

# PATRIOT

439TH TACTICAL AIRLIFT WING · AIR FORCE RESERVE · WESTOVER AFB

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MARCH 1987

## Col. Walker receives notice of general stars

By SSgt. Sandi Michon

There is a kernel of truth to the general rumors going around...

Col. Frederick "Mike" Walker, 439th TAW commander, learned this month that his promotion to brigadier general was approved by the U.S. Senate.

"Making brigadier general is about three steps above anything I ever set out to do," said Colonel Walker. "It's not really a goal I ever set for myself. I've just tried to do the best possible job wherever I've been."

And the colonel has a long list of accomplishments. A Carson City, Mich. native, he was commissioned a second lieutenant after graduating from Air Force ROTC and entered flight training at Greenville AFB, Miss. He completed War College in 1974 and Industrial College of the Armed Forces in

1978. He received an Airline Transport Pilot rating in 1975.

From 1956 through 1959, Colonel Walker was assigned to Dover AFB, Del. He flew C-124 aircraft worldwide as a line pilot and later was a maintenance officer assigned to flight test. He departed from the Air Force in 1960, and purchased a dairy farm in Michigan. During ten years as a self-employed farmer, he became a leader in the local community.

In 1965, he joined the Air Force Reserve program at Selfridge AFB, Mich. with a C-119G airlift unit. He entered the Air Reserve Technician (ART) program in July 1969 when the unit picked up U3A's as a interim aircraft for the Forward Air Control (FAC) mission. He qualified in the O-2A as a FAC and trained the unit in the new mission. In June 1971, C-

130A's were introduced for conversion of the unit to the Tactical Airlift mission. He served as instructor pilot, squadron operations officer and director of operations in the 927th Tactical Air Group.

In January 1976, Colonel Walker was involved in yet another conversion. He became assistant operations and training officer when the 403rd Tactical Airlift Wing converted to the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing. In October 1978, he departed for a statutory tour as Reserve Forces Advisor to Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service at the Military Airlift Command, Scott AFB, Ill.

He served as commander of the 913th Tactical Airlift Group at Willow Grove Air Reserve Facility, Penn. from 1981 to 1983, and was appointed to the position of Deputy Chief of Operations, 14th Air Force, Dobbins AFB, Ga. on June 2, 1983. He remained there until his assignment as commander of the 446th Military Airlift Wing at McChord AFB, Wash. in 1984.

Colonel Walker assumed command of the 439th TAW in 1986, and between the proposed C-5 conversion and the A76 study at Westover, he has been a very busy man. "I hope to be able to see these projects through to the end," said the colonel. "We're in transition, but we have great people here," he continued. "When all is said and done, this base will have an entirely different personality."

Colonel Walker hopes that his promotion to general will open doors that will help him to accomplish his goals at Westover, but as a person, said that he feels no different. "I'm still Mike," he said.



The Thunderbirds are returning to Westover! The Air Force aerial demonstration team will perform on the Sunday of Westover's two-day Open House set for June 6 and 7. Because rain cancelled last year's show, the T-Birds promised a return engagement. More information about the Open House activities soon will be made public.

**EDITORIAL****America's confidence in the military**

Both of our nation's most respected opinion surveys, the Gallup and Harris polls, have released national statistics indicating that America's military has acquired greater public confidence than religion, higher education, medicine, the Supreme Court, big business, the news media, Congress, state and local government and about a dozen other institutions.

The pollsters asked different, but similar, questions to rate public confidence in a range of key professions. In both polls, the U.S. military emerged as America's most trusted institution.

The obvious question is whether the military is getting better, or are other institutions failing to keep the public trust? The answer, depending on which poll is examined, seems to be somewhere in the middle — trust in the military is up somewhat while other institutions are slipping.

The end result is that Americans today place more trust in the honesty and hard work of our men and women in blue or green uniforms than in people in judicial robes, tweed jackets, three-piece suits or hospital garb.

Keeping this public trust is, of course, vital.

We at Westover are in an excellent position today to demonstrate to our neighbors that their faith in our operations and conduct is warranted. The proposed mission change to C-5A aircraft has propelled us onto the front page and on the nightly news and into daily conversations. Westover is again a household word in this region.

This local situation and the national trend indicated in the polls makes each one of us at Westover a representative of America's most trusted institution. Let's work hard to keep that faith.

