

PATRIOT

439TH TACTICAL AIRLIFT WING (AIR FORCE RESERVE)

WESTOVER AIR FORCE BASE, MASS.

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Westover and Chicopee firemen "knock down" a simulated aircraft fire as part of a joint training operation during November UTA. See story on page 4.

(USAF photo by Maj. Robert Carroll)

19 complete Westover's 1st NCO academy

Nineteen Westover Reservists are the graduates of the first NCO Academy Associate Program offered at a Reserve base. They completed the 12-month-long course on Sunday of the December UTA.

"The students ran the program themselves, using videotape instruction and program guides furnished by AFRES," explained MSgt. Faith Longfield, base career advisor. "They worked together, ate lunch together, planned the lessons together, and even had some fun along the way."

Classes included Air Force history, military law, NCO duties and responsibilities, the promotion system, and the new PEP program.

Many of the classes featured guest speakers such as MSgt. Jim Fothwell, 439th CAMS career advisor, speaking on career motivation; Col. Louis Paskevich, wing vice commander, explaining the AFRES organization; SMSgt. Salvatore Palumbo, 439th CAMS first sergeant, talking about Air Force customs and courtesies; and CMSgt. Jack Murdock, wing senior enlisted advisor, leading a discussion on NCO responsibilities. Two civilian personnel officers, Charlie Carignan and Norm Lorange spoke on management and labor relations.

The students alternated as lesson leaders on subjects ranging from stress management, problem solving, elements of power to history of government.

They were assisted by CMSgt. Gene Longfield, wing training officer. He coordinated everyone's schedules, arranged for audio-visual equipment and materials, served as a resource person for the lesson plans, and helped devel-

(continued on page 7)

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Patriot wins again
- DWI program
- AFRES gets C-5



EDITORIAL

Employer support: a two-way street

It's a little easier to be a Reservist these days, thanks to people like Stanley Zucker.

Mr. Zucker, an Agawam businessman, is chairman of the Massachusetts Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committee.

For the past several years, he's been volunteering his time to improve relations between employers and their National Guard and Reserve member employees. He helps to ensure that our full-time jobs won't be jeopardized when we perform our part-time military duties.

Federal law, and concerned citizens like Stan Zucker, protect our employment. But there are things which each Reservist can, and should, do to bolster employer support. Here are a few suggestions:

- Give your employer plenty of advance notice about your military duty schedule.
- Talk with your employer, and explain the job which you, and your unit, perform in the Reserve. If your military duties are related to your civilian job, make your employer aware of that fact.
- Invite your boss to visit Westover and see your unit train. The Wing periodically sponsors base tours, open houses, and specific employer support functions, and these are golden opportunities to show what the Reserve is all about.
- Let your boss know that you truly appreciate his or her support. One way to do this is by nominating your employer for the Pro Patria Award, which is given by the Defense Department to deserving bosses. (See related story on this page.)

Each of us has the responsibility to make the employer support program work. It benefits every Reservist and Guardsman, but it's definitely a two-way street!

Capt. Rick Dyer
Public Affairs Officer

An "attaboy" for the boss?

That's precisely what the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve hopes to give to the deserving civilian bosses of 439th members.

Each year, the committee awards "Pro Patria" honors to employers who support the national defense by adopting personnel policies that make it easier

for workers to serve in the Guard and Reserve.

Wing members may nominate their employers directly by letter. Nominations should be mailed to: "My Boss is a Pro," NCESGR Awards Officer, 1735 N. Lynn St., Arlington, VA 22209-2082.

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BRIEFS

Operation Brim Frost

Two C-130s, three aircrews and 30 members of the maintenance squadron of the 439th TAW's 914th TAG and a similar contingent from the Wing's 911th TAG will participate in Operation Brim Frost, at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, Jan. 28-Feb. 8. The Niagara and Pittsburgh units will join other Reserve, active duty, and Air National Guard units in the field exercise which tests personnel, airplanes and machines in severe winter conditions, including temperatures expected to hit 60 degrees below zero.

