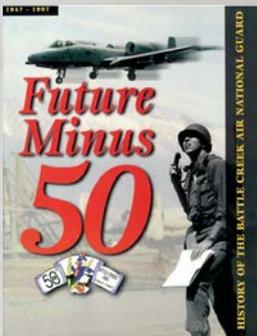


1997-2017

# The Next 20

HISTORY OF THE BATTLE CREEK AIR NATIONAL GUARD



1947-1997





## *DEDICATION*



***DEDICATED TO THE LEGACY OF TWO  
CITIZEN-AIRMEN WHO MADE THE  
PEOPLE OF BATTLE CREEK AIR NATIONAL  
GUARD BASE THEIR LIFE'S WORK:***

Colonel Howard C. Strand (1921-2017)

Colonel David T. Kennedy (1963 -2016)



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## *Foreword*

To the Men and Women, Friends and Family of the 110th Attack Wing,

As we approach the 70th anniversary of the 110th Attack Wing, we can all be proud to say that we were, or currently are, members of a premier Air National Guard Wing with a proven track record of excellence. Our current and past unit members, families and community have contributed immensely to the success of the unit. The Wing has been recognized at the highest levels and has accomplished a great deal since our last Wing history publication was compiled in 1997: we received a grade of “outstanding” on an Operational Readiness Inspection, deployed in support of numerous contingency operations, persevered through a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendation, and transitioned missions four times.

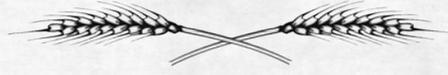
Over the past 20 years, we witnessed the Air National Guard transition from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve. During this time, the 110th established and reinforced core competencies that still exist today. Clearly, our tremendous history has established a culture of excellence that has allowed us to produce elite, adaptable, ready Airmen who remain vigilant to support and defend our Nation and State. We have built tremendous partnerships not only with our local community, but with our “Team Michigan” units, the Active Component, and our nationally-recognized State Partnership Programs with Latvia and Liberia.

On the backs of the people who have come before us, we currently have tremendous, high-tech, in-demand missions with a great future. Our elite Airmen are committed to excellence and continue to be recognized for their outstanding performance at home and while deployed in support of contingency operations. Without question, we have exited an era of change and have entered an era of opportunity. As always, the men and women of the 110th are proud of our outstanding heritage and are ready to capitalize and continue the legacy of this outstanding Wing.

The 110th has always been a great family. Our friendship, loyalty and dedication to each other has made the 110th a special place. We are blessed and thankful to be part of an organization that has an established and enduring connection that extends well beyond the main gate.

The first 70 years have been incredible and the last 20 have certainly been an adventure! Our missions may change, but the people have always defined the 110th...and they always will!

BRYAN J. TEFF, Colonel, MI ANG  
Wing Commander



# *Elite Airmen: Defending America's Skies*

**1**<sub>997</sub>

Fifty years after its federal recognition in 1947, Battle Creek Air National Guard Base sat in a very robust position. With strong community support, the 110th Fighter Wing had been firmly entrenched in its A-10 Thunderbolt II flying mission since 1990. Skilled technicians, representing some of the finest experience in their respective fields, kept the aircraft in the skies, adding to the proud heritage of the traditional-guardsman model: weekend-warriors who guard America and return to their families and civilian vocations for the rest of the month. With quality facilities and an enduring identity in the beloved A-10, it seemed that the 110th Fighter Wing's future relevance couldn't be more secure. But as members of the 110th looked towards the 21st century, little could they have known that they stood at the brink of a challenging new era of achievement, turmoil, and opportunity that would transform the traditional notion of a part-time, hometown Air Force Wing within the next two decades. The story of these airmen is one of resilience and determination; more importantly, it is a story of people.

## New Wing Commander

In late spring, 1997, Colonel Ronald G. Moore announced his retirement from the position of Wing Commander. Moore had led the 110th Fighter Wing since 1995. In June 1997, Michigan Adjutant General, Major General E. Gordon Stump, named Lt. Col. Kencil J. Heaton as the new commander of the 110th Fighter Wing, effective July 13, 1997.

## **Brig. Gen. Kencil J. Heaton, Commander, 110th Fighter Wing, 1997–2001:**

Brig. Gen. Ken Heaton graduated in 1968 from the University of Michigan, where he received a commission in the U.S. Air Force through the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). In 1969, he graduated from pilot training. During 1970-71, he completed a combat tour in Southeast Asia, flying the A-37 while assigned to the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing, during which time he received the Distinguished Flying Cross. He remained on active duty with the Air Force until 1978.



In 1980, Heaton joined the Air National Guard's 110th Tactical Air Support Group (TASG), at Battle Creek, Michigan. While with the unit at Battle Creek, Heaton again flew the A-37. In 1984, he transferred to the Air Force Reserves at Barksdale AFB, Louisiana to fly the A-10 Thunderbolt II. He returned to the 110th TASG in 1985 and took command of the 172nd Tactical Air Support Squadron (TASS), flying the A-37. He remained commander during the unit's transition to the A-10 and re-designation as a fighter squadron. From 1993 until returning to command the 110th Fighter Wing, Heaton served with the 127th Wing at Selfridge ANG Base.

During his career, Heaton held a variety of command and staff positions. He achieved a command pilot rating with six thousand flying hours in a variety of combat and support aircraft. After his tenure as commander of the 110th Fighter Wing, Heaton served as Assistant Adjutant General, Air, Michigan National Guard, retiring with the rank of Brigadier General.

### **Operation Joint Endeavor/Guard**

In the fall of 1996, the 110th Fighter Wing began planning for its second deployment to Italy in support of the UN peacekeeping forces in Bosnia. United States Air Forces Europe (USAFE) tasked the 110th, through ACC and HQ ANG, to deploy six A-10 aircraft and support personnel to Aviano AB, Italy, from April 2 to June 2, 1997.

On March 25, 1997, the ADVON team departed Battle Creek, Michigan, for Aviano AB, Italy. On April 4, pilots flew their first sorties in the area of responsibility (AOR). The 110th Fighter Wing scheduled three rotational tours, each lasting fifteen days, for the duration of the deployment. A total of 395 ANG members deployed for this operation. Approximately twenty individuals from seven other ANG units augmented the 110th Fighter

Wing in order to fill manning requirements. The performance of 110th members gained praise from their active duty counterparts. "The transition from the active duty unit performing the A-10 mission, to the guard unit was seamless and transparent," said Brigadier General Charles Wald, commander of the 31st Fighter Wing. "The 110th Fighter Wing was doing an outstanding job."

On May 29, the 110th Fighter Wing began preparation for redeployment to Battle Creek, Michigan. The 110th Fighter Wing successfully achieved their tasking, demonstrating their ability to perform a critical mission as part of the Air Force's Total Force.

### **110th Fighter Wing Celebrates Fiftieth Anniversary**

During the August 1997 Unit Training Assembly (UTA), the 110th Fighter Wing celebrated its fiftieth year as an Air National Guard unit. The Wing combined its annual family day and employer's recognition day during the same weekend.

On Saturday of UTA, several military aircraft flew in for a static display, including a P-47 Thunderbolt and an O-2A Skymaster, one of the aircraft previously assigned to the 110th. Hundreds of visitors, many of them former members and retirees of the 110th, were on hand to mark the occasion.



*An A-10 Thunderbolt II and a P-47 Thunderbolt take flight together during the Battle Creek Air National Guard's 50th Anniversary Celebration.*



The Wing conducted a formal retreat to end the duty day. The event included a change of command ceremony, marking the retirement of Colonel Ronald M. Moore and the assumption of command by Lieutenant Colonel Kencil J. Heaton. Major General E. Gordon Stump, Adjutant General for the State of Michigan, passed the Wing flag to the new commander, marking the beginning of the 110th Fighter Wing's second half-century.

#### **New Construction on Base Continues**

In September 1997, the last World War II-era building on base, which housed the Base Exchange (BX), came down. The BX moved to a larger temporary building until a new exchange was completed in 1999. At the end of October 1997, groundbreaking ceremonies took place for a new composite support facility and Security Forces building. The new support facility was designed to house the 110th Medical Group, as well as the Wing's dining facility and Services flight. The new Security Forces building gave the expanded squadron an excellent facility for training and conducting its day-to-day job. The two new buildings were funded under one construction project, costing an estimated \$5.8 million.

