

Selfridge Field,  
Building #1424, 1425, (Aircraft Maintenance Dock and Hangar) (Old Nose Dock)  
South of Carswell Street, West of Castle Avenue  
~~Harrison Township~~, Mt. Clemens Vicinity  
Macomb County  
Michigan

HAER No. MI-116-RR

HAER  
MICH  
50-MTCLE.V  
IRR-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
GREAT LAKES SYSTEMS OFFICE  
1709 JACKSON STREET  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-2571

HAER  
MICH  
50-MTCL.E.V,  
IRR

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

SELFRIDGE FIELD  
BUILDINGS #1424 and #1425  
(AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE DOCK AND HANGAR)  
(Old Nose Dock)

HAER No. MI-116-RR

I. INTRODUCTION

Location: South of North Perimeter Road, west of West Ramp  
Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mt. Clemens vicinity,  
Macomb County, Michigan

Quad/UTM U.S.G.S. Mt. Clemens East Quadrangle, Universal  
Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
17.348450.4720140 (#1424)  
17.348600.4720140 (#1425)

Date of Construction: 1960 (modified 1984, 1990)

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

Present Use: Vacant/Storage

Significance: The SAC hangars retain their essential massing and define the taxiway leading to the West Ramp, occupied by the former SAC complex, a distinct self-contained district at Selfridge that was isolated from the rest of the base for functional and security reasons. As key components of the complex, the functional core around which the SAC operations were organized, these utilitarian buildings were directly involved in Cold War military operations and readiness at Selfridge. But the significance of the buildings is best defined as contributing structures to the entire SAC installation. As a regional SAC refueling center, responsible for protection of the Great Lakes region, the SAC district was of exceptional importance in national defense strategy. These hangars served an integral role in the SAC tanker refueling capability.

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

## II. HISTORY

These structures were erected in 1960 from plans provided by the U.S. Air Force at a cost of \$265,021 each.<sup>1</sup> They were designed to service SAC aircraft, which included KC-97 tankers, and were an integral part of Selfridge's Cold War defense mission. During the Cold War, the 4045th and 500th Air Refueling Wings had the mission of constant readiness to respond to an alert and refuel SAC bombers on during alert and on scheduled missions. SAC ceased operations at Selfridge in 1965. The building was transferred to the Navy in 1966 and used for flight and maintenance operations for Naval Air Facility-Detroit.<sup>2</sup> In 1984 the first and second floor areas of Buildings #1424 and #1425 were renovated under plans prepared for the Navy, Northern Division and in 1990 the buildings was converted by the Navy to a Training Facility/Combat Vehicle Maintenance facility.<sup>3</sup>

## III. DESCRIPTION

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<sup>1</sup>Thomason and Associates, Intensive Survey of Historic Properties Naval Air Facility Detroit, Appendix A

<sup>2</sup>Nigro, Louis, Selfridge Air National Guard Base. An Unofficial History, 1977, p. 15

<sup>3</sup>Original construction plans on file, Selfridge Base Museum and Base Civil Engineers Office

Buildings #1424 and #1425 are massive rectangular plan, 154 feet 2 inch wide by 109 feet 10 inch deep, steel framed hangar structures. Their character is defined by the massive entry void that defines the principal elevation. The facade is composed entirely of corrugated metal panels and suspended entry doors, while the rear and side elevations present concrete block walls surmounted by corrugated metal sheets and opaque fiberglass panels that provide interior lighting. These panels rise to the roof eaves. The hangar bay of these buildings is shielded by a shallow-pitched gabled metal panel roof while the rear bays are shielded by a shed roofed corrugated steel panel roof. They are built on the same plan as adjacent hangars #1426, 1427, 1428 and 1429.

