

## 104<sup>th</sup> FIGHTER WING



### LINEAGE

104<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group (Air Defense), Apr 1956  
Redesignated 104<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Group  
Redesignated 104<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, 1 Jun 1992  
Redesignated 104<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1995

### STATIONS

Westfield, MA

### ASSIGNMENTS

#### WEAPON SYSTEMS

##### Mission Aircraft

P-47D, 1946  
P-51D, 1951  
F-94A, 1954  
F-86H, 1957  
F-84F, 1964  
F-100D, 1971  
A-10A, 1979

##### Support Aircraft

#### COMMANDERS

BG John J. Stefanik, 1956  
Col Edward D. Slasienski, 1963  
Col John J. Sevila, 1970

Col Bruno J. Grabovsky, Mar 1973  
Col Myrle B. Langley, 1978  
Col David R. Cummock, 1981  
LTC Alan T. Reid, 1986  
Col Richard A. Platt, 1990  
Col David W. Cherry, 1995  
LTC Dan Swift, 1997  
Col Robert T. Brooks, Jr.  
Col James Keefe

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

### **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

Aircraft in Cloud: Represents the primary mission; Bolt of Lightning: Represents the swiftness to strike; Two Fleur-de-lis: Represents the deployments to and from France; Five Stars: Represents the 131 Fighter Squadron; Crown & Crown Points: Represents the men of the many ethnic backgrounds That started the unit; Emblem designed by: MSgt Robert J. Delia Penna Original artwork by: SSgt Donald Bein.

## **MOTTO**

Dedicated To Excellence

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

War-fighting Mission: The unit's Designed Operational Capability (DOC) is Close Air Support (CAS) and Air Interdiction (AI). Primary employment is force application in the AI/CAS/JMO (Joint Maritime Operations)/JAAT (Joint Air Attack Team) mission areas. The unit maintains special capabilities in Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR), Airborne-Forward Air Control (A-FAC), Night Vision Goggles (NVG) and Precision Guided Munitions (PGM) mission capabilities.

The conversion to Group status took place in April, 1956, with the birth of the 104th Fighter Group (Air Defense), with an authorized strength of over 1000 personnel. Col Stefanik stepped up from command of the Squadron to that of the Group. Majors Bruno J. Grabovsky, Edward J. Rumanowski, and Edward D. Slasienski commanded the 131st Fighter-Interceptor, 104th Air

Base and 104th Material Squadrons, respectively. Capt Stephen P. Ferraro headed the 104th Infirmary; Maj Richard Mahoney took command of the 8131st; and Capt Peter Giorgio remained in charge of the 131st Forecasting Flight.

The 104th Tactical Fighter Group came back into being in October, with the personnel structure of the base very similar to the present arrangement. The Group headquarters was the top level of command at Barnes, with the 131st Fighter, 104th Materiel, and 104th Combat Support Squadrons, the 104th Dispensary and the 131st Weather Flight rounding out the base complement.

A big split marked the opening of 1966, as the 104th Materiel Squadron, which had been the largest unit in the Group, was divided into the 104th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and the 104th Supply Squadron. This was a natural separation of divergent functions and made the organizational structure less unwieldy. The new CAM squadron called for ten officers and 217 airmen, and the supply unit was authorized eight and 98. Maj Benedict Tarnauskas and Lt Col Walter Charow were the first commanders of the new units, with Lt Col Leonard B Murphy, former commander of the Materiel Squadron, stepping up to the post of deputy commander for materiel in the Group headquarters.

1976 - 104th personnel spend two weeks in January at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska in the major joint service operation "Jack Frost 76." In the summer, the 104th goes to Nellis AFB, Nevada for the first of its "Red Flag" exercise participation.

The unit receives its first Outstanding Unit Award for its conversion from the F-100 to the A-10.

The 104th collects its second Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

An Outstanding Unit Award is accepted by the 104th for the third time in four years.