**Col. Frederick D. Walker**  
Wing commander

**Changes underway at Westover's club**

A comprehensive opinion survey concerning the Consolidated Open Mess was accomplished on the January UTA and changes are already in the works.

Nearly 500 respondents brought their suggestions to the attention of club management. "We appreciate the interest shown by the respondents and will seriously consider all of the recommendations," said Dale Altman, chairman of the club's advisory board.

The most immediate change affecting Reservists is the announcement of a membership night on Saturday night of the March UTA. Membership night means a free dinner for all club members as well as music by a disc jockey. Other changes affecting Reservists include an expanded entertainment schedule on UTAs and additional bartenders in the casual lounge.

Other improvements will benefit all club patrons which number about 2,200. "The club has been here since 1974, and redecorations are needed in various areas," explained Tony Fortunato, club manager. Mr. Fortunato said that some decorating materials are already on order and work will begin as soon as possible. "We have also requested expansion of the dining room and kitchen areas and would like to build a screened-in patio off the casual lounge," he continued. Different menu set-ups are also being considered, such as an iced salad bar.

"During the next five to six months, Reservists should see a steady improvement in the attitude, appearance and service of the club," said Lt. Col. Thomas Hargis, base commander. "Efforts are underway to accomplish heavy-duty cleaning, and management is attempting to arrive at a more competitive wage scale for club workers.

"The proposed club changes are mainly financed from monies generated from the club itself," explained Colonel Hargis. "However, in the past we have received monies from appropriated funds to help with the maintenance costs. This money will no longer be available after October 1987.

"This change in the finance structure means that the club must become self-supporting," he continued. "The only way to accomplish that is to provide what people want."

**Prayer luncheon scheduled for March UTA**

A prayer luncheon is scheduled for March 7 at 11:30 in the Stonina Room at the Consolidated Open Mess. Anyone interested in attending should con-

tact MSgt. David Stebbins or TSgt. Robert Kazalski at ext. 3031 before 9 a.m. the day of the luncheon.

**PATRIOT**

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**Base Commander**  
Lt. Col. Thomas G. Hargis  
**Base Public Affairs Officer**  
Dr. Frank Faulkner  
**Wing Public Affairs Officer**  
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## Billeting offers new non-smokers policy

An informal policy at Westover billeting is making it easier for smokers and non-smokers to share the same quarters.

"Billeting has recognized that smokers and non-smokers often don't mix well and non-smokers are no longer suffering in silence," said MSgt. Paul Gilman, housing manager. "Non-smokers are now being offered the opportunity to choose a roommate who doesn't smoke."

Of the approximately 600 Reservists who stay in the seven buildings on a typical UTA weekend, about two dozen are asking for non-smoking roommates, he said.

"More and more people are inquiring about non-smoking rooms. If a person requests it, we can't guarantee such a room, but we will make the arrangement when possible. Non-smoking rooms are becoming more popular," Sergeant Gilman said.

"It is part of our overall policy of making the quarters more comfortable for Westover Reservists," he said.



**RIBBON CUTTING** — Westover's new base civil engineering complex was officially opened during the February UTA. Cutting the ceremonial ribbon are Lt. Col. Thomas G. Hargis, base commander, Lt. Col. William Garrity, 439th CES commander, Maj. Gen. Sloan R. Gill, special assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, and Col. Frederick D. Walker, 439th TAW commander.

(USAF photo by TSgt. Howard Garbarsky)

# 1986 tax information for Reservists

(AFRNS) — Most American taxpayers have been following the recent news about major changes in the federal income tax law. Those changes will be effective for 1987 tax returns — those filed by April 15, 1988.

There have been few or no changes for 1986 returns.

It should be noted that travel pay, basic allowance for quarters, basic allowance for subsistence and uniform allowances are not income for tax purposes and are not added to gross income.

Travel expenses, including meals and lodging, are deductible if under competent orders (with or without compensation) you remain away from your principal place of business overnight to perform authorized drills and training duty.

If you are temporarily called to active duty, you may deduct the costs of meals and lodging while on active duty, if you kept your regular job while on active duty, returned to it after release and were stationed away from the gen-



eral area of that job or business. These expenses are deductible only if you pay for meals and lodging at the official military duty location and only to the extent the expenses exceed the basic allowance for quarters and basic allowance for subsistence.

