

# PATRIOT

439TH MILITARY AIRLIFT WING • AIR FORCE RESERVE • WESTOVER AFB

VOLUME XVIII, NUMBER 6

JUNE 1991

## Westover units aid relief effort for Kurdish refugees

By SSgt. Christine Mora  
and Maj. Rick Dyer

Westover personnel are making headlines again, participating in the air and on the ground in the operation to aid Kurdish refugees fleeing from Iraq into Turkey.

C-5A aircrews from the 337th MAS, and nurses and medical technicians from the 74th AES, are involved in the humanitarian relief effort, which is known as "Operation Provide Comfort."

Several million Kurds have exited Iraq since late March, when troops loyal to Saddam Hussein quashed a rebellion by Kurdish tribesmen.

President Bush sent U.S. troops to protect the refugees, who have massed in camps along the Turkey-Iraq border. He also ordered the huge airlift of food and other humanitarian supplies for the impoverished Kurds.

"We have been airlifting thousands of pounds of foodstuffs, mostly canned goods, to Incirlik Air Base in Turkey," said Maj. Ken Hall, a pilot with the 337th MAS. He flew a "Provide Comfort" mission to Turkey several weeks ago.

Major Hall said that after C-5 and C-141 aircraft fly the supplies to Incirlik, helicopters and C-130 airplanes from the U.S., France and Great Britain carry the humanitarian cargo to the refugee camps, which have been built in the mountains near the border.

The major said that the massive relief operation brings "a much needed food source to the starving refugees." "We also bring in other supplies...the Kurds are using practically everything we deliver," Major Hall added.

Major Hall reported, however, that the Kurds will not wear Army-style field jackets, apparently out of fear that Iraqi forces would mistake them for U.S. soldiers.

He also said that the refugees were



(photo courtesy of Brooks Kraft/ Transcript Telegram)

**WESTOVER SPELLS R-E-L-I-E-F--** Members of the 42nd Aerial Port Squadron load relief supplies bound for the Kurds on the Turkey-Iraq border. Eleven C-141's full of supplies and 350 members of the 10th Special Forces based at Fort Devens left Westover in April for the stricken area.

unwilling to eat potatoes which were airlifted to their camps. The reason for their refusal is unknown.

U.S. military cargo planes have also carried tractors and other vehicles to the mountainous region where the camps are located.

The vehicles are needed to transport tents and materials "to outlying areas like (Dohuk)," Major Hall said.

Members of the 337th have been flying "Operation Provide Comfort" missions since April 16, when four Westover Galaxy crews were dispatched to Incirlik.

Wing officials expect that the

humanitarian flights will continue for at least several more months, especially in light of the great need of the Kurdish refugees, and the remote area where their camps are located.

Thirteen members of the 74th AES are currently stationed in Turkey, serving in a Mobile Aeromedical Staging Facility (MASF) located not far from Incirlik.

The 13--Capt. Ellen Restivo, Capt. Lisa Beth D'Amico, 1st. Lt. Rosanna Chaloux, 1st. Lt. Theresa Ciccolo, MSgt. David Hawkins, MSgt. Leslie Howe and MSgt. Mark Johnson, TSgt. Brian

(Continued on page 6)

## EDITORIAL

## I don't need a crystal ball

I've learned many things over the past year, and one of them is that I can't predict the future very well.

When asked last July what the base would be doing after our 50th anniversary air show, I always answered by referring to an upcoming Operational Readiness Inspection.

As we all know, that ORI never happened. Instead of practicing for a war, the Patriot Wing went to one.

Who could have foreseen Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Patriot Home or Provide Comfort, or the vital role which the base and the wing would play in each of those operations?

Who would have imagined the unit's mobilization, or Westover's selection as the northeast staging facility for history's largest military airlift?

A year ago, names like Dhahran, Riyadh, King Khalid and Bahrain were unknown to most of us. They aren't anymore.

Quite frankly, I doubt that anyone could have predicted the tumultuous year which the "Westover family" has been through, or the many experiences--good and bad--which we've shared together.

No, I sure don't have a crystal ball, and no one would ever confuse me for a fortune teller.

But there is one thing I've always known: that I could always count on each of you to rise to the occasion and do the near-impossible when the going got rocky.

Time and time again during Desert Storm, I've marveled at the tenacity, courage and ingenuity of Patriot Wing members and civilian staff at Westover. Each of you--regardless of whether you served "in the sand", or right here, making the airlift run--has played a crucial role in our Persian Gulf victory.

You exemplify the true meaning of the terms "citizen-airman," and "public servant," and for that, I am very grateful.

People now ask what Westover will be like once Desert Storm is behind us and we resume our "normal schedule." I'm not exactly sure, although it's reasonable to assume that there will be other challenges and other missions. Westover has certainly shown that it can handle just about anything.

But whatever the future brings, I'm certain that you'll make me proud.

I don't need a crystal ball to see that.

by Brig. Gen. Mike Walker  
439th MAW Commander

## Briefs

### Club membership

Any federal employee who resides or works within a 50-mile radius of a military installation is now eligible to join Air Force Consolidated Clubs, according to John Filler, Westover's club manager.

Filler said a recommendation from the Air Force Open Mess Strategy Session Symposium in 1989 resulted in the approval by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense to extend memberships to federal employees.

"Membership for both active and retired federal employees may be approved by the local installation commander when a club has the capacity to accommodate them," Filler explained.

"Anyone interested in joining the Westover club may call my office at (413) 593-5531," Filler said.

### SGLI benefits

Servicemen's Group Life Insurance benefits were doubled to \$100,000 effective April 6.

Because of the automatic coverage of the law, any member desiring less than \$100,000, or no SGLI coverage at all, must go to the CBPO to initiate a new VA29-8286 (SGLI election and certificate). Additionally, all members will be charged for the maximum coverage and covered for \$100,000 until the first day of the month following their filing.

Those members who do not want \$100,000 coverage must go to Customer Assistance, Building 1310, Room 8 to fill out the necessary form.

### AFRES nominees

The vice-commander of the Air Force Reserve and three AFRES colonels are among the officers nominated by the President for promotion.

Brig. Gen. Robert A. McIntosh, AFRES vice-commander, is on the major general list. Nominees for brigadier general are Cols. Louis A. Crigler, 14th AF vice-commander, Michael J. Peters, 452nd Air Refueling Wing commander, and Terry G. Whitnell, 94th Tactical Airlift Wing commander.

# PATRIOT

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"The content is edited, prepared, and provided by the Public Affairs Office of the 439th Military Airlift Wing, Westover Air Force Base."

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# Judge denies night-flying injunction

By Maj. Rick Dyer

A federal court denied a request May 6 for an injunction against night-time Desert Storm flying operations at Westover.

Judge Frank H. Freedman of the U.S. District Court in Springfield issued the ruling in a lawsuit initiated in March against the Air Force and the federal Council on Environmental Quality by a group known as Valley Citizens for a Safe Environment.

Valley Citizens had sought the injunction to stop the Air Force from flying cargo missions to the Persian Gulf from Westover between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7 a.m.

The group argued that the Air Force was bound by an April 1987 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which provided that "no military activity would be routinely scheduled" at Westover during those hours.

Valley Citizens also contended that the Air Force had violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by failing to obtain a supplemental EIS before commencing the night flying when the Persian Gulf crisis began last August.

The Air Force countered that the ongoing Desert Storm airlift operations at Westover constituted an emergency which, under federal regulations, exempted it from strict compliance with NEPA requirements for another EIS, and which justified the 24-hour operations.

Judge Freedman noted that the decision by the Council on Environmental Quality and the Air Force that the Middle East crisis was an emergency "cannot be called arbitrary and capricious."

"The affidavits of various officials depict a complex, global flight schedule that relies in large part on the twenty-four hour availability of Westover AFB's C-5A capabilities," the judge wrote.

He added: "The Air Force has not attempted to justify nighttime C-5A operations by speaking vaguely of national

security or world peace. Rather, defendants have pointed to specific military concerns with regard to troop redeployment, flight scheduling, cargo transport and other operations that necessitate the use of C-5A operations on a twenty-four hour basis."

Although a supplemental EIS was not compiled, the Air Force, at the request of the Council on Environmental Quality, did commission a special environmental assessment which examined the night-flying operation at the base, particularly with regard to noise levels.

The assessment was released by the Air Force in May and public comment on its findings will be accepted until June 3. Copies of the assessment, and the address to which comments may be mailed, are available at the base public affairs office.

In affidavits presented to the court during the case, the Air Force stated that it expected to cease night flying operations at Westover by July, when most of the Persian Gulf airlift is expected to be completed.

Judge Freedman indicated in his decision that the court expected the base "on or about July 1991" to "resume adhering to the conditions of the 1987 EIS" which prohibit non-emergency night flying operations.