#### **1998**

1998 began with the Wing's annual deployment to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona for "Operation Snowbird," an A-10 operations exercise that allowed aircraft to keep flying during Michigan's cold winter months. The Wing trained most of its focus throughout the year on the Air Combat Command's Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI), scheduled for October 17-25 at Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC). Preparations for the inspection included two Operational Readiness Exercises (OREs) at Alpena, May 2-9 and August 15-22.

In the midst of the ORI groundwork, the 110th Fighter Wing was visited by General Michael Ryan, Chief of Staff of the Air Force on September 22, 1998. Ryan's visit, which marked the

first time the base had hosted a sitting Air Force Chief of Staff, was a harbinger of things to come for the Wing: Ryan outlined the Air Force's new Air Expeditionary Force model, which would, for the first time, integrate Air National Guard units with their active duty counterparts in the force's deployment strategy.

The following month, the 110th performed with excellence at its ORI, earning the first "outstanding" grade for an Air National Guard Wing in the State of Michigan. The superlative result would align the 110th as one of the top-ranked Air National Guard units in the nation and lead to its by-request reputation of excellence. With the new buildings 6930 (Medical) and 6911 (Security Forces) open for duty by the end of the year, the 110th was well-positioned for what would prove to be a groundbreaking 1999.

#### **1999**

#### **Operation Noble Anvil**

In May, 1999, the 110th received activation orders to deploy 150 of its members to Europe in support of NATO missions in and around the former Yugoslavia. DoD spokesman Mr. Kenneth H. Bacon announced that the deployment would consist of equipment and personnel from the 104th Fighter Wing, Barnes Field, Massachusetts, the 110th Fighter Wing and the 124th Fighter Wing, Boise Air Terminal in Idaho. More than 700 airmen from these locations and approximately 18 aircraft were joined together under the presidential selective reserve call-up (PSRC) to form the 131st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron. They called themselves the "Killer Bees" because their location names all started with that letter.

Col. Ken Heaton, 110th Fighter Wing commander, was informed of the deployment by Air National Guard Director Maj. Gen. Paul Weaver shortly before the public announcement came from the Pentagon. The aircraft and personnel deployed would provide additional airpower for NATO commanders as they continued to wage the air



campaign against the military forces of Yugoslav President Slobodon Milosevic.

The NATO mission in the Balkans sought to convince Serbian political and military leadership that the costs of war were so high that they should pursue peace. Its objectives were to deter Belgrade from increasing its offensive against Kosovar Albanians, damage Belgrade's capacity to take repressive action and demonstrate the alliance's resolve of purpose in forcing Serbian political and military leadership to change course.



*110th Fighter Wing members are issued MRE's during Operation Noble Anvil, Trapani Air Base, Italy.*

The deployed team from the 110th Fighter Wing would join in concert with other United

States military aircraft and resources from Spain, Portugal, Canada and the United Kingdom. In addition to the 150 members deployed overseas from Battle Creek, three members deployed to Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina to backfill for active duty members who had deployed to Europe. While discussing general aspects of the deployment, Col. Ken Heaton said the unit was prepared for its mission: "This is what the 110th has been training for during the past 52 years."

The first C-17 carrying crews and equipment departed Battle Creek Air National Guard Base on Sunday, May 16. The original projection was that their deployment could last up to 270 days. The personnel launched into a rigorous operations tempo when they landed at Trapani Air Base in Sicily. The abandoned World War II-era airfield was lacking in almost every facility required to maintain a modern fighter wing. With no dormitories, members had to be housed in local hotels – some a two-hour drive away. Though faced with a bare base and little in the way of in-place utilities, the unit formed its teams, set up operations and was ready to perform within a matter of two days. According to several members, the speed that the unit reached combat-ready status surprised the mission planners. Chief Master Sgt. Tom Rose said, "We were able to overcome all obstacles and were up and operating before they were ready for us." When the first mission arrived, the personnel went about their duties as they had countless times before during training exercises. Only this time, the stakes were much higher.

When the aircraft launched for their first mission, support personnel waited anxiously for news. "When the A-10s came back from the first mission, work continued without any pause," said unit historian Tech. Sgt. Carol Cathcart. "News traveled at the speed of lightning that the planes were empty (of their munitions) and morale shot up immediately." From there, there was no break in sight. An average member worked twelve to fifteen hours a day.



Maj. Gen. Charles Wald, vice director for strategic plans and policy, the Joint Staff, Washington, D.C., announced on May 21 that the unit was in action and operating successfully. During the Pentagon press briefing, he said, “The A-10s we talked about that just arrived from the States a day or two ago from Massachusetts, Michigan and Idaho have destroyed five tanks today and several artillery pieces. (They’re) doing a great job already.”

*A Report from the Field: By Col. Ken Heaton, Trapani Air Base, June 1999.*

“No matter how you look at the calendar, we have passed the four-week time period for our deployment in support of Operation Allied Force. Whether it’s time from when the jets departed Battle Creek, or when the CRAF bird left and arrived at Trapani, or when we flew the first combat sorties, the first month has passed. I think most people would say that the time has gone by quite rapidly. At least most of us would say the days fly by but maybe the calendar doesn’t move quite as fast. When we were cranking out 24 sorties during the day, everyone was very busy. Maybe I should explain that while 24 sorties doesn’t seem like a lot of flying, we spend about four hours enroute to and from the AOR. We are getting three solid refuels totaling about 20,000 pounds of JP-8. That is enough to fly three complete sorties back home. We have a few pilots who have now totaled 80 hours of flying time in our first three weeks of combat.

“People have become pretty accustomed to the daily routine. We started off with virtually everyone living off base in one of four different hotels. Two dormitories on base are being renovated and we are slowly bringing small numbers of personnel into base housing. The ‘Harvest Eagle’ kitchen was finished two weeks after our arrival and is now serving two meals a day with plans to go to four meals a day. The hotel accommodations are very cramped with sometimes five people assigned to a small suite or villa. The travel time to the hotel is about an hour and when you add that commute

time to the 12-hour workdays, you can imagine that everyone sleeps pretty well at night, but not for very long. Until just recently, we have been working six days on with one day off a week.

“Morale has been very good. Keeping busy at work is the key to that. The ammo builders and the weapons loaders are very happy to see the airplanes coming back with most ordnance missing from beneath the wings. After work there isn’t much time to see the sights or to get to know the local people and the culture of southern Italy. It is hard to believe that you could get tired of spaghetti, pasta and pizza, but I think that is happening quite a bit. This location is nothing similar to Aviano Air Base in climate, topography, food, or culture. Up to this point, we have been trying to get everyone one day off a week. With the work schedule that we’ve had, many people are choosing to just relax at the hotels rather than get very adventuresome with sight-seeing trips, etc. With the reduced flying right now as a result of the recent peacekeeping efforts, I hope that we all will take the opportunity to get a much broader education of what Sicily is all about.



*Members of the 110th Fighter Wing pose for a photo during Operation Noble Anvil, Trapani Air Base, Italy.*

“At this point, the bombing missions have been suspended but flying is still continuing at a solid pace. Aircraft are still launching daily with full ordnance loads. The aircraft are refueling and flying up to the border, but instead of being



sent in with targets to hunt for, we are being held outside the Kosovo airspace in reserve in case the NATO ground forces come under fire and need air support. It appears that this schedule will hold for a few more days while the NATO commanders figure out what they'd like to do with us. The rumor mill is in full swing with all kinds of stories being spread about. The simple truth is that, at this point, the commanders have not decided our fate yet. When they do, the message will be relayed and plans will be made accordingly.



*110th Fighter Wing members unpack a conex bin of MWR and food supplies during Operation Noble Anvil, Trapani Air Base, Italy.*

“The real success here has been what all 733 personnel have accomplished. Regardless of whether we were traditional or full-time, Air National Guard or Active Duty, everyone has come together to form a very cohesive, mission-oriented fighting machine. Everyone hit the ground with feet running; we built bombs, generated aircraft, put in phone lines, set up a kitchen, flew missions, renovated a dormitory, whatever was required to get the job done, just like we have been trained to do since we all joined the military. Some people will look at this deployment and say that we have just tested the full-up concept of the Air Expeditionary Force. I would say they are right. It has been a privilege to serve with the personnel here and those at home who have supported us every step of the way.”

## Back Home

Despite projections that they could be deployed for up to nine months, a majority of Battle Creek's deployed members returned home after just seven weeks overseas. But in those seven weeks, they validated that the Air National Guard is a vital part of the Air Force's total force concept.

