

AirScoop



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Massachusetts Air National Guard

104th Fighter Wing

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Cover Photo taken by Mark Dion Sr., 104FW Roads and Grounds Supervisor

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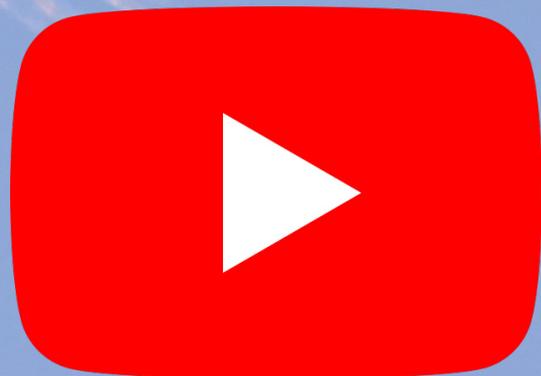
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From the CES Commander

Barnestormers,

This year will be full of transformation and steadfast support. As we embark on a new year, we face a period of significant activity and transformation. Preparations for the new aircraft are underway across the Wing, involving new equipment fielding, standard operating procedure (SOP) updates, and extensive training.

Amid these changes, the consistent and unwavering support of our units remains a cornerstone of our success. The Civil Engineer Squadron exemplifies this constant, providing essential services to the entire base, preparing for deployed environments, and supporting missions throughout Massachusetts.

Here are some highlights of their recent contributions:

Fire Department

These military and state employees, continues to provide critical services both on and off base. Responsible for all aircraft and facility firefighting at Barnes and in deployed environments. Currently, six of our firefighters are deployed in support of global missions. At home, the department has demonstrated its commitment to the community by providing mutual aid in 25 emergency responses across 10 different cities and towns. These actions were vital in protecting lives and property.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)

Provides critical support for detecting, locating, identifying, and neutralizing explosive hazards, both in wartime environments and for domestic operations. This past year, our EOD technicians supported a key deployed location while also conducting domestic operations, including range clearances, and providing support to local law enforcement and VIP protection details.

Emergency Management (EM)

The installations focal point for all-hazards readiness, responsible for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a wide array of incidents. A core function is the development and maintenance of the Installation Emergency Management Plan (IEMP), which creates a comprehensive response framework from natural disasters to man-made attacks. The flight provides critical Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives (CBRNE) training and validates installation plans through robust exercises and drills.

EM manages the Emergency Operations Center, the command hub that coordinates the installations entire response. As the Air Forces primary CBRN response force, EM specialists conduct specialized reconnaissance, hazard detection, and contamination control. They provide technical expertise during hazardous materials (HAZMAT) incidents. Reinforced by close intera-gency coordination with local, state, and federal partners to ensure a unified and effective response.

Operations and Utilities

A team of approx. 12 state and federal employees, responsible for the preventative maintenance and upkeep of the installation infrastructure. Their wide-ranging duties include the maintenance of 67 facilities, generators, and vehicle barriers, as well as the upkeep of all base roads, taxiways, ramps, and aprons. The flight ensures environmental compliance across the installation and manages snow removal operations for both the base and the airport.

*LT. Colonel Sarah Sinclair,
104thFW Civil Engineering Squadron Commander*

The 104th Fighter Wing guarantees flight line response

Story by Melanie J. Casineau 104FW/PA

BARNES AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Westfield, MA-When winter conditions halt aircraft arrivals and departures, the economic consequences extend far beyond aviation. Corporate travel, sports charters, private flights, and fuel sales are disrupted, while local restaurants, hotels, and businesses that depend on reliable air access, feel the immediate effects.

During a major snowstorm on January 25, 2026, while most of the 104th Fighter Wing remained off base, a dedicated team of five Massachusetts state employees stayed on base for more than 48 hours to ensure the runway could be cleared for emergency use. Their mission was critical: keeping the airfield operational in case aircraft needed to land or depart under urgent conditions.

The team works at the 104th Fighter Wing with the Civil Engineering Squadron. They all hold a CDL license. Ryan Ratcliffe, Mark Dion, Pete Derosier, Kyle Kleis, and Brian Salois have been working together for over 19 years.

