

AirScoop



104th Fighter Wing | www.104fw.af.mil



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Massachusetts Air National Guard

104th Fighter Wing

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Expanding Joint Integrated Capabilities

STORY & PHOTOS BY JAY HEWITT

Westover AIR RESERVE BASE, Chicopee, Mass. – Members from the 104th Fighter Wing, 103rd Airlift Wing, and 158th Fighter Wing recently participated in a series of integrated combat turn (ICT) exercises, June 11-12, 2025, at Westover Air Reserve Base, Chicopee, Mass. The Distributable-ICT exercises consisted of F-15C Eagle's from the 104th Fighter Wing and F-35A Lightning II's from the 158th Fighter Wing getting refueled by a C-130H Hercules from the 103rd Airlift Wing that also delivered a full missile loadout for each jet. This exercise proved the capability to refuel and rearm multiple fighters in austere conditions with no external support. Maintenance crews from the 104th and 158th Fighter Wing's loaded the C-130-delivered ordnance, all with engines-running (fighter and transports) for expedited refueling, rearming, and launch back into the operational environment.

The ability to perform integrated combat turns allows rapid refueling and rearming of fighter aircraft while minimizing the amount of time aircraft spend on the ground and the distance they have to travel to and from combat operations. Colonel Neal 'Rug' Byrne, 103rd Airlift Wing Commander, spoke on the significance of the exercise and highlighted its overwhelming success.

"The distributable integrated combat turn and our ability to execute it the way we just did shows our pacing competitors that their potential ability to target us is much, much more complex, and these ICT exercises show our ability to distribute and operate from anywhere."

During the first day of the exercise, two F-35's from Burlington Air National Guard base touched down and taxied into the Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) site, and just moments later the joint efforts of the 104th Fighter Wing, 158th Fighter Wing, and 103rd Airlift Wing maintenance teams enabled the F-35's to refuel without shutting down their engine. It took less than 15 minutes to fuel the fighters utilizing only the hoses and equipment the C-130s brought to the site.

On the second day of the exercise, two additional F-35's conducted D-ICTs, with this exercise also consisting of rearming a full air-to-air missile loadout on the F-35s in addition to getting refueled by a C-130 Hercules at the same time.

Shortly after the F-35s successful refueling, rearming, and takeoffs, two F-15C Eagle's from the 104th Fighter Wing landed to also perform D-ICTs with members of the 104FW maintenance group. In under forty minutes, the maintainers from the 104th Fighter Wing and 103rd Airlift Wing worked together to effectively rearm and refuel the F-15s through the 103d AW's C-130 Hercules, allowing the Eagle's to take back off and return to their mission.

The overall success of these D-ICTs demonstrates both the Air Force's ability to conduct joint exercises and our ability to execute the mission anytime, anywhere. The ability to conduct hot integrated combat turns illustrates the Air Force's capabilities of being able to land aircraft, refuel, rearm, and take back off in the most minimal amount of time possible, at any location, without any external support.

When asked about what the greatest impact of conducting D-ICTs are, Maj. Alex 'Birdman' Ostrom, 104th Fighter Wing pilot, answered by reinforcing the advantage of being able to land and return to the mission as quickly as possible.


"I think the benefit of the D-ICT is that it is vital to the peer adversary fight or any high tempo combat operation," said Ostrom. "You land, you get fuel and reload weapons and then get right back into the fight."

The overall effectiveness of the exercise also demonstrates the amount of practice, skill, and knowledge required by all involved maintenance groups and D-ICT teams to conduct the refueling and rearming operations. In the weeks leading up to the D-ICT exercises at Westover Air Reserve Base, the 104th Fighter Wing's ICT team conducted multiple practice ICT exercises at Barnes Air National Guard Base, with multiple F-15s touching down, getting refueled, rearmed, and back in the air.

MSgt Michael Poudrier, 104th Fighter Wing Crew Chief/Tactical Aircraft Maintenance Craftsman, acted as the Barnes ICT team lead throughout the ICT exercises, and emphasized the amount of skill and hard work that is required to accomplish these ICTs in such a short amount of time.

"The team successfully overcame significant challenges in establishing a safe and efficient sequence for concurrent missile loading and engines-running hot refueling," said Poudrier. "We mitigated hazards associated with minimal communication protocols through the implementation of a comprehensive and well-defined mission plan."





The team's performance exceeded ICT weapons load standards, demonstrating exceptional professionalism and dedication to mission success."

As the ICT team lead, MSgt Poudrier is responsible for building, training, and maintaining a highly mobile ICT team capable of rapid deployment and specialized aircraft servicing, as well as ensuring all team members are thoroughly knowledgeable of their roles and responsibilities. Following the success of the ICT exercises at Westover, Poudrier also spoke on the impact performing these exercises has on the mission as a whole.

"The implementation of the new process greatly improved efficiency during the hot refueling and weapons loading process, which supplements our existing airborne lethality with a faster turnaround in a hostile environment," Poudrier said."

Following the exercise, members of the Barnes ICT team were seen high-fiving each other in celebration as the refueled and rearmed F-15's took back off into the skies. Barnes ICT team member TSgt Damian Bouchard, 104th crew chief, was responsible for communications with the pilot and ensuring the weapons loading and refueling operations were conducted in a safe manner. He expressed that the excitement of the team was a direct result of the overall precision and teamwork that was displayed during the ICTs.