The tarmac entry/principal (east) elevation consists entirely of a set of 12 telescoping track-suspended entry doors that retract to admit aircraft. The facade is extended the width of a telescoping door bay on each side of the entry void by a shed roofed corrugated metal enclosed door pocket that suspends and incorporates the hangar doors when opened. The hangar doors and gable above are configured to permit the tails of large aircraft to extend through the closed doors beyond the building plane during servicing. Shed roof-covered frame extensions on each side of the entry void incorporate the

telescoping doors when fully opened. The rear elevation of #1424 displays a gabled profile above a shed roofed rear unit. Its piercing pattern defines ten bays consisting of three symmetrically placed overhead steel vehicular entry doors flanked by sets of two steel frame windows and equidistantly positioned steel pedestrian doors. The north and south elevations display functional fenestration consisting of two small steel frame windows in the concrete block curtain walls including single garage bays that have been filled in, with an off-center pedestrian entry in the north elevation. The rear elevation of #1425 displays a hipped profile created by a shed roof. Its piercing pattern defines ten bays consisting of three symmetrically placed overhead steel vehicular entry doors flanked by set of two steel frame windows and equidistantly positioned steel pedestrian doors. The north and south elevations display functional fenestration consisting of two small steel frame windows in the concrete block curtain walls that include former garage bay voids, with an off-center pedestrian entry in the south elevation that is shielded by a recent vintage steel gabled porch.

The interior plan of #1424 is composed almost entirely of open space aircraft maintenance bays under the steel truss gabled roof system defining the eastern bays of the structure. Large cargo cranes and hoists, 6000 pound capacity,

extend from the north and south trusses, used to service engines on the aircraft. A rank of offices occurs along the northern wall of the hangar, while the shed roofed western unit is occupied by offices, mechanical support, storerooms and support facilities. During renovations completed by the Navy between 1984 and 1990 the interior offices were converted to use as carpentry shops, tool room, operations and the hangar deck converted into nine vehicular work bays and heavy equipment work bays partitioned by masonry walls. Offices and storerooms were constructed on the second floor, extending outward from the original masonry walled rooms that backed up to the northern and western elevations. These contain frame partition walls usually sheathed in paneling or wallboard, drop ceilings and tile or carpeted floors. Above the false ceiling in the southwest corner of this building a painted logo occupies a large area beneath the original building ceiling. It is a black circle containing a triangle in the center of which is inscribed "CSC 7777 or 7770", the units stationed in this hangar. The triangle's left leg is a blue rectangle enclosing the words "Seven Hi" beneath the word "Suspected", a right leg composed of a red rectangle enclosing "Red Skin" beneath "Actual" and a base yellow rectangle "Broken Arrow" beneath "Nuclear." These mission codes deal directly with the Cold War threat America faced and provide evidence of the significance of this building and Selfridge's role in the Cold War.

The interior plan of #1425 under the gabled western bays is entirely open space under a steel truss roof system. Large cargo cranes and hoists, 6000 pound capacity, extend from the north and south trusses, used to service engines on the aircraft. The original concrete block peripheral offices occur on the south and east elevations while a steel mesh cage storage locker extends from the north wall. These contain frame partition walls usually sheathed in paneling or wallboard, drop ceilings and tile of carpeted floors. A prefabricated steel office/storage room system has been moved into the hangar and backs up to the south elevation.

#### 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.

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 July 13, 1984, Karl R. Rohrer Associates, Akron, in possession of Selfridge Base Museum, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. Repair Heater System in Hangar Buildings, First Floor Removal Plan Building #1424, Drawing No. 2078821, Sheet 2 of 14.

Copy of construction drawing, dated July 13, 1984, Karl R. Rohrer Associates, Akron, in possession of Selfridge Base Museum, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. Repair Heater System in Hangar Buildings, First Floor Removal Plan Building #1425, Drawing No. 2078822, Sheet 3 of 14.

Copy of construction drawing, dated January 11, 1990, SSOE, Inc., Flint, in possession of Selfridge Base Museum, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. Training Building Combat Vehicle Maintenance Facility Conversion, Elevations (#1424), Spec. No. 04-87-0325, Drawing A6.

C. INTERVIEWS

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

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