



THE EN GARDE



174TH ATKW, NYANG, HANCOCK FIELD ANGB, SYRACUSE, N.Y.



Sentry South 26-2

250 Years: A Reflection on
American History

Chief Williams Retires
after 28 Years of Service



VOL. NO.01 | ISSUE NO.02 | SPRING 2026

[HTTPS://WWW.174ATTACKWING.ANG.AF.MIL](https://www.174attackwing.ang.af.mil)

The En Garde



The En Garde is an official publication of the New York Air National Guard's 174th Attack Wing. Headquartered at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, NY, the wing's primary mission is to operate the MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft.

The En Garde is published quarterly by the 174th Attack Wing's Public Affairs Office. Views which appear in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Air Force or the National Guard Bureau. To contribute to the En Garde contact the PA office by phone at (315) 233-2651 or email at 174.ATKW.PAO.Org@us.af.mil.

174th Attack Wing Public Affairs Staff

Lt. Col. James Hockey
Chief of Public Affairs

1st Lt. Elizabeth Green
Public Affairs Officer

Master Sgt. Tabitha Hurst
Public Affairs Superintendent

Tech. Sgt. Duane Morgan
Public Affairs Specialist

Tech. Sgt. Alexander Rector
Public Affairs Specialist

Staff Sgt. Dylan McCrink
Public Affairs Specialist

Senior Airman Liam Eveleigh
Public Affairs Specialist

Front Cover Photo:

U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Jean Castilla-Martinez, a crew chief, installs a panel on an MQ-9 Reaper aircraft after completing post flight checks at exercise Sentry South 26-2, Gulfport, Mississippi, Feb. 19, 2026. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Dylan McCrink)

Back Cover Photo:

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Dylan McCrink, a public affairs specialist, boards a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft en route to exercise Sentry South 26-2 at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, Syracuse, N.Y., Feb. 17, 2026. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Alexander Rector)



WWW.174ATTACKWING.ANG.AF.MIL

Table of Contents

03

Commander's Comments

Col. Batick reflects on the National Guard's enduring role in defending the nation ahead of America's upcoming 250th anniversary celebration.

04

Sentry South 26-2

Airmen from the 174th Attack Wing supported MQ-9 operations during Exercise Sentry South 26-2 in Gulfport, Miss..

08

La Rock n' Roll-Out

Command Chief Master Sgt. Corey LaRock encourages Airmen of the 174th Attack Wing to strengthen warfighting, readiness, and civil support through increased engagement and leadership.

10

250 Years: A Reflection on American History

Tech. Sgt. Tyler Holcomb reflects on 250 years of American history and sacrifice through the enduring symbolism of the U.S. flag and its representation of national ideals.

14

Chaplain's Message

The 174th Attack Wing chapel team highlights the wing's diverse faith demographics and reaffirms its commitment to supporting the spiritual needs of all Airmen.

17

Chief Williams Retires after 28 Years of Service

Command Chief Master Sgt. Sonja Williams retires after 28 years of service at the 174th Attack Wing, passing responsibility to Command Chief Master Sgt. Corey LaRock.



174th Attack Wing Commander's Comments

174th Attack Wing,

Welcome to June Drill 2026. I ask that you take a few minutes to consider that in one month we will celebrate the 250th Anniversary of our country.

This year's anniversary is a remarkable milestone in our nation's history. Just 250 years ago, the colonists of a new nation boldly asserted their right to self-governance and freedom from the rule of a monarchy. Let's spend this month reflecting on the nation's journey, celebrating our achievements, and acknowledging the challenges we have faced along the way.

The history of the United States is a story of vision and perseverance. From the revolutionary ideals of the Declaration of Independence to the expansion of democracy through the Constitution and amendments that secured the rights of our citizens, the nation has continually sought to live up to its founding principles. Along the way we have faced struggles, wars, social upheavals, and moments of profound consequence that have tested the nation. Yet each challenge has also provided opportunities for growth, reform, and a renewed commitment to the American promise.

Since before the American Revolution, the National Guard has defended this Nation and its citizens. And throughout our 250 years, we have evolved alongside the Nation to become more effective now than any time in history. Today the 174th Attack Wing is at the tip of the spear of the defense of our Nation and our ideals. We are made up of patriots from very different backgrounds and with our own strengths and weaknesses. When we fail, we work to remedy our mistakes, guided by our core values, and become stronger in time.