The cost of transportation to and from a unit training assembly is probably not deductible in most cases. If a UTA is held on a day that would other-

wise be a normal workday in your civilian job, the expense of going from the normal place of work to the UTA is deductible. But if you do not go directly from your normal place of work to the UTA, you may deduct only the amount it would have cost to go directly from the work location to the site of the UTA.

Deductions for travel and transportation expenses must be taken on Form 2106 (Employee Business Expenses). If Form 2106 is used, the annual return must be filed using Form 1040. You may compute car expense by showing actual expenses or may use the standard mileage rate of 21 cents per mile for the first 15,000 miles and 11 cents per mile for each additional mile.

You may deduct the cost and upkeep of uniforms if military regulations prohibit you from wearing the uniform except while performing duties as a Reservist.

Uniform expenses must be claimed in the miscellaneous deductions section of Schedule A (Itemized Deductions).

## Former AFRES commander keynotes officers' Dining-In

By Maj. Rick Dyer

Westover's proposed C-5 conversion is part of a national defense plan that will mean more planes for the strategic airlift mission, at less cost to the taxpayer.

That's the message which Maj. Gen. Sloan R. Gill, former chief of the Air Force Reserve, stressed with Westover's officers during an address at the Dining-In on Feb. 2 at the Consolidated Open Mess.

According to General Gill, the Air Force plans to increase its C-5 inventory nationwide from 70 to 110 aircraft. (Under the proposed conversion, 16 of those planes will be stationed at Westover.)

"That's a 57 percent increase in the total Air Force C-5 capability," General Gill said.

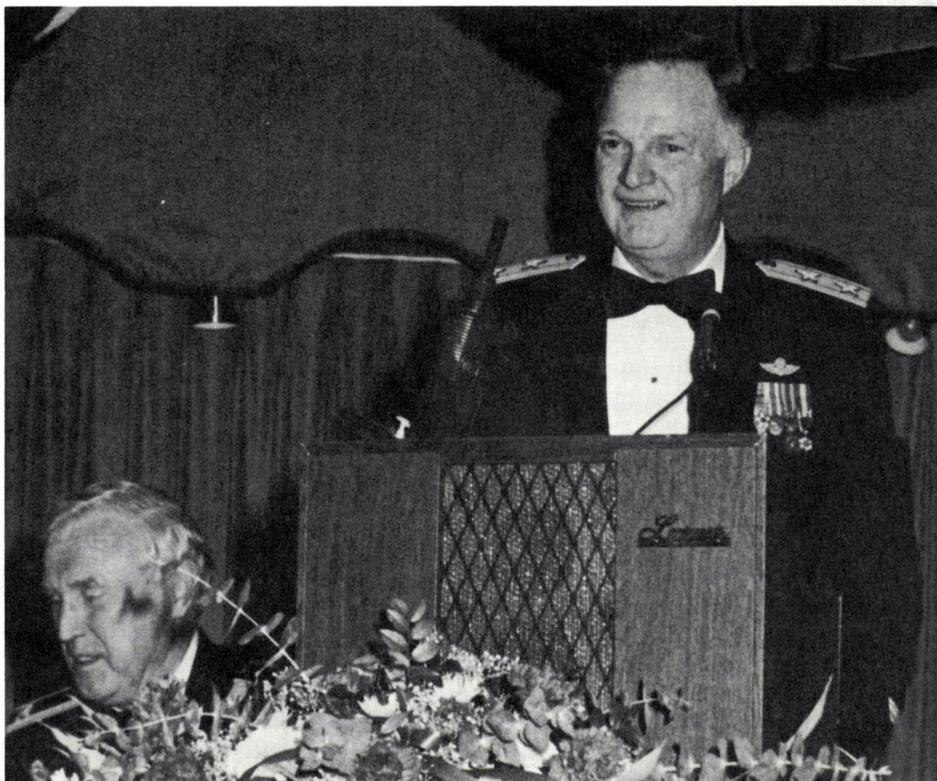
The general, now a special assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, also indicated that the increased Reserve role in strategic airlift will mean significant cost savings.

"We can put three Guard and Reserve crews on line for the cost of one active duty crew," the former AFRES commander said. "That translates into a \$1 million savings per crew for each crew whose role is transferred from active duty to the Guard or Reserve."