The check is in the mail

Air Force Reservists may occasionally experience some delays in receiving their monthly paychecks for the next several months. The check-printing machine at the Accounting and Finance Center in Denver sometimes fails to print the address of the payee. When this happens, Denver personnel must address the check manually. This, of course, takes additional time.

A replacement check printer has been ordered, but will not be in place and operating until mid-1985. Until then, Westover Reservists whose checks do not arrive within three weeks after a UTA should call the Reserve Pay Section at extension 3880.

UTA DATES

Feb. 2-3

Mar. 2-3

Mar. 30-31

Apr. None

May 4-5

Jun. 1-2

Jul. 13-14

Aug. 10-11

Sep. 7-8



and A: Col. Roy E. Ayers

Col. Roy E. Ayers is the Commander of the 439th Combat Support Group. In that capacity he serves as the base commander at Westover. He has been in that position since November 1981. During an interview with the Patriot, Col. Ayers had the following responses to questions asked.

Q. What are some of the achievements that have occurred at Westover during the past year that you're most proud?

A. We continue to set records, but that's a part of life, we always strive to do better. Our vehicle maintenance section has always been at the top in receiving awards and we're very proud of their achievements. Various sections of our supply department have also received recognition for the fine job that they do. In Budget, Ray Gilbert and his staff have been singled out to test and implement new programs in the AFRES system. They have done an outstanding job in meeting goals established by AFRES. In fact, today some of the things they have learned off of these tests have been implemented at other locations. Our MWR program continues to lead that field in AFRES. Our Club is always at the top of the list at meeting its goals and doing a good job in management. In fact our Club does a better job than many active duty base clubs. In billeting, we're continuing the refurbishing job that we started this past year. Paul Gilman and his staff have done an excellent job of tackling the problems in modernizing and refurbishing the billeting section. This year we'll be modernizing and refurbishing the enlisted barracks. Militarily, the 439th Weapons System Security Flight has been recognized by both 14th Air Force and AFRES for its achievements. The "Patriot" and the Public Affairs Office Staff also have brought Air Force wide recognition to the base. Overall, 1984 was quite a year of achievement for the base.

Q. Looking forward to this year what are some of the projects facing the base in 1985?

A. This year we plan to refurbish and remodel the dining hall. The project

calls for the relocation of the serving area and eventually bring new furniture into the building. Another project we've been working on has been to bring cable television into the base. First, we plan on putting it into the VOQ, but eventually we'll bring it into the enlisted dormitories sometime this summer. Those are two of the major things that we will be accomplishing this year. We should also be breaking ground soon on our new Civil Engineering Complex. And of course, we'll be continuing our energy conservation program by putting thermopane windows in buildings and hangars that presently don't have them.

Q. What are some of the problems that the base faces in the upcoming year?

A. One of the biggest problems the base has is that it was built over 40 years ago for a totally different type of operation. Under current legislative directives it is difficult for us to manage space. We're considered to have a tremendous amount of excess square footage available on the base, therefore, we are not allowed to build new buildings. Conflicting directives keep us from modernizing or making areas compatible with the functions that are in them. We have very few functions that are operating in areas that were built for them. We don't even have a central administrative building on the base. So much of the aircraft maintenance operation are not in facilities that were designed for the type of work that they presently have to accomplish. Even though we look great on the outside, on the inside we make things happen by making people adjust to the environment. Despite these problems, we continue to grow internally on the base with more active duty units taking advantage of empty spaces on military bases rather than renting facilities off base. One of the most recent units to join us is the Navy's Personnel Support Activity Detachment which is moving into Hangar 3 in January.

