



# AIRSCOOP

**104TH FIGHTER WING • MASSACHUSETTS AIR NATIONAL GUARD**  
*Pride, Professionalism, Patriotism* *Barnes Air National Guard Base*



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Citizen Airmen**

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U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Tech. Sgt. By Lindsey Watson-Kirwin



U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Julie Avey

**Tech. Sgt. Lucas Hagopian, Weapons Load Crew Chief from the 104th Fighter Wing, arms an F-15 Eagle with an Aim 9X missile during the 104th Fighter Wing's evaluation at the U.S. Air Force's Weapons Systems Evaluation Program.(WSEP). (U.S. Air National Guard Photos by Senior Master Sgt. Julie Avey)**

# Welcome Col. James M. Suhr



**Major General Gary Keefe, The Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard (right), administered the oath of office to new Barnes Air National Guard Base Commander Col. James M. Suhr (left) January 31 at Hanscom Air Force Base, Massachusetts. In the ceremony Suhr swore to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (Courtesy Photo by Joint Force Headquarters)**

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Colonel James M. Suhr assumed command of Barnes Air National Guard Base, Westfield, Massachusetts from Colonel James J. Keefe. A Change of Command ceremony will take place March 5 at Barnes Air National Guard Base. Colonel Suhr comes to Western Massachusetts from the Active Duty Air Force where he was the Director of Staff for the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, DC. As part of a Total Force initiative Suhr will be in a dual status role where he is both Active Duty and Air National Guard at the same time. This will be a first in the long list of Barnes Air National Guard Base Commanders.

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# From English Teacher to Citizen Airmen

By Tech. Sgt. Lindsey Watson-Kirwin

Airman 1st Class Christopher Chaves found a way to fulfill his dream of serving in the Air Force while still being able to stay close to his family when he discovered the Massachusetts Air National Guard. Chaves is an F-15 crew chief with the 104th Fighter Wing at Barnes Air National Guard Base in Massachusetts.

“I had always wanted to join the Air Force,” said Chaves.

Chaves who did not know about the option to serve in the Air National Guard as a citizen airman went to Saint Anselm College straight out of St. John’s High School and became a high school English teacher at Springfield High School of Science and Technology where he was also a three season Cross Country and Swimming Varsity Head Coach.

“Teaching was also an interest of mine so I started in that direction,” said Chaves. “The military thing was set aside for a while. Then I was teaching high school with college debt and my son. It just wasn’t possible to keep my head afloat.”

A chance encounter with an Air National Guard member who told his story changed Chaves’ course and started him down the path toward serving in a capacity he did not know existed.

“Coming to the Air Force when I did came by chance,” said Chaves.



**Airman 1st Class Christopher Chaves, maintains an F-15 Eagle to ensure the 104th Fighter Wing's Pilots are able to fly daily while at the U.S. Air Force's Weapons System Evaluation Program at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Tech Sgt. Lindsey Watson-Kirwin)**

“When I was teaching in Springfield I was living in South Hadley just down the street from Chief Sheffield in Vehicle Maintenance. He pulled up in his Jeep as I was getting into my Jeep and we started talking about Jeeps. Then I asked him about his uniform and where he served, and he told me about the Air Guard. That is just kind of where it started. I later found out I could be in the Air Force, serve in the Air Guard, stay in the same community, and not have to leave my son.”

From that initial meeting the conversation about serving in the Massachusetts Air National Guard continued.

“I spent time talking to Chief Sheffield and then he brought me on base to introduce me to others,” explained Chaves. “He knew I wanted to be involved with the aircraft. I think flying is one of our crowning achievements so that was definitely something I wanted to be involved in.

After touring the base and talking to personnel Chaves had decided he wanted to be a crew chief.



are probably the most involved directly with the pilot and the aircraft.”

In addition to Chaves desire to work on the F-15 Eagles he was drawn to the atmosphere and people serving at the 104th Fighter Wing.

“When you come onto Barnes I think what struck me first was how welcoming and happy everyone is,” said Chaves.

After completing Basic Military Training, Technical School, and seasoning days Chaves became a temporary technician at Barnes Air National Base and is here at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida on his first TDY with the Wing for the Weapons Evaluations Systems Program.



