

Lieutenant Colonel James F. Barnett, 112th Tactical Fighter Group, Pennsylvania Air National Guard is inducted into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame for his extraordinary accomplishments and professionalism as an A-7 pilot in two life-threatening incidents.

On 27 April 1983, Colonel Barnette was the front seat pilot of an A-7K (two-seat) aircraft returning to the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport from a night air-to-ground mission. Suddenly, the center canopy of the aircraft exploded. Colonel Barnette took immediate action to initiate a descent to Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base, which was about 30 miles away. He was able to fly a visual to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and complete an uneventful landing. Colonel Barnette's prompt action and flying skills prevented possible loss of the aircraft, damage to persons and property on the ground and injury to the pilots. As a result of his cool and calm reaction, Colonel Barnette was awarded the Pennsylvania Outstanding Aeronautical Achievement Medal.

On 27 September 1984, Colonel Barnette's skill and courage as a pilot were again tested. After taking off in his A7-D fighter, Colonel Barnette climbed to about 20,000 feet. His aircraft then suffered a catastrophic engine failure and subsequent fire. After executing the proper emergency procedures, Colonel Barnette realized that he could not save the aircraft. Because he was then over the densely populated areas of Steubenville, Ohio and Weirton, West Virginia, Colonel Barnette disregarded his own personal safety to avoid possible civilian casualties. He stayed with the burning aircraft until the last possible moment after it cleared Steubenville, and ejected at about 2,000 feet. Because of his selfless actions and professionalism in the face of a potential disaster, he guided his burning aircraft to an area away from the city where it crashed with no injuries to the civilian population.

In recognition of his extraordinary airmanship in the face of a serious in-flight emergency, Colonel Barnette was awarded the Tactical Air Command Aircrew of Distinction Award and a second Pennsylvania Outstanding Aeronautical Achievement Award.

The exceptional actions of Colonel Barnette as a fighter pilot confronted with emergency situations reflect the highest traditions of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. The singularly distinctive accomplishments of Colonel Barnette in demonstrating calm, courageous professionalism and superb airmanship reflect great credit upon himself, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and warrant his induction into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame.