

AirScoop



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



April 2026



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Massachusetts Air National Guard

104th Fighter Wing

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Cover Photo taken by A1C Ellen Ozkaptan, 104FW Public Affairs

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FULL STORY ON DVIDS

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MANG hosts inaugural SNCO Professional Development Course

Story by Jerry Hewitt, 104FW/PA

Massachusetts Air National Guard (MANG) recently graduated 41 Airmen across four different units and three states during the Air National Guard's first 700-level Senior Noncommissioned Officer (SNCO) Foundations course at Camp Nett in Niantic, Connecticut, from March 16-20, 2026.

Tailored for the ranks of Master Sergeant and Senior Master Sergeant, the five-day SNCO Foundations course connects institutional, functional, and base delivered education, training, and experiences, and will ultimately serve as a prerequisite for Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Academy.

"This course is critical because it sharpens the leadership skills our SNCOs need in order to guide today's force," said Chief Master Sgt. Meghan Gehl, MANG Professional Military Education (PME) Commandant. "It not only reinforces WHAT we do, but WHY we do it, ensuring we're developing disciplined, adaptable leaders who are ready to take care of our Airmen and accomplish the mission."

As the first 700-level Foundations course across the Air National Guard, it sets the standard for how senior enlisted leaders are developed for the future.

During the course, Airmen from across the 104th Fighter Wing, 102nd Intelligence Wing, 143rd Airlift Wing, and 224th Security Forces Squadron were split into the "Apex Raptors" flight and the "Iron Seagulls" flight, where class instructors spoke on leadership, strengthening operational readiness, budgeting and defense funding, manpower, and force generation strategies.

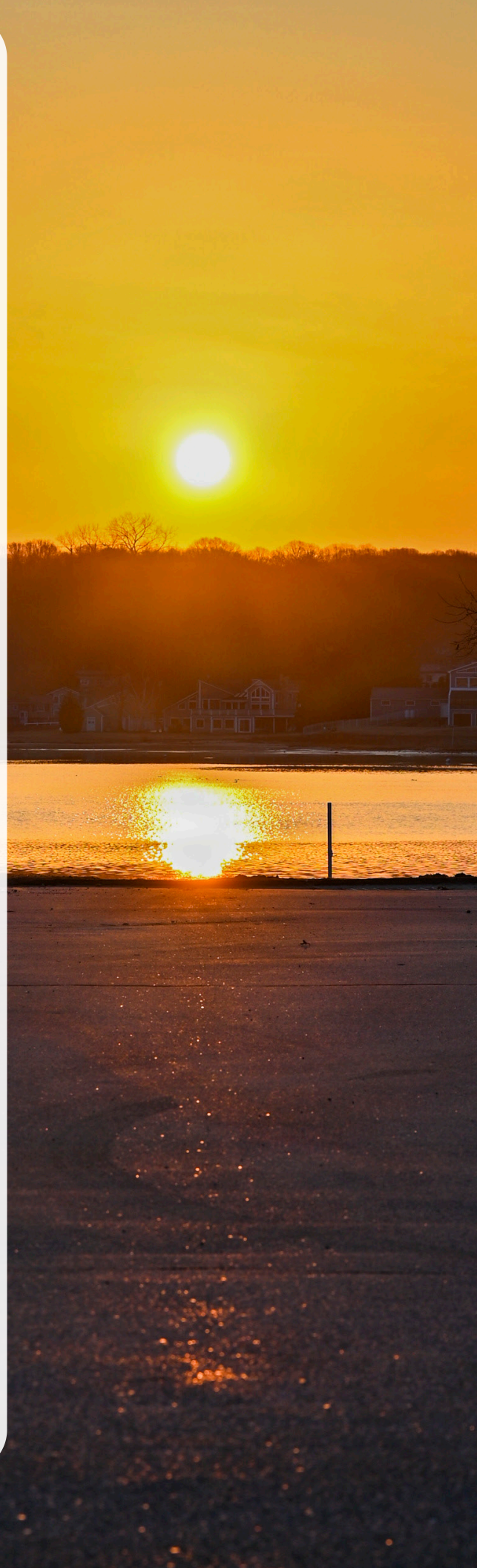
On March 20, the fifth and final day of the course, Airmen and instructors woke up with the rising sun to participate in a two-mile fun run prior to a chief panel discussion and the Air National Guard's first SNCO Foundations course graduation.

Not only did the run boost morale amongst Airmen at the Foundations course, it also served as a benchmark to the new Air Force physical fitness standards.

"The two-mile run really let us see where we're at as senior NCO's with the new Air Force fitness standards coming up, and to also set an example and the way forward for our younger NCOs on how to get to our new fitness requirements," said U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Mike Reynolds, an aerospace medical technician at the 104th Fighter Wing Medical Group. "It really is a great way to cap off the week that we've had."