Brig. Gen. Mike Walker, 439th MAW commander, said he was gratified by the decision.

"It supports our position, which is that we have been and are involved in a vital military operation during a time of national crisis," General Walker said.

The wing commander added that Westover's C-5A aircrews are still actively involved with both the Desert Storm airlift, and the Operation Provide Comfort flights which are carrying humanitarian relief supplies to Kurdish refugees in Turkey.

"As much as anyone, the men and women at Westover look forward to the time when we can resume a more normal schedule of activity here," General Walker said.

## Contracting office reaps AFRES awards

The team that oversees Westover's purchases of everything from hangar roofs to pocket pagers has been recognized by the Air Force Reserve for outstanding service.

The Westover Contracting Office was recently named outstanding contracting office of the year in the Air Force Reserve. Contracting office chief Michael LaFortune was also cited as AFRES outstanding base contracting employee.

The awards recognize exceptional performance during fiscal year 1990 when the Westover Contracting Office was responsible for more than \$12 million spent on purchases and services. The figure includes the renovation of Hangar 7 and upgrading the base electrical system.

*"It takes a dedicated team to administer all the details of \$12 million in contracts."*

The contractors also keep Westover operating day-to-day with the purchase of products and services from office supplies to custodial services. Whether you work with a typewriter or power mower, you are served by the efforts of the 13 members of the Westover Contracting Office.

The office staff has remained the same in size despite an almost doubling of the major service contracts due to the conversion to the C-5 and growth at Westover.

"It's only because they're profes-

sionals that the contracting office members have been able to meet the growing demands," Mr. LaFortune said.

"It takes a dedicated team to administer all the details of \$12 million in contracts. As an example of what they do, a contract to rent pagers could grow to a stack of sheets up to two inches thick. A design contract could fill a file drawer; we had a contract that took up an entire file cabinet," the contracting chief said.

His office administers the largest amount of funds and has the second largest staff of the 10 contracting offices in the Air Force Reserve. Mr. LaFortune and the Westover Contracting Office earned similar AFRES awards in 1988.

**Public Affairs Officer  
Mr. Gordon Newell  
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**Dear Wonderful People and Friends!**

*I don't know any of you, but in my heart you are all friends! Enclosed is an article of my son's homecoming, after 7 months in Saudi, which mentions his landing in the U.S. at your A.F.B., Friday night, 9 PM, 3/22/91.*

*My husband and I thank each and every one of you who dedicate your time, money and efforts in greeting these men who so greatly appreciate all of you.*

*You have given them something to carry in their minds and hearts forever: the pride of people, thankful to those who made the ultimate sacrifice-of their lives for others.*

*My son was emotional when he told me of his landing in the states with all of you- and repeating the story to all I knew- We also were emotional! The greetings, the kisses, the autographs and supplying the beer and desired "Pizza" was a dimension unsurpassed in their minds of the beauty of Americans! To wait for hours, for people you didn't know or didn't know you, will surely enhance unforgettable memories for all of us! Are you aware of the priceless gift you have all so generously given to so many?*

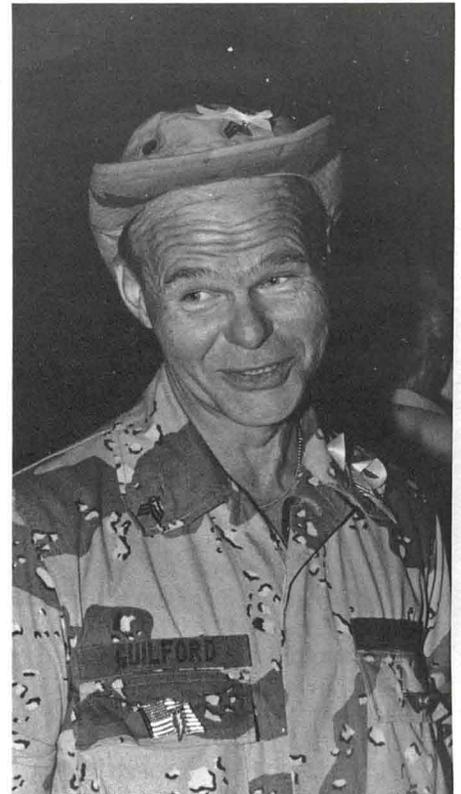
*Thank You, Thank You, Thank You from all the parents, relatives and friends who could not be there to greet their loved ones and from all the men and women whose lives you have enriched because of your warmth, thoughtfulness, caring and love- Your cheers have been heard around the world!!!*

*Wishing we could have been there too!!*

**Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Lazarski  
Roselle, Ill. 60172**

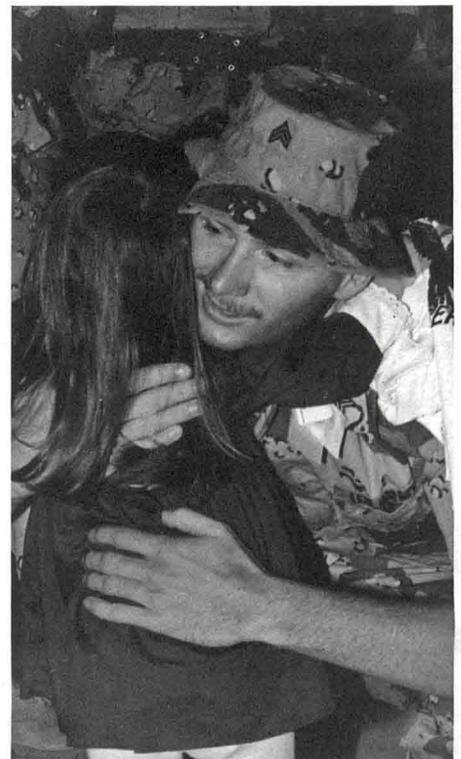
## Friendly Mail

*The letter above is typical of hundreds received by Westover Air Force Base officials since the base began welcoming home troops from Operation Desert Shield/Storm in early March.*



**BACK IN THE U.S.A.--** More than 27,000 troops have been welcomed home to the States through Westover's Base Hangar homecoming celebrations.

(photos by TSgt. Sandi Michon)



# Demobilization means mountains of work for CBPO

By Maj. Rick Dyer

It's no small task transforming 1,550 full-time active duty personnel back into part-time, citizen-airmen.

That's the lesson which members of the Westover Consolidated Base Personnel Office have been learning lately as they prepare for next month's demobilization of Patriot Wing reservists who were called up for Operation Desert Storm.

"There is a lot more work for us to do with deactivations than there was with the mobilizations," said Capt. Deny Jobes, head of the CBPO.

"During the call ups, everyone had the same type of orders and the paperwork was basically the same," the CBPO chief said. "But there is a tremendous amount of individualized record-keeping and paperwork associated with discharging people from active duty."

One of the biggest hurdles for the personnel staff is the preparation of individual discharge papers--known as DD 214s--for each of the activated reservists.

"We have to do an individual accounting of the number of days each unit member served on active duty," Captain Jobes said. "We also have to note such things as accrued leave, and awards and decorations."

Captain Jobes said that two members of her staff have been working on gathering data for the DD-214s for the past two months.

"We have to ensure those documents are absolutely correct," the CBPO chief said. "The discharge records determine veteran's benefits and can be extremely important years from now when other documentation is not available."

In addition to preparing the discharge summaries, the CBPO staff must also issue new ID cards and process medical, insurance, and pay records for each of the approximately 1,550 would-be civilians.

The demobilization process began the week of May 28, when activated reservists attended a series of pre-demobilization briefings in the Base Theater.

Actual out-processing will be held in the Base Hangar, starting June 24. At that time, unit members will stream through lines similar to the ones which greeted them as they went on active duty last winter.

Patriot Wing members will be released from active duty starting July 15. Members of the 337th MAS, who have been activated since last August, will be discharged first.

Many other activated reservists will leave active duty during the following two weeks.

"It's been a long and busy year," said SMSgt. Peter McCavick, first sergeant with the 337th MAS. Sergeant McCavick, who was activated along with the other members of his squadron last August, said that he is eager to return to his job at Holyoke Hospital, and a more normal life style.

"It will be great to get back to my job and my bowling league and to see the friends I haven't seen in a long time," Sergeant McCavick added.

Although a large number of 439th MAW personnel will be leaving active duty in July, some unit members will remain on duty longer due either to hardships or mission requirements.

"Some people have asked to stay on, and some will be asked to volunteer to remain because of their crucial jobs," Captain Jobes said. "We are busy now sorting out who will stay, and for how long."

The demobilization effort reverses a process which began at Westover last August with the call-up of approximately 200 members of the 337th MAS. Other reservists were activated to oversee the Desert Storm airlift operations at the base during call-ups here in December, January and March.