Let's take this month to honor both history and service. Across the nation, Americans will celebrate with parades, concerts, historical reenactments, and get-togethers that bring the story of the United States to life. I hope you do as well. But do so knowing that you are directly responsible for the freedoms of the Nation we are celebrating. Your dedication and determination will be written about by historians as another chapter in the book of America.

I'm immensely proud of this Wing and the work we do. Thank you for your service and commitment to this State and to this great Nation.

Col. Brett Batick
174th Attack Wing Commander

174th Attack Wing Achieves MQ-9 Milestones During Sentry South 26-2

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Dylan McCrink

GULFPORT, Miss. – The 174th Attack Wing, New York Air National Guard, deployed 36 Airmen to the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss., to participate in exercise Sentry South 26-2.

Sentry South 26-2 is a large-force employment exercise focused on major combat operations and joint maritime operations in a contested or degraded operational environment. Sentry South 26-2 applies joint and combined warfighting doctrine against realistic, robust, integrated enemy threat systems, all while operating under safe, controlled conditions.

Maintainers from the 174th Attack Wing played a critical role in the effective employment of the MQ-9 Reaper aircraft throughout the three-week exercise. Although the aircraft used during the event belonged to the 147th Attack Wing out of Houston, Texas, the original plan called for a Syracuse-based aircraft. Due to adverse weather in New York, planners quickly coordinated with the Texas unit to ensure mission continuity.



Once on station, the 174th's maintenance team serviced the Texas tail with the precision and technical excellence the Syracuse group is known for, ensuring the aircraft remained mission-ready throughout the exercise.

This year's exercise marked the first time an MQ-9 operating at Sentry South conducted flight operations using 100 percent satellite communications without C-band line-of-sight backup. Previous MQ-9 operations in Gulfport required a local pilot and sensor operator operating via C-band from the CRTC before handing control to crews flying remotely from their home station.

Through coordination between the 188th Wing, CRTC airfield management, local air traffic control and the Gulfport-Biloxi Regional Airport Authority, the aircraft was cleared to launch and recover while being flown entirely from Arkansas. The operation proceeded seamlessly, demonstrating the viability of fully remote MQ-9 operations within the Gulfport airspace.

Before the MQ-9's first sortie, the 174th munitions team assembled the aircraft's full combat payload while simultaneously training other Air National Guard units in munitions building procedures. Units receiving training included munitions specialists from the CRTC, Mississippi Air National Guard and the 137th Special Operations Wing, Oklahoma Air National Guard.

“I couldn’t be more proud of our munitions team. To build a full combat payload while also training other units at the same time really shows the level of expertise and teamwork we have.”



Staff Sgt. Morgan Piazza
munitions specialist, 174th Attack Wing

The exercise also marked the first time an MQ-9 operating during Sentry South launched with Hellfire missiles loaded on the aircraft. The milestone was made possible through coordination between the 174th maintenance team, CRTC airfield management and Master Sgt. Michael Anderson, the munitions accountability systems officer assigned to CRTC, ensuring all safety, accountability and airfield requirements were met to safely arm and launch the aircraft with live missiles.

GBU-38 Joint Direct Attack Munitions were released over Rattlesnake Range at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center in Hattiesburg, Miss., while AGM-114 Hellfire laser-guided missiles were launched at inflatable maritime targets in the Gulf of America in coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard.

All munitions employed during the exercise resulted in successful target engagements.

Pilots and sensor operators assigned to the 188th Wing, Arkansas Air National Guard, executed the live-fire events, refining their ability to employ precision-guided munitions in a nontraditional environment, including maritime strike scenarios.

The event resulted in two pilots and two sensor operators from the 188th Wing conducting their first-ever Hellfire engagements. The shots, executed in a maritime environment, present unique challenges compared to traditional land-based targeting.

Laser targeting over water is significantly more difficult due to surface movement and environmental factors, making maritime engagements more complex than static land targets. The shots also marked the first Hellfire employment for the 188th Wing under its continental U.S. training allocation.





Maj. Nick Barron
lead planner and liaison officer
188th Wing

“Shooting live weapons presents our crews with an element of exposure usually not attainable in a training environment. This, in turn, gives them the confidence and experience to employ in real-world scenarios.”

MQ-9 operations generated 56.7 flight hours across nine sorties. Crews employed four live Hellfire missiles and eight inert GBU-38 munitions while also conducting 50 simulated Hellfire and 17 simulated GBU engagements.