**Airman 1st Class Christopher Chaves of the 104th Fighter Wing, discusses the aircraft with Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beckel, Commander of the 131st Fighter Squadron, prior to take off at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Tech Sgt. Lindsey Kirwin)**

“It is definitely a good experience to be here with the unit,” said Chaves. “When you put yourself out there into new challenges here



**Airman 1st Class Christopher Chaves, serves as a Crew Chief during the 104th Fighter Wing’s evaluation at the U.S. Air Force’s Weapons System Evaluation Program (WSEP). (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Tech Sgt. Lindsey Watson-Kirwin)**

in a new place it shakes things up a bit, tests your ability to be deployable and to be effective in an environment that is less than routine. You depend on other people and other people depend on you.”

In addition to the training Chaves explained the trip was good for unit cohesion.

“It is a great opportunity to get to know the people that you would really only see in passing on a Guard drill weekend,” said Chaves.

The WSEP is meant to give a unit time to focus on training and ensuring that everyone is utilizing best practices.

“The best part for me is to be doing a job that is important. It is

important to maintain our readiness and I know I’m contributing to that,” said Chaves.

All Air National Guard units wear two hats as a part of the countries global defense system and as a part of their states Domestic Operations.



## Barnestormer Airmen Deliver Munitions for the Mission

By Senior Master Sgt. Julie Avey

Air Power starts with the weapons loaders as they bring the boom to the Weapons Systems Evaluation Program (WSEP), at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. A crew of three Airmen from the 104th Fighter Wing step to the aircraft preparing to load munitions for the mission at WSEP.

“You load the aircraft up and the missiles are gone when they return back to the base,” said Staff Sgt. Nick Albert. “We don’t get to see that every day. It’s cool to see the jets come back without the missiles and know we were a part of making it happen.”

Tech. Sgt. Lucas Hagopian, Staff Sgt. Timothy Mannion, and Staff Sgt. Nick Albert are a team of three weapons loaders from Barnes Air National Guard Base, Massachusetts. Their mission is to ensure weapons loaded on the 104<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing’s F-15 Eagles work properly for air crews at home station and deployed.

“We load the weapons systems to ensure the pilot is able to use all of the munitions which may be needed for the mission,” said Hagopian.

As a part of the WSEP exercise, the aircraft are loaded and shoot live missiles. The WSEP evaluates weapons systems. The purpose is to gauge operational effectiveness, to verify weapons system performance, determine reliability, and evaluate capability. The crews are provided valuable practice with



live weapons.

“I’m glad what we do has to do with the jets,” said Albert. “I think that is cool. Dealing with the actual plane itself helping to make sure it does its job.”

The WSEP tests the readiness of the unit and the weapons loaders are a huge part of the F-15s being ready for combat or homeland defense.

“We have the alert mission back home,” said Hagopian. “We are protecting the whole North East to ensure a 9/11 doesn’t happen again. It feels good to be a part of such an important mission. It feels good to be a part of protecting our country along with our freedom and rights.”

Hagopian is leading his crew through successful loads during WSEP with his 14 years of experience loading munitions on F-

15 Eagles.

Chief Robert Beaulieu of the 104th Fighter Wing Maintenance Group said “They are one of our best load crews and we would put them up against any other.”

“It’s good to come to these temporary duty training environments,” said Hagopian. “The repetition allows for more experience. Being in this career field for 14 years on the same jet you can pass on the experience and knowledge to the younger guys coming up.”

Hagopian is a traditional Guardsmen who works at General Electric Aviation in his civilian career. He makes parts for the T700 engine on the Black Hawk helicopter.

“I’m new in the career field so WSEP is great for me to get familiar with how the operation

how it felt “I can definitely say it was a little nerve wrecking at first knowing it was a live missile but after a couple times it felt like loading a non-live training missile. Safety along with strict procedures are carried out on any weapons load so I continued just the same.”

The three Airmen load crew will load over 14 missiles and 20,000 rounds of munitions during evaluations. They will load Aim 9X short range and Aim 120 medium range intercept missiles, along with 20 mm ammunition, and chaff and flare countermeasures.

The load crew consists of three positions called the One Man, Two Man, and the Three Man. The One man or the Weapons Load Crew Chief oversees and is in charge of the load crew. The Two man is the tool man who preps missile launchers and takes care of the tools. The Three man drives the jammer when loading missiles and inspects the munitions looking for defects prior to loading.