Approximately 20,000 Air Force reservists were activated nationwide. Of that number, approximately 1,550 were from Westover's Patriot Wing.

## Westover dining facility praised by Secretary of the Air Force

The Westover Prime RIBS team isn't perfect, but Secretary of the Air Force Donald Rice declared his great satisfaction with their Desert Shield/Storm record last Saturday.

When Prime RIBS members traveled to Chicago to receive the coveted Hennessey Award from him, Secretary Rice jokingly noted a blemish on the cooks' record. He reminded the Patriot Wing cooks that after preparing 22,000 box lunches they received their first complaint when a piece of chicken was left out of a box.

"He kidded us about it, but said that was an outstanding record. One in 22,000 is a percentage that would be hard to compute," said CMSgt. Ron Perrault, food service manager. The cooks have prepared more than

44,000 box lunches since August.

The Hennessey Award recognizes the Westover dining hall as best in the Air Force.

Westover's Prime RIBS captured the coveted Hennessey award for the second time in four years after coming in a close second in 1989 and 1990.

The award, sponsored by the National Restaurant Association in conjunction with the Air Force is the most prestigious honor presented to reserve dining halls.

Those at the ceremony were Brig. Gen. Frederick D. Walker, wing commander; Col. Thomas Hargis, base commander; Chief Perrault; SMSgt. Mike Spano and SMSgt. James Buell, food service superintendents.

## Care packages spelled S-U-P-P-O-R-T for Operation Desert Storm troops

by Maj. Rick Dyer

The tons of cookies, toothbrushes, shaving cream, socks and skin lotion which citizens in the Westover area sent to the desert conveyed an important message to U.S. troops serving there.

"The packages showed us we had the support of the people back home and that this was not another Vietnam," said Maj. Kenneth A. Byrd, who served in Saudi Arabia from August to January.

Major Byrd, a transportation officer who is now serving on the Headquarters USAF staff at the Pentagon, visited Westover during April to attend an airlift conference here.

He told Brig. Gen. Mike Walker, 439th MAW commander, that he wanted to personally thank people from this area, since he had received a "Westover care package" while he was stationed in the Gulf.

"The items which you folks sent to the Gulf were desperately

needed, particularly early on when the BX structure over there wasn't in existence," Major Byrd said.

The care package which Major Byrd received enabled him to replace his toothbrush, which he lost during his first two weeks in the desert. It also provided him with hard-to-get toothpaste, deodorant, shaving cream and skin softener.

One of the major's responsibilities as a transportation officer in the Persian Gulf was to see to it that supplies reached forward operating areas in the theater. That job, he said, also gave him a first-

hand look at the generosity of the people who sent donations to Westover.

"My commander had me establish an aerial port and see to it that MWR (Morale, Welfare and Recreation) pallets were distributed to troops in the outlying locations. I handled 40-50, 2,000-pound pallets which contained donations from your base."

Major Byrd, a 38-year-old resident of Springfield, Virginia and a distant relative of the famous admiral, said that he knew the source of the donated supplies

because each pallet bore a sticker which read: "From your friends at Westover."

"We could tell from the volume and quality of the items being sent that you cared," Major Byrd said. "The packages showed us that our people were going to be treated with the dignity they were due."

Since Desert Shield began last August, thousands of people from Western Massachusetts and

Connecticut brought books, food and comfort items to Westover for shipment to the troops in the Persian Gulf. Scores of area businesses and civic organizations aided the effort by making donations and sponsoring collections.

Whenever there was space available, C-5 crews from Westover airlifted the care packages, which were placed on wooden pallets by aerial porters from the 42nd APS, to the desert.

"We just can't say enough about the kindness extended by the people in the Westover area," Major Byrd added.



Maj. Kenneth A. Byrd, USAF Pentagon staff.

## Ballpark figures

As of 8 a.m. on May 21, 32,987 military personnel have been airlifted from the base to the Persian Gulf, and 27,266 troops have flown back here from the sand. Cumulatively, 60,253 passengers--for an average of 6,000 per month since last August--have passed through Westover's passenger terminal during history's largest military airlift. According to MSgt. John Spencer who did the research, the number of pax flown out of Westover could nearly fill Fenway Park twice. Sergeant Spencer also notes that if the more than 110,000 tons (220 million pounds) of cargo airlifted had been automobiles, our aircraft would have airlifted every passenger car registered in Chicopee, Westfield and West Springfield. The base also pumped more than 57 million gallons of JP-4 jet fuel during the Persian Gulf operation. Per Sergeant Spencer, that's enough to fill every passenger car and taxi now operated in Massachusetts.

## Kurdish refugee relief...

(continued from front page)

Major, SSgt. Eric Kennedy, SSgt. Rafael Reyes-Almanzar, SSgt. John Wise, Sgt. William Anderson and SrA John Galvany--had previously served in Saudi Arabia.

The 74th personnel are part of the 23-member mobile medical facility, which was established to treat military personnel who are working there in support of Operation Provide Comfort.

According to Capt. David Zamorski, operations officer with the 74th AES, the Westover medics are living under field conditions in Turkey. They reportedly are located more than a mile from the nearest shower facility, he said.

In addition to the 13 personnel from the 74th in Turkey, seven members of the unit are stationed in Germany, and four others are still in Saudi Arabia, Captain Zamorski said Monday.

# Cooks could have gone for "second helping"

by SrA. Nancy Wilochka

For many, spending four months in the desert and then asking to stay longer would be unthinkable. But for a team of Westover 439th Civil Engineering Squadron cooks, many of them would have gladly asked for 'seconds' and stayed on longer to continue performing their role in the Middle East conflict.

According to TSgt. Fred Cook, NCOIC of the team of six Westover cooks deployed overseas, he and three other team members would have volunteered to stay longer if their services were needed. Sergeant Cook believed his team of "prime RIBS" were the only activated reserve cooks in the Middle East.

Stationed in a tent city in the Persian Gulf area, the cooks' provided food services to several C-130 units flying northern missions. Among the C-130 units they serviced were three Air National Guard units, one active duty unit and a Korean unit.

Sergeant Cook felt that the entire operation was "put together well," and that his junior team members "benefited quite positively from their mission." Food supply was plentiful, with many items purchased from local sources. Occasionally, they had to make do with dehydrated and canned foods. Sergeant Cook said that the working conditions were relatively good, despite 12-hour shifts and sand storms.

The cooks split into teams of two and worked six days a week. On their one day off they spent most of their time resting. According to A1C Alex Walczyk, only after the ceasefire were they able to go into the local communities for brief MWR trips. "I am glad that I was able to go," Airman Walczyk said. "I wouldn't have minded staying longer if I could have. It's not something that every reservist gets to do. I may never get another chance."

The team, which left Westover on January 11, arrived at their duty station just days before the outbreak of the air war. Once the shooting started, donning chemical suits and gas masks became an everyday affair. "I had my people practice getting into their chem-gear from the very beginning," Sergeant Cook said. "We carried our chem-gear everywhere we went."

Airman Walczyk added that he felt sufficiently trained to continue the mis-



**HEADING HOME --** Cooks from the 439th CES prepare to board the C-130 that would take them back to the United States after Desert Storm duty in the Persian Gulf. From left, SSgt. Paul Maratos, SrA. Clayton Muenchmeyer, SSgt. Gary Cormier, TSgt. Philip Lupien, A1C Alex Walczyk, and TSgt. Fred Cook.

sion, despite the distractions of the war. "Security in the tent city was extremely tight. But even so, it was hard not to be apprehensive about possible terrorist activity," the airman said. Cooks from other units were sometimes tasked to augment the military police, according to Sergeant Cook.

Throughout their tour overseas the cooks were kept well informed of the progress of the war through newspapers

and CNN broadcasts. Sergeant Cook, who has been deployed overseas for previous missions said that this was by far the most critical tasking he had encountered. Because of this challenge, and the terrific team effort put forth by his co-workers, Sergeant Cook said, "I would have definitely stayed on longer if I could have. It was great to see my team members benefiting positively from a job well done."

## Sign of the times

**SAUDI ARABIA --** A soldier waiting on the ramp at King Khalid Military City spoke for thousands of others in the airlift home when he said "this is heaven." He was minutes away from boarding the aircraft that would take him to Germany to rejoin his wife and the 14-month old daughter he hadn't seen for more than four months.

Asked what he was going to do when he got home, he said simply, "I will hold my wife."

He was one of the lucky ones. For the thousands of others still waiting for the trip home to families it takes an effort to keep up spirits.