**Shriner Highlander Andrew Logan pipes at the Dining-In.**

(USAF photo by TSgt. Don R. Talbot)



**Maj. Gen. Sloan R. Gill addresses 439th TAW members at the Dining-In.**

(USAF photos by TSgt. Don R. Talbot)

General Gill said units like the 439th are well suited to the strategic airlift function.

"The C-5 mission is a good mission for AFRES," he said. "We have convinced Secretary Weinberger and the people on Capitol Hill that we can do the job, and that we can do the job cheaper."

General Gill, who served at Westover during the 1950's as a cargo transport pilot, said that there were several reasons why the base was proposed to receive the huge Galaxies.

"We thought of Westover because it's always been a prime port of embarkation for Europe, and because it's right on the pipeline," he explained.

The general acknowledged that one major drawback of the proposed conversion is the loss of navigator positions at Westover, since the Galaxies have built-in inertial navigation systems. He assured the officers, however, that there would always be a role for the navigator in the Air Force Reserve.

"The Reserve will retain its airdrop mission at other C-130 and C-141

units, and airdrop will always require the 'eyeball to the windshield' role of the navigator," General Gill said. "If you can travel to these units, you can participate," he told the navigators.

In addition to General Gill's keynote address, the dining-in featured the traditional mixture of military pomp and jovial merrymaking.

Three awards were presented at the dinner. General Gill awarded the Legion of Merit to Col. Frederick D. Walker, wing commander. Colonel Walker was cited for his "exceptionally meritorious service" as commander of the 446th Military Airlift Wing at McChord AFB, Wash.

Capt. Wesley T. Carter of the 74th AES and Lt. Col. Alan B. Clune of the 439th CAMS were honored respectively as the Wing's outstanding company grade and field grade officers.

Colonel Walker served as president of the mess, and 1st Lt. Patricia J. Mackey was vice-president.

The dining-in, which was attended by nearly 200 Wing officers, was chaired by Lt. Col. George Caldwell of the 439th TAW and Robert Motley, Westover's airfield manager.

# Westover CAP sprouts wings

By SSgt. Tom Allocco

Westover Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol has won some wings — two Cessna aircraft — which will give the local unit the capability for missions such as search and rescue, and should boost their recruiting capability.

CAP Northeast Region headquarters in Hangar 3 at Westover is scheduled to receive this winter a Cessna 310, a twin-engine, five-seat aircraft. The second plane, a Cessna 182 single-engine, four-seater is expected this summer, according to MSgt. Bob Seaton, 59th APS, who is the director of public affairs for Northeast Region of CAP.

The additional Westover-based aircraft will bring to 11 the number of aircraft owned by the Massachusetts Wing of the Civil Air Patrol. Westover Squadron is one of 20 CAP units in the state.

With two CAP aircraft based here, local units will be able to participate in more flying missions, said CAP Public Affairs Officer Brian Newton of Springfield. CAP Senior Member Newton is a senior at Cathedral High School and has enlisted in the Air Force under the delayed entry program.

"The traditional role of the CAP has been to conduct search and rescue missions for downed aircraft," Newton said. "In recent years, the CAP mission has expanded greatly, and now includes communications, Civil Defense, ground search, blood and organ donor emergency flights and other operations."



Army Reserve SSgt. Daniel O'Brien teaches his daughters Kelly and Laura the finer points of using a compass.

(USAF photo by Frank Faulkner)

The Westover Squadron was formed about 20 years ago and today has nearly three dozen cadets, aged 13 to 18, who learn about leadership and aviation. Another 15 senior members serve as leaders for the squadron.

Meetings are held each Tuesday night in Hangar 3 and S/M Newton says the Westover Squadron is recruiting both senior members and cadets.

Cadets are not allowed on board during Air Force authorized flying missions conducted by senior members. But cadets can participate in all other facets of operations and fly on orientation flights. In late December, CAP ca-

detes flew on a C-130E orientation flight with a crew from the 337th TAS.

Westover Squadron specializes in communications support and ground search techniques. Cadets are trained to participate in the "Night Tango" and other nationwide emergency communications systems. Their ground search training at Dog Patch includes first aid and CPR familiarization.

CAP members serve without pay and purchase their own Air Force-type uniforms and wear distinctive insignia. For information about joining the Westover CAP Squadron, call 557-3124 on Tuesday nights between 5 and 9 p.m.