The suspension of the Kosovo bombing campaign on June 10 and the end of the air war on June 20 put the 131st into a contingency operation mission where the aircraft flew just outside the Kosovar region, ready to give aid if called upon. By the end of June, it was clear that the 131st would stand down and its members would return home.



*A total of 156 airmen from the 110th Fighter Wing deployed in support of Operation Noble Anvil to Trapani Air Base, Italy.*

It took only three or four days to pack up their gear and prepare for the return flights home. The first 24 members from Battle Creek returned on a C-17 on June 30. The main body – nearly 110 personnel – arrived on July 1. The six deployed A-10s from Battle Creek returned to base on July 2 between practice flights by the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds and the Canadian Snowbirds. By July 4, almost all of the deployed personnel were stateside. A few remained as cargo escorts or to complete some transition. The last member returned by September UTA.



Looking back, many said that the work at Trapani was hard but rewarding. “I did not understand fully what they were fighting about over there when we left,” said one Senior Airman. “Now I know why we went and I know how important it was for us to be there. I am proud to have been a part of this mission.”

#### OPERATION NOBLE ANVIL: SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS

Members activated: 156 (two chaplains on home-station duty, two engine mechanics at Shaw AFB, South Carolina; 152 deployed to Trapani AB, Italy.)

Traditional guardsmen deployed: 83

Technicians deployed: 64

AGRs deployed: 9

Sorties flown: 442

Bombs dropped: Nearly 1,000

30mm rounds fired: Over 14,000

Maverick missiles fired: 65

#### 2000

##### **Major Awards**

The 2000's began on a high note for the 110th Fighter Wing, with the announcement of its fourth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, covering the period of November 1, 1996 to October 31, 1998. Specifically, the award highlighted the 110th's performance during the 8th Air Force Operational Readiness Inspection for which it received the first-ever grade of “outstanding” in the State of Michigan.

*The Air Force Outstanding Unit Award is awarded by the Secretary of the Air Force to numbered units that have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious service or outstanding achievement that clearly sets the unit above and apart from similar units. The services include: performance of exceptionally meritorious service, accomplishment of a specific outstanding*

*achievement of national or international significance, combat operations against an armed enemy of the United States, or military operations involving conflict with or exposure to hostile actions by an opposing foreign force.*

Several other significant national awards were announced for the Wing throughout the rest of the year, including the Air Force Association Outstanding Unit Award, the Winston P. Wilson Trophy, the Spaatz Trophy (the 110th's first since 1949), and the Maj. Gen. John J. Pesch Flight Safety Award.

##### **Operation Southern Watch**

Even after the success of the 110th Fighter Wing in Kosovo, the deployment tempo in support of the Air Expeditionary Force did not slow down. From May 1 to September 8, 314 personnel from Battle Creek Air National Guard Base deployed as a part of AEF 7 to locations as remote as Al Jaber and Ali Al Salem, Kuwait and Incirlik, Turkey in support of Operation Southern Watch. These included airmen in the specialties of Civil Engineering, Logistics support, Communications and Medical. Combined, this marked the largest deployment event to date for the 110th Fighter Wing. 170 sorties were flown from Al Jaber Air Base alone during the one-month trip.



110th Fighter Wing members pose for a photo in front of a bombed out hardened aircraft shelter during Operation Southern Watch, Al Jaber AB, Kuwait.



## 2001

On February 2, 2001, the 110th Fighter Wing's fifth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award was announced, for the period of November 1, 1998 to September 1, 2000. It was a rare instance where a unit was selected for the award covering back-to-back timeframes. This Outstanding Unit Award recognized the Wing's call-up to Southern Europe for Operation Allied Force.

### **Change of Command**

In March 2001, Col. Rodger Seidel was named Wing Commander, succeeding Col. Ken Heaton. That summer, Col. David Augustine's selection as Vice Wing Commander completed the Wing's transition to a new era of leadership. In 2001, Chief Master Sgt. Trina Philo was also promoted to become first woman to achieve the enlisted force's top rank at Battle Creek ANGB.



*Col. Rodger Seidel, left, 110th Fighter Wing Commander and Col. David Augustine, Vice Commander.*

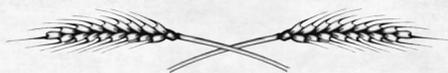
### **Col. Rodger F. Seidel, Commander, 110th Fighter Wing, 2001–2012:**

Col. Rodger Seidel was born in Shreveport, Louisiana and graduated from Rome Free Academy, Rome, New York in June of 1972. He attended The Citadel from 1972 through 1976 and graduated with honors to include "Who's

Who in American Colleges," and was also selected as one of the top 7 ROTC graduates in the nation. Col. Seidel received his commission upon graduation from The Citadel.

Col. Seidel entered active duty on March 11, 1977 and completed undergraduate pilot training at Vance Air Force Base, Oklahoma. He was assigned to the 354 TFW at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, where he flew the A-10. After two years in South Carolina, he was transferred to the 51st Composite Wing, Osan Air Base, Korea, where he flew the OV-10 and became director of Wing Stan Eval. Col. Seidel then returned to the A-10 and spent the next three years at England Air Force Base, Louisiana. While there, he served in the capacity of Chief of Wing Flying Safety and Squadron Flight Commander. In 1986, he was assigned to Headquarters PACAF where he became an air operations staff officer in charge of all forward air control programs in the Pacific. In 1989, Col. Seidel returned to Osan Air Base, Korea to serve for the next two years as Operations Officer of the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron flying OA-10s. His final active duty assignment found him working with the 110th Tactical Air Support Group as Air Force Advisor. In this capacity, Col. Seidel managed the unit's conversion from OA-37s to OA-10s and established an Exercise Evaluation Program rated "Best Seen to Date" by 9AF/IG.

Col. Seidel left active duty after 17 years and with over 2500 hours in the A/OA-10. He joined the 110th Fighter Wing in January of 1991 and served as the 172 Fighter Squadron Operations Officer and the full-time Air Operations Officer. In June 1995, he was selected to fill the position of the 110th Fighter Wing Vice Commander and in 2001 assumed duties as the 110th Fighter Wing Commander. He retired from that position in June, 2012.



# *The 110th in the Global War on Terror*

9  
/11

While the world watched as terrorists struck New York City's World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., Battle Creek Air National Guard Base assumed increased force protection levels, recovered all airborne jets and established a strip alert within one hour of notification that the United States was under attack.

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 tragedies, Security Forces members were activated to provide installation security. Thirteen members of the Security Forces Squadron were later sent to Offutt AFB, Nebraska until June 2002 to augment security manpower. The 110th also sent a team from its fire department to Southwest Asia for a year, beginning in October 2001. 24-hour coverage in the command post and communication center was also established to support operations.

## 2002

The 110th Fighter Wing launched into 2002 with an intensive schedule of deployments in support of counter-terrorism operations around

the globe. In March, the 110th Operations Group returned to Operation Snowbird at Davis-Monthan to hone their deployment readiness, while two squads from the 110th Security Forces Squadron deployed for a 90-day rotation to Southwest Asia.

Also in March, the 110th Medical Group deployed to Soto-Cano AB, Honduras. 110th airmen saw around 3,700 people during their time in-country, including about 650 on the last day they were there. The 110th Medical Group's engagement demonstrated that the U.S. Air Force's mission is not just to defend and destroy, but to mend and heal as well.

Late in 2002, numerous Wing members deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Southern Watch. Six A-10s and 370 personnel would establish operations out of Al Jaber Air Base, Kuwait. Similar to the 1999 mission in Kosovo, members of the 110th integrated with fellow airmen from Boise, Idaho and Barnes, Massachusetts, who each sent six jets of their own.



*Members of the 110th Medical Squadron carry medical supplies Thursday, March 14, 2002, into a remote village in Honduras.*



*Lt. Col. Mike Vandever, left, and SrA Allen Halley, center, conduct an eye examination Thursday, March 14, 2002 on a man at a remote village.*

### 2003

Most members deployed to Al Jaber Air Base returned to home station in January 2003, despite the looming war with Iraq. For many, it would prove to be a brief reunion with family and friends. In March, 370 personnel primarily from the 110th Operations and Maintenance Groups, along with 12 A-10s, were activated to fill a new tasking at Al Jaber. The bulk of this contingent left to an uncertain future on March 6.



