

# AirScoop



104th Fighter Wing | [www.104fw.af.mil](http://www.104fw.af.mil)



August 2026





**The AirScoop is a product of the 104th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office**

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## **— Mission Statement —**

**Forge combat-ready Airmen prepared to defend our Nation and employ lethal F-35 airpower**

## **— Vision Statement —**

**To be America's premier combat wing - projecting decisive, unrelenting airpower across the spectrum of joint warfare**

## **— Wing Priorities —**

**| Develop elite Airmen | Optimize readiness and lethality |**  
**| Strengthen partnerships | Drive continuous improvement |**



# 104th Fighter Wing Mutual aid: A resource communities depend on

Story by Melanie J. Casineau

BARNES AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, WESTFIELD, Mass. - Mutual aid is more than an agreement between neighboring fire departments; it is a commitment to teamwork, coordination and readiness when emergencies happen.

For the 104th Fighter Wing Fire Department, mutual aid means responding alongside neighboring departments when additional personnel or specialized capabilities are needed. Firefighters routinely serve as a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT), assist with fire suppression, conduct search operations, provide ventilation, support firefighter rehabilitation and maintain personnel accountability. Their presence helps departments meet firefighter safety standards while ensuring enough staffing to sustain operations during prolonged incidents.

Travis Raby, fire chief for the 104th Fighter Wing, has spent more than three decades serving both the military and his local community. He joined the Air National Guard in 1993, became a civilian firefighter with the 104th in 1994 and was named fire chief in 2013.

While the wing has always maintained strong community partnerships through volunteer service and outreach, emergency response has become an increasingly important part of its mission.

"The Guard is known for being ready, relevant and reliable, so the community counts on us to support them," Raby said. When Raby became fire chief, he recognized an opportunity to strengthen relationships with neighboring fire departments while maintaining the department's ability to support the wing's mission.

"Our mutual aid partnerships weren't as strong as they could have been or should have been," said Raby.

Raby stated that the first step was attending monthly mutual aid meetings in Westfield. Now they have signed mutual aid agreements with 26 partner agencies throughout Hampden County, the first formal agreements in the departmen







"We regularly respond to Southampton and Westfield, and we're now a first-call department for Easthampton, which is new for us," Raby said. "As soon as they have a confirmed fire, we go."

Easthampton Fire Chief Christopher Norris, who has been with the department for 25 years, said no single department has the resources to manage every emergency alone.

"The ability to call upon highly trained neighboring departments significantly enhances firefighter safety and our ability to serve the public," Norris said.

Norris continued to state that Barnes Air National Guard Fire Department has become one of their most trusted mutual aid partners, consistently providing highly trained personnel, specialized equipment and professional leadership during emergency incidents. He feels that their willingness to respond whenever requested strengthens the operational capabilities and gives the firefighters confidence that additional experienced resources are on the way when incidents escalate.

"Their consistency, preparedness and familiarity with our operations have made them an invaluable asset on emergency scenes," said Norris. "Their personnel integrate seamlessly into our Incident Command System and work alongside our members as if they were part of our own department."

The 104th department is also responding more frequently to calls in Holyoke. While firefighters sometimes respond directly to emergency scenes, they are often assigned to backfill local fire stations while municipal crews remain committed to large incidents.

"They're out fighting the big fires," Raby said. "We're sitting in their fire station, ready to respond if another emergency comes in."

Capt. Dave Rex, training officer for the Holyoke Fire Department, also stressed that mutual aid agreements are critical to protecting area communities.

"We are able to bring more resources to bear for whatever emergency we may be responding to," said Rex.

Mutual aid requests arrive nearly every week. The department responds to incidents requiring Rapid Intervention Team coverage, st



equipment and rope systems in case firefighters become trapped or injured, assists with fire extension searches, establishes water supplies and supports defensive fire operations.

Westfield Fire Chief Eric Bishop, who has served with the department for 25 years, said maintaining a strong relationship with the 104th Fighter Wing is essential.

