

AirScoop



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Massachusetts Air National Guard

104th Fighter Wing

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From the 104FW Maintenance Group Commander

This month marks a pivotal moment for the 104th Fighter Wing as we continue our transition to the F-35. Support Equipment Induction remains in full swing, ensuring our Airmen have the tools and capability required to sustain this advanced platform.

In the coming weeks, we will break ground on new F-35 aircraft shelters—an important investment in our future mission and the infrastructure needed to protect and maintain this fleet. We are also rapidly approaching a major milestone: the arrival of our first F-35 mid June.

Most of our Core Cadre have now returned to Barnes after months of intensive training at F-35 units across the country. Their expertise is already strengthening our foundation. At the same time, our personnel continue hands-on training with the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, Wisconsin, and the 158th Fighter Wing in Burlington, Vermont, ensuring we remain aligned with best practices and fully prepared for operational integration.

Throughout this transition, our leadership team has been deeply engaged—removing barriers, supporting Airmen, and driving progress at every level. The excitement across the wing is unmistakable. We are not just receiving a new aircraft; we are embracing a new era of capability, readiness, and strategic relevance for the Commonwealth and the nation.

The 104th Fighter Wing is ready for this moment, and together, we will rise to meet it.

- *Col. RYAN L. RANDALL*



F-35 training builds teamwork between 104th and 115th Fighter Wings

Story by Melanie J. Casineau, 104FW/PA

BARNES AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Westfield, MA-Change can be challenging, but it also brings opportunity. In recent months, airmen from the 104th Fighter Wing have intensified training in preparation for the arrival of the F-35, working closely with the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison, Wisconsin.

While several locations across the country support F-35 training, the 104th has frequently partnered with the 115th to gain hands-on experience with the aircraft and its systems.

The wing has a long history of evolving through multiple aircraft generations, from the P-47 to the F-15 and now the F-35. With the addition of the F-35, the wing will have operated eight different aircraft.

U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Adam Casineau, 104th Fighter Wing aerospace ground equipment superintendent, recently visited the 115th to manage, equip and train on F-35 ground equipment.

“As our wing converts to the F-35, all the equipment changes along with it,” Casineau said. “Fifth-generation fighters bring advanced systems that we don’t have experience with in the F-15 career field.”

We must replace aging aircraft at the end of their service life as we did with the F-15. The F-35A is

the most advanced multirole fighter aircraft in the world and plays a critical role in national defense.

“The systems in Madison are relatively new,” Casineau said. “Ours date back to the ‘50s and ‘60s and look nothing like this.”

Casineau plans to compile a visit report so his team can compare current practices at the 115th with those at the 104th and develop updated procedures.

The transition to the F-35 brings significant differences. While the F-15 Eagle focuses on air-to-air superiority, the F-35 supports both air-to-air and air-to-ground missions. Its avionics systems are more advanced, and administrative requirements, including manning, infrastructure and program documentation are also evolving.

U. S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kyle Cote, 104th Fighter Wing F-35 advanced fighter integrated avionics technician, is spending two months training with the 115th.

“Basic maintenance practices like swapping parts and routine servicing stay relatively the same, but the jet is fully digital now,” Cote said. “We’re also taking on responsibilities previously handled by the electrical and environmental shop. We’ll be doing more software loads and running diagnostic checks than we did on the F-15.”

U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Dan Tourtellotte, 104th Fighter Wing aircraft maintenance unit chief enlisted manager, said troubleshooting will also change.





“The F-15 required a hands-on approach to diagnose issues,” Tourtellotte said. “The F-35 is essentially a flying computer. It can diagnose itself and provide codes that guide maintainers toward a fix.”

While hands-on tasks such as engine swaps and servicing remain necessary, much of the work now relies on systems like the Primary Maintenance Aid. These systems continuously update, improving efficiency and accuracy over time.

Tourtellotte said the goal is to apply lessons learned from other units to build processes tailored to the 104th.

“Each unit we visit has its own way of doing things,” he said. “Barnes has always led in excellence, and these visits show our commitment to preparing our base and Airmen for the future.”

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Bill Sabadosa, 104th Fighter Wing support section NCO in charge, also visited the 115th to learn about the Autonomic Logistics Information System, or ALIS. The system serves as the IT backbone of the F-35, integrating training, planning, maintenance and support functions.

“Master Sgt. Brett Sabin from the 115th has shared products that will help us navigate ALIS more effectively,” Sabadosa said. “They’ve developed tools that make it easier to track both legacy and program items.”

In addition to training in Madison, the 104th’s core cadre personnel have worked with units at Hill, Luke and Eglin Air Force bases to become fully qualified to support future training.

“There will be a steep learning curve,” Cote said. “But with the support from units across the Air Force, we’ll be ready for the challenge.”

The 104th expects to receive its first F-35 Lightning II aircraft in June 2026. The transition will expand mission capabilities at Barnes Air National Guard Base and ensure the wing remains a premier fighter unit.

“The 104th is a great fit,” said Maj. Gen. Gary W. Keefe, adjutant general of Massachusetts. “They have years of fighter experience, strong community support and a strategic location for homeland defense.”



HEADLINES & HIGHLIGHTS



Best Warrior Competition



Change of Command



New F35 Equipment Arrives

BARNESTORMER COMMUNITY



104th Honors and Remembers



WAM Clean Up



Salem Muster

Safety Corner

Motorcycle Safety

The Air Force Motorcycle Unit Safety Tracking Tool (MUSTT) is a mandated, web-based application (found within AFSAS) designed for on-road motorcycle riders to track required safety training.

All active duty, reserve, and guard personnel riding a motorcycle on base (and off base while in a military status) are required to have an active account and keep their records current!