Q. What are some of the upcoming events to be held at Westover this year?

A. Once again we'll be hosting the National Model Airplane Champion-



ships during the final week in July. It is expected that it will draw an even larger crowd than we did in 1982 when we last held the event. We're still awaiting word on the Thunderbirds whether they'll be a part of our Open House that we'll be holding on July 27 to kick off a week of aviation activities at Westover. In addition, we'll continue to support such activities as the Explorer Scouts Police Academy this summer. On the military side of the house, Westover will continue to support such activities as Century Yankee, Reforger and other exercises to Europe that will deploy through the base throughout the year with C-141's and C-5's. More visible will be the deployment of F-111's from Pease AFB for a two month period while their airfield undergoes construction. They'll be flying training missions during the weekdays starting in middle of June. We've become a training base for other units because we have a drop zone that's on the airfield, that's accessible and easy to operate with. We also have excellent aircraft facilities to accommodate them and good people facilities. Other units are finding out about us and coming in here and utilizing the facilities. With all of these people utilizing the facility it's important that the coordination for these visits originate with my office. It's important that any agency or unit wanting to use the facility follow established procedures. In the past, we've run into problems when units through friendships developed over the years have set some things up that nobody knows about when they actually show up. We don't want that happening here because we do have the ability to provide the service at Westover and all we need is notification.

Patriot again selected best USAF newspaper

For the second consecutive year, the *Patriot* has been selected as the best newspaper in the entire Air Force.

The monthly base newspaper, which is published by the 439th TAW public affairs staff, was recently awarded first place in the funded unit offset newspaper category of the Air Force Media Contest.

Earlier this year, the *Patriot* won the

AFRES Media Contest. In 1983, the publication won its category in the Air Force competition.

"We are obviously ecstatic," MSgt. Lawrence Lentz, *Patriot* editor, said after the announcement. "We're particularly delighted that for the second time in a row we have been able to win against all the other Regular, Reserve and National Guard papers."

In addition to Sergeant Lentz, other *Patriot* staff members include Maj. Bob Carroll, Capt. Philip Weber, Capt. Dave Keefe, Capt. Rick Dyer, TSgt. John Spencer, SSgt. Sandi Michon, SSgt. Gordon Newell, SSgt. Carmen Burgos, SSgt. Kathleen Lincoln, SSgt. Glenn Bogart and Ms. Jo Pothoff.

The paper will now represent the Air Force in the Department of Defense Thomas Jefferson Award competition.

Flying squadron never forgets one of its own

Three years ago, MSgt. Donald MacGillivray was stricken with a rare degenerative brain disease called Kuf's Disease. During the December UTA, members of the 337th TAS showed that they remember "Skater" and that they still care.

At a ceremony held in Hangar 1, Lt. Col. Walter C. Holliday, 337th TAS commander, presented Sergeant MacGillivray's wife Maralyn with a plaque commemorating his service and retirement. In addition, Colonel Holliday gave Mrs. MacGillivray a Christmas gift from the entire unit.

Sergeant MacGillivray has been hospitalized with the rare disease for more than three years. According to Mrs. MacGillivray, the disease is so unusual that it took doctors ten months just to determine what it was. "Because the symptoms are so much like Alzheimer's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis, Don's doctors say that Kuf's Disease is hardly ever diagnosed," said Mrs. MacGillivray. "Right now, doctors from all over the country are coming to visit Don because he is one of only two people alive who is known to have this disease," she added.



On their tour of the 337th TAS, Mrs. Maralyn MacGillivray and her son Brian are shown how the slide rule is used in load planning by SMSgt. Charles D. Arvin. Lt. Col. Walter C. Holliday, 337th TAS commander, looks on. (USAF photo by Capt. Philip Weber)

The MacGillivrays have four children, aged 13, 16, 18 and 19. Brian, 18, accompanied Mrs. MacGillivray to the ceremony, and is considering joining his father's old unit for loadmaster training. Mrs. MacGillivray said she wouldn't be surprised if all of her sons eventually

join the military.

In addition to being a member of the 94th and 901st CAMS as a reservist, the sergeant was Chief ART Flight Mechanic from 1979 to 1981. "The Air Force has always been a major part of our lives," said Mrs. MacGillivray.

Chicopee firefighters get tutoring at Westover

Reserve and civilian firefighters rubbed elbows and composed notes with their Chicopee Fire Department counterparts on Saturday of the November UTA when the two units battled a mock aircraft fire at the base.

"This is just the type of training we need," said Chicopee Fire Chief Robert Nunes, as he watched his men extinguish a roaring blaze that leapt 30-feet into the air.

"We haven't had the type of training

with foam equipment that Westover has had and we need this type of hands-on experience, particularly since it's possible that Chicopee units could be the first to arrive at a crash or gasoline fire," the chief added.