A total of 12 pilots, 11 sensor operators and six intelligence analysts supported MQ-9 operations from the 188th Wing in Arkansas, while additional liaison officers, communications specialists and weather personnel supported operations from Gulfport.

Mission taskings included close air support, counter-unmanned aircraft operations, combat search and rescue support and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions, showcasing the MQ-9's flexibility across multiple mission sets.

For the 174th maintenance team, the live Hellfire mission also marked a significant milestone. The unit had not conducted a live Hellfire load in several years, providing Airmen the opportunity to refresh and validate critical skill sets associated with a payload not routinely employed in recent operations.

Beyond combat employment, the 174th Attack Wing achieved several logistical milestones during Sentry South 26-2. Most notably, Airmen successfully conducted a static load of deployment materials, including a truck and trailer connex, onto a C-130J Super Hercules aircraft. Historically, the wing has deployed equipment using the C-17 Globemaster III.



Demonstrating compatibility with the C-130 expands the wing's deployment flexibility and enhances its ability to rapidly mobilize using multiple airlift platforms, increasing responsiveness in dynamic operational environments.

In addition to flight operations and maintenance duties, 174th Airmen participated in mass casualty training alongside Air and Army National Guard medical units. Their involvement enhanced medical response proficiency across participating units and reinforced the importance of joint integration in high-stress contingency scenarios.

“Sentry South has been a prime example of the 174th Maintenance Group's unwavering readiness to deploy and deliver mission-capable aircraft and equipment worldwide,” said 1st Lt. Tyler Heggelke, director of operations of the 174th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 174th Attack Wing, New York Air National Guard. “Our Airmen consistently demonstrate flexibility, dedication to their craft, and the ability to overcome challenges, regardless of their difficulty.”

Through joint integration, live-fire execution and expanded deployment capability, Sentry South 26-2 strengthened the 174th Attack Wing's ability to project combat power in complex and contested environments.

JOIN TODAY

THE 174TH ATTACK WING HONOR GUARD



*Honor those who
serve!*

As a member of the Honor Guard your main focus is to provide military funeral honors to Veterans, retirees and active-duty members.

Other community events include:

- Parades
- Flag folding ceremonies
- Retirements
- Change of command ceremonies
- Community patriotic events

BENEFITS OF JOINING

- One Statement for your EPB/OPB
- Technician/DSGs receive one full day of base pay for each day worked
- Each event adds one retirement point to your service record
- The ability to make a positive impact on the Wing and local community
- Uniform, & dry cleaning services provided
- Paid training

(315)-233-2515

174.atkw.base.honor.guard.org@us.af.mil

6001 East Molloy Rd. Syracuse, NY 13211



La Rock n' Roll-Out

To the Men and Women of the 174th Attack Wing,

Not long ago, our Wing Commander shared his vision and foundational priorities for the 174 ATKW: **Warfighting, Readiness, and Civil Support**. As your Command Chief, I want to discuss how we, as the enlisted force and officer corps of this great Wing, bring that vision to life. Achieving these goals requires more than just executing our daily tasks; it requires a holistic approach to everything we do, built on a foundation of connection, trust, and action.

One of the most critical ways we build this foundation is by getting involved. I am calling on each of you to actively participate in our private organizations and professional networks—our **Rising Six, Master/Senior Enlisted, Chiefs, and Company Grade Officer councils**. Furthermore, I challenge you to take the lead in running wing and community events, and to bring your voice to the table for process and local policy improvements.

These aren't just "extra" duties; they are the lifeblood of our culture. Getting involved allows us to connect with members outside of our immediate units and AFSCs. It breaks down silos and builds a community where we actively invest in and empower one another. Here is how your involvement in these councils and events directly drives our Wing Commander's priorities:

Warfighting: Building Resilient Mindsets

The Commander defined Warfighting not just as our ability to fight our nation's wars, but as a mindset rooted in discipline, moral integrity, and resiliency. Service takes a toll on our minds, bodies, and families. When you participate in our councils and wing events, you are actively building the support networks that foster that resiliency. By connecting with your fellow Airmen, sharing experiences, and taking a holistic approach to our overall well-being, you ensure that we have the mental and emotional fortitude to master our craft and adapt to the uncertainties of modern warfare.