"It was definitely a great team effort, all around," said Bouchard. "Our team did a lot of work in the weeks leading up to this exercise. The newly implemented Distributed – Integrated Combat Turn procedures, all done with engines running while loading training missiles has never been done at Barnes before, so it took a collaborative effort from everyone involved to make this exercise as successful as it was."

The capability to perform these Distributed-ICTs bolsters the U.S. Air Force's combat and air superiority capabilities by being able to quickly rearm and refuel aircraft from anywhere in the world with little to no external support. The D-ICT exercises at Westover demonstrate the Air Force's ability to conduct joint operations to accomplish the mission and project airpower deep into our pacing theaters.

HEADLINES & HIGHLIGHTS



Crash Course in Readiness



Above and Beyond with TCCC



Final Flight in Eagle

HEADLINES & HIGHLIGHTS



Martin to Chief Promotion



Golf & Grow



Speed Mentoring

BARNESTORMER COMMUNITY



Tour bolsters community engagement



Local kids get a tour



Star Spangled Springfield celebration

CADRE'S CORNER

Happy July!

Neither the heat nor a busy schedule can slow our student flight down. We are continuing to send off recruits!

Best wishes to our Barnestormers who arrived at BMT in July and are headed there in August:

Brian Shaw
Cole Kiiza
Jordan Wetherell
Savanah Chapman
Kylee Merchant
Joel Figueroa
Nicholas Stackhouse
Nicholas Jolicouer
Britto Magalhaes
Mackensi Goncalves
Hernandez Gonzalez

Mary NDwiga
Kyle Taylor
Jaden St Pierre
Bergeona Alcin
Sophia Strand
Thomas Nuesslein
Hermann Abalo
William Pramberger
Alexis McNally

Aim High!
SSgt Ryan Carvalho
SSgt Mykel Potter



PROMOTIONS

1LT. 2LT. Christian Waterman	FSS			
TSgt. MSgt. Matthew Blanchette	AMXS			
TSgt. MSgt. Jenna Olander	MDG			
TSgt. MSgt. James Hickey	SFS			
TSgt. MSgt. Donald Finamore	MSG			
SSgt. TSgt. James Newsome	AMXS			
SSgt. TSgt. Matthew Robidoux	MXS			
SRA. SSgt. Nicholas Moran	MXG			
SRA. SSgt. Jamal Jeffrey	MXS	A1C.	SRA	
Hunter Anderson	FSS			
A1C. SRA Paloma Allphin	LRS			
A1C. SRA Corey Thouin	FSS			
AMN. A1C. Eve Bartlett	MDG			

Congratulations!

RETIREMENTS AND DEPARTURES

MSGT. Dennis Cyr
AMXS | 26 Years

TSgt. Timothy Mannion
MXS | 22 Years

MSgt. Christina Ridolfi
Heading to MS ANG | 14 Years



Best Wishes!



HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS

A REGULAR COLUMN BY KINDA-HISTORIAN MELANIE CASINEAU

104th Tactical Fighter Group Enlistees Gain Expanded Technical Training Options in 1973

BARNES AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Massachusetts- In July 1973, the Air National Guard introduced a policy change that offered male and female applicants of the 104th Tactical Fighter Group unprecedented access to technical training options.

U.S. Air Force Sgt. Bill Fortin, a recruiter for the 104th Tactical Fighter Group based at Barnes Airport from 1971 to 1983, said the new system allowed enlistees to select from a full range of Air National Guard career fields, rather than being limited to state-specific training slots.

"In the past years, states were allocated training spaces from Air Guard Washington headquarters, thus limiting choices to only those career fields available within the state," Fortin said in a July 1973 issue of Aircoop, the group's newsletter.

Under the revised policy, training slots were centralized and listed by headquarters in Washington, enabling recruiters across the country to offer applicants their choice of technical training. Qualified candidates received confirmation directly from headquarters before enlisting.

The expansion aligned with a larger national strategy. In an Aug. 23, 1973 memorandum, Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger declared the implementation of the "Total Force Policy," stating that guard and reserve units would serve as the initial and primary reinforcements for active-duty forces. At the time, more than 90% of skills taught in the Air National Guard were applicable to civilian careers.

Source: July 1973 Aircoop article by Senior Master Sgt. John Lundberg and nationalguard.mil



Eagles Over New England

The History of the
F-15 at Barnes
2007-2025



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August 15, 2025

GOLF

TOURNAMENT

SCHEDULE

REGISTRATION START:	10:00 AM
SHOTGUN START:	11:00 AM
COCKTAIL HOUR:	4:00 PM
DINNER:	6:00 PM

PRICE: \$150

PER PERSON

INCL. LUNCH ON TURN, DINNER,
GOLF PRIZES & MULLIGANS

DINNER ONLY: \$45

Raffles, Contests,
Prizes, live music

Jim Kelley
@Jim-Kelley-19



venmo

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Sponsored by 104th FW Chief Council



SATURDAY

August 23, 2025

104FW MAIN HANGAR

SCHEDULE

COMMANDERS ALL CALL: 1100

LUNCH: 1130-1330

NE BUTCHER BLOCK

ENTERTAINMENT: 1330

GAMES, BAND ETC.

POC FOR QUESTIONS CHRIS RIGA



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