

AirScoop



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Massachusetts Air National Guard

104th Fighter Wing

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From the Command Team

Barnestormers,

As we continue to push toward the end of FY25, I want to extend a warm welcome to each of you for September RSD. Your dedication and hard work continue to drive our mission forward, and I am proud of the exceptional efforts you all exemplify every day.

September RSD marks the final drill with the legendary F-15 Eagle before we transition to the next chapter — the F-35 Lightning II. This is a moment of pride, reflection, and anticipation.

For 17 years, the F-15 eagle has been our steadfast partner in defending our skies, demonstrating unmatched agility, power, and reliability. To the Barnestormers, your dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment have made this aircraft a symbol of our strength and excellence.

To everyone who has flown, maintained, and supported the F-15, thank you. Your sacrifices, your professionalism, and your passion have laid a solid foundation for the next generation of fighters. Your legacy is etched into the history of our force, inspiring those who will follow.

I encourage everyone to participate in the Big E Military Appreciation Day, on September 12. This is a fantastic opportunity to honor and celebrate the sacrifices of our service members and show our support for the military community and access the many resources available for military members and veterans.

Additionally, on September 14, the Operations Group will be holding a Change of Command Ceremony, where Colonel Michael 'Shot' Glass will relinquish command to Lt. Col. Ashley 'Wreck' Rolfe. Let us come together to recognize the leadership transition and reinforce our commitment to operational excellence as we move into this new chapter of the F-35.

Lastly, as we approach the holiday season, I want to emphasize the importance of safety in all that we do. Let's maintain our focus on safety first, ensuring we protect ourselves, our colleagues, and our mission.

Thank you for your outstanding contributions.

Colonel "Moon" Halasi-Kun & CM Sgt Gardner



End of an Era: The 104th Fighter Wing Prepares to Say Farewell to the F-15 Eagle

STORY BY Melanie J. Casineau, 104FW/ PA

For the past 18 years, the men and women of the 104th Fighter Wing have watched the F-15 Eagle fly above Westfield and return from missions both overseas and across the country. They've maintained this aircraft, ensuring its place in history as one of the most dominant fighter jets ever built.

The Wing has launched alert scrambles, defended the skies over New England and New York, protected over 40 million Americans, and accounted for nearly a third of the nation's GDP. The Eagle has not only served its mission, it has earned a place in the hearts of those who worked on, flew, and supported it.

Before the farewell event began, Col. David "Moon" Halasi-Kun, Commander of the 104th Fighter Wing, addressed the crowd with a tearful, yet very prideful speech.

"If you threaten this nation from the Atlantic or from the poles, you'll be met by a Barnestormer," Halasi-kun said. "That's your first point of contact from the air with the United States, a Barnestormer."

Halasi-Kun, who began his career flying the F-15 and chose to finish with the Eagle, delivered a heartfelt message. With over 21 years of service and more than 3,100 hours in the F-15, his connection to the aircraft runs deep.

He reflected on the places the Eagle has taken the 104th Fighter Wing over the past 18 years; Romania, Germany, the Netherlands, and many others. "I hope when I mention these places, it brings a smile to your face, it does for me,"

Halasi-kun said. "Remember the people, the planes, and the missions. I'm never going to forget any of it."

Family, teamwork and friends were central themes in Halasi-Kun's speech.

"We've been around the world together, think about that," he said. "We've been around the world with this aircraft."

The event also honored individuals who have had a lasting impact. Master Sgt. Josh Daniels, 104th Fighter Wing Crew Chief, who originally arrived from Otis ANGB was given jet number 013 in 2011. He was recognized for maintaining the same aircraft for over 17 years.

Also recognized was the youngest 104th Fighter Wing Crew Chief, A1C Luke Florek, who will transition to the F-35F. Florek was "coined" by Halasi-Kun and challenged to maintain his jet for his entire career, just as Daniels did.

Daniels plans to continue working with the F-35 when they arrive. "I am looking forward to learning the new technologies and seeing what the capabilities are with the F-35."

Halasi-Kun then took a moment to thank the many members who transitioned from Otis, as well as those who stayed through the retirement of the A-10 to welcome the F-15.

"Eighteen years later, we are an unstoppable team," he said. "With 104 victories and zero losses, the F-15 Eagle clearly belonged at the 104th Fighter Wing."

He extended his gratitude to every Airman in the Wing: "You gave life to the Eagle. Keeping a 40-year-old aircraft combat-ready again and again became routine. Focusing on one mission and doing it better than anyone else, that's who we are."





As tradition, the Wing hosted a farewell celebration to honor the hard work and legacy built over nearly two decades. The hangar was alive with music, games, and memories.

The F-15, jet number 178, stood proudly at the center of it all, a backdrop for group photos, final looks, and selfies. A band played, members played pickleball, enjoyed video games with Frost Call, and cornhole matches, all surrounding the jet that defined an era.

Attendees included current Wing members, their families, alumni, and supporting organizations. Among them was Colonel Marcel Kerdavid, the first commander to welcome the F-15 to the 104th in 2007.

Throughout the hangar, groups of former members shared stories and reflected on their time with the Eagle. Some who left when the A-10 departed returned to meet up with old friends who had stayed with the transition. In the coming weeks, the last F-15s will depart Westfield, marking the final chapter of the Eagle's legacy.

"The Eagle's legacy doesn't end here," Halasi-Kun said in closing. "It lives on in the lessons we've learned and in the culture we've built. That's what we pass on to the next generation. Our Wing is no stranger to change, from the P-47, P-51, F-94, F-86, F-100, A-10, F-15, and now to the F-35, we've always adapted. Because it's not just about the machine. It's the people of the 104th who make the difference. It's generations of excellence. That is our legacy."