Readiness: Fostering a Culture of Retention and Teamwork

Readiness means we are trained, resourced, and prepared to execute. As the Commander noted, this starts with recruiting and retention. Airmen stay in the 174th Attack Wing because they feel they belong to a community of trust and action. By stepping up in the Rising Six or Top III, mentoring peers, and driving local policy improvements, you are directly impacting our readiness. You are removing roadblocks, improving processes, and ensuring your wingmen have the resources and support they need to meet their training and medical requirements. A connected, empowered Wing is a Ready Wing.

Civil Support: Strengthening Our Community Ties

Civil Support is a cornerstone of our identity as Guardsmen. We are the immediate response force for our communities in times of crisis, as demonstrated during the DOCCS mission. However, our connection to the community doesn't just happen during state emergencies—it is forged every day. When we run community events and volunteer our time, we strengthen the bond between the 174th ATKW and the citizens we serve. We reinforce our role as a beacon of hope and demonstrate that our commitment to New York is unwavering.

The Way Forward

Mission-command is alive and well here, but it requires your voice and your leadership. We cannot seamlessly integrate modern combat aviation, command and control, and civil support operations if we operate in isolation. Our new mission statement challenges us to be "Advancing Air Power together." The keyword is **together**. I challenge every Airman to find a way to leave this Wing better than you found it. Join a council. Lead a community event. Bring forward a solution to improve local policy. Let's build the strong culture of accountability, discipline, and community that will ensure the 174th Attack Wing remains the team of choice for decades to come.

Thank you for what you do every day for our state and our nation.

Chief Master Sgt. Corey LaRock
174th Attack Wing Senior Enlisted Leader

A New Chief Joins the Ranks

During the March drill weekend, longtime 174th Attack Wing member Lyle Sharkey was promoted to the rank of chief master sergeant. The milestone marked a significant achievement in his career and made the moment even more memorable as Col. Jason Taylor, Mission Support Group commander and Sharkey's younger cousin, presided over the ceremony.



Two Hundred and Fifty Years: A Reflection on American History

Story by Tech Sgt. Tyler “Struggles” Holcomb, 138th Attack Squadron Historian



Tech. Sgt. Tyler “Struggles” Holcomb, sensor operator & 138th Attack Squadron historian.

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – Once, perhaps twice in a lifetime, the American citizenry is compelled toward a deep collective reflection by a milestone since our nation’s founding. This reflection considers the stated ideals of our founding fathers, the circumstances by which these ideals were tested, the moment in time during which this anniversary occurs. One hundred years after the founding of this nation, the United States was recovering from a bloody civil war that had resulted in the long-awaited freedom of all her people. The bicentennial celebrations saw America as a global superpower vying for the propagation of her ideals in an uncertain nuclear reality. And now, on the eve of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of our nation’s founding, the people of the United States once again prepare to reflect upon the ideals of our nation, consider the sacrifices made in their defense, and determine the manner by which the collective American citizenry will march toward the future to protect and perpetuate these ideals for generations to come.

Perhaps no moment captures the birth of the American spirit that would define subsequent generations than the events of August 1777 on a small frontier outpost in Upstate New York. It was there at Fort Stanwix that a superior British force arrived with cannon and mortar to lay siege to the garrison within. Colonel Peter Gansevoort was faced with two options: surrender and allow the enemy to advance toward their goal of decisively crushing the revolution; or be killed. But what the enemy had not anticipated was the strength of spirit that had set fire to the hearts of the New Yorkers within the fort. On July 4th, 1776, the delegates of the Second Continental Congress declared “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Thus was born from the vast swaths of disconnected and diverse colonists a single citizenry, pledging to each other their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor in defense of a new nation: The United States of America.

At Fort Stanwix, the besieging British soldiers awaited the announcement of surrender, confident in their certain victory. What they saw instead was a banner being raised into the morning light. It was ragged and homespun cut and pieced together that same morning from the soldiers’ white shirts, a blue cloak, and spare red cloth. A symbol of hope, defiance in the face of a common enemy, and a dogged determination that echoed the cornerstone values of the burgeoning young nation. For the first time in history the United States flew her flag in the face of enemy troops. Within weeks the British Army besieging Fort Stanwix was repulsed in the face of extraordinary heroism from New Yorkers who responded to the call of duty from across the state, and the same flag would be present when final victory would be secured in 1783.