Jeffrey R. DuBois, MA. State Superintendent at the 104th Fighter Wing, commented on the teams determined dedication to get the job done. "They know how to work together, without question", said DuBois. "They are extremely flexible, one of the best teams I have known and they just get it done!"



Westfield–Barnes Regional Airport relies on the 104th Fighter Wing to clear the primary runway and select ramp areas, making close coordination essential.

“The 104th Fighter Wing is a critical component of our community and our airport,” said Daniel Shearer, Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport Manager. “During the winter, the 104th provides additional snow removal assets, specialized equipment, and skilled personnel that significantly enhance our capabilities.”

Responsibilities are clearly defined between the two teams. “We each have a section to do,” said Ratcliffe. “Everybody knows their part. The 104th is responsible for the Gulf Taxiway, North, Bravo onto Runway 20, the South Arm, and then returning back. The airport handles Bravo Taxiway, Echo, Hotel, Foxtrot, Alpha, and Delta.”

This coordination allows snow removal operations to move quickly and efficiently. “We’ve been doing this so long that it’s second nature,” Ratcliffe added. “It’s like one big team with the city, we take over from one area, they take over from another, and we meet in the middle.”

“During the last storm, we had an aircraft land fully covered in snow,” Dion said. “The landing went fine, but when the pilot needed to take off, we had to go right back out and clean the runway again.”

Even minimal snow accumulation presents safety risks. “A thin layer of snow or ice can significantly reduce aircraft traction,” Shearer explained. “Snow must be completely removed and pushed well clear of the pavement to prevent obstructions.”





The team noted that storms of this magnitude are rare. The last comparable event occurred nearly ten years ago, when fighter jets were still parked on the ramp.

“Back then, we wouldn’t wait for six inches of snow,” Ratcliffe said. “We’d be out there with just a dusting, nonstop.”

Preparations began days before the storm, with crews fueling vehicles, each truck carrying up to 200 gallons of fuel, performing functional checks to ensure all equipment is working properly, and producing deicing fluid on site.

“Two hundred gallons of fuel will last about 20 hours before refueling,” said Dion. “If we need more, it’s available on base and can be transported to the flight line if necessary.”

Equipment bays were fully stocked with two snowblowers, four plow trucks, and four brooms. Although plans called for at least three plow trucks and two snowblowers, all equipment was prepped and ready. This readiness was essential, as the runway must be cleared to support emergency operations and ensure safe aircraft movement.

In addition to snow removal, the team is responsible for runway deicing. “We use a non-saltbased product called sodium acetate,” said Derosier. “Salt causes corrosion on jet engines and aircraft components. Sodium acetate does not, making it safer for aviation operations.” Ratcliffe has taken on the additional duty of making the deicing liquid on base saving time and money. The product is ready when needed.

NEWDEAL BrineX is the product used on the airfield. "It involves taking NEWDEAL ice melting pellets and mixing it with water to create what we call "CE Home Brew", "said Ratcliffe.

Dubois confirmed that the product is FAA approved and tested.

While winter weather limits recreational flying, it coincides with peak sports charter season. "This is the height of our sports charter traffic, including UMass football and basketball and their visiting teams," Shearer said.

Without the support of the 104th, snow removal would take longer, reopening would be delayed, and staffing costs would increase significantly.

This long-standing, mutually beneficial partnership between the 104th Fighter Wing and Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport ensures the airport remains operational through most winter storms and can return to normal operations quickly. Most importantly, it guarantees that both civilian aviation and military aircraft are ready to respond at a moment's notice, when the community and mission depend on it most.



HEADLINES & HIGHLIGHTS



Final F-15 Disassembly



Meta AI Glasses

SUNGLASSES

Authorized Frames:

Black, brown, white, dark blue, gray, transparent, or gold/silver wire.

Traditional gray, brown or dark shades
AUTHORIZED.

Mirrored lenses or any smart glasses with AI, photo or video capabilities while in uniform are
UNAUTHORIZED.