Sarcastic humor helps. That's why wags are lampooning the safety slogan "Not One More Life" that was

promoted to curb a rash of accidents. For every such safety sign, a homesick airman or soldier has nailed up its counterpart: "Not One More Day." It's a tongue-in-cheek slogan which acts as a safety valve for thousands of long-suffering troops. It's painted on wood signs, sides of buildings, on T-shirts and any other flat surface.

Those entering the dining hall in the Air Force tent city at King Khalid Military City see a posted slogan expressing the longing of all those who are washing their clothes in plastic tubs, sleeping on cots and eating with plastic ware. "Quote of the Day," it says. "In the near future, that which was unavailable, will be!!"

## Women in Gulf help dispel sexual prejudices



**PREFLIGHT--** WO2 Beth Cullinan preflights her UH-60A Blackhawk for a shuttle mission between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

### Article and photo by SrA. Kymberly Taylor

KUWAIT--The Middle East, a region that generally treats women as chattel, provided an ironic setting to illustrate the fundamental role of women in the U.S. military.

From weather operators, to cooks, pilots and military police -- women worked side by side with men to comprise the backbone of the American forces in the Persian Gulf.

A tent city in Saudi Arabia, sixty miles from the Iraqi border, houses almost 600 Air Force men and women as a small part of a much larger 10,000-person Saudi military base. Of those troops, more than 10 percent are women holding jobs in every field.

SrA. Marty Deitz patrols the entry gate to "tent city" with an M-16 over her shoulder and remembers when things weren't so quiet.

"The Iraqi's were firing SCUDS at us during the air war and we watched the Patriots intercept them mid-air, practically over our heads," she said. "At first, we all thought that they were missing the airstrip by a long shot, then we realized

that the blasts were in a circle around 'tent city.' They were aiming for us!

"I was scared," she continued, "but we all were to some extent. It was a war and we were right in the middle of it."

WO2 Beth Cullinan also knew what being in the middle of the war was about. Ms. Cullinan, a pilot flying UH-60A Blackhawk helicopters, served in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait since the end of last year. "We are attached to an Armored Division that was a part of the XII Corps" she said.

Because the Blackhawks were often tasked to carry operations orders from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the troops on the front lines, the Army aviators spent little time at their base.

Pilots and crew chiefs spent almost a month between February and March living out of their helicopters, going without showers and eating MRE's three times a day.

"That's all changed now that the war is over," said Ms. Cullinan, whose unit is still working out of a tiny Army base just north of Kuwait City. "Our biggest problem now is combating the boredom. I've been jumping rope, running at night when it's cooler and doing a lot of reading.

"At least I'm saving money," she added with a brightening of her smile, "there's no place to spend it around here."

"I miss real shopping," said SrA. Cammie Marie Torres, a cook for the Air Force's "tent city" at the Saudi Arabian air base.

On her last shopping excursion to a local Saudi village, Airman Torres discovered that being a woman didn't hinder her military career, but had definite disadvantages in the country proper.

"Two men tried to buy me!" said the airman. "Women (who fall into the category of chattel in Saudi society) can be bought and sold. It was just outrageous and the guys I was with got a huge kick out of it," she said.

"The men do look out for us here since we get such a strange reception by the locals," she added. "It's hard to work in an environment where the local people won't speak to you and you get treated like an object."

Some women had much more on their minds than the local reception. After leaving her 8-week-old baby in the hands of a babysitter, one sergeant discovered through her husband that the woman was treating her child harshly. Long distance phone calls to the states to make new child-care arrangements further complicated the weather operator's deployment.

In addition, most living conditions do not lend themselves to privacy.

Although Ms. Cullinan and her Blackhawk unit live in unisex Army tents in Kuwait, the Air Force does provide separate living arrangements for female troops, like Airman Torres.

"We keep moving around," said one woman who had just moved from a tent across the camp. "As people keep leaving, they break down the tents and the camp shrinks."

"We used to have more than 21,000 troops here (in tent city) and at that time we had 198 females. It's still a 10 percent ratio," said SSgt. John Lockman, tent city services supervisor.

Breaking down the camps will happen much more quickly than breaking down the sexual prejudices in the military but it's happening.

And it is certain that when the troops do return home, they will be received as the heroes they are, man and woman side by side.

# Keeping up with news a tough job in desert

by TSgt. Tom Allocco

SAUDI ARABIA -- When 74th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and 439th Airlift Control Flight members in Saudi Arabia greeted arriving Public Affairs representatives, handshakes were immediately followed by questions about news at Westover.

Copies of "Westover Today" helped update those serving 7,000 miles away at locations in Riyadh and a Saudi Arabian military base 35 miles from the Iraqi border. But even satellite telephone and television can't close the gulf between home and those in posts on the other side of the world.

At a time when the Stanley Cup games were underway and the NBA play-offs were starting up, sports fans were following the games from copies of the "Stars and Stripes" Armed Forces tabloid and days old newspapers flown in from home.

Keeping up on world news is just as tenuous. Those accustomed to getting their news from multi-channel TV in the living room are making do with the Armed Forces Network news on television sets only found in recreation tents. Long working hours with few days off further discourage



**NEWS FROM HOME** -- SSgt. Mary Elwell and TSgt. Brian Major, 74th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron medical technicians, read the latest copies of *Westover Today* outside their quarters at Eskan Village near Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

television viewing.

Those 74th AES members living in modern Eskan Village housing outside Riyadh have television. However, because they are located at the farthest reach of the orbiting satellite, programs click off the air after five or 10 minutes of viewing when the satellite moves out of range. "It's very frustrating watching television like that," said MSgt. David Perrault, medical technician.

To the north, 439th ALCF members receive three copies of "Stars and Stripes" on most days and make efforts to supplement them with news from home.

"When planes come in, we ask if they have copies of newspapers. They may be five-days-old by the time we see them," said MSgt. Bob Seaton, operations NCO.

"I knew more about what is going on in the Middle East before I came here than now," said Lt. Col. Robert McMillan, 439th ALCF commander.

Mail delivery that can take weeks further heightens the sense of isolation. Mail sent from Saudi Arabia is postage free, but when the Public Affairs representatives returned home, they carried mail from several ALCF members to speed up delivery to their families.

## ALCF commander tells of dining with Saudi family

by TSgt. Tom Allocco

SAUDI -ARABIA -- If you are invited to dinner in Saudi Arabia, be prepared to sit on a rug for a leisurely meal of excellent food, interrupted by prayers and ending abruptly following the serving of tea.

That was the recent experience of Lt. Col. Robert McMillan, 439th ALCF commander, at King Khalid Military City when he was invited to the home of the Saudi airfield manager. The other guests were nine Saudi Arabian men wearing white robes and Arab headdress and another Air Force officer.

Colonel McMillan expressed the feeling of many Americans when he described Saudis as capable of being friendly, generous hosts concerned for their guests' comfort. All those at the dinner spoke excellent English, but live by the Saudi traditions upon which their society is based.

"Our host's wife had spent the day cooking, but we

never saw her," Colonel McMillan said. "We saw his six sons, ages 2 to 16, of whom he was very proud, but we never saw his daughter," he said.

The dinner, which took place during the Moslem holy season of Ramadan, broke a day time fast. The Saudis broke the fast at sunset with water, dates and herbal tea, after which they went to a nearby mosque to pray.

When they returned the main meal commenced on a plastic sheet over an oriental rug which was covered with food from wall to wall. The guests sat on the floor and the main course was an "excellent" large platter of chicken and rice, Colonel McMillan said.

During the meal the host served a dark burgundy beverage in quality glassware which proved to be a Kool-Aid type drink.

The meal lasted an hour and a half, until the Saudis excused themselves to again pray. When they returned, tea was served after which everyone left in accordance with the Saudi custom of not lingering following the meal.

# ALCF team helps to airlift VII Corps home

by TSgt. Tom Allocco

SAUDI ARABIA--Westover's ALCF team in mid-May saw the last of the 100,000 members of the Army's VII Corps airlifted out of northern Saudi Arabia and was looking forward to its own return home by the end of the month.

The nine ALCF members under Lt. Col. Robert McMillan arrived at the Saudi Arabian air base at the beginning of April to oversee the redeployment of Desert Storm troops.

Not long after a ceremony to mark the departure of the last VII Corps soldiers, a flow of C-130s began bringing members of the Third Armored Division from Kuwait to the Saudi air base. The ALCF team's mission at the base was scheduled to conclude following the airlift home of the division's 6,000 to 8,000 troops.

Maj. Wayne Petitto and MSgt. Tom O'Brien were told to expect several additional weeks of duty at Riyadh. Scheduled to return home were Colonel McMillan, Maj. Thomas Mauzaka, SMSgt. Frank Ruotolo, MSgt. Fred Fraini, MSgt. Bob Seaton, TSgt. Jim St. Cyr and TSgt. Greg Morin.