[VIEW THE GALLERY HERE](#)

HEADLINES & HIGHLIGHTS



MXG BOLSTERS READINESS



PILOTS CELEBRATE FINAL FLIGHT



SFS STAYS READY

BARNESTORMER COMMUNITY



CREATING CONNECTIONS



PARAGUAN AF VISITS



GLOBAL GAURDIAN

CADRE'S CORNER

Happy September Drill!

We are continuing to send off recruits!

Best Wishes to our Barnestormers who are headed to BMT in September:

Ernest Obeng
Thomas Nuesslein
Loise Chiuri

Aim High!
SSgt Ryan Carvalho
SSgt Mykel Potter



PROMOTIONS

SSgt.	TSgt. Ryan Carvalho	FSS
SrA	SSgt. Shaun Gezotis	FSS
SrA	SSgt. Joao Pontes	MXS
A1C	SSgt. Braedin Dobek	OSF
A1C	SrA Macrina Molina	MXS
A1C	SrA Joseph Rhodes	MDG
A1C	SrA Caleb Tekpeh	LRS
Amn	A1C Olawunmi Aina	LRS

Congratulations!

RETIREMENTS AND DEPARTURES

SMSgt. Andrew Everett
MXS | 22 Years

MSgt. Morgan Trede
CES | 21 Years

SMSgt. Jennifer Rodriguez
OSF | 20 Years

MSgt. Joseph Lamour
CES | 20 Years

Col. Andrew St. Jean
Heading to 102nd | 23 Years

SSgt. Matthew Collier
7 Years

SSgt. Hannah Jones Trudeau
6 Years

SSgt. Joshua Paquette
6 Years

SrA Nhat Phan
6 Years

SrA Joshua Gath
6 Years

Best Wishes!

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS

**A REGULAR COLUMN BY KINDA-HISTORIAN
MELANIE J. CASINEAU**

From Eagles to Lightnings: A Legacy of Change at the 104th Fighter Wing

The 104th Fighter Wing has seen its fair share of transitions. Today's shift from the F-15 Eagle to the F-35 Lightning II mirrors the historic handoff from the A-10 Warthog back in 2007. The atmosphere then and now is filled with familiar sights, Fini-Flights, farewell celebrations, new aircraft training, and new faces stepping into new roles.

In 2007, following a BRAC (base realignment and closure) decision, Barnes Air National Guard Base entered a new era with a \$45 million investment in construction and modernization projects to support the incoming F-15s. Now, nearly two decades later, history repeats itself, this time with the F-35. After a favorable Environmental Impact Study, the Secretary of the Air Force signed the Record of Decision (ROD) in December 2024, officially designating Barnes as a future home for the F-35.


The timeline for this transition is very similar to 2007. Capt. Matthew Mutti (Ret.), then with 104th FW Public Affairs, reflected on the A-10 leaving.

"Each month, more of the 104th's A-10s will fly away, two-by-two, until September when the last two are expected to vanish. By the time the transition is complete, it will be about a year later."

Major Mark Silvers, an F-15 pilot with the 104th, echoed this comment recently. "We've already begun divesting F-15s and will continue through September 2025 in preparation for the arrival of our first F-35s in June 2026."

The departure of the A-10s in 2007 marked the end of a nearly 30-year close-air support mission. Likewise, the retirement of the F-15 closes an 18-year chapter for the Wing.



A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft in flight, showing the cockpit and engine nacelles.

That era ended with a series of memorable Fini-Flights. On March 30, 2007, a historic milestone was reached when Col. Jon "Motley" Mott broke the A-10 flight hour record previously held by Gen. James Skiff, logging an estimated 4,570 hours. Flying with Col. Mott were Col. Marcel "Jake" Kerdavid, Lt. Col. Ken "Torch" Stiles, and Lt. Col. Ed "Sped" Sommers, together, their four-ship formation had over 15,550 combined flying hours, each pilot individually surpassing the 4,000-hour mark.

Fini-Flights looked a bit different then, A-10s were welcomed home with fire trucks spraying arcs of water. Today, the send-offs are louder, and families gather on the ramp to greet their pilots after one last flight.

Also present in 2007 was Col. Connie E. Coward (Ret.), who had flown the first A-10 into Barnes nearly 30 years prior. He returned to witness the last two depart. "The aircraft has changed so much over the years," Coward reflected. "It didn't have all these electronic gadgets back then."

One wonders what he might say today about the F-15s leaving and the F-35s arriving with cutting-edge stealth and sensor technology.

New beginnings aren't limited to aircraft. In 2007, Airman Ian O. McAlister became the first 104th member to achieve a perfect score on the F-15 avionics course at Sheppard AFB.

At the recent Farewell to the Eagle event, 104th FW Commander Col. David Halasi-Kun summarized the spirit of the Wing.

"Our Wing is no stranger to change. From the P-47, P-51, F-94, F-86, F-100, A-10, F-15, and now to the F-35, we've always adapted. Because it's not just about the machine. It's the people of the 104th who make the difference. It's generations of excellence. That is our legacy."

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 have already begun divesting F-15s and will continue divesting through September of this year in preparation for the arrival of our first F-35s in June 2026.

- Maj. Mark 'Mr. Chow' Silvers



36

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

2

Fully Qualified Pilots
4 currently in training
4 leaving for training- OCT

15

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

20

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



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ANG
Alumni
Association**

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