## Air Force Assistance Fund appeal set for April

More than 38,000 people will need your help again this year. They benefit from Air Force Assistance Fund programs made possible by your contributions.

During the April UTA, the fund will be asking for your vital support as a unit representative will be at sign-in.

"Many Reservists are unaware that the fund benefits them as well as their active duty counterparts," explains MSgt. James Freer, chief of personnel affairs and AFAF project officer.

The widows and dependents of en-

listed Air Force members are eligible for admission to one of two retirement communities located in Florida. The Enlisted Men's Widows and Dependents Home Foundation sponsors Teresa Village, a 113-unit apartment and nine house complex located in Fort Walton Beach. Another 128 of a 378 planned garden style apartments have been completed at Bob Hope Village near Eglin AFB, Fla.

Survivors of Air Force officers may take advantage of housing in San Antonio, Tex. The AFAF's Air Force Village opened in 1970 and features

378 apartments and a 68-bed nursing home. A second village will open this year with another 310 apartments and another 68-bed nursing facility.

In addition, one program of the AFAF's Air Force Aid Society provides financial assistance to Reservists traveling on Air Force business during times of emergency.

"Perhaps you are saying, 'I'll never need to use these services. Hopefully so, but one never knows' said Sergeant Freer. "In the meantime, your donation will go to help others less fortunate and who need your help."

## "Patriot People"



SSgt. Shirley Warbeck

**Name:** Shirley Warbeck  
**Rank:** SSgt.  
**Age:** 31  
**Address:** Coventry, Conn.  
**Unit:** 58th APS  
**Position:** Cargo specialist  
**Civilian Occupation:** Shift leader at a pizza parlor  
**Favorite Food:** Hot dog  
**Favorite Beverage:** Tea  
**Favorite Sport:** Jogging  
**Favorite Hobby:** Sewing  
**Ideal Vacation:** Camping in the mountains  
**Best Way to Relax:** Gardening  
**Preferred Entertainment:** Movies  
**Favorite Celebrity:** Paul Newman  
**Favorite Music:** Classical  
**Favorite Book:** Domina (Barbara Wood)  
**Favorite Color:** Blue  
**Favorite Car:** Toyota  
**Pet Peeve:** Husband  
**Worst Thing About Westover:** Barracks

## Commissary privileges await implementation

(AFRNS) — Air Force Commissary Service officials have advised Reserve forces personnel that they will be allowed to use commissary facilities on an extended basis as soon as the Department of Defense provides an implementing policy.

The change allows Reservists to use the commissary any time during a 365-day period equal to the number of days spent on active duty, up to 14 days. These days can be used any time during the year starting with the date of active duty training.

However, AFCOMS officials said that until they receive instructions, only Reserve forces personnel who are serving their tours under the old system will be allowed to shop in the commissaries. These tours must be of more than 72 hours.

Officials said they welcome the new policy of expanded use and are aware of the importance to Reservists that this non-pay entitlement represents. However, until the new instructions are received, no changes can be implemented.

## "Patriot Muster"

Hundreds of Reservists from Westover, Niagara and Pittsburgh, and a dozen C-130's will participate in "Patriot Muster" in March.

The three 439th TAW units are scheduled to "muster" at Westover, March 20-22 for a practice Operational Readiness Inspection. Approximately 300 Reservists from the flying squadrons, CAMS, ALCE, aerial ports and the Wing will participate in the ORI exercise.

The exercise scenario includes deployment to a forward operating base, heavy equipment airdrops, personnel airdrops and re-deployment to the base of origin.

Because of Westover's proposed conversion to C-5 aircraft and Pittsburgh and Niagara's conversion to the C-130H and C-130E models respectively, an actual ORI has not been scheduled for the squadrons.

"Even though we don't know when the ORI will be, we won't wait until the last minute to prepare," said Col. David L. Webber, 439th TAW deputy commander of operations.



**FASHION UPDATE** — TSgt. Lori Boucher, 439th CSG chief of customer assistance, displays the blue, red and yellow training ribbon Reservists may add to their ribbon collection. Active Reservists as of Dec. 19, 1986 are entitled to the ribbon. Prior service personnel who enlist after Dec. 19, 1986 are entitled to the ribbon upon enlistment and non-prior service personnel enlisted after that date are entitled upon completion of basic military training.