The ALCF team was living in a tent city located in a wadi, a dry river bed,



(photo by SrA. Kymberly Taylor)

**ON THE FLIGHT LINE --** ALCF operations officer, Maj. Wayne Petitto, (right) discusses loading procedures with a passenger waiting for a flight home.

about 45 miles from the tri-border area of Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The 300 Air Force members on the base were the guests of the Saudi military community of about 10,000, which

includes army facilities and a helicopter training school.

The ALCF team lived in a world of almost unrelieved desert brown where temperatures averaged 105 degrees during the day and were hitting 115 degrees at times in May. They were never far from the one-and-a-half liter bottles of water stacked in boxes everywhere in the tent city and airfield.

The heat forced the rescheduling of many take-offs to evening hours when cooler air provided more lift.

There were few complaints about long hours, because, as Sergeant Seaton said, "what else is there to do?" Diversions were limited to little more than a recreation area in a portable building, dubbed "La Mirage," featuring one dart board, one ping-pong table and a bar offering non-alcoholic beer, Perrier and cans of Saudi Arabian Pepsi-Cola.

The monotony was broken by sandstorms, dust devils as tall as buildings and, one night, by a brief but violent storm which blew open tent doors and filled tents with sand.

Comparisons of living standards were among regular topics of conversation. Those in the Air Force tent city slept on thin mattresses on cots in air



(photo by TSgt. Tom Allocco)

**THIRST QUENCHER --** SMSgt. Frank Ruotolo, an ALCF loadmaster, grabs a bottle of water from one of the many pallets littering the camps in King Khalid Military City. Bottled water is an important necessity due to the high threat of dehydration in the desert sun.

conditioned tents and had showers during limited morning and evening hours. For soldiers in posts to the north, showers were a luxury reserved for one hour every other day and air conditioning was an unattainable dream.

"We're grateful for what we have when we see what other guys go through," Major Petitto said.

With the standard of living reduced to the basics, the ALCF members used ingenuity to improve their conditions. With plywood they fashioned partitions for privacy and shelves to hold paperbacks and mementos from home. An extra wool Army blanket, a sleeping mat, or plastic bags to keep sand out of clothing became objects to be sought out and valued. Sergeants Fraini and Morin spent a productive afternoon setting up a patio area to escape the sun outside their tent with camouflage netting and chairs.

"We're on our own here. When you're out in nowhere, you make do with what you have," Sergeant O'Brien said.

The ALCF members' most prized possessions were one of the few washing machines and dryers in the area, from Epstein's, Holyoke and Giguere's, Chicopee.

Other luxuries were a seemingly unlimited supply of small bottles of Perrier, the result of a donation of 40,000 cases of the mineral water by a French company. The ALCF team members made the nine mile drive from the airfield to the tent city in Nissan Safaris and similar vehicles, donated by the Saudi government.

The small comforts could never compensate for life in the desert.

"If people have a day off they will sleep in a little, and then put on a uniform and go in to work. There's nothing else to do," Sergeant O'Brien said.

"After three weeks here, the novelty wears off, people are ticked off, the heat gets to you and the work wears on you," said Major Petitto.

The pace of life in the ALCF command trailer and on the ramp didn't leave much time to think about living conditions.

In the trailer, "there are five radio nets, two land lines and typed message traffic and they can potentially all go off at once," Major Petitto said.

On the ramp, loadmasters Sergeants Ruotolo, O'Brien and Morin served as the eyes and ears of the ALCF team.



(photo by TSgt. Tom Allocco)

**ON WATCH --** Maj. Wayne Petitto, operations officer, oversees the loading of a civilian contract 747 aircraft. Handling up to 35 civilian and Military Airlift Command planes a day, the Airlift Control Flight team constantly cruised the ramp to keep operations moving smoothly.

They could be found wherever there was a problem with passengers, cargo, fuel or other potential delay.

A measure of the size of the airlift was the estimate that it would take 41 C-141s just to haul home the 1.6 million pounds of empty pallets accumulated at the Saudi Arabian base.

"At the end of the day, you're tired and drained, but you can see that you

just moved 15,000 troops and that feels good," Major Petitto said.

That was the reward for a long, hard job. It was the opportunity to make a dream come true for troops like one soldier who was among those airlifted by the ALCF team.

"This is heaven...this is what I've been waiting for," he said during the last minutes of his wait on the flight line.

# A camera lens is the window to a colonel's heart

by TSgt. Sandi Michon

Extraordinary events often highlight extraordinary people. Westover's Welcome Home activities have caused certain individuals to shine - perhaps because they so beautifully reflect the love around them.

Col. Charles "Whitey" Joslin not only captures those people on film but is one of the best himself. The warmth of his character and his love for people shine as brilliantly as the flash unit on his camera.

His photos from the Base Hangar tell a story, but it is simply another chapter in a book the 51-year-old colonel from Concord, N.H., began years ago. The slim, athletic husband and father of three has captured many memories over his 31-year military career and throughout the years has encapsulated these "chapters" into albums of photos, letters, poems and reflections for his family. His clear blue eyes sparkle when he tells of his latest album for his four-year-old grandson Matthew.

In Colonel Joslin's current chapter, Westover is like an honored family

member and he shares his photographs like a proud papa.

What began as a weekend whim of photography in the hangar in March has turned into a full-time project which has touched hundreds of lives now, and possibly for years to come.

"I wanted to capture some homecoming memories of the three C-141's being diverted from Loring," said the deputy commander of operations. "I ended up with some great pictures, but the emotion of the welcome ceremonies was what really hooked me.

"Being there in uniform and getting the salutes, hugs and 'God blesses' and riding the emotion of the welcomes became addictive," said Colonel Joslin. He referred to the experience as an emotional snowball.

After two months of photographing welcomes at the Base Hangar two to three times a day, Colonel Joslin has compiled an enviable collection of photos which capture the young, old, and in-between expressing a wide gamut of feelings.

He has captured the surprise and appreciation of unsuspecting troops as they

walk into the effusive welcome ceremonies. He has caught many tears inspired by joy, past pain, the anguish of separation and the tears of pure patriotic pride. By far, the most common element in his photos is smiles, and the smiles shine brightest on the Saudi-tanned faces.

Families are his favorites as scores of reunions are depicted by long-overdue embraces and kisses. Family members hang on tightly to their soldiers almost to insure they are back for real. Westover also serves as a surrogate family to thousands of troops passing through enroute to home stations.

After 65 rolls of film and over 2000 photographs, Colonel Joslin is still deeply moved by the human drama played out before him. "There are times I can't focus because my eyes are blurred with tears," he said. "At first I tried to hide the tears. After a while I loosened up and now I just thoroughly enjoy it."

He recalled the day Col. Jim Sehorn, 459th MAW commander from Andrews AFB, came to greet the troops from Willow Grove. Sehorn, who spent six and a half years at the "Hanoi Hilton", watched the troops file into the Base Hangar with tears streaming down his face. "He cried for two hours," said Colonel Joslin.

According to the colonel, viewing the developed prints brings the emotion of the moment back full-force. "The ladies that develop my film tell me they cry when certain prints come out of the machine," he said laughing.

When the prints from the first rolls came back, Colonel Joslin selected his favorites to be enlarged and began to "decorate" his office walls with his photographs until it began to resemble a gallery. Many people "toured" his gallery and the colonel decided to have the prints mounted on large boards and displayed in the Base Hangar.

"It's great to watch people's faces as they walk through the display," he said. He explained that all the display photos are numbered and all the negatives are filed at Russell's 60-Minute Photo in Chicopee if anyone is interested in acquiring prints. He has taken names and addresses of many individuals and units he has photographed and is in the process of organizing those prints for mailing.

His photographic work has traveled



Col. Charles "Whitey" Joslin

far and wide already. An album was sent to the commander of the Military Airlift Command, Gen. Hansford T. Johnson, and an album was sent to the White House. Colonel Joslin's photo albums have accompanied many Westover officers to higher headquarters briefings which have spread Westover's "welcome fame" even further. Slides are currently in production for Westover briefings.

There is a possibility of producing Colonel Joslin's photos in a commemorative booklet which may be distributed at the Base Hangar, to Westover reservists and possibly used for the 1992 airshow.

How ever the colonel's photo collection is used, it is sure to tug at the heart and provide instant memories of a special time in Westover's history. General Walker is extremely pleased with the creative quality of Colonel Joslin's work

and both agree that "this is what we're all about at Westover."

Colonel Joslin's wife, Sue, and daughter, Laura, accompanied him to the Base Hangar on one of his photo sessions. "He's always done this at home. He's always made us albums from photos he's taken and poems he has written," shared his wife. "I'm glad that through his base photographs, people will get a glimpse of the special man he is at home."