In the two hundred and fifty years since the nation's founding, the stars and stripes have been the eternal symbol of the passionate idealism that drives the American citizens to pursue the greater good no matter the personal cost. When the nation was torn apart and plunged into Civil War, nearly 450,000 New Yorkers would carry the flag in battle once more to uphold the sacred bond of union and freedom. Regiments composed of over 1,000 men left home carrying pristine colors in 1861 would return home years later numbering as low as 200, the flag becoming ragged, torn, and bullet-stricken, but still waving proudly. Sergeant William Carney, born into slavery, was shot several times in the legs, arms, chest and head. Struggling back to his men, he pulled his regiment's blood-soaked flag from inside his coat exclaiming "the old flag never touched the ground." Sergeant Carney, like so many millions of other Americans, saw in the flag the very ideals, inalienable rights, and virtues that he held dear, and determined that they were worth fighting for.

Americans and New Yorkers would carry the flag as they charged up San Juan Hill, broke the Hindenburg Line, landed on the beaches of Normandy, and captured the island of Okinawa. It has flown in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Mogadishu, Iraq and Afghanistan. It has flown over expansive airfields and small outposts. It has flown with aircraft, rode inside tanks, and sailed with aircraft carriers and patrol boats. It has been waved by families welcoming home their loved ones, and it has accompanied home those who gave their lives. Every hand that touches the flag adds depth both to the banner itself, and the sacred virtues it represents. It has been the one singular witness to the entirety of our nation's two hundred and fifty years of history. It has come to be the greatest symbol of the United States and the greatest representative of her sacredly held virtues.

George Washington, in his inaugural address, summarized the character of this nation in a manner that rings true centuries later, declaring that the "preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people." The American Flag is the symbol of this great democratic experiment, the shared symbol of identity of a diverse citizenry devoutly committed to the common regard for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In this period of collective reflection and celebration two hundred and fifty years later, may we all take the time to ponder the flag as it waves proudly in the breeze over Hancock Field's headquarters, consider the sacrifices made for the values it represents, and march together in lock step to ensure the security of those value for two hundred and fifty years to come.



174th Empire Central Spark Cell

To develop the network of Airmen innovators across the 174th ATKW. Through training and education of the many available resources, Empire Central Spark Cell will foster a community of innovative thinkers throughout the wing.

We need:

Senior Mentors: Executive-level group that provides strategic advice, advocacy, and mentorship to the Spark Cell.

Innovation Officers: Planning Spark Cell activities, managing Spark Cell operations, promoting and communicating innovative activities across the Wing, and recruiting and responding to member needs.

Squadron Innovation Leads: Each Squadron within the 174th will have the opportunity to be represented within Empire Central Spark Cell. Any rank is welcomed.

174th membership is open to all interested participants. Membership is voluntary and capped at CGOs and NCOs. FGOs and SNCOs wishing to get involved are encouraged to become Senior Mentors.

ARCWERX / AFWERX

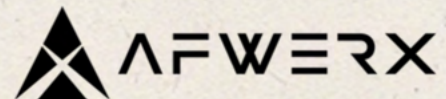
POINTS OF CONTACT

SMSGT HOFFMASTER: olivia.hoffmaster@us.af.mil

SMSGT DONNELLY: james.donnelly.2@us.af.mil

MSGT NUNEZ: roberto.nunez.2@us.af.mil

TEAMS Channel: 174th Empire Central Spark Cell



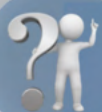


ARC SENTRI

DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S INNOVATION SENTINELS

Why ARC SENTRI?

ARC SENTRI prepares Airmen and Soldiers to identify real operational challenges, apply proven innovation methods, and deliver actionable outcomes that strengthen readiness and mission effectiveness. This inaugural course focuses on doing, not theory, connecting modern innovation practices directly to operational needs.



Who Should Apply

Ideal Candidates:

- Airmen and Soldiers motivated to solve operational problems
- Enlisted, Officer, and Civilian personnel
- All career fields welcome
- Guard, Reserve, and Active Component eligible (Joint/Total Force)



Professional Development

What Participants Will Do

- Tackle authentic, mission-relevant problem sets
- Apply structured innovation and agile methods
- Work in cross-functional, cross-service teams
- Develop solutions that can transition back to units
- Engage with experienced innovation practitioners and mentors

What Participants Will Gain:

- Practical innovation and problem-solving skills
- Leadership and collaboration experience across services
- Tools you can immediately apply at your unit
- Exposure to national-level innovation efforts
- Professional development aligned to modernization priorities