With Westover firefighters as their tutors, the Chicopee personnel manned two foam lines and battled the inferno which was created when 200 gallons of JP-4 fuel were ignited on a metal frame that resembled an airplane.

Westover Fire Chief Haskel Jenkins said that the joint exercise fulfilled an Air Force requirement that base firefighters train with local departments in the use of foam, and other emergency equipment.

Chief Jenkins said that other joint training efforts would be conducted with Chicopee, and the fire departments from other surrounding towns, on a regular basis during the coming year.

439th cops train Navy counterparts

By SSgt. Gordon A. Newell

Don't be too surprised if the next time you drive through the main gate, the guard that waves you on is wearing a Navy uniform.

Navy Reservists training at Westover are being tutored in the finer points of law enforcement by MSgt. Charlie Maligno, NCOIC, and other members of the 439th CSG law enforcement section.

"We at Westover have been at the forefront of providing meaningful training opportunities for members of our fellow services," said Col. Roy E. Ayers, base commander. "The training provided to the Navy Master at Arms force is just the latest. For sometime now, we've also been providing training opportunities for Navy cooks in the mess hall and just recently established a joint training program in our billeting office. It's meaningful training that the service, the individual and the base all benefit from."

The program was conceived early in 1984 when Lt. Cmdr. William Hurd, commander of NAVSTA NORVA 101, approached Westover's police chief, Harold "Red" Voelker and Captain George Halbardier, Department of Defense guard force supervisor. He asked if such a program could be established for Naval Reservists with Westover Reservists providing the instruction.

"They were looking for training in the Master at Arms career fields," said Sergeant Maligno, who directed the program. Approval from higher headquarters was quickly received and 14 students started classroom and field training in May.

"They received training in every aspect of law enforcement — just as our people would if they were attending tech school at Lackland," the sergeant said.

Subjects covered in the course include law enforcement, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, vehicle stops, search and seizure, handcuff techniques, response to alarms, domestic disturbances and interrogation procedures.

Doing the brunt of the teaching are TSgt. Bob Shedd and TSgt. Scott Barber of the 439th.

"They are the best trainers you could find," said Sergeant Maligno. "Both are experienced police officers in civilian life — Sergeant Shedd in Oxford, Mass.



U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Daniel L. Gagnon, NAVSTA NORVA 101 (right) and SSgt. Dennis R. Bromery conduct a vehicle check at Westover's Industrial Gate as part of a joint Air Force/Navy security training program being conducted by the base's 439th CSG law enforcement section.

(USAF photo by Maj. Bob Carroll).

and Sergeant Barber in Holyoke — and they are both versed in the military side as well."

When the course is completed in June of 1985, the Naval Reservists will have received training equivalent to the Air Force's three level.

"Most of the training so far has been in the classroom," explained Sergeant Maligno. "But starting with the December UTA they joined Reservists and DoD people at the gates, in patrol vehicles and on the desk."

"They do not," he emphasized, "carry weapons at any time."

The Navy has greeted the program with great enthusiasm, says Sergeant Maligno.

"We're very pleased with the whole thing," said Boatswain Mate Chief Robert Carlos of the NAVSTA/NORVA 101, the unit to which the trainees are assigned. "This is a great opportunity for us to increase our visibility on base, as well as gain new skills."

According to Sergeant Maligno, this is the only project of its kind in the country.

"I'd love to see this kind of training go AFRES-wide he said." There must be a lot of units out there with Army, Navy and Marine units for neighbors that could benefit from such training. It makes sense. It saves the taxpayers money and it proves that the services can work together to get the job done."

C-5 makes its AFRES debut

The first C-5A Galaxy aircraft assigned to the Air Force Reserve was turned over to the 433rd Tactical Airlift Wing at Kelly AFB, Texas on Dec. 1.

The delivery of the first C-5A to an AFRES unit is a milestone in a series of force structure changes announced by the Air Force. The 433rd TAW will receive 15 more Galaxies by the end of fiscal year 1987.