"It's been a happy kick for me," said Colonel Joslin. "The biggest thing is to share what I've been blessed to see with others."

As the weeks pass, the colonel's sense of pride increases, both in his photos and in the people in them. As the display in the hangar continues to grow he commented, "I hope we run out of mounting boards the same time we run out of people."

### *Desert Storm's "Patriot Home",*

Westover AFB, March 1991

I didn't take a picture  
Of the young marine with a rose...

An elderly lady sent me his way.  
She stopped me in my uniform.  
"In my 73 years", she said,  
"I've never felt so heart-warmed.  
He's just sitting alone;  
He just wants to be by himself".

He sat alone beneath the flag,  
His head bowed in repose;  
His stare was lost in space.  
Across his khakied knees  
Lay a long-stemmed rose,  
A tear ran down his face.

I interrupted his reverie  
When I took his hand.  
"Welcome home", I said.  
He looked up silently, half awake,  
He smiled...his eyes were red.  
He answered when I shook his hand,  
An echoed squeeze returned my shake.

I couldn't take a picture  
Of my hero with a rose...  
His silent world was sacred.  
Full of what, who knows?  
I could not impose  
Upon its sancticity.

---Col. Whitey Joslin



**CHEERS AND GREETINGS --** Col. Whitey Joslin captures the spirit of the crowd on film as they welcome returning Desert Storm troops during a recent homecoming in Westover's Base Hangar.

## Westover to celebrate Desert Storm success at local amusement park

by Maj. Rick Dyer

The men and women who have been hard at work at Westover AFB since last August will be guests at a celebration honoring them June 16.

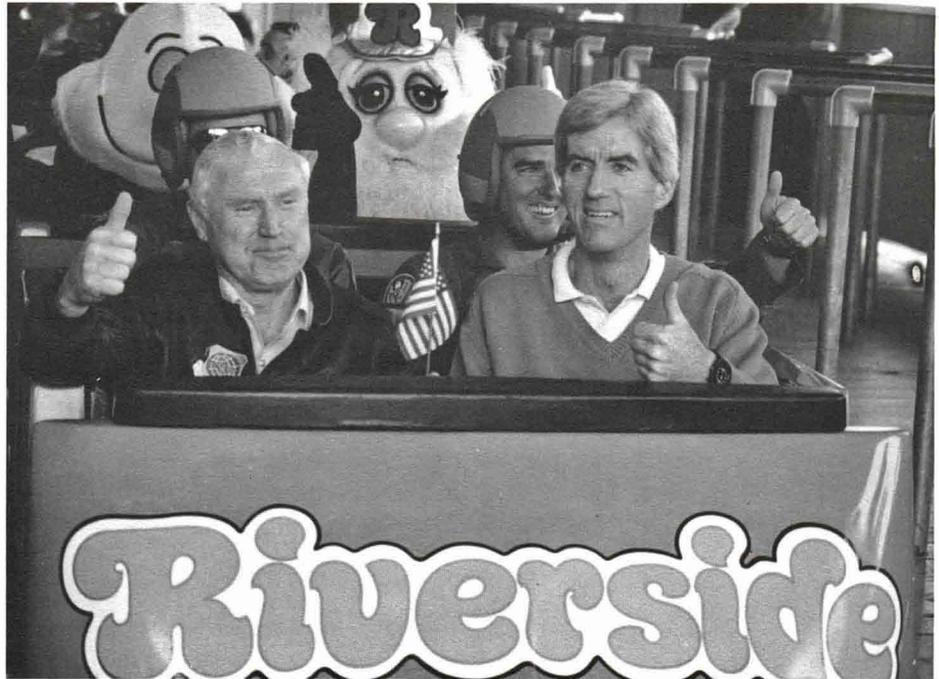
Riverside Amusement Park in Agawam will host a day-long "Heroes and Friends Day" at the park to honor base military and civilian personnel for their Desert Storm successes.

"It's our way of saying 'thanks' to all the people at Westover for they super job they've been doing in the Desert Storm airlift and homecoming celebrations for Persian Gulf veterans," said Ed Carroll, Riverside Amusement Park president. "The men and women at Westover played a major role in our nation's victory in the Gulf, and they are all heroes, too."

More than 5,000 base military, civilian and volunteer personnel, and their family members, will be admitted to Riverside free of charge starting at 9:30 a.m. June 16. They'll be treated to all of the rides at the park free of charge, and the same type of barbecue they've been providing around-the-clock to the Desert Storm troops who've been landing at Westover.

Local businesses which have provided food and beverage for the homecoming parties in the base hangar will provide provisions for the barbecue at Riverside, which will be held in the park's "Picnic Grove Area."

The amusement park will be open to the general public starting at 11:00 a.m.



(photo by SrA Nancy Wilochka)

**THUMBS UP--** Brig. Gen. Mike Walker, commander of the 439th MAW (left) and Ed Carroll, president of Riverside Amusement Park in Agawam give the pilot's "thumbs up" signal before a recent "test flight" on Riverside's Cyclone rollercoaster.

on June 16. Riverside will donate \$2 from each paid admission that day to the Westover U.S.O. chapter's Operation Patriot Home celebration fund.

Westover and Riverside officials announced "Heroes and Friends Day" May 9 at a press conference at the park. A contingent of 439th airmen, led by Brig. Gen. Mike Walker, 439th MAW commander, warmed up for the event by taking a "test flight" aboard Riverside's "Cyclone" roller coaster.

"We are grateful to Riverside for their support and kindness in hosting this

event for our people," General Walker said. "We've been working hard during the past 10 months, and I know that everyone will enjoy this special day."

With the ongoing homecoming and airlift missions, base officials noted that June 16 would still be a work day. However, they said that every attempt will be made to arrange schedules during the day to allow for maximum attendance.

Riverside Park will be open until 11:30 p.m. June 16. Information concerning the event is available at unit orderly rooms.

**ART IMITATES LIFE--**In the midst of real-life homecomings at Westover May 17, the base also played host to a make-believe welcome ceremony. The 35-member film crew from September Productions in Boston converted the flightline into an outdoor sound stage to produce an advertisement for United Technologies Corporation. The ad, which is scheduled for national broadcast in June, is United Technologies' tribute to the men and women who participated in Desert Storm.



## "Every Nighters Club" offers special welcome to returning troops

SSgt F. X. Kelley

Although they came to Westover not knowing each other a little more than two months ago, friendships quickly developed and sometime in March the erstwhile strangers decided to band together as a loosely-organized, yet solidly committed rooting section for Persian Gulf veterans.

When it came time to select a name for the group, the choice was both instantaneous and unanimous--the Every Nighters Club, in tribute to their omnipresence at the Base Hangar.

Since day one of the reverse flow of servicepersons from the Gulf to home, at least one of the thirty members of the Every Nighter's Club has been there for the returnees. Collectively, they have bestowed countless thousands of hugs, handshakes and hurrahs upon arriving Desert Storm veterans.

Each Every Nighter has a special spot for providing that personal touch of home. Some huddle in the "hugging center" just north of the "bend in the rug," others man positions at the "hugging corner," the first point on the last leg of the welcome home walk, and still others hold down reserved spots strategically stationed along the cordoned-off aisle of honor.

The group has even developed a routine. As they walk misty-eyed and mildly mesmerized down the long red distinguished visitor's carpet, returnees are first presented with a Desert Storm pin, then greeted with a handshake, and finally treated to a gentle but firm hug.

Every Nighter members, most of whom live in western Massachusetts, trace their roots to MSgt. Barbara Morris, base career advisor, who provided the inspiration for the group's genesis. "Barbara is the original Every Nighter. It was her enthusiasm and dedication which provided the organizational spark," said SSgt. Mike Bouchard, who is here on active duty with the 439CSG/LGS.

A Minneapolis native, SSgt. Bouchard spends almost all of his off-duty time serving as a cheerleader with fellow spirit-lifter Judy "Pompon Lady" Bellerose.

All members agree that their primary motivation lies in trying to give more than they receive; and according to all, the benefits are tremendous.

"I waited sixteen hours for the first flight to arrive," said Judy Bellerose. "Every one of the troops asked the same questions-Who are you?, Why are you here? Their responses made me aware of the importance of the greeters," she said.

"It's a never-ending series of special moments," said Dick Lafley, the group's official photographer, who has spent 12-15 hours daily at the base hangar since the first troop arrived here.

For Joan and Jim Welch, one of several couples who belong, the club provides an opportunity to provide for others the greeting that her brother, a two-term Vietnam veteran, never received. "When he came home, other than for my immediate family, there was nobody," she said.

"Every time I reach out with a handshake or a hug, I feel that the country I fought for has been reunited," said Kevin Leary, a decorated Vietnam veteran, whose medals drew the attention of a returning Marine warrant officer. Ironically, the two had been sta-

tioned in Chu Lai at the same time, and had even crossed paths. "I was a Seabee, and he turned out to be the first Marine who quaffed a beer in the NCO club we constructed."

