



# *The Michigan Reservist*

*The Official Publication for the Reserve Organization of America  
Department of Michigan—[www.roami.org](http://www.roami.org)*

**Issue 1 – 2025**

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Louis Wilson, LTC, US Army, Retired, President

The ROA-Michigan Department has remained busy this fall. Our main projects have been planning for the annual ROA-MI State Conference and starting a new program with the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor Army ROTC Wolverine BN.

Our Conference will be on 26 April 2025 at the Mulligans Golf Center, Selfridge ANGB, Michigan. The conference theme will be focused on “Chinese and Russian: Arctic Incursions.” The EXCOM officers are putting together a team of knowledgeable speakers to address this issue that is gaining in importance. Russian and Chinese incursion into U.S. zones off Alaska have become an increasing occurrence. Russian and Chinese ships operating off the European coast have been in the area when vital undersea communications cables have been cut. The strategic position on the globe of Alaska, Canada, and our northern European Allies gives the U.S. advantages in the Arctic, which warrant protection. It promises to be a timely and insightful conference.



Louis Wilson, LTC, US Army,  
Retired, President

The presentations will be offered onsite and by ZOOM. Those attending in person will be able to enjoy lunch with friends. A modest fee will be charged for the coffee and continental breakfast and lunch. The presentations will be offered via, interactive ZOOM. Be sure to bring your questions for our speakers. Please confirm your attendance by either calling LtCol Bronka at 248-879-7357, or by email at: [bronkaj@comcast.net](mailto:bronkaj@comcast.net) NLT 16 April 2025. If attending by ZOOM, a Meeting ID and other relevant information will be provided at the time of confirmation.

The ROA & ROTC Working Together Program was developed with the cooperation of CPT Louis Goldstein, PMS, Army ROTC, UM-Ann Arbor and myself starting in Sept. 2025. This is a new voluntary program that benefits both the cadets and officers. Starting with a basic idea of the two groups working together, we are developing a process to operate and recruit cadets and officers. This is a cadet driven program focused on their needs and interests. CPT Goldstein identified two cadets, Jonathan Li and Ethan Wilmot, to serve as cadet leaders and points-of-contact. They went to work on the ROTC side. I reached out to my military friends to describe this new program and to recruit them as participants. The officers are valuable resources that can be utilized as career mentors, classroom resources, award presenters, write reference letters, recommend books, and more.



The cadets are very enthusiastic. I was pleasantly surprised by the positive results in officer involvement with seven Army generals volunteering along with several other ROA officers. If you would like to volunteer or for more information, contact me by email at: [louis-wilson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:louis-wilson@sbcglobal.net). It is rewarding to give back.



**RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION  
Reserve Organization of America  
DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN**

**2025 STATE CONFERENCE  
26 April 2025  
Mulligan Golf Center  
Selfridge ANG, Michigan**

**Theme: Russian and Chinese Arctic Incursions**

**Schedule of Events**

0930-0945 Conference Welcome & Introduction

0945-1045 Speaker 1....TBD

1045-1055 Break

1100-1145 Speaker 2...TBD

1200-1300 Lunch and ROA National speaker

1300-1430 Department Business Meeting and election of officers

All speakers will appear via Video Conference Zoom ID # Pending

**COST: \$20 conference fee at the door to include light Continental breakfast and Lunch**

**Please confirm your attendance by either calling LtCol Bronka at 248-879-7357, or by email at [bronkaj@comcast.net](mailto:bronkaj@comcast.net) NLT 16April 2025  
If attending via Zoom, Zoom link will be provided at time of confirmation.**



## ROTC / JROTC

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

# New Working Together Program is a Success

For several years, the ROA-MI has worked with the JR-ROTC and ROTC units of all service branches on college and school campuses throughout Michigan, providing medal sets for their top students during spring ceremonies.



CPT Goldstein and UM Army ROTC Cadets.

Last September 2024, CPT Louis Goldstein, PMS at UM Army ROTC BN, got together with LTC Wilson and sparked an idea as to how their two groups could work together to form a win / win partnership. The ROA has officers with a wealth of career military experience. The ROTC has enthusiastic cadets, who are eager to learn. We have an opportunity to bring these two groups together to share experiences and meet new military friends in a relaxed setting. The officer resources that can be offered are: classroom resources, career advisers, presenters at events, and more.

CPT Goldstein presented the idea to the 50+ Army ROTC cadets and asked for their comments. They were very enthusiastic about the idea and provided a lot of excellent suggestions. This is an ROTC program, with the cadets as the driving force to develop group and individual meetings that meet their needs. The ROA-MI is providing the officer resources. This is not an official class and attendance is not required. The officers and cadets are all volunteer participants. What a great opportunity for cadets and officers to interact.