Gen. Thomas M. Ryan Jr., commander in chief, Military Airlift Command, and Maj. Gen. Sloan R. Gill,

commander in chief, Air Force Reserve, flew the aircraft from California to its new home at the San Antonio base.

The aircraft arrived at Kelly with new AFRES and 433rd TAW markings. AFRES headquarters authorized an additional local identifier to be temporarily inscribed along the aircraft's nose. Local reservists chose to name their first C-5A "The City of San Antonio". Appropriately, Mayor Henry Cisneros of San Antonio and 433rd TAW Commander, Brig. Gen. John G. Sullivan were on hand to accept the aircraft.

Communications center housed in mobile vans

By Capt. Philip Weber

Westover's Telecommunication Center is now temporarily housed in two gray mobile vans.

Located inside building 1832, the vans will be at the base during the Telecommunications Center renovation inside building 1510 scheduled to be completed on March 3.

The project will expand the working area inside the Telecommunications Center and provide room for the new standard remote terminal equipment that will be installed under the project.

The vans arrived on Nov. 19 and 21 from McGuire AFB after being flown into the New Jersey base on board a C-5A from the Azores. They belong to the 2nd Combat Information Group at Patrick AFB, Fla. and are used by the Air Force whenever it is necessary to set up a remote communications center. In addition to Westover and the Azores, the Patrick unit has taken the vans to Saudi Arabia in support of the AWACS mission as well as being used at various facilities stateside and on exercises around the world.

Because the communications equipment in the van is different from that maintained at Westover, the vans come with their own maintenance personnel. A1C Bruce Clements and A1C Tim Hyers have been temporarily assigned to the communications center while the vans are in operation at Westover.

"The equipment in the vans is over 20 years old, but it still does the job,"



A1C Timothy Hyers (left) from the 2nd Combat Information Group at Patrick AFB, Fla., points out to Lonnie Worthy of Westover, the communications lines which will carry all incoming and outgoing messages into two remote communications vans temporarily housing Westover's Telecommunications Center. The vans were brought in from the Azores to fill-in while the center undergoes renovation.

(USAF Photo by Capt. Philip Weber)

said Airman Clements. "It took us three days to get the equipment operating correctly. Because the lines here at Westover are so old, we ran into reception problems and had to put a signal amplifier on the line to boost the receiving signal."

Despite the minor problems, the vans took over the base communications function at noon on Nov. 29.

Ron Beaulieu, a member of the 1998 OLC at Westover, said, "Working in the vans is quite different from the Tele-

communications Center, we've got a lot of up and down climbing involved in the vans. But our new facility is going to make all the climbing worthwhile."

In addition to more room, the renovated Telecommunications Center will have a message pass through window, similar to what you would find at bank drive-in facilities, which will increase the security of the center.

Message traffic can be delivered or picked up at the temporary location in building 1832 from 0600 to 1800 daily.

Base activates stringent DWI program

**By SSgt. Debbie Elliot
Social Actions Office**

The Air Force, like the civilian community, is becoming more and more concerned about the drunk driver. In response to this problem, the Department of Defense stiffened the punishment for drunk driving on military installations; AFRES has stressed the implementation of Driving While Intoxicated control programs; and commanders have developed stringent DWI policies for their bases. As a result, Westover now has an active DWI program of its own.

One year ago, a base DWI Initiatives Committee was established. Its goals were to prevent or reduce DWI-related injuries and death of Reservists and

their families, establish an ongoing education program, and change attitudes that effect drunk driving.

These goals are being met through a variety of base functions.

The Morale, Welfare and Recreation Division publicizes DWI information in the weekly bulletin and in mailings to Consolidated Open Mess members. The Social Actions Office holds DWI classes during UTAs with information on blood alcohol content, the body's reaction to alcohol, DWI laws, and suggestions for sensible drinking.

In addition, Westover Police Chief Harold Voelker has offered the assistance on his officers. If asked, and available, they will provide local transporta-

tion to anyone feeling the effects of alcohol and not able to drive.

During the holiday season, Capt. Charles Curci, drug and alcohol abuse control officer, advised Reservists of their responsibilities as hosts and guests at year-end parties. He reminded them that hosts can be held legally responsible if they continue to serve an obviously intoxicated guest and then allow them to drive.

