groton, CT for submarines. Other shipyards are building destroyers (Aegis), Joint High Speed Vessels (JHSV), and the new escort ships (Marinette, WI). We might see some of these travel past Detroit.



The US Navy SYSCOM's, in particular NAVSEA, is playing catch up with drone technology and autonomous ships. There are two major hubs for ships on each coast. The Atlantic fleet has also been keeping an eye on the Middle East. The US Navy is allocating its fighting force to Asia/Pacific. Along with keeping trade routes open, most people do not realize that the US Navy plays a very significant role in humanitarian relief.



CDR James Semerad, USN (RET)

to be a major player in moving food, supplies, and fuel throughout the world. However, the three prepositioned ship fleets (MPF) have been reduced to two. MPF ships are organized into two Maritime Prepositioning Ship (MPS) squadrons, each comprising four to six MPF ships as well as additional prepositioning ships dedicated to other military services. Each MPS squadron carries sufficient equipment and supplies to sustain more than 16,000 Marine Expeditionary Brigade and Navy personnel for up to 30 days. Take a look at <https://sealiftcommand.com/>

Shifting to the homefront, Happy Birthday 250, Oct 13, 1775. The Metro Detroit Navy League conducted a Navy Ball at the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club on Oct 16. USN in Michigan operates two Navy Reserve Centers at Selfridge and Battle Creek, Ft Custer. The pride of ROA MI is the University of Michigan NROTC in Ann Arbor.



USS Robert E. Simanek , Military Sealift Command



From the Air Force

Graydon W. Dimkoff, Lt. Col., USAFR, Retired, Vice President Air Force Section

What is SAOC?

Sometimes referred to as the “Doomsday Plane,” this 1st of five “Survivable Airborne Operations Control” planes are being flight tested in Dayton, Ohio.

Designed to serve as Airborne Command and Control Centers that would be used in the most catastrophic circumstances, the SAOC would allow the President to direct US forces, and relay orders from the air.

Each plane is a Boeing 747-8, and is being radically re-fitted by the Sierra Nevada Corporation under a \$13 billion dollar contract awarded in 2024. These planes will replace the existing four E-4B Nightwatch planes that have been in service for over fifty years. The contract calls for completion in 2036. The flight tests now being carried out are meant to reduce risks early on, and to enhance later integration of innovative technology. Each plane will be hardened to protect against radiation and electromagnetic pulses, as well as fitted with advanced communications antennas, computer, and mission systems.

Sierra Nevada took delivery of the first 747-8 in June, 2024 about six weeks after the contract was awarded, and by April, 2025 had received four out of the five, at their innovation and technology center at Dayton International Airport. The company also opened a second hanger there in October, 2025, and also opened the first of two new hangers in October, 2025 for this important project. Revised from the Air Force Times, October, 2025, by Stephen Losey



A Busy September

September saw not only the US Air Force and the Armed Forces of Norway conduct a joint exercise over the Norwegian Sea, utilizing a B-2 Spirit stealth bomber to send a ship to the bottom of the sea, but also the same month, saw the second B-21 Raider fly to Edwards AFB from Palmdale, LA. Each event would normally be a stand alone headline grabber, being of great significance.

The joint exercise with Norway comes at a time when the Arctic is becoming an increasingly contested environment. Not only is China increasingly attempting to assert maritime dominance through a series of Naval provocations, including a series of recent incursions into US Arctic territory, but also China has announced its intention to build a nuclear-powered ice breaker to add to its conventional fleet in the area.

The delivery of the 2nd B-21 Raider greatly enhances the service’s capabilities to test this next-generation stealth bomber. With two B-21s at Edwards AFB, the Air Force can move into more advanced phases of testing such as weapons systems, and integrating critical mission systems. Until now, B-2 testing was primarily focused on initial flight performance checks.

If there’s an overriding theme to these two September events, perhaps the biggest is the multi-level, ever-expanding emphasis on preparation to effectively meet 21st Century challenges. Or, maybe it’s the fact that these two September events may well be only two of many such advances occurring this year and impacting preparedness.





From the Army President

Louis Wilson, LTC, US Army Retired, Vice-President

Transforming in Contact Initiative – Updating Armor Brigades

As the Army examines its armor formations, it wants to avoid placing them in a potential stalemate, similar to what is being seen in the Russia-Ukraine War. To avoid that fate, armor brigades are receiving new equipment and experimenting with different formations, as part of the service's "Transforming in Contact" (TIC) initiative, first launched in 2024 with infantry brigades.

The Army's TIC Concept seeks to deliver new equipment, such as Infantry Squad Vehicles, drones, counter-drone equipment and increased electromagnetic warfare capabilities, to operational units as they prepare for major training events and deployments. Under TIC 2.0, the Army is shifting its focus to Armor Brigade Combat Teams and division-level assets. "Ukraine has us going back to first principles, such as, "Why do we need armor?" said Maj. Gen. Curtis Taylor, head of the 1st Armored Division. Armor remains vital on the battlefield, because it provides mobile protected firepower to penetrate prepared defenses, seize and hold ground, and dislocate enemy combined arms, Curtis said at September's Maneuver Warfighter Conference at Fort Benning, Georgia.

New areas to adapt includes robotics and drones, sensing and striking at the company level, using first-person-view drones under armor, layered drone countermeasures, embedded electronic warfare and robotic breaching. Maj. Gen. Thomas Feltey leads the 1st Cavalry Division, which has two brigades in the TIC initiative. The 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team is scheduled to go to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, in November. There, soldiers will test the new equipment and formations, Feltey told Army Times in an interview. Lessons from that rotation will fuel the development of another brigade, the 2nd ABCT, 3rd Infantry Division, which will then pass along its lessons learned to 1st ABCT, 1st Cavalry Division, for a rotation at the NTC in 2027.

Each brigade will have a Multifunctional Reconnaissance Company and a Multipurpose Company added to the formation. They will also change up formations, running a separate 12-tank company and a 14-tank company, as well as two different configurations of mechanized infantry companies, Feltey said. The task is daunting. In training, the aim is to fight three enemy brigades, which translates to killing 224 tanks, 224 tracked vehicles, 168 wheeled vehicles, 56 mobile guns, 392 squads and 900 unmanned aerial systems in a 24 to 48-hour period, said Col. Alexis Perez, head of 2nd ABCT, 3rd ID, at the Maneuver Warfighter Conference. To achieve those effects, the brigade will need to lean on its division assets. Feltey sees division artillery as providing some of that firepower. Division artillery now has a rocket battalion, three direct support battalions with two cannon artillery batteries each, and a third, a composite High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARs. They will also have the Air Cavalry Brigade at the division level to parse out to brigades when needed.

"What we're seeing in Ukraine and in World War I after the front froze, we lost our ability to conduct fire and maneuver. It stalled our offense," Feltey said. These moves are to improve Armor's fire power, maneuver, shock effect.



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