Following the run, Airmen were able to ask questions on leadership to a dedicated chiefs panel, consisting of U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Michelle O'Keefe, Massachusetts Air National Guard (MANG) State Command Chief Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey St. Jean, 104th Fighter Wing Maintenance Group Senior Enlisted Leader, U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Shane McGuire, 102nd Intelligence Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant, and U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Nicholas Kollett, 143rd Airlift Wing Command Chief.

The chief panel provided the graduating Airmen with valuable insight on impactful mentorship and what it means to be a leader at the SNCO level.





“For the first iteration of the 700-level Foundations Course, I would say it was a big success,” said Chief Master Sgt. St. Jean. “The quality of questions asked by the students to the Chiefs panel showed a real thirst for knowledge, and a strong desire to become the best senior leaders they can be, and that gives everyone hope for the future of the force.”

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Ari Leonard, a financial management technician with the 104th Fighter Wing, received the honor of being selected as class leader for the Apex Raptors flight, and spoke on the significance of the course.

“The Foundations course is designed to set the stage for SNCOs before they attend SNCOA. The course creates a unique opportunity for SNCOs to come together and learn from each other, and a major benefit of the course was the focus on peer mentorship,” said Leonard. “To be recognized by my peers was an honor. To be able to contribute to the leadership development that took place this week was a privilege and an experience that will stay with me.”

Immediately following graduation, Airmen celebrated by singing “The Air Force Song” in unison, and also thanked their instructors for providing a wealth of knowledge and expertise throughout the five-day course.

“The instructors’ approach to guiding the students to achieve the learning objectives was spot-on; all along the way they led the teams down the pathway to discovery, challenging the students to think critically, and letting them solve the problems without solving things for them,” said St. Jean. “The instructors worked incredibly hard to ensure that the quality of the experience would be very high.”

HEADLINES & HIGHLIGHTS



Phast Track Medical Readiness



EOD Conducts Monthly Detonation



Catholic Service back at Barnes

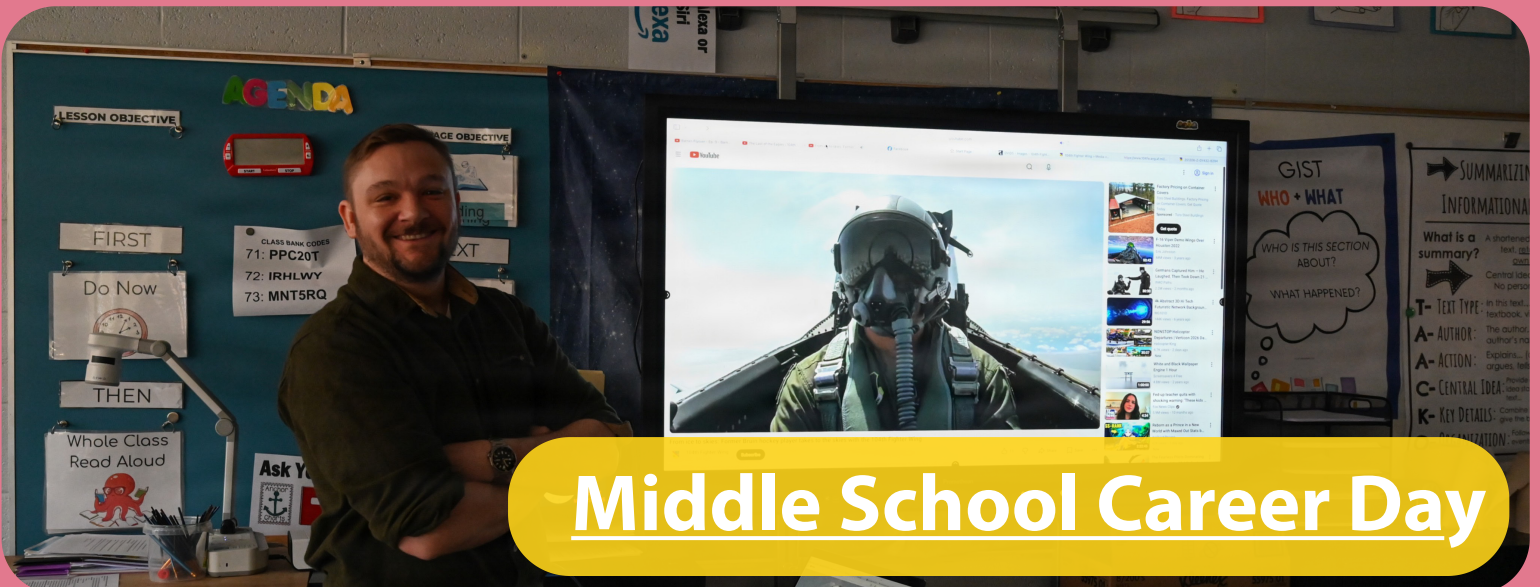
BARNESTORMER COMMUNITY



Former 104FW member receives award



Smith Vocational High School



Middle School Career Day

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!!