"I routinely call the 104th Fire Department, especially when it comes down to the Rapid Intervention Team," Bishop said. "They are the right resources available as quickly as possible."

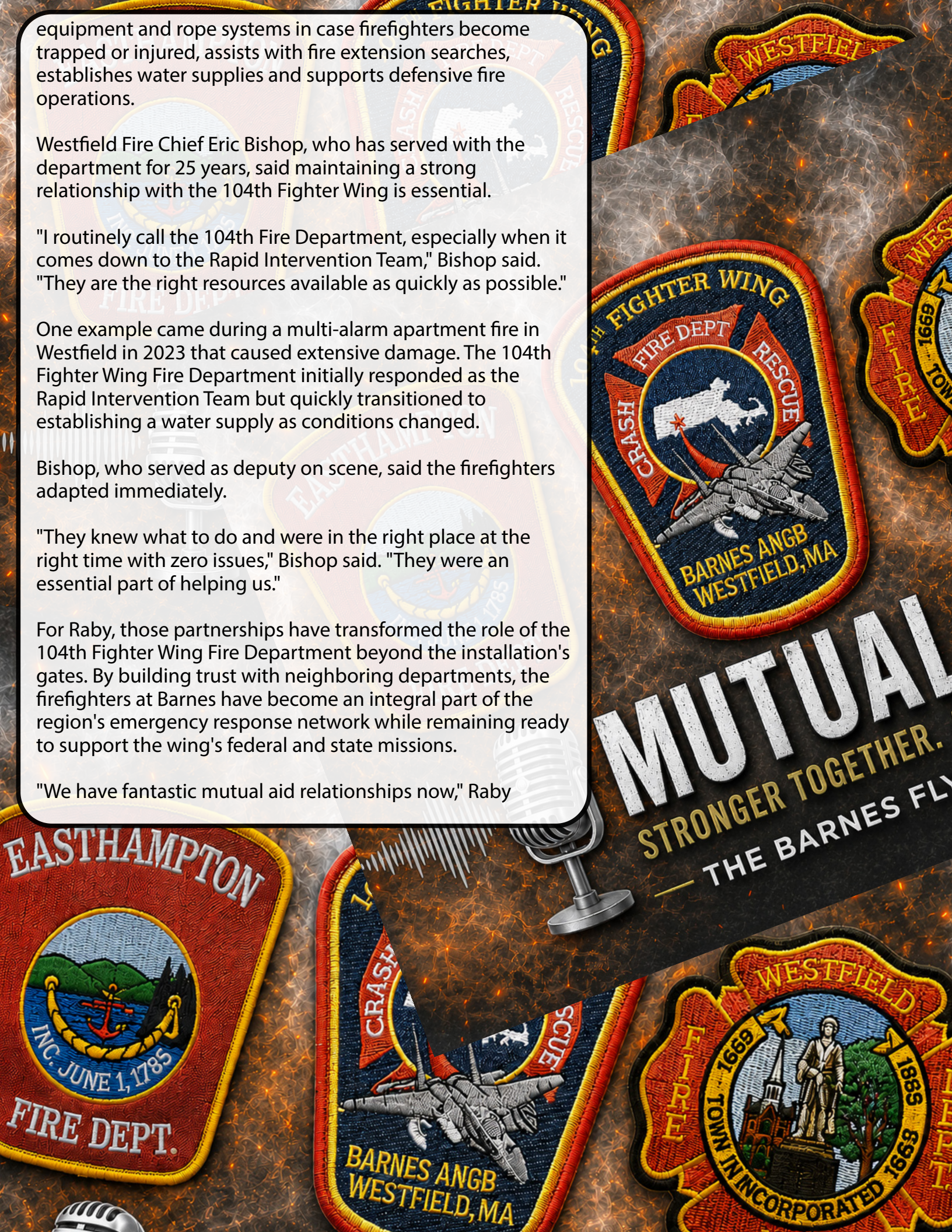
One example came during a multi-alarm apartment fire in Westfield in 2023 that caused extensive damage. The 104th Fighter Wing Fire Department initially responded as the Rapid Intervention Team but quickly transitioned to establishing a water supply as conditions changed.

