



# *The Michigan Reservist*

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**Issue 3 – 2024**

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Louis Wilson, LTC, US Army, Retired, President

The ROA-Michigan Department has been active this past spring and summer. Our State Conference was convened Saturday, 20 April 2024 at Mulligan's, Selfridge ANG Base, with the theme focused on the U.S. Space Force, and Charles Galbraith, COL, USAF, RET, Senior Resident Fellow for Space Studies, Mitchell Institute discussing the Space Force from a strategic perspective. An updated ROA-Mich. Dept. Constitution and Bylaws were approved.



Louis Wilson, LTC, US Army,  
Retired, President

The ROA-Mich Dept. reached out to military organizations throughout the State. Under LTC (RET) Jack Bronka's guidance as the ROTC Coordinator, we connected with the university and junior ROTC units throughout Michigan. We provided medal sets to ROTC honor students and were honored to be invited to the awards ceremonies. EXCOM members, that included LTC Bronka, CAPT Potochik, CDR Semerad, LTC Wilson and others, attended events at Michigan State University, University of Michigan, and more. The UM Ceremony touched me personally, as I was commissioned on the same stage 50 years prior.

The 65<sup>th</sup> Annual International Armed Forces Night Dinner took place 10 May 2024 at the American Polish Cultural Center, Troy Michigan. This colorful event was attended by military officers in dress uniforms of all branches from the U.S. and Canada. Military music was provided by the 126<sup>th</sup> Army Band. ROA member, COL Charles Thornell, Jr. served as master of ceremonies. The ROA-Mich Dept was well represented by: LTC Scott Murdock, LTC Jack Bronka, CAPT Ventzel Potochik, CDR Jim Semerad, COL Charles Thornell, Jr., LTC Louis Wilson, and other ROA members.



Naval Reserve Center (NRC) Detroit Family Day was celebrated Saturday, 13 July 2024 at Selfridge ANG Base. This was the first Family Day since the Covid Pandemic of 2020. This family focused event featured a cookout with hamburgers, hot dogs and family interaction. The ROA-Mich made a donation towards the food. CAPT Ventz Potochik was on hand to represent the ROA and provide information.

CMDR Semerad has been involved with the U.S. Navy League, Sea Cadets, and the ROA National Family Readiness Support Committee.



I look forward to increasing ROA member involvement in events. I encourage you to join old friends and meet new ones this year. The following page has photos of recent events.



## From the Army President

Louis Wilson, LTC, US Army Retired, President

# Army Soldiers Train with Marines to Ramp Up Air Defenses

The Marine Air Support Squadron 3 hosted the Army's Air Defense Artillery Fire Control Officer Course. Marines and Army soldiers are trained on how to defend their airspace in an increasingly complex and threatening battlespace. The Marines with Marine Air Support Squadron 3, Marine Air Control Group 38, of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing at Camp Pendleton, CA, hosted the Army's Air Defense Artillery Fire Control Officer Course.

The three-week course focused on the fire control officers' role within the Army's MIM-104 Patriot surface-to-air missile system. Senior Army leaders have pointed to the high and rising demand for air defense units in overseas deployments and exercises. For example: An air defense battalion saw its Poland deployment extended by three months as the unit supported NATO defense in eastern Europe. The 1st BN, 62nd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, of Fort Cavazos, TX kicked off their deployment in October and was set to return home by March. The unit stayed three additional months. The Army is adding hundreds of new air defense specialties in the coming years, Army Times reported.



Patriot Missile fired at joint Army Marine Officer Course



The Marine Corps has restructured its forces to build Marine littoral regiments that include littoral anti-air battalions. The Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR) is part of the larger force design intended to remedy challenges created by the continued evolution of the character of warfare. The MLR will carry advanced radar and the Medium Range Intercept Capability (MRIC), a short-to-medium range air defense system.

The air defense need is evident this year alone, after three U.S. troops were killed and dozens more injured in January from a one-way surprise attack on an outpost on the Syria-Jordan border. In August 2024, eight U.S. troops were injured

in an aerial drone attack on the Rumayn Landing Zone in Syria.

The Army course at Pendleton gave Marines a chance to learn how to integrate the Patriot system in their air defense network. "What the Marines gained from this course is an ability to take this knowledge back to our units and train Marines on Army air defense capabilities," said Maj. John Christensen, MASS-3 operations officer.