The 104th helps validate the Total Force concept by deploying for six weeks to Operation Deny Flight and Deliberate Force, flying combat missions for the first time in the unit's history. The unit also receives its fourth Outstanding Unit Award for its accomplishments during the period of January 1, 1993 through July 31, 1994.

1996 -The unit collects its fifth Outstanding Unit Award for the period of January 1, 1995 through June 30 1996.

Members of the 104th Fighter Wing are activated per a Presidential Selective Recall to deploy in support of NATO operations in Kosovo. One hundred fifty unit personnel deployed to Trapani, Italy, to join members from A-10 units from Battle creek, Michigan and Boise, Idaho. The three units combined to form a joint expeditionary squadron that flew more than 400 sorties, helping to pave the way for the signing of the peace accord, ending years of violence.

The unit officially received its sixth Outstanding Unit Award for the period of August 31, 1997 through August 30, 1999. The unit also deployed to Al Jaber Air Base, Kuwait in support of Air Expeditionary Force in July. Several unit members also deployed to various locations throughout

Turkey, Italy and Saudi Arabia for Expeditionary Combat Support from May through October.

Beginning in January, the wing deploys approximately 500 personnel in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom to an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia and to other locations within the same region. There, the wing becomes the lead unit of the 387th Air Expeditionary Wing, a combined unit comprised of 103rd Fighter Wing, Connecticut Air National Guard personnel and personnel from other units. The wing sends 11 A-1 Os to the deployed location where they fly each day of the war, compiling a 98 percent Mission Effectiveness Rate with no combat losses or damage. In March, the wing's Services Flight captured the 2003 Kenneth Disney Award as the best dining facility operation in the Air National Guard, breaking a record for points earned in the process.

2004 - The 104th Fighter Wing deploys five members of the Transportation Section of the Logistics Readiness Squadron in February to serve as convoy drivers in Iraq supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. They are deployed for an initial period for 179 days. The Wing is presented its seventh overall Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period from January 1 - May 21, 2003, recognizing its service as the lead unit of the 387th Air Expeditionary Group, 410th Air Expeditionary Wing, in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Wing is awarded the National Guard Bureau's Winston P. Wilson Trophy as most outstanding Air National Guard unit equipped with jet fighter or reconnaissance aircraft for 2003. The award recognizes the 104th's role in leading the development of the Litening II Targeting Pod Program for the A-10 aircraft community. The Wing provided 34 modified aircraft, 18 Litening II Pods and 54 qualified pilots in less than three months, an amount triple the initial goal. Upon completion of the project, the Wing deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, where its efforts in combat ensured that no Scud missiles were launched during the conflict and that the sanctity of coalition forces were preserved. In August, the Wing's Operations Group Commander, Col. Michael D. Akey, is named Commander of the Massachusetts Air National Guard. 2005- Col Marcel E. Kerdauid, Jr., formerly the Wing's Vice Commander, assumes command of the Wing from Col. Michael R. Boulanger in January. Colonel Kerdauid becomes the 13th Commander of the Wing. Also in January, Lt. Col. Jon K. Mott is named Vice Commander. The Wing receives the eighth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in its history for the period from August 25, 2002 to August 25, 2004, further recognizing its accomplishments leading up to and through its participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On June 1, 2011, at approximately 3:30 p.m. the skyline of Springfield Mass. changed as winds gusting beyond 130 miles-an-hour, a spinning cyclone of destruction spun debris, and moved from building to building leaving a wake of devastation in its trail. All told, when the tornado dissipated it had moved from the Westfield through Springfield, Wilbraham, Monson, Ware, Brimfield, and Sturbridge. Closely following the winds sweeping through, the National Guard was quickly responding to provide support, relief and security. The dynamic nature of the guard allows for rapid response and the ability to integrate and work seamlessly with municipal and town authorities. Teams with chainsaws were deployed to cut debris. Units were sent to augment the state and municipal police, serving as sentries to the road ways that were destroyed. Communication teams were sent to establish communication networks. They established radios, cell phone and the internet connections. Public Affairs was tasked to provide damage assessments for the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency; and document the state's