Bishop, who served as deputy on scene, said the firefighters adapted immediately.

"They knew what to do and were in the right place at the right time with zero issues," Bishop said. "They were an essential part of helping us."

For Raby, those partnerships have transformed the role of the 104th Fighter Wing Fire Department beyond the installation's gates. By building trust with neighboring departments, the firefighters at Barnes have become an integral part of the region's emergency response network while remaining ready to support the wing's federal and state missions.

"We have fantastic mutual aid relationships now," Raby





# HEADLINES & HIGHLIGHTS



**Dr. Bigda's 15 Years**



**Bible Study**



**Joint Cyber Mission**



# BARNESTORMER COMMUNITY

EOD will be conducting 4  
controlled detonations  
Thursday, August 13,  
between 0900-1400.





# New Recruits

**We're proud to continue sending  
new Air National Guard recruits to  
Basic Military Training each  
month in Texas. Best of luck as  
you begin this exciting journey.  
We'll see you soon!**

**Spencer Bates  
Cameron  
Bousquet  
Elvis Brito  
Frank Sclar  
Aiden Walsh**

*Aim High!*





**It's time to have some fun in the sun. The 101 Critical Days of Summer focuses on preventing the annual spikes in injuries and accidents between Memorial Day through Labor Day.**

**These accidents not only impact individuals and their families, but also mission readiness and force lethality.**

**Please review the Summer Safety Checklist and enjoy your time off this summer safely!**

## 101 Critical Days of Summer Safety Checklist

### *Sun Safety*

- ☐ Limit your sun exposure between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm
- ☐ Get some sun-protective clothing
- ☐ Wear a hat and sunglasses with UV ray protection
- ☐ Replace any sweat-saturated items with dry clothing
- ☐ Apply sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15
- ☐ Apply sunscreen on both sunny and cloudy days
- ☐ Apply sunscreen every two hours, or after swimming or sweating



### *Heat Safety*

- ☐ Reduce the intensity of activities 15 minutes or longer in length
- ☐ Make sure you are well-hydrated
- ☐ Limit outdoor physical activity in a place with a warmer climate
- ☐ Allow your body to acclimate to the change in temperature



### *Pool Safety*

- ☐ Never leave a child unsupervised in or near a pool or spa
- ☐ Teach children 4 and older to swim
- ☐ Avoid inflatable swimming aids such as "floaties"
- ☐ If possible, install a 4ft tall or higher fence around all sides of the pool
- ☐ Do not use a pool or spa if there are broken or missing drain covers
- ☐ Do not dive in less than nine feet of water
- ☐ Always employ a feet-first entry
- ☐ Be aware of sandbars



### *Protect Against Bugs*

- ☐ Use insect repellents to guard against ticks
- ☐ Wear long sleeve shirts and long pants when going outside
- ☐ Never leave stagnant pools of water around the house
- ☐ Avoid using scented soaps or perfumes



### *Safety on the Road*

- ☐ Driving and texting don't mix
- ☐ Never drink and drive
- ☐ Plan your outing...know the area and pack accordingly
- ☐ Perform a vehicle check-up
- ☐ Slow down...enjoy the drive
- ☐ Get a good night's sleep the night prior and take frequent rest stops
- ☐ Keep emergency supplies in your vehicle



### *Fire Safety*

- ☐ Never use gasoline to start a BBQ grill or campfire
- ☐ BBQ grills are meant for outdoor use only
- ☐ Ensure charcoal is cool and completely out before disposing
- ☐ Hot surfaces are not limited to cooking surfaces
- ☐ Build campfires in appropriate areas
- ☐ Ensure campfires are completely out before leaving





# HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS

A REGULAR COLUMN BY KINDA-HISTORIAN  
MELANIE J. CASINEAU

## The 104th Fighter Wing Warthog with Two Souls, Flies again

**BARNES ANGB, Westfield, MA.-** A small crowd at Barnes Air National Guard Base held its breath as the giant yellow arm of the crane began to work. On May 19, 2026, with a beautiful sky and strong sun, the A-10 Thunderbolt II was about to do something it hadn't done in nearly three decades, fly.