LTC Wilson presented the idea to the EXCOM, who approved. CPT Goldstein and two cadets attended an EXCOM meeting and discussed their interest and ideas. LTC Wilson went to work recruiting officers and promoting the program. The idea was to start with a small “pilot program” limited to one group, the UM-Ann Arbor, Army ROTC BN, develop the resources and process, and create awareness of this new program. An analogy is like laying a new railroad track, developing the program and process, as we head to a future objective. LTC Wilson was happily surprised when seven Army generals volunteered to join the group along with several other ROA officers.



Cadet Jonathan Li, with mic, and cadets in discussion with officers.

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## New Working Together Program is a Success

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With the leadership of Cadets Li and Wilmot, the cadets learned of the opportunity and suggested ideas. They developed dates and times to fit their class schedules. They asked for one meeting a month, starting in Jan. and to have group meetings available onsite and via ZOOM, in consideration of the officers' driving time and distance from locations not in Ann Arbor. The program is designed to use a minimum of officer's time.

The officers provided their military bios, which were made available to the cadets prior to the first meeting 22 Jan 2025. After introductions, an officer list was circulated. The cadets selected an officer or two to contact before the Feb meeting. The cadets were provided the officers' email, and asked to contact the officer, who has the control of sharing his/her phone number. Individual contacts can be made and reported back at our February meeting.



View of the ZOOM screen with a few of the officers. Top left MG Marsiglia, 2nd row: MG Bartell, BG Montjar, and 3rd row MG McQueen.

The cadets were given the opportunity to ask questions. A very interactive discussion followed on a wide range of relevant topics. The officers were very open and shared their personal experiences. They were asked to recommend books, old or new, that would be of benefit or interest to the cadets. BG Montjar offered that, once he became acquainted, he would be glad to write a reference letter. "It can help to have a reference letter on official BG red flagged stationary in a promotion or request packet," he advised.

As this first program develops, it may expand to include Navy and Air Force ROTC units, and other locations in Michigan. The next group meetings are scheduled for 19 Feb, 19 Mar, 16 Apr. If you would like to be part of this enjoyable new program, you are asked to email your request along with your military bio attached to: LTC (RET) Wilson at [louis-wilson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:louis-wilson@sbcglobal.net).





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

Captain Ventz Potochnik, USN (Retired), Sea Services, Vice President

### Navy Must Meet Recruiting Goal for 3 Years to Close Gaps at Sea

It will take three years of meeting recruiting goals to recover from the Navy's current gaps-at sea, a service official said last week.

There are about 20,000 operational gaps at sea, Capt. Candice Tresch, spokesperson for the Office of the Chief of Naval Personnel, told USNI News in an email.

The area of concern is specifically the apprenticeship, or E1 through E4 positions, gaps at sea, U.S. Fleet Forces Force Master Chief John Perryman said during a Surface Navy Association panel.

There are a certain number of first term sailors who leave every year who need to be replaced by incoming sailors, Perryman said. The Navy made its recruiting goals in Fiscal Year 2024, but missed them the previous two fiscal years. The goal for the current fiscal year is 40,600 enlisted active-duty sailors, the same as the previous year.

Gaps at sea have been a problem for the Navy over the past few years. Last year, the Navy had 21,000 operational gaps at sea, but 22,000 apprenticeship gaps at sea. That's because there were some billets in the higher ranks that were overfilled. The large number of gaps at sea was compounded by missing the recruiting goals in fiscal years 2022 and 2023, USNI News previously reported



### Coming Soon: Wi-Fi for Sailors

Cruise ship and cargo vessel operators have been rapidly adopting Starlink internet access for business uses, "big data" applications and shipboard morale, with broad approval from crewmembers. The U.S. Navy has taken note and is preparing to follow suit, thanks to a program dubbed Sailor Edge Afloat and Ashore (SEA2) and an early experiment aboard the carrier USS Abraham Lincoln.

In some ways, warships present an ideal application for low earth orbit satellite internet. They are highly complex and digitized, and they stand to benefit from the potential to move large amounts of data in a short amount of time, with low latency. Their large crew complements spend months deployed, far from home, and maintaining morale is another high priority.

For decades, these vessels have relied on VSAT terminals connected to half a dozen satellites in geostationary orbit, with higher latency and lower bandwidth. The sailors on USS *Abraham Lincoln* have been the first to try out something new under way, thanks to combat systems officer Cmdr. Keven White, who made it a priority to install connections for Starlink and OneWeb LEO services on board as soon as possible.

Cmdr. White began testing the high-speed service options aboard USS *Abraham Lincoln* in February, and the connection is now "entirely up and running," with reportedly profound improvements for sailor morale and productivity.

Lincoln's crew will be sharing this privilege with the rest of the fleet soon, as SEA2 is now "on the cusp of being available on every Navy ship," according to NAVWAR.





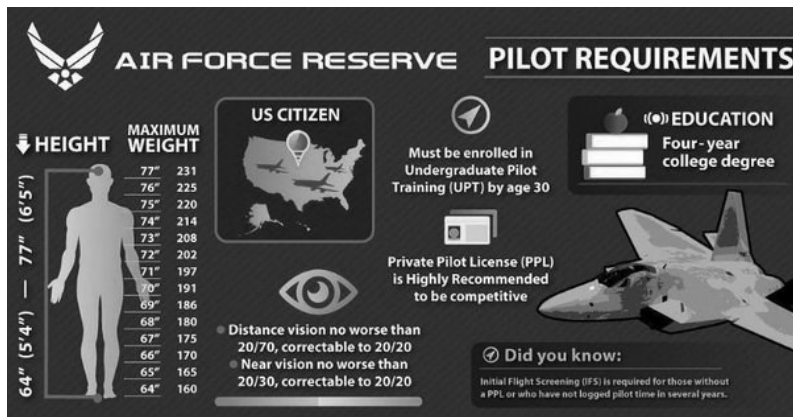
## From the Air Force Vice President

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

### Air Force Needs More Pilots

According to a report released in January, 2024, by the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies, the Air Force continues to have a “pilot crisis.” The report stresses the need for the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard to retain experienced pilots, and for the Air Force itself to grow and train all of its active component combat air forces. In addition, the report strongly recommends an increase in the production of fighter aircraft.

The institute warned of a future in which the service is unable to meet the demands of warfare due to pilot shortages and inability to effectively engage in enemy combat. As the Air Forces’ pilot combat experience levels continue to drop, so will survivability rates and mission outcomes in combat. Experienced pilots simply have better survivability rates.



In 2024, the service fell short of its airmen goal by nearly 1,850. Of the positions that needed to be filled, 1,042 were fighter pilot billets. To this day, the number of recruits is still below replacement of those retiring, and none are available for expansion of the service. These shortages have arisen over the last few years.

“The U.S. Air Force’s combat aircraft inventory is the smallest that it has ever been in its history,” the report said. The report attributed the decline to infrastructure divestment,

while also mentioning other factors. Moreover, the fleet’s aircraft average 30 to 50 years old, with many lacking modern technological advances. While the report encourages more fighter aircraft such as the F-35A and F15EX, Elon Musk has recently advocated far greater emphasis on unmanned fighter capabilities and therefore a decrease in F-35 production.

Whether autonomous capabilities someday replace manned aircraft or not, the immediate future still appears to require more pilots across the spectrum.

This article is based primarily on an article by Riley Ceder in an article published in the Air Force Times.







## ROTC / JROTC

CPT Stephen Balaze, ROTC, Bronco Battalion

# Western Michigan ROTC, Bronco Battalion

This year, WMU ROTC has around 100 Cadets, due to significant growth in their Freshman and Sophomore classes. During the fall semester the Bronco Battalion was busy! The Cadets planned and executed a field training exercise (FTX), engaged in clubs and extracurriculars, trained in tactics during leadership labs, and of course balanced their classes and homework.

In September, the Bronco Battalion executed its three-day FTX at Fort Custer Training Center, Battle Creek, MI. During the FTX, cadets flew to Fort Custer in CH-47 helicopters and conducted day and night land navigation on day one. Day two included instruction in first aid, marksmanship, individual move-



ment techniques, fieldcraft, field hygiene, and radio etiquette, followed by a platoon competition. Day three concluded with Cadets participating in the Leadership Reaction Course and obstacle course.



The Bronco Battalion Cadets are actively involved in many university activities. During the football season the Bronco Battalion provided a color guard and cannon crew at five football games for Western Michigan and three for Grand Valley State University. The Bronco Battalion

run club ran the WMU vs. CMU game ball 80 miles on its way to Mount Pleasant and is planning to run the Zeigler Kalamazoo Marathon in May. The Ranger Challenge team competed well at the 7th Brigade Ranger challenge, and the Western Ranger Organization trained over 10 new recruits.



Inside the classroom the Cadets showcased their true talent. The junior class boasted an exceptional fall average GPA of 3.62 across the class. A mark that put 13 of our 20 juniors on the dean's list! Across the entire battalion, the Cadets achieved an average GPA of 3.37, showing our Cadets' leadership in the classroom.

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## The Michigan Reservist

Opinions expressed herein are those of the editor or columnists and are not necessarily those of the Department of Michigan or the Reserve Officers Association of the United States.

Newsletter Editor LTC (Ret) Scott D. Murdoch [smurdoch@imanor.com](mailto:smurdoch@imanor.com)

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