(USAF photo by Frank Faulkner)

## SMSgt. LaFrance named 439th CSG first shirt

SMSgt. Joseph LaFrance was appointed first sergeant of the 439th CSG in January. Previously, he was first sergeant of the 42nd MAPS for two years.

The new Combat Support Group first sergeant said the position presents a special challenge.

"The group is a big unit. There are almost 200 members and they are spread out, with people in the motor pool, security police, base headquarters and elsewhere. It's hard to have an identity, it takes someone to bring all those people together. I think I can do that," Sergeant LaFrance said.

"As first sergeant it's my job to make the unit run smoothly while looking after the spirit of the members," he said.

Sergeant LaFrance joined the Air Force in 1965 and served in Vietnam, Korea, Thailand and other locations in Asia as an air cargo specialist.

In 1971 he joined the Reserve's 901st Aerial Port Flight at Hanscom Field. He served as an air cargo specialist and loadmaster and came to Westover when the unit transferred to the base in 1974. He earned the Meritorious Service Medal while with the 901st APF.

A graduate of the First Sergeants



SMSgt. Joseph LaFrance.

(USAF photo by SSgt. Sandi Michon)

Academy, Keesler AFB, Miss., and Senior NCO Academy, Gunter AFB, Ala., Sergeant LaFrance also wears the Air Force Commendation Medal.

Sergeant LaFrance resides with his

wife, Janice, and their three daughters and two sons in Moosup, Conn. A graduate of Eastern Connecticut State University, he is employed as a rural route carrier.

## Chief Spencer buried with honors

Retired CMSgt. Leland B. Spencer, who died Sunday, Jan. 25, was buried with military honors in a ceremony attended by fellow 439th CAMS members and other Reservists at St. Mary's Cemetery, Northampton.

About 80 Reservists were in uniform at the burial services Thursday, Jan. 29. The ceremony included a color guard and taps by the Westover Honor Guard. There was also a rifle salute by a Hanscom AFB, Mass. unit and a salute by members of the 337th TAS.

Chief Spencer served as a member of the 439th CAMS for 22 years before he retired in 1985. He served as a flight line supervisor before he was named chief of quality assurance.

A native of Canton, Penn., he served in the Navy during World War II. He was a long-time resident of Northampton and was a past president of the Florence Civic and Business Association, a communicant of Annunciation Church, Northampton, and president of the Northampton Bowling League.

Chief Spencer is survived by his wife, Lorraine; a son, Steven; and three daughters, Judy A. Scanlan, Sharon L. Sargenski and Susan M. Gray.

Westover Reservists made a donation in Chief Spencer's name to the American Cancer Society.

## earning a PAT on the back

### Enlistments

SSgt. Robert G. Albert  
 SSgt. George P. Bracey  
 SSgt. Paul M. Giglio  
 SSgt. Cheldon O. Lanier, Jr.  
 SSgt. William C. Laplante  
 SSgt. Robert P. Morin  
 SSgt. Clarence J. Paulin  
 SSgt. Michael J. Remillard  
 SSgt. Vidyanand Setaram  
 Sgt. Robert J. Powers, Jr.  
 Sgt. William A. Theroux  
 A1C Edward E. Demars  
 A1C Robert J. Ingerson  
 A1C Thomas D. Lemoine  
 A1C Keith J. McCabe  
 A1C Robert E. Stec  
 AB Annie L. Crockett  
 AB Kevin J. Graveline  
 AB Felicia A. Jordan  
 AB Mark D. Templeman

### Re-enlistments

MSgt. Robert R. Durand  
 MSgt. Joaquim M. Henriques  
 MSgt. Andrew B. Lown  
 MSgt. L.C. Mays  
 MSgt. Corinne A. Squire  
 MSgt. Stuart C. Bartholomew  
 MSgt. Thomas P. Templeman  
 MSgt. Benjamin P. Tomlin  
 TSgt. Gerrit Faber  
 TSgt. George Gomperts  
 TSgt. Duane G. Nelson  
 SSgt. Thomas N. Allocco  
 SSgt. Richard I. Boyce  
 SSgt. Bruce J. Bretschneider  
 SSgt. Richard P. Carson  
 SSgt. Glenn M. Flynn  
 SSgt. Albert D. Guzzo  
 SSgt. Lex S. Johnson  
 SSgt. Judy A. Jones  
 SSgt. Philip J. Lupien  
 SSgt. David R. Rannikko  
 SSgt. Thomas M. Wright  
 Sgt. Bonnie A. Nolfi

# The sky is not the limit for Westover's Diane Hamer

By Maj. Rick Dyer

Back in the days when she was first learning to fly, Diane Hamer would land at a suburban Chicago airport, park her plane, and then hop on a bus for the return trip home.