HEADPHONES

Wear and use of earbuds, headphones, or bluetooth-enabled devices while in uniform, indoors or outdoors, is
RESTRICTED TO OFFICIAL DUTIES ONLY.

Authorized in PT gear

Clearer DAFI Standards



BARNESTORMER COMMUNITY





MSgt Timothy Wachta
Occupational Safety Manager



Maj Martin "Hekir" Clark
Chief of Safety



SMSgt Denis Brennan
Weapons Safety Manager



SMSgt Matthew Leonard
Occupational Safety
Specialist



MSgt Jerry Paquette
Occupational Safety
Specialist

Meet the Barnes Aviation, Occupational and Weapons Safety team.

Here at the 104th, keeping everyone safe is the top priority. The main idea is: if you see something that looks unsafe, you need to say something. Before you jump into a task, it's smart to do a quick risk assessment when you think it's needed. Just take a moment to think through what could go wrong. It's not just the safety office's job to keep an eye out; it's on every single one of us. Think twice before you perform any task and keep an eye on each other!

Don't be afraid to speak up! You can report any hazard you find to your supervisor, the facility manager, your unit's safety rep, or just go straight to the main safety office. There's an official form for it (AF Form 457), and your commander should make sure you can easily get your hands on one.

Also, just a heads-up: the safety team will be starting their annual inspections of all the buildings on base this month and will continue throughout the year. This will include identifying hazards and assessing each section's safety programs such as JSTO's, fall protection, motorcycle safety and Unit Safety Representatives responsibilities.

The safety office is getting refreshed and is focused on making sure everyone has the knowledge and power to help build a better, more modern safety culture. Avoiding all mishaps by proper safety training, identifying hazards, and implanting risk management is key!

If you have any concerns or ideas, you can call the Safety office directly at 698-1009 or shoot them an email at 104.FW.SAFETY@us.af.mil.