There was no roar of engines, no smell of burning JP-8 fuel, and no smoke. Instead, there was only the low hum of diesel hydraulics and the quiet clanking of heavy steel chains. Very slowly, almost gracefully, the green A-10 Thunderbolt II was lifted from the concrete pedestal that had held since 25 September 1997. As the "Warthog" suspended in mid-air, she held the secret of a double soul, representing two distinct stories of survival, tragedy, and ultimate honor.

U.S Air Force Retired Chief Master Sgt. Rob Roy was a crew chief when the aircraft arrived and remembered her story.

"A-10 jet number 79-0100, also known as "Georgia Girl", and a veteran of Desert Storm," said Roy. "She came to Barnes from the 354th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW), Myrtle Beach AFB, SC on March 12, 1992 after its base was closed by BRAC".

After years of hard combat, this aircraft was retired from service due to a fatigued wing structure and became a battle damage repair training aircraft. The unit couldn't let a combat veteran end that way. In 1997, the decision was made to restore her exterior, to make her beautiful once more, and to give her a final, sacred mission.





She was to be placed on a pedestal and would no longer be "Georgia Girl." She was destined to carry a heavier, more sacred legacy. Placing her in a permanent location also meant giving her a new name that honored a local fallen hero.

On September 17, 1986 an unexpected disaster struck during a training mission. Two A-10s collided in the skies over Wells, New York. Major John Southrey, a pilot of the 104th Tactical Fighter Group, did not survive the crash and his aircraft, tail number 78-0648, was lost.

When the unit restored the retired 79-0100 in 1997, they decided she would fly no more under her own name. They painted her with Major Southrey's tail number, 78-0648, and stenciled his name proudly beneath the canopy.

On September 25, 1997, a crane from Westover AFB hoisted her onto her perch. For twenty-nine years, she stood guard over the base, keeping Major Southrey's memory alive. Birds nested in her intake, families took photos beneath her wings, and new generations of pilots passed as they entered the base.

U.S Air Force Master Sgt. Adam Dempsey, 104th Fighter Wing TAMS Superintendent, worked on the project to help the old Warthog fly again. "Following the completion of the new main gate, Wing Leadership decided to relocate base static displays to improve visibility," said Dempsey

"Field of Dreams", a nickname for that area of land by the 104th FW Chiefs Council, looked perfect for a walking park and also a place to consolidate the base's historic aircraft.

With this new plan it meant the old Warthog had to move.

"Georgia Girl's" two identities remained only memories until May 19, 2026 when she "flew" again and was lifted by a crane from Central Mass Crane service, Inc. Several attempts to lift her off the pedestal almost looked as if she did not want to move. She wobbled and waved and eventually was lifted again, flying temporarily, and placed on the ground, just inside the old main gate. She was not making this move easy.





Later, a time capsule that was placed inside the jet was opened at a ceremony. When the capsule was opened, a key was found labeled 79-100 in a bag with an old Airscoop newsletter. The front page of the newsletter told the story of Southreys death. The key was the physical link to "Georgia Girl", the silent warrior who had sacrificed her identity so that a fallen brother would never be forgotten.

As for now, A-10 jet number 79-100 and 78-0648 does not plan to fly again. Its journey to a new home has taken her on quite an adventure. Starting with a crane and then being towed to its location in the field of dreams. A time capsule will later be placed that will continue to hold the truth about the two stories and how an old warbird can fly after being broken.