When and Where

Course Snapshot:

- **OPENENROLLMENT:** Cohort 1 will kickoff **Jan-2027**
- Duration: 12 weeks total (3 in-residence, 9 virtual)
 - Week 0 (Virtual; only 2 half-days): Program orientation, staff introductions, team assignments, and access to resources
- In-Residence Dates & Locations:
 - 25-29 January 2027 | TBD
 - 22-26 February 2027 | TBD
 - 12-16 April 2027 | TBD
- Time Commitment: Virtual weeks require approximately 8-12 hours per week
- TDY & Costs: TDY required; course seat funded by ARCWERX, TDY expenses unit-funded



SCAN ME



steven.mcknew.3.ctr@us.af.mil
dana.garrett.2.ctr@us.af.mil

To apply, scan the QR code or click the link
<https://shorturl.at/tgF3G>



Chaplain's Message

Hi Hancock Field,

Every year as a part of making our chapel plans, we review current 'faith group demographics'. We wanted to share the results with you because you might be a bit surprised. You are way more diverse than you used to be. In our unit here in little old Syracuse, you wouldn't believe who your Wingmen are. We have close to 400 Airmen who are a part of a Protestant denomination. Nearly 300 Catholics. Almost 400 who claim no religious preference. There are also fourteen people who are Pagan or another Earth Based faith, twelve of Islam, six Jewish Airmen, four Buddhists, three Eastern Orthodox, two Latter Day Saints, two Quakers, and (we see you out there) one Hindu. You may not know this, but this is very different from what it looked like five or ten years ago. Whether we have more diverse people joining or just more folks feeling comfortable sharing their faith background, it's exciting to see such a wide representation of religious backgrounds. As your chaplains, we want to let you know that your religion and your faith practice is important to us. That's why we're here. To help you be the best adherent of your faith that you can be.

We are here to help you practice YOUR faith and that is not going to change. Religious Preference Codes and religious accommodation practices are changing, but none of that is going to get in the way of the Chaplain Corps helping you worship, serve, and live as your faith dictates. And none of this means that those of no faith practice will be somehow neglected or ignored or forced into something that violates their conscience. The Secretary of War and our Chief of Chaplains are reemphasizing what the Chaplain Corps is here for – the spiritual care of our Airmen. And that means EVERY SINGLE Airmen. Your Chaplains and Religious Affairs Airmen are here for you. Let us know what you need. Worship services, holy day observations, or faith specific studies. We just did a survey of our area and found over 600 religious organizations here to support your faith in the community as well! If we can't provide it, we can help you find it.

Spiritually strong Airmen find purpose in something bigger than themselves and bring strength to the fight that goes beyond what we can bring ourselves. That makes you a better Airman, a better husband or wife, a better mom or dad, a better brother or sister, a better friend and Wingmen. Stay faithful, stay strong, stay resilient, and let us know how we can come along side you. Blessings to you all.

-Your Chapel Team

Lt. Col. Matthew Hallenbeck
174th Attack Wing Chaplain



Cole Andrews, Joseph Anuka, Anthony Cruz, Alexander Dacko, Eric Leguillow Nunez, Hassan Mberwa, Dalton Mackey, Rowan Marocchi, Alyssa Neagle, Vipoo Pring, Hannah Quito Urdiales, Mason St. James



Sam Ali, Matthew Hauber, Joemihr Gholson, Damien Martin, Brandon O'Brien, Justice Prempeh, Arnold Zumbrum



Garrison Boone, Chase Bureau, Jean Castillamartinez, Jessica Flores



Wyatt Czapla, Isaiah Dillabough, Breanne Nau



Collin Coakley, Zachary Houle, Joshua Jasniok, Zachary Kenny, Tad Peace, Anthony Polimeni, Shane Renfrew, Anthony Vaughn, Gabriel Vecchio



Brian Ackley, Stephen Bitler, Rachel Kelty, Michael Stemper, Jason Vaughn



Jason Hanavan, Christopher O'Connor, James Tarby



Lyle Sharkey



Justin Phillips, Thomas Yarrington



Lauren Vaughn



Lee Nietzel

New Leaders Take the Helm at the 174th

Leadership transitions have marked the year as several key positions changed hands. Col. Lee Neitzel assumed command of the MXG from Col. Seth Anderson, who then assumed command of the OG from Col. Keith Walker. Col. John Meili succeeded Walker as deputy wing commander, while Col. Nicholas Welly assumed command of the 152nd AOG from Meili. At the enlisted level, Command Chief Master Sgt. Corey LaRock assumed responsibility as wing command chief master sergeant, succeeding Command Chief Master Sgt. Sonja Williams.