“The training here is also good bonding,” said Hagopian. “We get to show off our skills and we go up against other load crews for a little competition along with bragging rights.”

Albert said “The last time I was here it was really fun so I wanted to make sure I came back again. It’s a little more intense here than it is at home sometimes. On a daily basis you load up fake missiles and they fly and then they land. Here at WSEP you launch the jets and you are being watched by the inspectors, officers, everyone, a little more intense. Every day whether here or back at home



station is an important day on the job as we adhere to technical orders to provide weapons.

Albert has been in the Air National Guard for five years as a Weapons Loader and has attended WSEP twice. Mannion was in the Coast Guard as a machinist technician and Air Force Reserves as a firefighter previously.

The weapons load crews are able to improve readiness and team work during their training at Tyndall.

“The Weapons career field is a tight group,” said Mannion. “We have a work hard and play hard mentality so when we are out on the line doing the operations we have a better bond with each other.”

Albert said “It’s our second family.” Hagopian agreed.



**Tech. Sgt. Lucas "Tubes" Hagopian, Staff Sgt. Timothy "The Little Machine" Mannion and Staff Sgt. Nick "Nicky" Albert, are a team of three weapons loaders from Barnes Air National Guard Base, Massachusetts. The Team communicates as they arm an F-15 Eagle with an Aim 9X Missile and perform gun loads during evaluations at the U.S. Air Force's Weapons Systems Evaluation Program. (U.S. Air National Guard Photos by Senior Master Sgt. Julie Avey)**

## 104th Fighter Wing Airmen Aim High on Alert Status

By Senior Master Sgt. Julie Avey

The 104th Fighter Wing screams over the Northeast protecting the skies after receiving the call. The Airmen at Barnes Air National Guard Base scramble whether it is a National emergency or it is for an evaluation as it was the case this time. Standing ready each day of the year the Airmen showcase their skills and expertise.

Without notice, members of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Inspector General Team arrived on base Friday January 27, to test the wing's ability to defend the Northeast airspace.

"I am very happy to report that we received the highest rating of "Mission Ready" for our NORAD IG Alert Force Evaluation here at the 104th Fighter Wing," said Col. James J. Keefe, Commander of the 104th Fighter Wing.

The 104th FW, Massachusetts Air National Guard received results from the NORAD Inspector General team on their Alert Mission inspection resulting in the highest rating of "Mission Ready" for 24/7 Alert units in the United States Air Force and U.S. Air National Guard.

The purpose of the alert evaluation is to assess the procedures and execution of the 104th Fighter Wing's alert mission, ensuring they are prepared to execute the mission every day. The Inspector general team from NORAD's headquarters evaluated all supporting elements of the region's mission such as the ability to maintain and generate alert aircraft and security forces ability to secure.

The Aerospace Control Alert (ACA) mission at Barnes Air National Guard Base was evaluated and received the highest rating allowable of "Mission

Ready" on all four NORAD IG sub graded areas of inspection and an overall rating of "Mission Ready".

"If you have ever been through an Air Force evaluation, you know this is not the normal ratings," said Keefe. "Even more amazing is we have a skeleton force at our home station Operations and Maintenance Groups due to our Weapons Systems Evaluations occurring at Tyndall Air Force Base. This was a no-notice evaluation moved by IG from a different date at the end of last year."

The four areas of inspection are Command and Control-Mission Ready, Mission Employment-Mission Ready, Alert Aircraft-Mission Ready, and Security Forces-Mission Ready. To achieve a "mission ready" rating, it requires years of expertise and attention to detail by numerous personnel in every area, all focused on delivering the very best results for our nation's defense.

In all there were twelve strengths within the areas of inspection highlighted by the inspectors. There were two strengths under Command and Control, Mission Employment received four strengths, and Alert Aircraft received six strengths.

"The NORAD IG Team was very impressed with our mission, and mentioned to me that he considered us a top tier unit," said Keefe.

Additionally, two Barnestormers were recognized by the NORAD IG during the inspection.

Staff Sgt. Rachel Morin of the 104th Security Forces received Superior Performer recognition along with Chief Master Sgt. Robert Roy, Chief Enlisted Manager of the Aerospace



(U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Julie Avey)

Control Alert's aircraft maintenance operations.