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS

A REGULAR COLUMN BY KINDA-HISTORIAN
MELANIE J. CASINEAU

Throw back to April 1950, "The Thunderbolt "
Vol.1 No. 12, a newsletter written by the
131st Fighter Squadron.

State Purchase of Barnes said Likely to Pass

According to the statements made by some of those present at the dinner which followed the recent inspection of this field by the 21 man delegation of State Legislators, as well as the opinion of writers in local newspapers, the possibility of purchase by the state of Barnes Airport looks better now than at any time since the first time the bill was introduced.

On top of favorable reports emanating from the legislature, comes the announcement that the bill was approved for action by the Aviation Committee of the House.

The inspection trip was initiated, mainly through the efforts of Rep, Anthony PARENZO, D- Westfield, who submitted the bill to the legislature.

The group was flown from Logan airport in Boston to Barnes field here, in one of the Air Guard C- 47's, piloted by Lts. Frederick Gillian and Andrew Marshall of the 101st. They were given excellent cover escort by a flight of four F-47's from the 131st Fighter Squadron led by Captain Bruno J Grabovski, supported by Lt's, Walter Pratt, Fred Johnson, and Harry Cresotti. The boys flew a pretty tight formation with the C-47 in the center.

MASSACHUSETTS



AIR



NATIONAL



GUARD

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During their visit here, the solons had a wonderful opportunity to see exactly what the Barnes had to offer. In coming by plane, they had a chance to observe the layout of the field from the air, and note the possibilities of expanding the field into one of the best in New England. Once on the ground, they proceeded to inspect the runways, lighting equipment, drainage systems, and terminal facilities in an exclusive tour of the whole base.

After the tour of Barnes, the group adjourned to a dinner in the Colonial Inn, Westfield, after which they flew to Bradley Field in Windsor Locks, CT to give it an appraisal, then flew back to Boston to resume their regular duties.

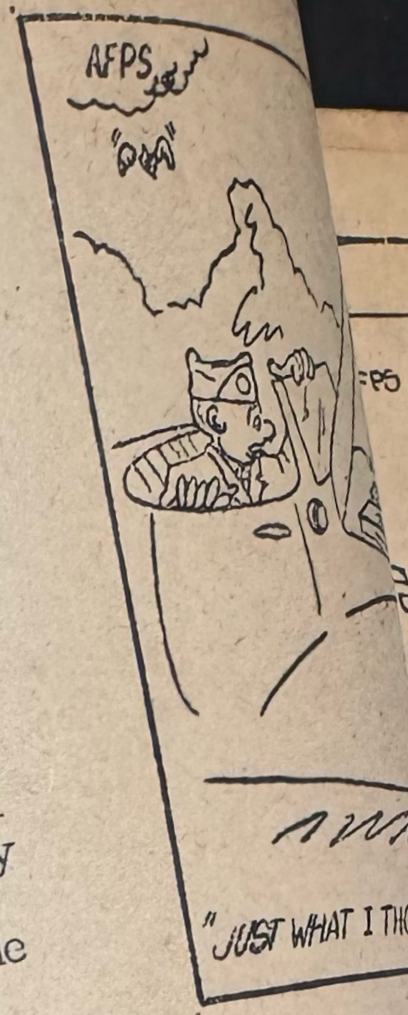
Among the visitors was Rep. James Hannon, D- Lee, blind lawmaker, who was accompanied by his well known "seeing eye" dog "Susie", who was personally greeted by our mascot "Rocker Box".

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The 'THUNDERBOLT'



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**

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT PATRICK J. SHAUGHNESSY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP 2026

**Application
Deadline
15 April**

ABOUT THE CHIEF

CMSgt Patrick J. Shaughnessy dedicated 35 years of service to the Massachusetts Air National Guard before his passing on June 21, 2006.

Renowned for his unwavering commitment to leadership, mentorship, and camaraderie, he embodied the principles of service to community and country.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- ✓ All current senior students enrolled in the city of Westfield (Westfield High School, St Mary's High School, and Westfield Technical Academy).
- ✓ Proof of enrollment or acceptance to a 2 or 4 year college or certified trade program.
- ✓ Minimum 3.0 GPA

APPLICATION PROCESS

Submit application package to school guidance counselor. Winner will be notified on or before the 30th of April 2026

**Email
applications to:
104fw.pa@gmail.com
Subject: Scholarship**

Visit 104FW.ANG.AF.MIL



2026 Tour Schedule



**Apr 7 | Apr 21 | May 5 | May 19
Jun 2 | Jun 16 | Jun 30 | Jul 14
Jul 28 | Aug 11 | Aug 25 | Sep 22**

WELCOME TO THE F-35

GOLF

TOURNAMENT

JUNE 12

Registration @ 8am
Shotgun start @ 9am



SOUTHAMPTON COUNTRY CLUB

\$125 EACH

Incl. LUNCH/DINNER

\$40 EACH

DINNER ONLY

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W/
REG.

RAFFLES & PRIZES



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Kelley 781-223-8308 J.



Sponsored by 104th
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Thunderbolt Council