*Command Chief
Williams Retires!*

Chief Williams Retires after 28 Years of Service



Story and photos by Tech Sgt. Duane Morgan

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – On March 7, 2026, Hancock Field said goodbye to Command Chief Master Sergeant Sonja Williams after 28 years of military service during a retirement and change of authority ceremony held here. As part of the ceremony, Williams turned over her authority to Chief Master Sergeant Corey LaRock who became the seventh command chief of Hancock Field.

Williams was the first woman to ever serve as the 174th Attack Wing's Command Chief.

Williams assumed the duties of Command Chief on February 4, 2023. She joined the U.S. Air Force in December of 1997 and after completing basic training, went on to Keesler Air Force Base to attend Personnel Specialist school.



Upon her return to the 174th Fighter Wing, she was assigned to the Commander Support Staff in the Logistics Readiness Squadron.

In August 2006 she cross-trained into the Education and Training career field and transferred to the 174th Civil Engineer Squadron where she became the Unit Education and Training Manager (UTEM). In this position, she was instrumental in the squadron's transformation of training records from paper based to a digital format.

In May 2011, while assigned to the Civil Engineer Squadron, Williams deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom to the Manas Transit Center located near Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

In May 2012, Williams was selected as the Wing Human Resources Advisor (HRA) and received national recognition for her accomplishments.

In 2018 she was selected to be the Mission Support Group Senior Enlisted Leader (SEL). Afterwards, deciding to leave to fill a one-year position as the 174th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron SEL in 2019.

Prior to her current position, Williams returned to her previous position as SEL for the 174th Mission Support Group.

Williams said that one of the biggest accomplishments in her career was initiating the Formal Mentorship Program at the wing.

Williams set up a speed mentoring event, where new Airmen at the 174th met with the Chiefs and spent five minutes getting to know one another. After five minutes they would rotate and speak to another Chief.

"After all the Airmen spoke with all the chiefs, I would match them with their first and second choices and have them exchange information," said Williams. "Because of that the younger Airmen were able to make connections, and until this day those connections are still going strong."

Williams wanted younger Airmen to have a way to speak to Chiefs to be able to pick their brain and get guidance on how to move forward in their career.



Williams is also a High School Spanish Teacher. She has held this position for 24 years and plans to return to teaching.

Williams plans on taking a couple months off before coming back to finish the school year. She'll then finish another two years before retiring from teaching.

Once Williams retires from teaching, she plans on doing a lot of traveling abroad.

Williams is also the former President of the Jefferson County Branch of The American Association for University Women. She is also a member of numerous community and military advocacy groups to include the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, the Non-commissioned Officer Association, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the National Council for Negro Women.



*Ret. Chief Master Sgt. Sonja Williams
17th command chief master sergeant
174th Attack Wing*

"Take advantage of every opportunity that comes your way. Make sure your PME is all done, and capitalize on volunteer opportunities. This way when it comes time to move forward in your career, you'll already be ready for the challenge. If you stay ready you'll never have to get ready."



Clarity for Mental Wellness through Stress

Use the following Steps to help you through your day:

1. Morning: Reflect on what you did well yesterday and what do you want to do well today.
2. Afternoon: Notice if you are sticking with your plan and meeting the goals for today.
 - Take a moment to enjoy the success of doing something positive, meaningful, and finishing it.
 - If you didn't meet your goal, you may not be able to course-correct today—put it aside and go back tomorrow.
 - Thank those who helped you, assess what worked, didn't work, and ask for clarity from others who were part of the task.
3. End of Day: Why did you succeed or not succeed? The process is very important. If you pay attention to the process, success is much easier in the end.
 - Ask yourself who helped you and specifically how they made a difference.
 - Who didn't help you and why didn't it help?
 - Look for what you could have done differently to help it go well.
 - Remember why the person wasn't helpful to you—do you need clarification or a discussion?

Remember that we can often be harder on ourselves than we would be to another member or to our friends. We may not have the information asked of us, and we may find it hard to feel like we are not excelling, and yet, it is expected of us. Know this, you are not alone, you will get better, you have support and guidance, and you are expected to make mistakes. Why? Because your mistakes will build you stronger and better and build your resiliency into your job and in your life. Resilient people bounce back and don't cave, just like you built your muscles from a powerhouse of stress through rupture and repair. If its yet to come...