The public transportation was essential, she recalls, because she wasn't old enough to drive an automobile to the airfield.

Capt. Diane Hamer, a Reservist with the 439th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Westover, has been flying since she was 15 years old.

She isn't quite sure what attracted her to aviation, although she remembers watching "Sky King" on television and longing to be a pilot.

## Flying is a way of life

What she is sure of, however, is that aviation means more to her than just a hobby, or even a career. For Diane Hamer, flying is a way of life, and the sky has no limits.

Captain Hamer holds a commercial pilot's license and a bachelor of science degree in aeronautical engineering.

For the past 14 years, she has worked as an engineer and project manager at Sikorsky Aircraft in Stratford, Conn., where she's currently responsible for the development of a night vision system for the Navy's CH 53E "Super Sea Stallion" helicopter.

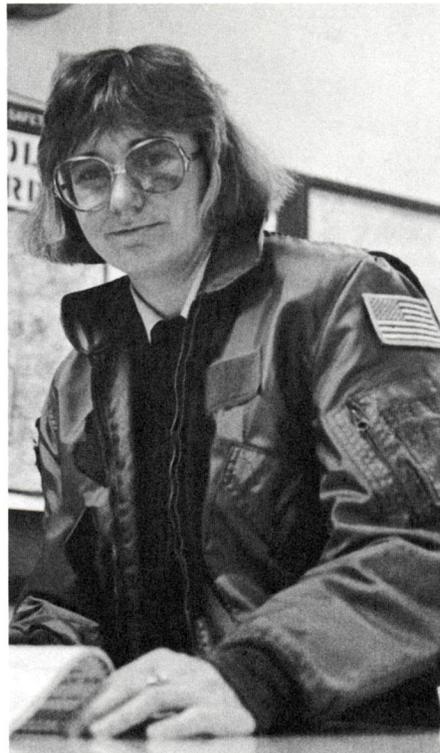
She also owns two airplanes, and operates a flight training school at the Oxford (Conn.) Airport.

The captain, a 15-year veteran of the Air Force and Air Force Reserve, also holds a master's degree in business administration and has completed her first year of night law school. Although she is currently on a leave of absence from law school, she says that if she pursues the legal degree, she will undoubtedly use it in an aviation-related field.

## The list goes on . . .

Captain Hamer was commissioned through officer's training school following her graduation from the Aerospace Institute in Chicago. She spent 18 months on active duty as an engineer working on structural load projects and crew escape systems for the A-10 and F-15 aircraft.

"The fact that I wear glasses prevented me from becoming an Air Force



Capt. Diane Hamer

pilot and, of course, I would have loved that," she said.

But while her vision may have barred Diane Hamer from earning Air Force silver wings, it certainly didn't ground her.

She soloed at age 16, and earned her pilot's license at 17. "I finally got around to getting my driver's license

when I was 18," she said. She has logged more than 1200 flying hours, and is understandably proud of her ratings as a flight instructor and commercial pilot.

Several years ago, she founded Nautatuck Valley Aviation Inc., the corporation under which she operates the nine-aircraft flight school.

"She is a dynamic young woman," said Lt. Col. Harold Lawrence, 439th CAMS commander. "She is very knowledgeable when it comes to aviation."

Captain Hamer says that she feels extremely comfortable in the cockpit, and views aviation as being "relatively safe if you take the proper pre-flight precautions." Still, she is aware of the risks.

## A look to the future

Captain Hamer is currently working on earning a flight engineer's certification that would enable her to realize her long-standing goal of becoming a pilot aboard a commercial airliner.

She believes that some of the airlines have been "a little slow" about hiring women for such positions, but she also believes that the career field is "slowly but surely" becoming more accessible to female pilots.

"That is the way it should be," she said. "Gender shouldn't enter into it. The only question should be whether or not a person is a good pilot."

HQ 439TH TACTICAL AIRLIFT WING (AFRES)  
WESTOVER AIR FORCE BASE, MA 01022

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