*The 110th Security Forces Squadron, Operation Iraqi Freedom.*

### **Operation Iraqi Freedom**

When combat operations began in Iraq on March 17, 2003, members of the 110th Fighter Wing were among the first to take to the skies in

the famous “Shock and Awe” campaign against the infrastructure of Saddam Hussein’s military. Operations continued at a frenetic pace for the next three weeks with pilots from the 110th leaving a scathing mark on Iraqi military targets.

#### A-10 PERFORMANCE IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM:

- A-10s made up 8% of the fighter force in Operation Iraqi Freedom
- A-10s flew 44% of the total fighter sorties
- A-10s accounted for 60% of targets destroyed in OIF

#### BATTLE CREEK A-10 STATISTICS:

- Combat sorties: 700
- Combat hours: 2,000
- Targets destroyed: 1,100

On April 8, 2003, Maj. Jim Ewald, a pilot from the 110th Fighter Wing, was shot down over Baghdad, Iraq by a surface-to-air missile. Remarkably, Ewald ejected and was recovered by U.S. Army ground forces to fly combat missions again within 24 hours of the shoot-down.



*An A-10 Thunderbolt shot by surface-to-air missile over Iraq, flown by Maj. Gary Wolfe.*

Another Battle Creek pilot, Maj. Gary Wolfe, was flying a different mission the same day and was also hit with a surface-to-air missile. Though half the engine cowling was shot away, his aircraft was still flyable. Wolfe returned to base with a single engine; the cowling from his aircraft now sits at the USAF museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

#### *A Day in the life at “The Jab” By Maj. Don Henry*

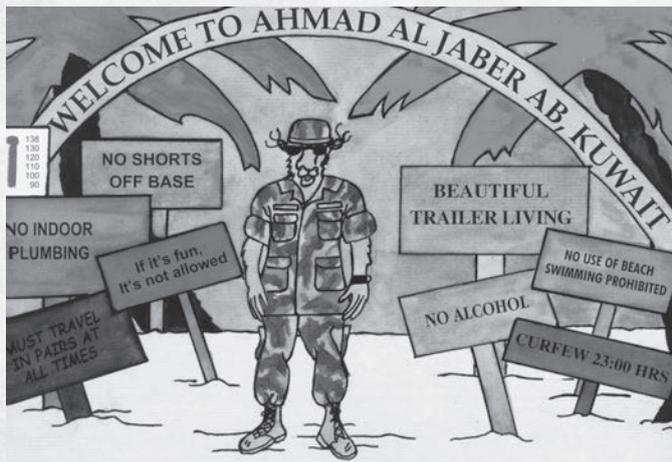
“Anyone who has spent any time at Ahmed Al Jaber Airbase (“The Jab”) in Kuwait knows what I mean when I say that ‘Groundhog Day’ is finally over, yet we know Puxataqney Phil is forecasting a long ‘winter’ of deployments to new remote locations as our military faces a prolonged fight against terrorism. Everyone from the 110th has their own unique stories to tell about the Jab since we all had different roles to play and points of view during the conflict – all worth remembering.

“There really wasn’t a typical day. Because of the open-ended nature of the deployment, we all did our best to cope with the numbness brought on by daily routines. I marked time by watching for new things around us, or by making an effort to change various elements of my daily routines – ‘anything different is good’ was my motto. The most simple changes and diversions were helpful. For example, I might ask for soup over my rice ration instead of the standard issue ‘beef slop’ or ‘chicken slop,’ (meat and gravy). Even familiar comforts like ice cream lost their appeal if indulged on a daily basis. I never went without my coffee though, especially in the ‘morning.’

“The day usually began by waking up at 2200-2300 hours because our unit’s flying schedule was generally planned within a midnight to noon window. As pilots going to fly, we would try to drive out to the jets early – or hurry back through maintenance debrief after a flight – just so we could eat at the flight-line kitchen (chow hall) if there was any possibility of it being open. Occasionally, we made it our destination rather than just a stop on the way to the jets. The flight-line kitchen was the highlight of the day because it was not as crowded as the one inside the compound. The food servers were a friendly, English-speaking, military crew instead of third-country nationals (TCNs), and meals tasted better (especially the ‘real’ eggs) because they were cooked on-location with better ingredients. Their food was just the boost we needed between sorties, and a little walk down the road to the chow hall didn’t hurt either – getting to the gym was much more difficult with Marines on base.

“The Marines were everywhere. It was a major adjustment to deal with the lines at the chow hall, the barbershop, and the base exchange, not to mention having to padlock our buildings to keep items from being procured by ‘The Borg.’” The Marines lived in tents that grew up almost overnight and more than doubled the size of the American compound. The compound was a 180-acre area surrounded by a 15-foot dirt berm. It enclosed all the basic facilities of a military base, except they were generally scaled-down. It also had numerous bunkers made of large, square cement pipes with layers of sandbags around them. Unless someone was caught outside during an exercise, it was rare to have to duck into a bunker during an alarm.

“It became painfully obvious that the Iraqi regime was going to give us problems when the Giant Voice rang out, ‘Alarm Red, MOPP 4!’ This was no exercise – it was the first time a real Scud was shot our way. Fortunately, the heat of summer in the Middle East had not yet arrived as we dressed in our protective suits and masks. In the confusion of the first alarm, I put on what I thought was my mask



*Welcome sign (barrier art) at Al Jaber AB, Kuwait.*



*110th Fighter Wing members design barrier art in their down time, Al Jaber AB, Kuwait. Decorated barriers could be seen in and around the installation.*

only to discover that a fellow pilot was frantically scurrying to find his mask. When it dawned on us that I had taken his mask, we did a quick exchange which later made for an embarrassing laugh when we knew all the panic was for nothing. There were both fun times and not so fun times. Some of my less pleasant memories included the anthrax and small pox shots, and the spider bite that put me on crutches for two days.



*The Al Jaber AB, Kuwait flightline during a dust storm.*

“Even the sand storms were tolerable. A couple times we still did our planned cookouts or made the most of what we know was a short-lived situation. When the weather was bad, or as it was getting hot toward the end of the deployment, most of us found air conditioning. Many people in our

unit spent their off time at work or in the common areas playing cards, watching the news and DVD movies, or writing email at the few computer terminals available. Television and e-mail were our main connections to the outside world – surfing the internet was too slow, and getting a telephone line for morale calls was a challenge most of the day. Until the war officially started, though, figuring out the start-date was a continuous guessing game, and discussions about deployment life were increasingly difficult both for families back home and for us. As you can imagine, letters and care packages pouring in from family and friends were very much appreciated, many arriving after Baghdad had come under coalition control.

“After months of speculation on the start of hostilities, we finally made our mark on history. In spite of all the second-guessing and professional critics we hear about these days, the 110th Fighter Wing has a lot to be proud of. As we settle back into our peacetime routines, we need to remember to thank every cook, clerk, and craftsman for the contributions they made toward our national and local heritage, for the phenomenal reception we received, and for helping in the transition back to our families. Deployments have a way of bringing life’s most important things back into focus and cementing a unit’s mission focus and friendships



through the common memories of its experience. Until the next war, we need to keep our newest people smart on what we've learned, included as part of our team, and flexible to the changes we face."

***Fighting From Behind the Enemies' Gate – By Lt. Col. Ron Wilson, Tallil, Iraq, April, 2003***

"One of the most pleasant and peaceful nights I spent during Operation Iraqi Freedom was from the roof of a bombed-out Su-25 Iraqi operations building just south of An Nasiriya, Iraq. The night was April 7, 2003, the night before the fall of Baghdad and a day the 172nd Fighter Squadron and I would never soon forget. It was a very warm night in Iraq and some of us, who were in Tallil to set up shop, took our cots and slept on the roof. It was just a bit cooler than in the building. Just because it was quiet and the skies were clear, I knew this was a deceptive picture of the battle that was raging. I knew two or three miles above me passed hundreds of jets on their way to and from Baghdad and the surrounding areas. The stillness of the night and the clarity of the sky were very misleading for what lay ahead.

"To begin the story, I must go back two weeks to the week of March 24, when we were scrambling trying to get organized to set up forward operations at Tallil. Lt. Col. Dave Kennedy was organizing a group to open Tallil AB, Iraq as a place for A-10s to land, refuel, and continue to battle in Iraq. The ultimate goal was to base A-10's at Tallil, operate out of this remote location and bring the fight to the enemy from their own backyard. I was more than interested. I had hoped that there would be a spot for me to live and operate in Iraq. Our combined unit would consist of seven Battle Creek pilots, four Boise pilots, four Pope pilots and four Willow Grove pilots. Various support people, 90% from Battle Creek, which included Intel, Ops Techs, and Life Support. We had 60 maintenance troops. Half were from Battle Creek. The stage was set and I made the cut. I would operate and work at Tallil AB, Iraq for an undetermined amount of time.