"I've laughed, cried, and been on both the giving and receiving end of consolation," said Audrey Sherman, who reflects the reciprocity of emotions group members experience.

Veteran greeter Donna Provost and husband Steve had a recent surprise, when a late-night caller turned out to be a returnee who had been the recipient of an Every Nighter's greeting, and upon arrival home decided to call and say thank you. His somewhat naive, but earnest inquiry of "Do you remember me", was met by Steve's retort-"We think so, were you the guy in uniform?"

Whereas Westover's active-duty personnel may be due for demobilization July 15, the Every Nighters won't officially disband until all the troops are back. "We'll be here until the last one comes home," said Sara Craven.



(photo courtesy of the Every Nighters Club)

**WELCOME BACK --** Every Nighter stalwart Sara Craven offers a homecoming hug to a Desert Storm veteran following a recent flight arrival. The 30 members of the Every Nighters Club have bestowed thousands of hugs and handshakes upon returning troops during welcome home ceremonies here.



(photo by TSgt. Sandi Michon)

**SOLID SUPPORT--**This veteran's salute stance shows pride runs deeper than disability.

## Veterans honored

Approximately 200 Korean and Vietnam veterans were "welcomed home" May 4 during a moving ceremony in the Base Hangar.

The veterans, who came from Western Massachusetts and Connecticut, were honored during "East Hartford Day" at Westover. Approximately 1,500 residents of East Hartford, Conn. were on hand to cheer the Korean and Vietnam veterans, and to greet returning Desert Storm troops who landed at the base.

Many of the veterans who participated said the ceremony made up for the welcomes which they didn't receive after the earlier wars. The vets received a thunderous ovation as they filed down the red carpet in the hangar.

The tribute was organized by Santo Ranno, an East Hartford resident and Vietnam veteran, who has worked frequently as a homecoming volunteer.

Also honored during the event were Brig. Gen. Mike Walker, 439th MAW commander, and his wife, Carol. They were praised for Westover's role in Desert Storm and for the around-the-clock welcome party at the base.

## Be sure you're grounded

We greet our returning troops in the Base Hangar. In a wing of the hanger, just to the left of the room where we greet them, is an armory. Most of the returning troops are armed, some heavily. I consider a B.A.R., an M-16, and a side arm, plus a supply of ammo, to be pretty heavily armed. The troops turn their weapons in at the armory for the time of their visit with us. In the hallway, just outside the armory is a small metal box, labeled, "spark producing materials." I've walked by the spot, perhaps a thousand times, but last night, for the first time I noticed the words printed on the door above the box: "Be sure you are grounded before you enter." Now, I know what that means to the troops. As they enter a room where arms and ammunition are stored, the possibility of a cigarette spark, or a little static electricity

on their clothing, could detonate the ammunition and turn that armory into a powder keg. So, these words serve as a reminder to all who enter, of imminent, potential danger.

As I pondered these words, I saw them as a potential reminder to people of faith, to be grounded in their faith before they enter. Where religious people may enter has lots of possibilities. Churches require people to participate in prolonged classes of confirmation before allowing them to enter into membership. This is because we believe they should be well grounded in the knowledge of their faith if they are going to practice it. Entering the church may be the easy place to go.

Sometimes entering life, or life's situations makes a strong grounding in the faith desirable. Many POWs from the Vietnam Conflict have told me they were ill-equipped to use their religious faith as a tool for survival in a time and place where it was the only resource they had left. Many of the young people who participated in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm have said it felt so strange when, frightened and alone, they found themselves taking inventory of their personal resources, and realized that they wanted to talk to God, something they hadn't

*"I suspect that in the face of danger, most of us would be surprised by the discovery of our need for spiritual grounding, and our lack of it."*

wanted, or tried to do for years. Many said it felt like they couldn't connect when they tried to pray. They realized the value of having a prayer habit in order to feel comfortable praying, rather than feeling uncomfortable for having prayed.

Overall I am very favorably impressed with what I see in these young people. I like their values. I am sure that some of them will choose a closer walk with God, and will become better grounded in their faith. Some may forget their feelings, now that the danger is over, until God finds them again in some other situation.

I suspect that in the face of danger, most of us would be surprised by the discovery of our need for spiritual grounding, and our lack of it. So, take those words seriously. Be sure you are grounded before you enter.

by Lt. Col. Sandy Van Norden  
Base Chaplain

## Employer Appreciation Day at Westover honors bosses

Westover hosted its first "Employer Appreciation Day" on May 21, with more than 40 bosses in attendance.

According to Lt. Col. Michael Roy, project coordinator, the event, which was held to thank the employers of activated Desert Storm reservists, was highly successful. During the event, bosses had the

chance to tour the base and view Desert Storm operations

Other employer appreciation days are scheduled to be held at Westover on June 8 and 12.

For reservations or further information, contact MSgt. John Sullivan at extension 3590.

# N. E. media becomes part of Westover story during Persian Gulf War

by SrA Kymberly Taylor

For a reporter, Westover operations during Desert Storm have provided one story after the other, ready for the telling.

Three hours before the first home-bound troops arrived at Westover from the Gulf last August, Public Affairs Officer Gordon Newell called Springfield Union-News reporter Cynthia Simison and announced, "Here's what you've been waiting for."

Ms. Simison and her photographer, as well as representatives from more than 10 other local media outlets, swarmed the base hangar that morning for a chance to question and photograph the desert-worn men and women as they returned to native soil.

The steady stream of press through Westover's gates that morning wasn't new to the base Public Affairs office. Since August, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, many New England newspapers, TV and radio stations have dedicated at least a phone call per day to check on the action at Westover.

"There's not a lot of time to rest anymore," said Ms. Simison. Since November, she has served as the coordinator for all Westover stories reported in the Springfield Union-News.

During the heat of Westover activity, the journalist visited the base almost daily to make sure she was up on the newest angle to the Westover war story.

"I've reported about military families in the guard and reserve, demonstrators and protesters -- anything relating to Westover or Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield," she said.

Leaving her beat at the Hampden County Superior Court was a welcome change for Ms. Simison, "And it was a BIG change," she emphasized. "I went from dealing with child molesters and murderers to really top-notch people.

"I think that is the secret to your success," she added. "People at Westover are genuine human beings who all have a job to do. I developed a relationship of trust and respect with those I met at the base. I've been treated very well, and as far as I'm concerned the reception (for the troops) has been great."

Joanne Quinones, news reporter with WGGB TV, agrees.



(photo by TSgt. Sandi Michon)

A COMMON SIGHT--"Live from the Base Hangar..."



(photo by SSgt. VinBlanchard)

**WELCOME HOME--Joanne Quinones, a reporter from Channel 40 in Springfield, interviews one of the first 20 troops to arrive home from the Persian Gulf who received a "hero's welcome" at Westover in March.**

'Although a reporters job is to cover the news with distance and neutrality, the sight of battle-weary troops returning to a hero's welcome in Westover's base hangar was an emotional experience that couldn't be denied,' she said.

"You find yourself getting swept up in the homecoming, the troops get off the plane and even though I'm not supposed to be involved I feel myself getting teary-eyed. I guess I'm just a softy," she added.

"We (WGGB) started getting involved in the war when Westover did," she continued. "Westover was a place that I found myself going to on a daily basis. This kind of close contact with a subject makes the news more personal for a reporter, and I started forming relationships with the people at the base."

Being at Westover during this war has also been a learning experience for those tasked with reporting about it.

"This has been a great opportunity to find out how different people feel about the military," said Ms. Simison. "You see people from every walk of life working and volunteering at the hangar."

"It's a real good history lesson too," said Ms. Quinones. A lot of us are experiencing what our parent's experienced -- going through a war -- but it was different for me because I'm a reporter. Sometimes I found out more about what was going on than a lot of people, or even my own family did," she said.

"I was fortunate because it was mostly good news and that made reporting it a bit easier."

# New maintenance platform story is a tall tail tale

by Maj. Rick Dyer

What has eight wheels, an elevator, stands more than seven stories tall and fits the C-5A Galaxy to a "t"?

It's one of Westover's newest pieces of maintenance equipment---a mammoth, self-propelled T-tail stand.

The motorized maintenance platform--which resembles a giant erector

set contraption on wheels--can be used on the flight line, or in the DC and Pull-through hangars.

As it is driven out to a C-5 aircraft, one maintenance worker steers while 14 others act as spotters. Like any conventional truck or automobile, it has a steering wheel, gas pedal and brakes.