"Chief Roy has been here through the stand-up of the ACA alert mission and has led us to success over the last seven years" said Keefe. "These ratings are a testament to his dedication and professionalism."

"I am very proud of our whole team," said Keefe. Our team of professionals proved they execute the NORAD 'no fail' mission.

The Wing trains for and performs combat roles while simultaneously executing the ACA mission from its home station on a daily basis. The 104th FW is a Wing assigned to the Massachusetts National Guard and Air Combat Command. The Wing is equipped with the F-15 Eagle and supports worldwide overseas operations, homeland operations, domestic response, security cooperation and international strategic partnerships.

The homeland mission of the 104th FW is the ACA mission providing armed F-15 fighters ready to scramble in a moment's notice to protect the Northeast from any airborne threat. The Wing is responsible for protecting a quarter of the nation's population and one third of the Gross Domestic Product.

## 2016 Injury Summary

By Master Sgt. Shannon Huard, 104FW Occupational Safety Manager

### February 2017 – Wing Safety How-Goes-It

**The unit has experienced 4 injuries since the last How-Goes-It.**

- Worker lacerated thumb; using power tool; not greater than first aid; not reportable.
- Participant fractured leg; stepped out of golf cart; lost time; reportable Class C.
- Worker struck head on overhead door; not greater than first aid; not reportable.
- Worker strained wrist; trying to fix frozen gate, not greater than first aid; not reportable.

**The unit has experienced 0 mishaps since the last How-Goes-It**

### *Calendar Year 2016 Injury Summary*

In Calendar Year 2016, the 104th Fighter Wing experienced 43 injuries. Of those, 12 were reportable Class C's, 12 were reportable Class D's and 19 were not deemed reportable at all. What does all this mean?



A mishap is an unplanned occurrence, or series of occurrences, that results in damage or injury and/or meets Class A, B, C, or D reporting criteria. Damage or injury includes: damage to DoD property; occupational illness to DoD military or civilian personnel; injury to on- or off-duty DoD active military status; injuries to on-duty DoD civilian or inactive military personnel; damage to public or private property, or injury or illness to non-DoD personnel caused by Air Force operations.

Mishaps are classified by total direct mishap cost and the severity of injury/occupational illness.

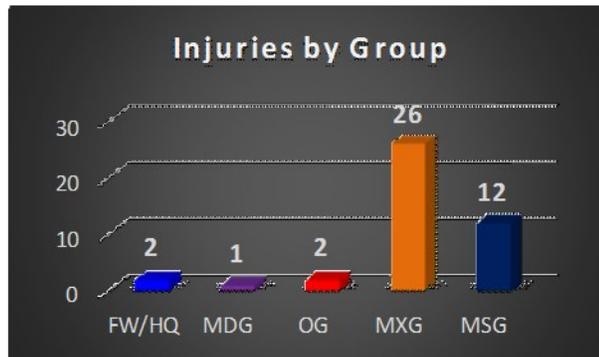
A Class A mishap is a mishap resulting in one or more of the following:

- Direct mishap cost totaling \$2,000,000 or more
- A fatality or permanent total disability
- Destruction of a DoD aircraft

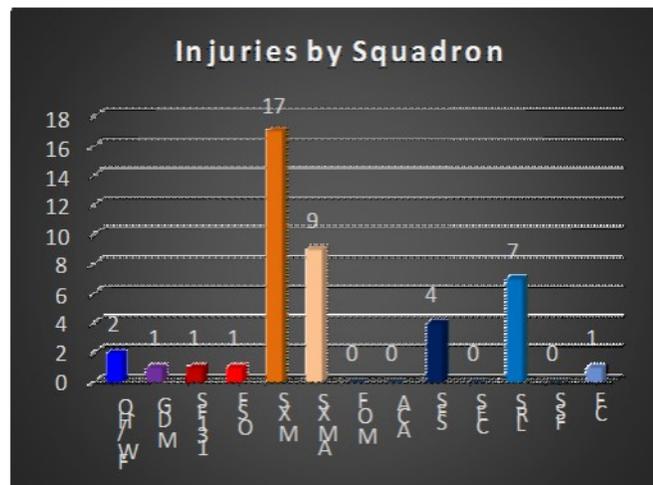
A Class B mishap is a mishap resulting in one or more of the following:

(2016 Injury Summary Continued from page 10)

The chart below depicts the total number of injuries by group in calendar year 2016.