*Airman 1st Class Sven Berger talks to an A-10 pilot over headset during preflight check before launching the plane on a mission to Iraq in support of coalition forces on Saturday March 29, 2003.*

"April 3 was the day prior to my departure for Tallil AB, Iraq. Just a few minutes after midnight I was scrambled on a combat search and rescue mission for a downed F-18 pilot somewhere south of Baghdad. My wingman, Major Kevin Krasko, and I flew almost four hours searching for this F-18 pilot, where we encountered the most activity of the war. When we could not get a tanker and almost ran out of fuel and options, we were forced to land at Tallil at sunrise. This was to be my first experience of Tallil. I was picked up from my jet by Major Keir Knapp and driven on a four-wheeler



*A-10's in formation over Southwest Asia.*

to a communications tent, being chased by three or four wild dogs that were nipping at my heels. I got refueled and left Tallil very quickly to continue our search, which was soon called off, and no survivor was found. After a very quick exposure to Tallil on April 4th, I wondered if I had made the right choice!

“Departing for Tallil on April 4 was an experience. We were to fly a mission, then land at Tallil. My wingman on this mission was Major J.D. Van Havel. Our target was Baghdad International Airport. We did not know the target until airborne and, to say the least, we were excited to be going to Baghdad. Over Baghdad International Airport, we supported Special Forces operations. After searching for targets and having several surface-to-air missiles shot our way, we decided to make our way back to Tallil. All of maintenance was going to turn us and we were going to be the first operational and locally-based A-10s to launch on a combat mission.

“That was an amazing first day. Now back at base, I was getting a look at my new home away from Kuwait! There was no running water, no electricity, and no toilet facility except an outhouse. The building was full of sand and bullet holes and broken glass. We slept 8-10 in a room on cots with sleeping bags. Our breakfast, lunch, and dinner consisted of MRE's. We were a day operations only squadron. I looked forward to the nights where we

could sit around the campfire signing songs. We called ourselves the ‘Desert Dawgs,’ a conglomerate of the four squadrons. Some called us the 540 EFS: because they added all the units’ numbers together. We even had a guy who wrote a song of our experience. When not flying, our entertainment consisted of going on trips to a base bone yard, driving a tank around, or visiting the Biblical city of Ur.

“The morning of the 8th, the weather had moved in. It was cloudy and dusty. Lt. Col. Dave Kennedy and I flew a mission right over downtown Baghdad. Our targets consisted of city buses full of Republican Guard members, military bunkers, and the Ministry of Information building. We had to fly low because of the weather and had a lot of triple-A fired at us. Upon landing, my next duty was Supervisor of Flying. Little did I know we would soon have trouble headed our way. My first call I received was to inform us that we had an A-10 headed our way that had its engine shot off. The very next call, I had two A-10s on vapors declaring emergency fuel. The third call was an A-10 down. Thankfully, the pilot was picked up and on a helicopter headed our way.

“Everyone was safe and we spent the night as usual sitting around the campfire singing songs, but we had a lot more to sing about this night. A few days later we redeployed back to Al Jaber as the Whiteman squadron took over operations at Tallil from behind the enemy's gate.”

### **Returning Heroes**

Deployed members of the 110th began returning to home station in May, and most were back with their families by Memorial Day. A welcome home party was held over September UTA to recognize deployers and their loved ones.

The 110th Fighter Wing's deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom was, in many ways, its finest hour. From that single episode came more personal decorations than any other period in the unit's history. As 2003 drew to a close, high-



level combat awards like the Bronze Star and the Distinguished Flying Cross could be spotted for the first time on the dress blues of many airmen on base. At the December 2003 awards formation alone, two Distinguished Flying Crosses and eight Bronze Stars were presented to members who had performed with distinction in Iraq.

**110th Fighter Wing Distinguished Flying Cross Recipients, 2003 OIF Deployment**

Lt. Col. William S. Cuel  
Lt. Col. Donald A. Furland  
Lt. Col. David T. Kennedy (with Oak Leaf Cluster)  
Lt. Col. Clifford W. Latta, Jr. (with Oak Leaf Cluster)  
Lt. Col. David P. SanClemente  
Lt. Col. Bryan J. Teff  
Lt. Col. Ronald W. Wilson

Maj. James C. Ewald  
Maj. Shawn E. Holtz  
Maj. Richard M. Kaplan

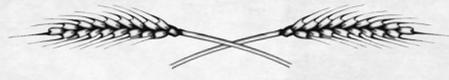
**110th Fighter Wing Bronze Star Recipients,  
2003 OIF Deployment**

Col. David L. Augustine  
Lt. Col. George H. Benefield, Jr.  
Lt. Col. Joseph E. Benson, Jr.  
Lt. Col. David T. Kennedy  
Lt. Col. Keir Knapp  
Lt. Col. Robert J. Heath  
Maj. Patrick M. Crupi  
Maj. James C. Ewald  
Maj. Donald F. Henry  
Chief Master Sgt. Edward A. Bartha  
Senior Master Sgt. Brian E. Cooper  
Senior Master Sgt. David W. Meyers  
Master Sgt. Terry L. Hatlevig  
Master Sgt. Kelly A. Kirk

**2004**

In mid-February 2004, five members of the 110th's transportation section were mobilized to work with the Army in transporting supplies and equipment throughout Iraq. They would return in late October.

May 2, 2004 was a day almost 19 years in the making for Lt. Col. Cliff Latta. While returning from the "Hawgsmoke" competition in Fort Smith, Arkansas, Latta passed the 4,000 hour mark flying the A-10 Thunderbolt II, a feat accomplished by about only a dozen other A-10 pilots, or less than one percent of those qualified on the aircraft.



# *An Era of Uncertainty*

**2**<sub>005</sub>

In February 2005, the 110th was notified that it would receive its sixth Outstanding Unit Award, this time presented with a rare Valor Device, for service in Operation Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and Noble Eagle between September 11, 2001 and July 24, 2003. It was almost unheard of for an entire Wing to receive the “V” device, even those who remained at home station. The 110th’s selection for this honor validated its remarkable record of achievement both at home and abroad.

Also in February, Wing Commander Col. Rodger Seidel hit the 4,000 hour mark as an A-10 pilot. With only about a half-dozen 4,000 hour A-10 pilots on active duty, Seidel joined a very elite group.

## **BRAC**

Despite the laurels earned by members of the 110th Fighter Wing, news came on May 13, 2005 that the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) had named Battle Creek Air National Guard Base to its list of facilities recommended for closure. If accepted by Congress, the recommendation would effectively end the existence of the 110th Fighter Wing by 2010. Recognizing both the

economic and defense advantages associated with having a Wing located in Southwest Michigan, a campaign to save the base began, spearheaded by community advocacy group Battle Creek Unlimited and local representatives including Congressman Joe Schwartz and State Senator Mark Schauer.

On June 20, 2005, community leaders, political representatives and over twenty unit members traveled to St. Louis, Missouri to present a case for the base’s removal from the BRAC list. The commission was receptive to the information provided by representatives of the 110th and asked several questions in return, stating that they had “homework to do.” Throughout the rest of the summer, the campaign to save Battle Creek Air National Guard Base worked diligently and effectively to prove the facility’s value to the Department of Defense. On June 27, a team of analysts traveled to Washington on behalf of Battle Creek Unlimited to identify data flaws of the BRAC process and to appeal a visit from commission members to the base. Two days later, Commissioner Samuel Skinner visited the base and was greeted by more than 500 members of the community. Skinner was deeply impressed by the information gained from his visit and returned



to Washington to propose an amendment to the BRAC's list of recommendations, making Battle Creek ANGB an "enclave" for future missions. Any significant change in the mission would be projected at least 3 years in the future. (Fiscal Year '09). The announcement of this amendment was made on August 27, effectively securing the 110th's continuation as a cohesive Wing. The exact mission set that would drive that future remained to be determined.

Wing's mission-capable "satisfactory" grade added more ammunition to the case that the 110th was here to stay.

