

SELFRIDGE FIELD, BUILDING NO. 562
(Alert Crew Facility Building)
(Old Readiness Crew Building)
Ammo Rd., northeast of Taxiway A
Mt. Clemens vicinity
Macomb County
Michigan

HAER No. MI-116-CC

HAER
MICH
50-MTCLE.V
ICC-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Great Lakes Systems Office
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, NE 68102-2571

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SELFRIDGE FIELD HAER No. MI-116-CC
BUILDING #562 (ALERT CREW FACILITY BUILDING)
(Old Readiness Crew)
Bldg.

I. INTRODUCTION

Location: Ammo Road, northeast of Taxiway A
Selfridge Air National Guard Base
Mt. Clemens, Mich., Macomb Co., MI

Quad/UTM: U.S.G.S. New Haven Quadrangle, Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
17.349680.4720600

Date of Construction: 1962

Present Owner: Air National Guard
3500 Fetchet Avenue
Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland 20762

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: Building 562 housed shifts of Air Defense Command
(ADC) Alert Forces support crews who scrambled
quickly to prepare and service aircraft for operation
during an alert. It is directly related to the Selfridge
Cold War defense capabilities and is one of the best
examples on base of national Cold War military
preparedness.

Historian: William Rutter, Midwest Environmental Consultants,
May, 1996

II. HISTORY

Building #562, "Old Readiness Crew" (Alert Crew Facility Building) was built in 1962 from plans provided by the Department of the Air Force Air Defense Command Installations Department.¹ It served as a dormitory for crews supporting alert fighter aircraft and their pilots who occupied separate crew quarters in the hangar line (Building #566) immediately west of the barracks. The complex was designed to allow service crews and pilots to respond quickly during a scramble, and to permit the aircraft to be airborne as quickly as possible. Typically, alert crews served alternating three and four day tours in the facility.² These ADC hangars and barracks were contained within a secured area enclosed by barbed wire fence that extended on to and across the roof of Building #562. Notations on the original plans on file at the Civil Engineers Office on base indicate that a bay was added to the south end of the original building and the fenestration was altered during construction.

¹ Original construction plans on file, Selfridge Base Museum and Base Civil Engineers Office

² Gordie, Clifford B., SAC, A Portrait, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1965.

III. DESCRIPTION

This rectangular plan frame 25'9 3/4" by 93' 3 1/2" building is a stark functional side-gabled single story structure originally clad in beveled siding, later replaced by asbestos shingle and now sheathed in aluminum siding. It is shielded by an asphalt shingle roof and rests on a concrete block foundation.

The fenestration of the primary (west) elevation defines nine generally symmetrical bays consisting of two steel panel doors and seven wood sash windows. Southward from the northwest corner of the building, three symmetrically positioned window voids extend to and abut a pedestrian entry door. Two window voids separate this door from an identical one to the south, which occurs north of two window voids approaching the southwest corner of the building. The south elevation is two bays wide, defined by two window voids. The east (rear) elevation is ten bays defined by a single sash window near the south corner and three groups of three sash windows symmetrically positioned across the remainder of the elevation. The north elevation is defined by three symmetrically positioned window voids. The original fenestration was more strictly symmetrical and included a single pedestrian entry on the west elevation, but subsequent renovations, most notably the addition of the south end bay, altered this pattern. All windows but those on the west elevation that

faced the security-controlled perimeter leading to the alert hangars were covered with welded steel grating, while barbed wire ran from the woven wire fenced perimeter up onto and across the roof of the building.

The interior of the building features a central hall linking a combination lounge (10 foot 2 inch x 36 feet) and mess area (26 feet 6 inch) at the north end of the building to living quarters. South of the mess area along the hall were a 10 x 19 foot latrine and a 10 x 19 foot bedroom. South of the lounge were three bedrooms, two of 10 x 10 feet and the other, converted into a store room, of 10 x 13 feet. At the time it was constructed the south elevation was extended by a 20 foot bay of the end of the center hall to permit the construction of two additional 13 x 20 foot bedrooms. In total the building plan incorporated a central hallway linking six bedrooms, an entry vestibule, a latrine and combined kitchen/mess area/lounge at the north end of the building. Although the original floor plan remains unchanged today the building was renovated to include drop ceilings, new electrical and toilet fixtures, carpeting in the hallway and lounge and sheet rock walls sheathed with wall paper in public areas and wainscot paneling beneath plain wallpaper in the crew bedrooms.

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Anonymous, Brief History of Selfridge Air Force Base, 1917-1960, unpublished ms., Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 1960.

_____, Guide and Directory, Selfridge Air Force Base, Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, 1960.

Gordie, Clifford B., SAC, A Portrait, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1965.

Narducci, Henry M., SAC and the Alert Program: A Brief History, Office of the Historian, Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, 1988.

Nigro, Louis, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, An Unofficial History, unpublished ms., Public Information Office, Selfridge ANG Base, Michigan, 1977.

B. PLANS

Copy of construction drawing, dated January 10, 1962, Department of the Air Force Air Defense Command Installations for Selfridge, in possession of Selfridge Base Museum, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. Architectural Plan and Schedules, SLF 140-056, Sheet 2 of 7.

Copy of construction drawing, dated January 10, 1962, Department of the Air Force Air Defense Command Installations for Selfridge, in possession of Selfridge Base Museum, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. Elevations and Sections, SLF 140-056 Sheet 3 of 7.

C. INTERVIEWS

Lt. Colonel Donald O'Dell (Ret.), former base Public Relations Officer, December 5, 1995, Mt. Clemens, Michigan

Selfridge Field ,
Building #562,
(Alert Crew Facility)
HAER No. MI-116-CC
Page 6

Eric Reeve, Selfridge Environmental Management, October 12, 1995.

Colonel Robert Stone (Ret.), Curator, Selfridge Base Museum, October
13, 1995.