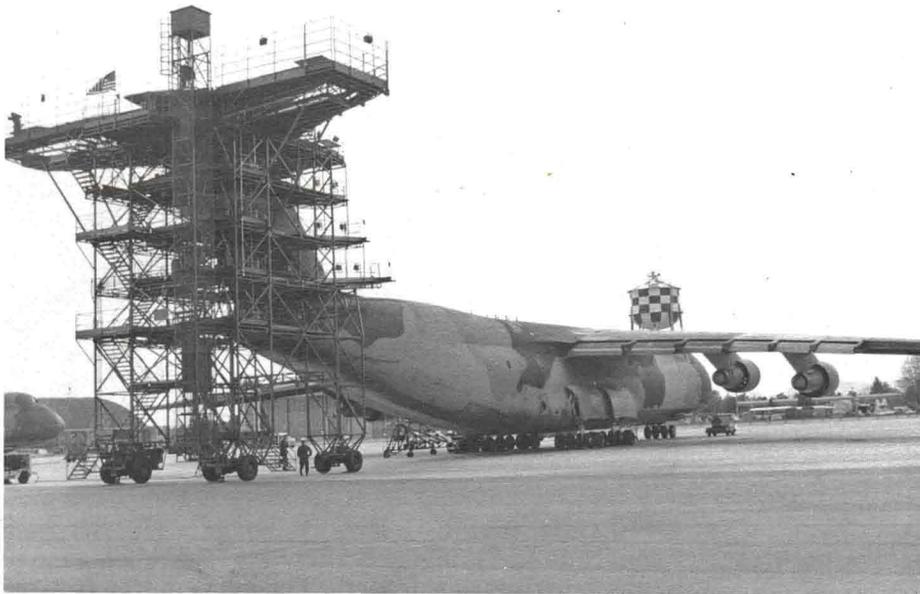
It also has an elevator which carries workers to various levels of the tail, and a crane for hoisting parts and equipment.

The T-tail stand enables the maintenance personnel to perform repairs and adjustments on the big plane's rudder, pitch trim and elevators.

Given its size and weight, the stand offers the workers an extremely stable platform as they labor high above the ground. It has a number of sliding platforms which allow access to all levels and both side's of the C-5's tail section.

MSgt Henri Drenthe and MSgt Steven Skowron, both of the 439th OMS, have received extensive training in the use of the T-tail stand and serve as its principal operators.

According to Capt. Cam LeBlanc, maintenance officer with the 439th MAW, the huge mechanized platform was received at the base late last winter and has been extremely useful to maintenance workers who are called on to make "high-level" repairs.



(photo by TSgt. Sandi Michon)

**TALL TAIL --** Westover's mechanized, self-propelled maintenance platform, which stands over seven stories tall, helps maintenance workers to perform repairs on the C-5A Galaxy's huge and hard to reach tail section.

## Westover recruiter designs Desert Storm patch for Patriot Wing

It took three hours of design work and a lot of thought, but thanks to an NCO from Westover's Reserve Recruiting Office, 439th MAW members now have their own Desert Storm commemorative patch.

MSgt. George Fillgrove, who has collected 2000 unit patches since 1972, can now add one of his own creation to the collection.

Noting a large number of Desert Storm pins being worn at Westover and the absence of an appropriate unit patch, Sergeant Fillgrove decided to take on

the project. He borrowed ideas from three other unit patches in creating the concept for the design.

The colorful patch depicts the Patriot Wing's C-5 Galaxy strategic airlift mission during Operation Desert Storm.

Sergeant Fillgrove's patch is available at Sentry Cleaners, and is reportedly selling briskly to Desert Storm memorabilia collectors.

Sentry Cleaners is donating half of the receipts from sales of the patch to the Westover USO's homecoming celebration fund.





TSgt. Glenn Brault

## "Patriot People"

**Name:** Glenn Brault  
**Rank:** TSgt.  
**Age:** 29  
**Address:** Chicopee, Mass.  
**Unit:** 439th MOBSF  
**Position:** Financial Management Supervisor  
**Civilian position:** Post Office Supervisor  
**Favorite Food:** Lobster  
**Years of Service:** 6  
**Favorite Sport:** Basketball  
**Favorite Hobby:** Computers  
**Ideal Vacation:** Hawaii with my wife  
**Best Way to Relax:** Watching sports on T.V.  
**Preferred Entertainment:** Comedy  
**Favorite Celebrity:** Sylvester Stallone  
**Favorite Music:** Soft Rock  
**Favorite Book:** *Appalachian Trail Guide*  
**Favorite Color:** Blue  
**Favorite Car:** Corvette  
**Pet Peeve:** Bad attitudes  
**Best Thing About Westover:** Close to home  
**Worst thing about Westover:** No complaints

# PAT

## on the back

### Reenlistments

SMsgt. Stuart E. DeGray  
 MSgt. William J. Archambeau  
 MSgt. Lawrence L. Edwards  
 MSgt. Paul L. Frappier Jr.  
 TSgt. Steve Bogard Jr.  
 TSgt. Byron T. Chaples Jr.  
 TSgt. Neal A. Jason  
 SSgt. Glenn G. Connon  
 SSgt. Albert E. Dudley  
 SSgt. Cynthia K. Fairchild  
 SSgt. Ronald J. LaBonte  
 SSgt. Judith A. Marcinowski  
 SSgt. Philip W. Nadeau  
 SSgt. Douglas A. Pregony  
 SSgt. John W. Schnieder  
 SSgt. Arthur B. Young  
 Sgt. Brent M. Field  
 Sgt. John P. Moderacki  
 Sgt. Joaquim H. Pedro  
 SrA. Dennis R. Miller

### Enlistments

SSgt. Michael J. Lieb  
 SrA. Barry F. Carragher  
 A1C Robin A. Babineau  
 A1C Gary J. Cramer  
 A1C Yolanda L. Kelly  
 AB Dana S. Forrester  
 AB Charmaine M. Mallett  
 AB Ellsworth S. Smith

## Westover's Honor Guard seeks recruits

If you take pride in your unit and your uniform, consider joining Westover's Honor Guard.

According to Maj. Natalie Iryshe, honor guard OIC, the unit is actively recruiting new members.

"We're looking for sharp, proud troops to represent the base and wing at all types of military ceremonies," Major Iryshe said.

"It's a voluntary activity that requires an extra commitment of time, but it is also a very important job which not everyone can do."

Honor Guard members receive extensive training in the manual

of arms, military ceremonies and close order drill. Heavy emphasis is placed on proper grooming and wear of the uniform.

The unit represents Westover at parades, military ceremonies and public events.

"As a result of the public interest in Desert Storm and the role which the base has been playing in it, we've been inundated with requests for appearances by the honor guard," the major added.

Westover personnel interested in joining the honor guard should contact TSgt. Doreen Bronner, honor guard flight commander, at ext. 3127.

## Thirteen protesters convicted in District Court

Thirteen people were convicted yesterday in Chicopee District Court on charges that they trespassed at Westover AFB last October

The defendants were found guilty after a jury trial and sentenced to perform 100 hours of community service or

serve 30 days in the House of Correction.

The 13 were arrested during a demonstration in October when they refused police orders to stay out of the road and off base property. The defendants were protesting U.S. military involvement in the Persian Gulf.

# SrA. Laura Irish honored as Airman of the Year

SrA. Laura L. Irish, an energetic, 26-year-old fuels specialist from the 439th CES, has been selected as Westover's, "Airman of the Year."

A native of Dallas, Texas, Airman Irish graduated from Shawnee, Oklahoma High School and the Dickenson Business School in Oklahoma City.

She served with the 507th CES at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma and enlisted in the Air Force Reserve in December 1988. She joined the 439th CES at Westover in October 1989.

When Operation Desert Shield began last August, Airman Irish volunteered to work at the base on nine consecutive weekends. During this time, she also worked full-time at the Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton, pursued her nursing degree through night classes at Greenfield Community College, and cared for her four-year-old son.

Last December, Airman Irish was called to active duty as one of the 1,550 reservists who were mobilized here for the Persian Gulf War.

She has served on active duty as a fuels specialist since then.

Her unit has worked around the clock, pumping more than 50 million gallons of JP-4 jet fuel during the largest military airlift effort in history.

Since coming to Westover, Airman Irish has completed her Air Force career development course, the NCO preparatory course, and a special fuel valves school.

"Laura is really a dynamic person and she works very hard," said Maj. Talivaldi Maidelis, acting executive officer with the 439th CES. "Despite the fact that she's a single parent who faced a lot of hardships, she did a fantastic job."



SrA. Laura L. Irish

## PATRIOT

Coming in July: Desert Storm veteran becomes citizen



Published monthly for Patriots like SrA Elaine Perreault of Fort Devens, Mass. and 2300 members of the 439th MAW at Westover AFB.

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