### Hurricane Katrina

In August 2005, with much of the Gulf Coast devastated by Hurricane Katrina, Michigan answered the call to accept up to 10,000 evacuees from Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana. The 110th was an integral part of the reception of these displaced individuals. By Saturday of Labor Day weekend, 300 evacuees had been prescreened or received care at Battle Creek Air National Guard Base before relocation to nearby Fort Custer. Fifty-four members from the 110th Civil Engineer Squadron, Military Personnel Flight, Transportation, and Chapel offices were also activated to support hurricane recovery operations in Louisiana and Mississippi.



*110th Fighter Wing members "bug out" of their shelter during the Operational Readiness Inspection, Alpena, Mich.*



*110th Fighter Wing members load a "wounded" airman into the back of a truck during the Operational Readiness Inspection, Alpena, Mich.*



*Members of the 110th Fighter Wing activate to support hurricane recovery operations in Louisiana and Mississippi.*



*Members of the 110th Fighter Wing and medical personnel help bring New Orleans evacuees from their aircraft to a medical screening station at Battle Creek Air National Guard Base.*

Even as the Wing's future seemed in turmoil, members of the 110th rose to the occasion during another Air Combat Command Operational Readiness Inspection, held at Alpena CRTIC. The



*110th Fighter Wing opens STARBASE, a program for local elementary students to enrich skills in math and science.*

### **Outstanding Unit Award (with “V”) Presented**

In December 2005, the 110th Fighter Wing’s sixth Outstanding Unit Award was officially presented in a ceremony presided by Maj. Gen. Thomas G. Cutler, Adjutant General of Michigan. “It’s all about outstanding people doing an outstanding job in the service of their state and nation,” said Col. Rodger Seidel, upon accepting the award. This honor recognized the entire Wing’s support of deployed members since September 11, 2001.

### **A-10C Conversion**

In 2006, conversion of the A-10’s cockpit and avionics systems gave it a significant upgrade, essentially making it a different aircraft in the minds of pilots and crew, who would require new training on the airframe. The improvements included the ability to drop modern munitions, such as the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) and the Wind Corrected Munition Dispenser (WCMD). Battle Creek and the 175th Fighter Wing from Baltimore were the first two guard units to transition to the A-10C.

Meanwhile, the Wing continued to deploy personnel either as individuals or small units in support of various wartime and homeland defense contingencies. Members of the 110th also contributed to domestic operations during Super Bowl XL, held at Ford Field in Detroit. Eight members from the 110th Security Forces Squadron

were activated to provide vehicle searches for Super Bowl-related traffic with the state-of-the-art Omni-Directional Inspection System (ODIS). Security Forces members deployed to Iraq also returned in March after six months abroad.

With the A-10 mission scheduled to leave Battle Creek in late 2008 – a part of the BRAC agreement to keep the base open – the future mission set of the Wing remained unclear. In June, 2006 the 110th hosted Lt. Gen. Steven Blum, Commander of the National Guard, and Governor Jennifer Granholm to highlight Battle Creek’s ability to support the new Joint Cargo Aircraft, also known as the C-27 Spartan, that was being planned for operations by the Department of Defense. Positive feedback from the visit made Battle Creek a first-tier option for the bed-down of the new cargo aircraft.

### **President Gerald R. Ford Funeral**

Presidential funerals, due to their high-profile guests, rituals, and heightened security requirements, are a massive undertaking. When President Gerald R. Ford, a Michigan native, passed away in December 2006, it set in motion a large-scale plan in which the Michigan National Guard served an integral role. Thirty members of the 110th Fighter Wing were activated to support the funeral including three Public Affairs specialists, 14 from Logistics, six from SFS, and one each from Wing Staff, maintenance, and communications.

### **2007**

Early in 2007, the 110th Operations Group held its annual exodus to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base for Operation Snowbird. This trip, usually a refreshing change of pace from Michigan’s winter doldrums, ended on a somber note when Colonel Dave Kennedy, 110th Operations Group Commander, suffered a debilitating heart attack while on temporary duty in Arizona. Kennedy, the most decorated member of the 110th Fighter Wing with two Distinguished Flying Crosses and a Bronze Star Medal, was medically retired later that year and eventually passed away in August 2016. Though



his presence would still be felt through the dozens of members he influenced and mentored during his time at Battle Creek, Kennedy's retirement significantly changed the leadership trajectory of the 110th Fighter Wing.



*Members of the 110th Attack Wing participate in a funeral cordon for Col. Dave Kennedy (ret.) on Friday, August 19, 2016.*

### **Colonel David T. Kennedy**

Colonel Dave Kennedy was born in April 1963 in Texas. He earned the distinction of being an Eagle Scout at the age of 13 and was a graduate of Detroit Catholic Central and the University of Michigan.

Kennedy entered the military in 1986 becoming a pilot with the 110th Fighter Wing. He flew the A-37 Dragonfly and then flew over 2,000 hours in the A-10. His last assignment was the Commander of the 110th Fighter Wing Operations Group. During his service he engaged in combat in Kosovo and Iraq and was highly decorated with two Distinguished Flying Crosses with Valor and a Bronze Star.

In the community, Kennedy coached many youth sports to include being the head coach of the Battle Creek Bruins Youth Hockey League for over 11 years. He loved hockey and also played in the adult hockey league for many years. He lived every day of his life to the fullest and passed away on August 15, 2016.



*Wing Commander, Col. Rodger Seidel, presents Lt. Col. David Kennedy with the Distinguished Flying Cross during an awards formation.*

### **C-NAF Emerges**

By October 2007, a new enterprise known as the Component Numbered Air Force (C-NAF) was in the works at Battle Creek Air National Guard Base. This new concept would prove to be a major factor in the stabilization of Battle Creek's future mission set. The program was derived from a collaboration between United States Air Forces Europe (USAFE) and the 3rd Air Force to develop a concept of operations for the proposed 17th Air Force, which would be responsible for command and control of USAF operations in Africa. The goal was to include Battle Creek Air National Guard Base as part of their total force team from the very beginning.

### **Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Deployment**

In the fall of 2007, 200 maintenance and operations personnel from Battle Creek deployed once again to support the A-10 package. The destination for what was generally accepted to be the 110th's final employment of the A-10 in combat (and the first combat deployment for any unit with the A-10C) was Al-Asad Air Base, Iraq. Shortly after arriving, 110th personnel received orders relocating them to Bagram AB, Afghanistan after an Air Force-wide grounding of F-15 Eagles took Bagram's normal fleet out of the fight. "This Wing doesn't do anything easy," remarked Col. Rodger Seidel upon



*110th Fighter Wing Maintainers take a break while deployed during Operation Enduring Freedom, Bagram AB, Afghanistan.*



*Rocker Ted Nugent visits the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base.*

hearing of the relocation. The deployed members of the 110th supported Operation Enduring Freedom diligently, returning to Battle Creek on January 22, 2008.

With the maintenance and operations groups back at home station, the transition began from the A-10 fighter mission to the new world of an airlift mission. The 110th would now forge a new identity as an Airlift Wing flying C-21s – small Learjets responsible for command and executive transportation – after the last of the A-10Cs departed for their new assignment at Selfridge ANGB in September 2008. The Wing's new era in operations was matched by updated facilities including a state-of-the-art Civil Engineer Building, for which a ribbon-cutting was held on November 28, 2008.

Even with a new airlift mission, the deployment tempo at the 110th didn't slow down. Throughout 2008, several members participated in Operation Jump Start, providing protection of the Southern U.S. border. Other members continued to support operations in the Middle East, deploying in small groups or as individuals to locations including Kuwait and Iraq.

#### **ACC UCI**

In 2008, the 110th also was tested by a Unit Compliance Inspection (UCI), receiving its final

grade as a part of Air Combat Command (ACC). The Wing passed with no unfavorable findings and a “did not comply” rate of 2%. “That puts us in the top 10% of units inspected – great news,” said Col. Rodger Seidel. Also in 2008, the 110th received the Air Force Association Outstanding Air National Guard Flying Unit award and the Winston P. Wilson Trophy recognizing the top ANG fighter or reconnaissance aircraft unit – further proof that the airmen of Battle Creek were capable of performing at the highest possible levels, even in the face of an uncertain future.