The chart below depicts the total number of injuries by squadron in calendar year 2016.



## Worship Schedule

*General Christian Worship*

11:00 a.m. Saturday, February 5, 2016

If you need to talk, the Chapel Team will be out and about. You can also stop in for a chat at the Base Chapel (Building 12, aka. the Fitness Center) or call ahead at ext. 698-1057.

# 104th Fighter Wing Chief Council

Your 104<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing Chiefs Council is a robust team made up of Chief Master Sergeants and Senior Master Sergeants. Our responsibilities are comprised of ensuring that we provide you with an avenue to inform us of any concerns that are impacting your Quality of Life and/or ability to perform your duties and responsibilities in support of our mission. We then work both individually and collectively to negate those concerns while still maintaining our Vision Statement of being the best Fighter Wing in the Combat Air Force.

Your council is a recognized Private Organization and is mandated to meet the requirements of Air Force Instruction 34-108. We have an Official Charter and By-Laws that have been reviewed by the 104<sup>th</sup> Staff Judge Advocate's Office, the Force Support Squadron, the Mission Support Group Commander and endorsed by our Wing Commander. The charter allows the council to be comprised of Chief Master Sergeants within the Wing as well as those Senior Master Sergeants who are in CMSgt positions on the manning documents but have not been promoted due to such things as a lack of control grades for Active-Guard & Reserves (AGRs) or may not have sufficient time in service or time in grade to be promoted to Chief. We currently have 17 members which make up the council.

We are self-funded through each member paying dues as well as establishing fund raisers throughout the year. The funds maintained in our budget are used for such Wing initiatives as the Chief Master Sergeant Patrick J. Shaughnessy Scholarship. This scholarship is available to any enlisted member of the 104<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing furthering their education at either a two or four-year college/university. Another opportunity to support the enlisted members within the Wing is the annual presentation of the Major General George W. Keefe Award at the Awards Banquet. This award, presented by the Chiefs Council in honor of Major General George W. Keefe, is designed to honor an enlisted member who encompasses the qualities of Leadership, Responsibility, Mentorship, Self-Discipline, Family Values and who also improves the image of the 104<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing and the Massachusetts National Guard. The same qualities that Major General Keefe exemplified while serving as a member of the 104<sup>th</sup> and then as our Adjutant General of the State of Massachusetts.

We also serve other councils and functions within the Wing. You have seen us at such events as the Alumni Dinners, Chamber Breakfasts, Parades, Family Readiness Group Pasta Dinners, TIME Conferences, Combined Federal Campaign Functions, Halloween Parties, Children Christmas Parties, and honoring fallen Airman (both past and present) at wakes and funerals.

Above and beyond the scholarships, the Major General George W. Keefe Award, and other listed functions, the Chiefs Council has the primary responsibility of being the eyes and ears of the Commander(s). As stated in Air Force Instruction 36-2618: "CMSgts serve as key leaders at all levels in the Air Force from flight-level to Air Staff. They serve as commandants, superintendents, program managers, command chief master sergeants, functional managers, and career filed managers." We are both collectively as a council and individually within our separate flights, squadrons and groups wholeheartedly engaged on enhancing quality of life issues while sustaining the operational tempo within the wing and meeting/exceeding all mission requirements. This is done through continuous engagement within our areas of responsibility and finding out what issues are impacting the enlisted force. We then bring these concerns to our meetings and find a way to mitigate these impediments to our troops while still covering all mission requirements. Any issue that involves our enlisted force has been reviewed and engaged on by the council. The only issues we have yet to discuss is the ones that we have yet been made aware of. On that note, if there are any issues that are impacting you or any of your peers, find your Chief or Chief (Selectee) and make sure you bring them these concerns. There are no issues too big or too small. We, as your Chiefs Council, want to ensure we negate any stressors that impair your ability to have a high quality of life and/or morale while still engaged on our mission requirements keeping the 104<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing as the best Fighter Wing in the CAF.

# Proud of our Airmen!



Catch our Airmen in action  
on Instagram at 104fw!

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