response. Search and rescue team as well as the guard's medical response personnel were tasked to look for those still trapped and help treat any injured. 24-hours following the disaster 1,000 Mass. National Guard members were deployed to the effected towns. The Army and Air National Guard worked with multiple civilian agencies. All organizations involved operated along the same protocols, focusing on serving the affected communities. Many of the first responders were traditional guard members, serving in their full-time capacity as firefighters, police and EMTs, aiding to the interoperability. Four days following the disaster, the recovery effort is evident. Neighborhoods' have seen their power restored; streets that were impassable are now being cleared. All thanks to countless volunteers, members of the city/town's first responders and the Massachusetts National Guard.

Due to scheduled runway construction this summer, F-15s from the Massachusetts Air National Guard's 104th Fighter Wing at Barnes ANG Base in Westfield will temporarily split operations between Otis ANG Base on Cape Cod and Westover Air Reserve Base near Springfield, according to Barnes officials. The wing will maintain its aerospace control alert posture at Cape Cod, while flying training missions out of Westover, states Barnes' May 30 release. "We anticipate approximately 12 F-15s will be based at Westover as we complete our construction projects here at Barnes," said Col. James Keefe, 104th FW commander. Operating the training missions at Westover "will allow us to maintain our proficiency, while we maintain our alert posture at Otis," he said. Otis, home to the Air Guard's 102nd Intelligence Wing, lost its F-15s to Barnes as part of BRAC 2005. There's still some infrastructure at Otis from its fighter days that the Barnes airmen will be able to utilize. Westover is home to Air Force Reserve Command's 439th Airlift Wing. Barnes' runway repairs are scheduled to take up to six months to complete, meaning the F-15s are expected to be back home by year's end. 2013

Air National Guardsmen gathered at Barnes ANG Base in western Massachusetts, along with federal, state, and local government officials, to celebrate the re-opening of the runway that the 104th Fighter Wing's F-15s use. The re-opening ceremony took place on Jan. 31. The base is adjacent to Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport, which shares the runway. "With this newly renovated and fully mission-capable runway at Barnes . . . , the Air Guard will be better able to protect the homeland and fight America's wars," said Lt. Gen. Stanley Clarke, ANG director, in the wing's Feb. 3 release. The renovation was a \$21 million project. "This runway project enhances our ability to perform our 24/7 aerospace control alert mission . . . to protect the northeastern United States, and our ability to provide military support worldwide," said Col. James Keefe, 104th FW commander. During the construction, Barnes' F-15s operated from Otis ANG Base on Cape Cod and Westover Air Reserve Base near Springfield. 2014

An F-15C pilot killed when his aircraft crashed into a Virginia forest on Aug. 27, 2014, was incapacitated minutes before impact, preventing him from recovering from a rapid descent, according to an accident investigation board report, released Monday. Lt. Col. Morris Fontenot, the inspector general for the 104th Fighter Wing at Barnes ANGB, Mass., was ferrying the jet to NAS New Orleans, La., for a radar upgrade. Just over 30 minutes into the flight, the aircraft began descending about 12,000 feet per minute. "At some point during the mishap flight, the [pilot] received an environmental control system warning light indicating higher than normal

temperature in the avionics bay," states the report. Investigators could not determine that was the reason for the aircraft's decent, but at 8:56 a.m., Fontenot responded to a call from air traffic control declaring an emergency. The center requested his status and seconds later Fontenot responded, "Affirm. Standby" as his aircraft passed 36,000 feet MSL. The aircraft reached supersonic speed before it impacted the ground at 8:58 a.m. It was inverted between 60- to 70-degrees at the time, states the report. Fontenot "did not attempt to eject" even though there was "sufficient altitude to recover [the aircraft] after declaring an emergency," states the report. The reason he was incapacitated "could not be determined." The loss of the aircraft was valued at \$45.2 million. An F-15C, tail number 86-0157, crashed in Virginia on Aug. 27, 2014, killing the pilot.



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