The Patriot missile system can track up to 100 targets at a range of 100 miles and defend a 12-mile area. The MRIC system has a range of up to 40 miles and houses 20 missiles. The number of targets the system could track was not publicly available. While the Patriot and MRIC are distinct systems, how they're used overlaps enough for the training to apply to Marines. Their positions require Marines to assess a host of options to detect and strike down aerial threats. "As the Marine Corps looks to incorporate our own organic system, it's important that we look to the joint services for procedures, training, tactics and techniques for how to best and most effectively use that system," Smith said. "The importance of this training to the joint force and to the Marine Corps cannot be overstated," said Lt. Col. Tyrone Anub Jr., MASS-3 commanding officer. "Every missile needs to count — and every second does count."



## ROTC / JROTC

Shannon Eddy, Adm Asst, University of Michigan Technological University ROTC

# Michigan Technological University AFROTC

Michigan Technological University (MTU) is known for its strong emphasis on engineering and technology and has a notable Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) program. Air Force Detachment 400, known as the *Guardians of the North*, at MTU has had a campus presence since 1946 and is one of 19 original detachments in the nation. The detachment welcomed the addition of the Space Force program in 2020 and has consistently commissioned lieutenants into this new branch of service. Det 400 is medium-sized, averaging around 60 cadets, and is housed in the oldest building on campus that is on the National Register of Historic Places. It is a program that celebrates individual accomplishments and yet functions as a tightly knit family unit. The fact that MTU is located in the Keweenaw Peninsula in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan has its advantages and opens up a lot of unique opportunities for cadets to physically train outdoors. The rugged landscape consists of ancient volcanic rock bluffs, dense forests, lakes, and a coastline on Lake Superior. It is rated the snowiest campus in the nation, averaging almost 300 inches of snow a year.



The program's location makes it the most remote AFROTC detachment in the country in terms of proximity to an active duty Air Force Base. The Cadre and Cadet Wing leadership work hard to overcome this by creating a wide range of opportunities for exposure to Air Force programs and experiences that prepare cadets to enter into active duty as second lieutenants upon commissioning. Leadership and career development, field leadership exercises, war-gaming, community service projects, and heritage events such as Military Ball and Dining Out all showcase what opportunities are available to them in the Air Force. In recent semesters, the cadets completed a visit to the 148th Fighter Wing in Duluth, Minnesota and hosted an incentive flight aboard a Minnesota-based C-130 over the Keweenaw. In August 2024, the cadets visited Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, giving them exposure to a range of base operations as well as 18th Air Force, Air Mobility Command, and U.S. Transportation Command.



The majority of cadets at MTU are pursuing technical STEM degrees in areas of Engineering and Computer Science. On average the program commissions 8-12 Second Lieutenants into the Air Force and Space Force each school year. The Cadets regularly average a GPA of 3.5 or better and have a rigorous schedule of academics, athletics, military training, high expectations and strict rules of conduct. They develop throughout their 4 to 5 years in the program and learn how to apply their STEM major to their career in the Air Force.

Overall, Michigan Tech's AFROTC program stands out for its commitment to producing well-rounded leaders who are ready to uphold the Air Force Core Values of *Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do*. They will carry with them not only their technical skills but also the morals and ethics instilled in them during their training as they start a new chapter with the opportunity to serve their country and contribute to the defense and security of our nation.

# Department Events of Interest



IAF Dinner 2024



ROTC Awards



NRC Detroit Family Day



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

Steven Wells—Opinion Article

### Opinion “75 Ready Ships”

Defense Opinion—by Steven Wells.

The U.S. Navy’s goal of “75 ready ships” remains a “work in progress” after two years of effort, said Vice Adm. Brendan McClain, the commander of the Naval Surface Force Pacific and the most senior operational surface warfare officer in the Navy.

The Navy has a readiness goal of ensuring 75 combat-credible surface ships at any given time. But this is a difficult goal to meet as the fleet is a shrinking, aging force whose deployed units are regularly extended to support ongoing deterrence operations. Those extensions in turn upset carefully planned shipyard work packages for multiple ships.

The Navy response so far has been very tactical, swarming the problem at hand with as many resources as possible to get a ship deployed, a process that often “robs Peter to pay Paul,” and perpetuates crisis planning. More ships that would ease the rotational deployment cycle for the fleet, or shorter periods deployed to fewer locations and without extensions, are unlikely for the immediate future.

So, what can the Navy do to make readiness planning and sustainment more robust in the face of ongoing operational challenges?



The Navy’s more diverse ecosystem of maintenance has seen its shipboard, tender-based and local-homeport components decimated since the end of the Cold War. Bringing back a maintenance and repair system at multiple levels might ease the burden on shipyard-level maintenance and repair.

Condition-based maintenance, a concept practiced by many U.S. allies, could help to reduce the overall maintenance workload, especially when armed with digital support from growing sensor networks on ships.

Finally, U.S. allies and partner nation shipyards build and maintain capable ships. As many have suggested, the U.S. should tap well-qualified overseas shipyards for maintenance and repair to ease the burden on the overworked, continental U.S. system.