*The 110th Airlift Wing receives first C-21 Learjet.*



## 2009

As the Component Numbered Air Force group (C-NAF) continued to grow, it was redesignated as the 217th Air Operations Group (AOG). Under this moniker, the group continued to travel into groundbreaking territory in the support of Command and Control (C2) capabilities for USAF assets operating on the continent of Africa. Organized as a group with five squadrons, the unit was designed to engage at the operational level of warfare by providing a full spectrum of command and control capability. To accomplish this mission, unit personnel trained to support all five Air Operations Center divisions: strategy, combat plans, combat operations, intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance and air mobility. Given the somewhat nebulous concept of a command and control node situated in the continental U.S. but providing guidance, intelligence and information to a theater commander via satellite, the AOG produced remarkably tangible results from the

very beginning. A state-of-the-art facility in Battle Creek, staffed by subject matter experts in various disciplines of warfighting and humanitarian missions become a true gem of Battle Creek and the Air National Guard. More than that, the 217th Air Operations Group became a highly-respected asset recognized for its expertise throughout the entire United States Air Force.

## 2010

As the Wing's forward outlook was crystalizing around the C-21 airlift and AOG missions, Battle Creek entered a year of inspection preparation and individual/small-unit deployments, sending out almost 200 members to training and contingency deployments world-wide. It was also a time of preparation for the Wing's projected C-27 Spartan mission, which showed much promise as a brand-new, highly versatile and combat-relevant airframe. The wing remained in this mode throughout most of 2010 and 2011, dividing its concentrations between



*Members of the 110th Airlift Wing after the first C27J Spartan flight out of Battle Creek Air National Guard Base Battle Creek, Mich., Oct. 17, 2010. Members flew in the aircraft as part of a demonstration of the C27J Spartan.*



*Servicemembers from the 110th Airlift Wing, prepare for their second Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE) in preparation for an Operational Ready Inspection (ORI). The guardsmen traveled to the Combat Readiness and Training Center at Volk Field, Wis.*



*U.S. Air Force Maj. James Shay, 110th Medical Group, Bioenvironmental Engineering, briefs firefighters and hazmat members on a simulated chemical spill at the 110th Airlift Wing, Battle Creek Air National Guard Base. Shay participated in the Vigilant Guard exercise that provided a realistic training environment where National Guard units work with local civilian emergency responders in responding to disaster scenarios.*

preparation for this new mission and planning, training and preparing for its first ORI under Air Mobility Command (AMC).

### 2011

The Operational Readiness Inspection was held in October 2011 at Volk Field, Wisconsin. There were many excellent individual performances which resulted in an overall rating of “satisfactory;” a very encouraging progress report for the Wing’s ongoing transition to AMC missions.

### **AOG Excels in Global C2 Support**

Members of the AOG were again called upon repeatedly to provide support to USAFE, AFRICOM and other commands. Members of the AOG engaged with dedicated, direct involvement in the planning and execution of Operation New Dawn in Iraq and Operation Odyssey Dawn, the campaign to depose the regime of Libyan dictator Muammar Gadhafi. In the two years since officially standing up, the AOG’s statistics spoke for themselves. Officially, the group provided support for seven unified combatant commanders and on average deployed 178 members a year for a total of over 12,000 days of support.



*Colonel Rodger Seidel, 110th Airlift Wing Commander, Battle Creek Air National Guard Base, Twila Gonzales, Director, Defense Logistics Agency Services, and Jeffrey Curtis, Executive Director Material Policy, Defense Logistics Agency, take part in a ribbon cutting ceremony for a new DLA Disposition Services Simulation Laboratory at the 110th Airlift Wing, Battle Creek Air National Guard Base. This lab allows DLA Disposition Services to test ideas before implementation. The facility primarily serves as an incubator for logistics concepts destined for the field.*



# *An Era of Opportunity*

**2** 012

## **MQ-9 Mission Emerges**

Presidential Budget PB13, released in February 2012, brought news that the Air Force would divest itself of the C-27 Spartan completely. This announcement sent shockwaves through the 110th Airlift Wing as the realization that the aircraft projected to bear the Wing's new identity had suddenly disappeared from the Department of Defense's long-term plan.

The good news of PB13 was that instead of the C-27, the 110th Airlift Wing had been slated to receive the MQ-9 Reaper. A remotely-piloted aircraft, the MQ-9 represented the Air Force's commitment to future technology. "The MQ-9 is going to be a total culture change for this base because it is 24/7 ops," said Col. Ron Wilson, 110th Operations Group Commander. "It will be a different environment because people will be flying RPAs. It's a huge thing for people to undertake." The preparations for bringing an MQ-9 operations facility to Battle Creek were projected to take about three to four years. Crewmembers began training for the MQ-9 mission immediately.

June 2012 also marked the retirement of Col. Rodger Seidel, who had presided over the Wing for twelve years. Col. Ron Wilson succeeded Seidel as Wing Commander and assumed the task of shepherding the Wing into new territory toward the MQ-9 mission.

Brig. Gen. Ronald W. Wilson, Commander, 110th Attack Wing, 2012–2015:

Brigadier General Ronald W. Wilson is currently the Director of the Joint Staff for the Michigan National Guard, based at the Joint Forces Headquarters in Lansing. As Director of the Joint Staff, he oversees the coordination and integration of Army and Air Force forces in supporting Michigan's role in protecting the homeland. He also assists the Michigan Air National Guard Commander in the administration of units located at Selfridge ANG Base, Battle Creek Air National Guard Base and the Combat Readiness Training Center in Alpena, Michigan.



General Wilson received his commission as a second lieutenant in 1983 through the University of Wisconsin-Superior Reserve Officer Training Corps program. He served eight years on active duty primarily as an A-10 pilot before joining the Michigan Air National Guard. He has served in numerous assignments in flying and operations, as well as command positions from the squadron through wing level. General Wilson is a command pilot with more than 4,000 hours in the A-10. General Wilson has deployed in support of numerous operations including Operations Southern Watch, Allied Force, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Prior to assuming his current position, General Wilson was Commander, 110th Attack Wing, Battle Creek Air National Guard Base, Michigan from 2012 to 2015.

### 2013

On June 15, 2013, the 110th Airlift Wing flew its last mission with the C-21 Learjet, effectively ending its tenure as an installation that supported a traditional military airframe. The base's long and storied flying career reached back to 1947 when it was assigned the P-51 Mustang. Throughout its history, the Wing also operated the F-86F Sabre, the F-89A Scorpion, the RB-57A Canberra, the O-2A Skymaster, the OA-37B Dragonfly, and the A-10 Thunderbolt. "This was a bitter sweet moment for us," said Col. Ron Wilson, who piloted the ceremonial flight. "It is important for us to turn the page in our history and move on to the next step."

The departure of the C-21 marked the beginning of a new era and a new vision for the Wing. Now focusing on cutting-edge technology used across the entire Air Force, the 110th would be responsible for conducting surveillance, reconnaissance, and irregular warfare operations in support of combat objectives without risking the lives of military pilots.



*The 110th Attack Wing holds a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house in celebration of their new MQ-9, Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) mission. The event was attended by a host of elected officials, distinguished visitors and local media.*

### 2014

The 110th Operations Group officially stood up its MQ-9 Reaper organization on October 1, 2013. However, with the specialized operations facility still in development, this meant that members of the 110th Operations Group would travel to other bases with active MQ-9 missions to train and participate in the mission. The operations tempo for these crew members remained steady throughout 2014 as they sought to navigate the learning curve that came with a new mission in which the aircraft they supported were physically located thousands of miles from their control stations.



*The 110th Attack Wing Operations Group receives its first MQ-9 Ground Control Station Friday, August 29, 2016 at the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base, Mich.*



*Members of the 217th Air Operations Group conduct command and control exercises during Northern Strike 2014 at the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base. The three-week event included twenty-four units from 12 states and two Coalition partners and took place primarily at Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center and Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center.*



*Michigan Governor Rick Snyder visits the 110th Attack Wing, Battle Creek Air National Guard Base, Mich., Saturday, December 13, 2014. Gov. Snyder recognized members of the 110th Attack Wing in an awards ceremony and listened as Wing Commander Col. Ronald Wilson highlighted the the Wing's achievements since BRAC 2005.*

Meanwhile, great things were happening elsewhere on base, as the 110th continued to invest its future into new, technologically-innovative growth missions. The AOG continued its exemplary record, participating in Planning Conference African Lion, Presidential reach back support, exercises Virtual Flag 14-2, Northern Strike 14, and Objective Focus 14.