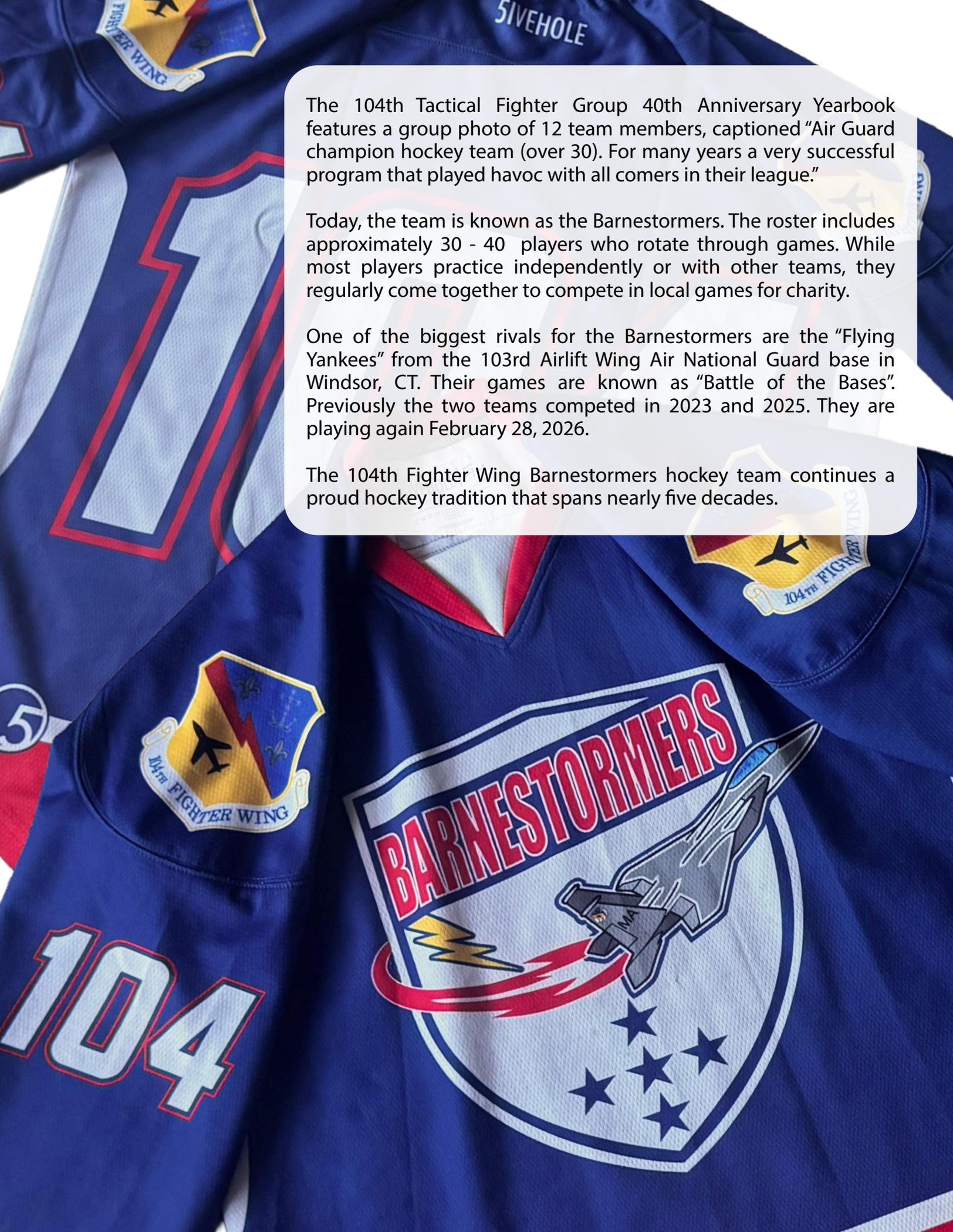
New Recruits

**Good Luck Recruits who are
leaving in February!**

**ISAIAH RIVERA
EVA NAMUYIGA
HORATIO PINNOCK
MATTHEW APPLETON
JOSEPH LANGONE
BRADEN SULLIVAN
COLIN CUSACK
VANESSA ANTIL
MICHAEL CLARK
WYATT HEETER
KEVIN LEE
ALEXANDRA LAROCCO
AVA LIENAU FREEMON
SOPHIA PERKINS
LUCAS MORGANELLI
JASON BELKUS
TYLER PARENT
DANIEL LAGUERRE,
ALAYSA SOUZA**

Aim High!





The 104th Tactical Fighter Group 40th Anniversary Yearbook features a group photo of 12 team members, captioned "Air Guard champion hockey team (over 30). For many years a very successful program that played havoc with all comers in their league."

Today, the team is known as the Barnestormers. The roster includes approximately 30 - 40 players who rotate through games. While most players practice independently or with other teams, they regularly come together to compete in local games for charity.

One of the biggest rivals for the Barnestormers are the "Flying Yankees" from the 103rd Airlift Wing Air National Guard base in Windsor, CT. Their games are known as "Battle of the Bases". Previously the two teams competed in 2023 and 2025. They are playing again February 28, 2026.

The 104th Fighter Wing Barnestormers hockey team continues a proud hockey tradition that spans nearly five decades.

F-35 CONVERSION CORNER

The conversion journey began in Spring of 2023 when the secretary of the Air Force approved Barnes ANGB as the preferred location for a new fleet of F-35s. This selection drove the requirement for favorable completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which was achieved in November 2024. Upon favorable completion of the EIS, the Secretary of the Air Force signed and reported to Congress the Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD was approved in December 2024, which means that the decision to station the F-35 at Barnes is official! We completed divesting F-15s with the last to leave September 2025. We are preparing for the arrival of our first F-35s in June 2026.

- Maj. Brian 'Brass' Burke

An F-35 fighter jet is shown in profile, flying towards the left. The aircraft is white with grey and blue accents. It is surrounded by a colorful, multi-layered outline in shades of yellow, red, and blue. The background is a solid blue color.

36

**Personnel currently
off-base training
(2 LRS | 34 Maintainers)**

4

**Fully Qualified Pilots
7 currently in training**

15

**New construction projects
scheduled throughout the
conversion - starting with OPS**

20

**The number of F-35s
scheduled to be delivered
by Summer 2026**