Key MUSTT Requirements & Reminders

Initial Action: Upon becoming a rider or arriving at a new base, you must contact your Unit Motorcycle Safety Representative (MSR) within 30 days to establish a record in MUSTT.

Safety Briefing: An initial safety briefing with your commander or MSR is required.

Training Timeline:

- o Basic Rider Course (BRC): Required for all new riders.
- o Intermediate/Advanced Course: Must be completed within 60 days to 1 year of completing the basic course.

Annual Requirement: Riders must log into AFSAS/MUSTT every year to update their profile and receive an annual/pre-season briefing from their MSR.

PCS/Assignment Change: A new initial safety briefing and account update with the new unit's MSR are required upon arrival at a new duty station.

Required Protective Gear: Regardless of state laws (ie;CT), Air Force Instruction (AFI) 91-207 requires full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) both on and off base.

The 104TH cares about you...
Ride Safely!!

New Recruits

**Good luck to recruits
leaving in May!**

**AMBER STEARNS
AIMI NOSA UWAIFO
CHELSEA SMALLS
ESME AFRIYIE
STEVEIANA PAIBO
ANTHONY REIN
MICHAEL ZURITA
DESMOND CHEETHAM
PATRICK LAVELLE
OCHOA MELENDEZ
CAROLINA DYKES**

Aim High!



RETIREMENTS AND DEPARTURES

SMSGT. MARK GASKALKA
FSS | 38 Years

MSGT. FAWN STRANDNESS
COMP FLT | 20 Years

MSGT. BRAD CANEY
FSS | 32 Years

MSGT. FABRICIO OCHOA
MOF | 18 Years

CMSGT. LAWRENCE BUELL
CES | 28 Years

MSGT. BRAD ERDMANN
MSG | 15 Years

TSGT. DOUGLAS SCHONLAW
MX | 22 Years

MSGT. JESSICA DIXON
MDG | 12 Years

SMSGT. HEATHER CEKOVSKY
FSS | 21 Years

SRA JAY GITTAO
LRS | 9 Years

SSGT. JEREMY LAKATA
AMXS | 6 Years

SRA. BRYCE PARSON
MXS | 6 Years

SSGT. JORDYN TOWSE
AMXS | 6 Years

SSGT. RYAN CARNEY
MXS | 4 Years

Best Wishes!



HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS

A REGULAR COLUMN BY KINDA-HISTORIAN MELANIE J. CASINEAU

What came first, Barnes Air National Guard Base or Barnes Municipal Airport?

The airport came first.

The earliest recorded aircraft landing in Westfield, Massachusetts occurred on July 13, 1914, when pilot Jack McGee flew a Burgess-Wright biplane into a field on Southampton Road, Westfield, MA. At that time, there was no established airport, just open land used for aviation experiments.

During World War I, the site saw its first military use as Camp Bartlett in 1917. It served as a training ground for the 26th Division before deployment to France. However, this was still not a formal airfield.

Efforts to establish a dedicated aviation site began in 1923, when local citizens sought land for a flying field. On October 12 of that year, Westfield Aviation Field was officially dedicated. The land was owned by Vincent E. Barnes, an aviation enthusiast. In 1927, Barnes donated 51 acres to the Westfield Chamber of Commerce for use as a public airport. Construction of a large hangar began in March 1928.

After Vincent Barnes' death in 1936, his wife and daughter donated his remaining land, totaling 297 acres, to the city. The city council then voted to rename the facility Barnes Airport in his honor. At this point, the airport was firmly established as a civilian aviation facility.

Although the site had earlier military connections, its primary development was as a civilian airport. Military involvement increased during World War II. In June 1942, the War Department took over nearby abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps barracks





and briefly stationed an air unit at Barnes. The airport was also used to train future fighter pilots, including students from Massachusetts State College in Amherst, who completed an eight-week flight training program there.

The idea for a permanent military presence, Barnes Air National Guard Base, did not emerge until after the war. Discussions began in March 1946, and by 1947, the Air National Guard had established a small presence at the airport. Headquarters operated out of the Westfield Armory on Franklin Street, while tents and temporary facilities were set up on a remote section of the airfield. Under the leadership of Major John J. Stefanik, a small team began developing the base, constructing essential facilities such as a hangar, lean-to structures, and a fire station.

From that point forward, Barnes Municipal Airport and the Barnes Air National Guard Base grew side by side, sharing the same location while serving both civilian and military purposes.

A 1974 Gold Jubilee program reflected this dual role. Airport manager Larry W. Hendrick noted that the airport would continue to serve both as a home for the National Guard and as a gateway for the local community and industry. While it was not intended to rival major airports like Logan or Bradley, Barnes Airport was recognized as an important regional general aviation facility.



WELCOME TO THE F-35

GOLF

TOURNAMENT

JUNE 12

Registration @ 8am
Shotgun start @ 9am



SOUTHAMPTON COUNTRY CLUB

\$125 EACH

Incl. LUNCH/DINNER

\$40 EACH

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W/
REG.

RAFFLES & PRIZES



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Kelley 781-223-8308 J.



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Chiefs Council &
Thunderbolt Council



WESTFIELD AVIATION MUSEUM

**2026 SEASON GRAND OPENING
FLY-IN & OPEN HOUSE**

May 16th 10am-2pm

**Located at Hangar 3. Follow the signs from the main
terminal entrance to the:**

**WESTFIELD AVIATION MUSEUM
111 AIRPORT RD., WESTFIELD, MA 01085**

**Static display Aircraft & Vehicles, displays by the
104th Fighter Wing, Gulfstream Aerospace,
Bright Ideas Brewing, and More!**

Food by Macken's Specialty Sliders

**- Westfield Aviation Museum at Hangar 3 -
111 Airport Rd., Westfield, MA 01085**