### **Cyber Range**

March 2014 marked a major milestone for the continuation of the 110th Attack Wing as a training ground for cyber professionals with the introduction of the new Michigan Cyber Range connection at the 110th Communications Flight. The connection joined the Michigan National Guard with others affiliated to the Michigan Cyber Range to become the first unclassified cyber training facility located on a military installation in the country.

In December 2014, Battle Creek Air National Guard Base was visited by Governor Rick Snyder during the annual Wing awards ceremony and town hall meeting. Snyder made brief remarks to the assembly, then announced that the unit would be known as the 110th Attack Wing under the new MQ-9 mission.

### **2015**

The unprecedented growth of premier mission capability for the 110th Attack Wing continued in 2015. After a decade of challenging mission realignment, the 110th fully realized its transition from an era of change to an era of opportunity. To test the Wing's future readiness, an Air Combat Command Unit Effectiveness Inspection/Capstone was held in October, 2015. The Wing performed beyond expectations with zero critical findings and 18 "strength" areas identified by ACC inspectors. The message was sent loud and clear: Battle Creek Air National Guard Base was prepared to excel in an era with more growth potential than any other in the 110th Attack Wing's history.

### **New Leadership**

Led by Colonel Ron Wilson since June 2012, the 110th welcomed a new Wing Commander in Colonel Bryan Teff on December 5, 2015. An announcement shortly afterward added "cyber defense squadron" to the 110th's portfolio of assets. The 272nd Cyber Operations Squadron brought 71 new jobs to the installation, providing the backbone to a robust cyber defense team that counters threats using methods and capability to survey, secure and protect DoD networks.



*Col. Bryan Teff assumes command of the 110th Attack Wing, Battle Creek Air National Guard Base, Mich., Saturday, December 5, 2015 in the hangar of the Wing. Teff will be taking over the role of commander from Col. Ronald Wilson who had been the wing commander for three years.*

**Col. Bryan J. Teff, Commander, 110th Attack Wing, 2015-Current:**

Colonel Bryan J. Teff is the Commander of the 110th Attack Wing, W.K. Kellogg Air National Guard Base, Battle Creek, Michigan. Col. Teff earned his commission at the United States Air Force Academy along with a Bachelor of Science degree in Operations Research. Following pilot training, his first assignment was at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi, as a T-38 instructor pilot. Col. Teff was a Distinguished Graduate

from pilot instructor training, Randolph AFB, Texas. Col. Teff received an A-10 assignment in 1994 and was a Distinguished Graduate from Fighter Fundamentals. After serving in various A-10 pilot and leadership roles, Col. Teff was assigned as the Chief of Combat Operations and the 110th Air Operations Squadron Commander at Battle Creek Air National Guard Base, Michigan. Col. Teff was a distinguished graduate from the AOC formal qualification course. In January 2011, Col. Teff was assigned to the Alpena CRTC where he served as the base commander until March 2014. In April 2014, Col. Teff was assigned to the 127th Wing, Selfridge ANGB as the Mission Support Group Commander. In April 2015, Col. Teff was assigned to the 110th Attack Wing as the Vice Wing Commander. He assumed command of the 110th Attack Wing in December, 2015.

Col. Teff is a command pilot with 3,800 hours of flight time in the T-38, A-10A, and A-10C aircraft. He has deployed seven times, encompassing over 100 A-10A and A-10C combat missions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

**2016**

In 2016, the 110th finalized its Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) operations building, solidifying the Wing's transition to the MQ-9 Reaper flying mission, which began in 2013. Senator Gary Peters, Congressman Fred Upton and other state and local dignitaries attended a grand ribbon-cutting for the \$6.4 million, 24,759 square-foot facility on September 17, 2016. From this location in Southwest Michigan, the 110th Operations Group can control the MQ-9 Reaper in airspace over contested theaters anywhere in the world. Already, the Group has established a reputation of exemplary Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) support with over 1,500 sorties and 4,110 hours flown in Fiscal Year '16 alone.



2016 also saw the 217th Air Operations Group continue to leverage Battle Creek ANGB's multi-domain capability through excellence in the planning, direction and assessment of operational-level command & control for two Combatant Commands. The AOG now orchestrates integrated air, space and cyberspace assets for an area of responsibility comprised of 34 million square miles and 105 countries in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Broad support was also provided through the 110th Attack Wing's Agile Combat Support function (medical, services, and engineering assets) which lent relief during the Flint Water Crisis, humanitarian partnership missions in Liberia, as well as domestic assistance operations in California and Kentucky.

### **Distinguished Visitors**

In September 2016, the 110th Attack Wing was honored to welcome Latvian President Raimonds Vejonis, who acknowledged the Wing's longstanding support of the Michigan National Guard's State Partnership Program with Latvia, most recently evidenced by the 110th's involvement with Exercise Northern Strike at Grayling Range and Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center. The highly-successful State Partnership Program was established by the Department of Defense in 1993 to promote stability, enhance military capability, improve interoperability and enhance the principles of responsible governance among struggling Baltic nations and assigned program management to the National Guard Bureau. Since then, the program has expanded across the globe. In 2009, Liberia became Michigan's second state partner.

In 2016, the 110th also hosted visits by Michigan Lt. Gov. Brian Calley, Senator Gary Peters and Mr. "Snake" Clark, a pioneer of the U.S. Air Force's RPA program. Community engagements were also held between the Wing and the Battle Creek Chamber of Commerce, the Gull Lake Rotary Club, the Marshall Rotary Club, Central Michigan University, as well as Michigan State



*The 110th Attack Wing proudly hosted the President of the Republic of Latvia, Raimonds Vejonis, for a special tour of Wing facilities. Joined by his wife, Iveta, the President's two-hour visit included a briefing at the 217th Air Operations Group which highlighted the 110th Attack Wing's mission capabilities.*

Police and Battle Creek Police Departments. For all of these reasons, 2016 will be remembered as a time when the 110th Attack Wing embraced its future as a multi-domain, multi-mission, technology-rich entity, while simultaneously adding value to partnerships with community, state, national and global stakeholders.

What lies ahead for the 110th Attack Wing? If the first months of 2017 are any indication, the 110th is here to stay. With a set of relevant, rapidly-growing missions that are sure to carry the Wing decades into the future, the way ahead looks as bright as it ever has. As the last two decades have proven, no matter the challenge, the professional excellence of the people of the 110th has propelled the Wing toward the highest standard of service to our nation, state and community. It is for this reason that regardless of what the future may hold, the 110th Attack Wing will always be defined by its people.



## *Operational Aircraft 1947-2017*

<i>P-51 Mustang</i> .....	1947-1953
<i>F-86 Sabre</i> .....	1954-1955
<i>F-89 Scorpion</i> .....	1955-1957
<i>RB-57 Canberra</i> .....	1958-1970
<i>O-2 Skymaster</i> .....	1971-1980
<i>OA-37 Dragonfly</i> .....	1981-1990
<i>A-10 Thunderbolt II</i> .....	1990-2006
<i>A-10C Thunderbolt II</i> .....	2006-2008
<i>C-21 Learjet</i> .....	2008-2013
<i>MQ-9 Reaper</i> .....	2013



## *Commanders* *1947-2017*

Captain Ross M. Norwood .....	1947-1953
Major Robert W. Flagg .....	1953-1956
Major Percy Lewis .....	1956-1956
Colonel Howard C. Strand.....	1956-1965
Colonel Richard A. Rann.....	1965-1974
Colonel Howard C. Strand .....	1974-1981
Colonel Leroy R. Crane.....	1981-1984
Colonel Ronald L. Seely.....	1984-1990
Colonel John L. Bradley, III.....	1990-1995
Colonel Ronald G. Moore.....	1995-1997
Colonel Kencil J. Heaton .....	1997-2001
Colonel Rodger F. Seidel .....	2001-2012
Colonel Ronald W. Wilson.....	2012-2015
Colonel Bryan J. Teff .....	2015

***OUR VISION STATEMENT:***

ELITE AIRMEN PROVIDING PREMIER  
MISSION CAPABILITY

***OUR MISSION STATEMENT:***

PREEMINENT MULTI-DOMAIN ANG WING  
PROVIDING MQ-9, CYBER DEFENSE,  
AGILE COMBAT SUPPORT, COMMAND &  
CONTROL, AND PLANS FOR COMBATANT  
COMMANDERS AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES



*“Aerial warfare continues to evolve. Our great RPA Airmen are leading that change. They are in the fight every day.”*

–General Mark A. Welsh III,  
20th Air Force Chief of Staff