The current outlook for improving overall U.S. Navy readiness ahead of possible great power conflict is grim, as a larger and more capable fleet is the real solution. In the meantime, however, improving the Navy’s organic maintenance capacity, embracing new concepts for maintaining ships and allowing trusted partners to join the readiness process can improve the readiness of existing ships.





## From the Air Force Vice President

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

### B21 Raider Status

Department of the Air Force leaders and industry partners provided updates on the B-21 Raider, the Air Force's newest bomber, during a panel at the Air and Space Force Association's Air, Space and Cyber Conference, Sept. 18.

The B-21 will incrementally replace the B-1 Lancer and B-2 Spirit bombers to become the backbone of the Air Force's flexible global strike capability. The airframe is a long-range, highly survivable stealth bomber capable of delivering a mix of conventional and nuclear munitions and will be the "air leg" of the nuclear triad, critical to deterring conflict.

Panelists who provided updates included Gen. Thomas Bussiere, Air Force Global Strike Command commander; Maj. Gen. Jason Armagost, Eighth Air Force and Joint-Global Strike Operations Center commander; William Bailey, Department of the Air Force Rapid Capabilities Office director; and Thomas Jones, Northrop Grumman Aeronautics Systems sector president. Bailey and Jones provided updates about how the B-21 program is progressing.

"We're really starting to strike up quite a cadence [and] generate two flight test flights in a given week," Jones said. "When we started this journey, we made a vow that we were going to design this system to be a daily flyer. It's been a phenomenal year of progress, and we hope to continue that through the next year." The aircraft is now going through a fatigue testing campaign.

Armagost discussed how the B-21 program is preparing for the delivery of the aircraft to Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, to include laying the foundation for AFGSC squadrons to be sufficiently equipped, trained, and certified for aircraft delivery, while Bailey spoke to the teamwork that has been essential to the program's development.

"We're very clear as a team what the priorities are day after day," Bailey said. "That collaboration between operators and acquirers has been a key component of this success ... that has got to be a consideration [in Great Power Competition]."

Bussiere addressed current strategic threats posed by adversaries and the necessity of the bomber force, and the future capabilities the B-21 will provide, to keep pace with those threats. "We are the free world's only bomber force. We're probably not going to see a decreased demand signal from our regional combatant commands on bomber task forces," Bussiere added. "That demand signal, in my opinion, is only going to go up in the years ahead. As we transition from legacy to new, the B-21 fleet will provide great comfort to our allies and should provide great pause to any potential adversary."

He added, "Nobody on the planet can do what we're doing right now. Nobody on the planet can build an exquisite, technologically-advanced platform like the B-21, and quite frankly, nobody on the planet can hold at risk what we can hold at risk at a time and place of our choosing." Bailey echoed Bussiere's comments about the adaptability of the B-21 systems, which were "designed with flexibility in mind."

"Agility and flexibility — they can't just be buzzwords. These are the kind of things that you need to be able to demonstrate over time. Why? Because it's going to be changing on you, and we've had the benefit of employing a lot of those strategies on this program," Bailey concluded.

The B-21 program has a production goal of a minimum of 100 aircraft.





## From the Army President

Louis Wilson, LTC, US Army Retired, President

### What is the Buck-a-Year?

At our State Conference, 20 April 2024, a member asked the question, “What is the Buck-a-Year Program” and why do we do it? Here is the answer.

The ROA has two forms of full membership: Annual and Life. The Annual Membership requires a yearly payment of dues. The Life Membership is a one-time payment of a larger dollar amount. But, it is the only dues that you are required to pay for the rest of your life.

Here is my experience. As a young lieutenant in the 1970s, my immediate commander, advised me that it would be “beneficial to your military career” if you became an ROA member. The commanding general of our Army division encouraged a policy of 100% officer participation in the ROA. I had 4 years left of a 6-year commitment in the Army. I did the math, and found it less expensive to pay for one Life Membership than four one-year Annual Memberships.

The policy worked well for the ROA in the short term, but not in the long run. Now, years later here is the financial position of ROA-Michigan. Roughly 95% or more of our 650 members are Life Members. At the state level, we receive little or no dues revenue. However, we still have expenses: Website, newsletter printing, conference venue, ROTC activities, and more. To help the ROA-Michigan cover expenses, the EX-COM created the Buck-a-Year Program several years ago. The idea was, and still is, that if our current Life Members could each donate a small dollar amount each year, we can remain financially sound and in the black.

As an ongoing effort, the Buck-a-Year donation form is included in each Newsletter. I ask you to not overlook it, but to consider a small donation to help maintain the ROA-Michigan. If all give a little, it will help a lot.



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## The Michigan Reservist

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