Then Go Build Yours—

You are a War Fighter, Ready, and Civil Support—to all.

174TH ATKW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

RECONNECT AND SERVE AGAIN!

Calling all current and former members of the 174th Attack Wing, it's predecessor units, and tenant units! Re-connect with over 400 fellow veterans and maintain the bonds forged in service. Since 1979, our mission has been to provide a social network and continue our legacy of service in the community.

What We Do:

- Annual Summer Picnic: A social gathering and a ceremony to dedicate memorial stones for our recently deceased members at Alumni Park.
- Annual Veterans Dinner: A yearly tradition held before Thanksgiving to honor our service and celebrate the holiday together.
- Community Service: We proudly participate in events like the 174th Memorial Day Ceremony and Wreaths Across America.

Membership Benefits:

- Maintain contact with the 174th family.
- As a member, your name will be engraved on the memorial stones in Alumni Park, ensuring your legacy is honored for generations. Join Today – Dues Unchanged Since 1979!

Membership is just \$25 for five years, with a one-time \$5 initiation fee.
Don't wait – lock in this rate!

READY TO JOIN OR WANT MORE INFO?

Email Us: 174th alumni@gmail.com

Visit a Meeting: Join us on the 3rd Thursday of any month at 1800 in the Heritage Room / All Service Club



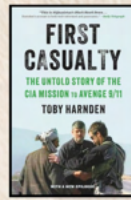
Commander's Reading List

Strategy, Leadership and Warfare



A Message to Garcia

Elbert Hubbard



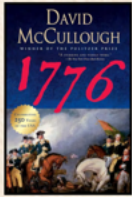
First Casualty: The Untold Story of the CIA Mission to Avenge 9/11

Toby Harnden



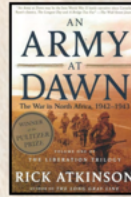
Turn the Ship Around!

David Marquet



1776

David McCullough



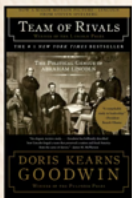
An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa (1942-1943)

Rick Atkinson



The Second Nuclear Age: Strategy, Danger, and the New Power Politics

Paul Bracken



Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln

Doris Kearns Goodwin



The Accidental Superpower: Ten Years On

Peter Zeihan



Economics in One Lesson

Henry Hazlitt



American Icon: Alan Mulally and the Fight to Save Ford Motor Company

Bryce G. Hoffman



Adaptation Under Fire: How Militaries Change in Wartime

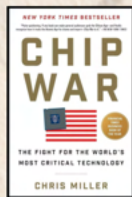
Barno/Bensahel



Oh, the Places You'll Go!

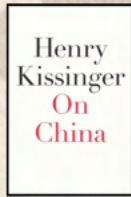
Dr. Seuss

Technology



Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology

Chris Miller



On China

Henry Kissinger



The Kill Chain

Christian Brose



The Hundred-Year Marathon

Michael Pillsbury



White Sun War: The Campaign for Taiwan

Ryan/Saxon

Podcasts

- War on the Rocks
- Defense One Radio
- Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
- WSJ What's News
- Economist Podcasts



174TH ATKW
RUNWAY 5K

PRESENTED BY SYRACUSE HANCOCK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
SATURDAY, AUGUST 1st, 2026 AT 08:00 AM



28
LEGACY OF ATTACK

REGISTER NOW AT:



<https://runsignup.com/Race/NY/Syracuse/SyracuseAirport5k>

No Federal Endorsement Intended

174th ATKW Leadership



WING COMMANDER
COL. BRETT BATICK



**DEPUTY WING
COMMANDER**
COL. JOHN MEILI



COMMAND CHIEF
CHIEF MASTER SGT.
COREY LAROCK



WING FIRST SERGEANT
SENIOR MASTER SGT.
DAVID DINOLFO



**174th OG
COMMANDER**
COL. SETH ANDERSON



**174th AOG
COMMANDER**
COL. NICHOLAS WELLY



**174th MXG
COMMANDER**
COL. LEE NEITZEL



**174th MSG
COMMANDER**
COL. JASON TAYLOR



**174th MDG
COMMANDER**
COL. MISTY LOONEY



Readiness • Civil Support • Warfighting