The Social Actions ended the year-long program at the Open Mess on Saturday evening of the December UTA. Their breath analyzer demonstration gave club patrons the opportunity to check blood levels and learn about local DWI laws.

"Patriot People"



Name: ALAN F. HARRINGTON

Rank: Capt. (recently promoted)

Age: 36

Address: 238 Beacon Street
Framingham, Mass.
01701

Unit: 42 MAPS

Position: Air Transportation
Officer

Civilian Occupation: General
Manager, Pagell Corp.
Medway, Mass.

Favorite Food: Pizza

Favorite Beverage: Coca Cola

Favorite Sport: Basketball

Favorite Hobby: Air Force
Reserve

Ideal Vacation: Downhill skiing

Best Way to Relax: Sunbathing

Preferred Entertainment: Movies

Favorite Celebrity: Willie Nelson

Favorite Music: Country &
Western

Favorite Book: In Search of
Excellence

Favorite Color: Red

Favorite Car: Audi

Pet Peeve: Inconsiderate people

Best Thing About Westover: A
special flight nurse

Worst Thing About Westover:
Industrial gate closing at 6:30
P.M.

Commander's Call

Fifteen awards were presented by Col. Roy E. Ayers, base commander, at the 439th Combat Support Group Commander's Call during the December UTA.

Air Force Commendation Medals were presented to: **MSgt. James V. Divita** for solving problems in the field of Chapel Management. **TSgt. Timothy P. Murphy** for meritorious service as Combat Arms Training Instructor.

Air Force Achievement Medals were presented to: **Capt. Philip R. Weber** for outstanding professional skill in the varied fields of Civil Engineering. **1st. Lt. Laverne Cholewa** for leadership in the field of Education and Training. **SMSgt. Leonard F. Dube** for developing and implementing research projects in the Quality Assurance Evaluation Program. **MSgt. Maurice J. Arcand** for outstanding knowledge in the Air Cargo Transportation Field. **MSgt.**

Ronald A. Ploof for professional skill in the field of Air Transportation.

MSgt. David A. Stebbins for outstanding knowledge in the field of Chapel Management. **TSgt. Robert J. Kazalski** for professional skill in the field of Chapel Management. **TSgt. Donald A. Morin** for leadership in the field of Air Transportation. **TSgt. Claude W. Thompson** for developing and implementing research projects in the Air Cargo Transportation field. **SSgt. Jeffrey M. Brown** for outstanding professional skill in the field of Air Cargo.

Community College of the Air Force Associate in Applied Science Degrees were presented to: **MSgt. Harold B. Crapo, Jr.** in the area of Communications Operations Technology. **TSgt. Claire L. Gaudreau** in the area of Material Management. **TSgt. Aidan G. Prendergast** in the area of Transportation and Traffic Management.

Westover NCO helps AFRES

When aerial port Reservists across the nation receive academic training in their career field, chances are they are benefiting from the work of Westover's MSgt. Clayton M. Baummer. He is currently the training NCOIC for the 58th APS.

Completion of a lesson plan project had been jeopardized when headquarters AFRES found itself with a shortage of qualified personnel. Because of his years of experience in the air transportation field and his knowledge of lesson plan development, Sergeant Baummer was selected to fill the critical vacancy.

During his two months of temporary active duty in Georgia, Sergeant Baummer wrote or contributed to lesson plans involving such functional areas as Air Terminal Operations Center, Airlift Control Element, Cargo Processing, and Materials Handling Equipment. These plans are now being used in more than 60 Reserve aerial port units nationwide.

The sergeant has served with the 58th APS since 1972. A Korean War veteran, Sergeant Baummer is a past commander of VFW Post 8075. He resides in Naugatuck, Conn., and owns a restaurant in nearby Derby.

NCO Academy . . . (continued from page 1)

op the curriculum.

"The class started with 30 students, but only 19 graduated," continued Sergeant Longfield. "They each joined for many reasons. However, the majority joined to help their progress as NCOs.

The 19 graduates are:
MSgt. Michael J. Conboy
MSgt. James V. Divita
MSgt. Robert G. Erhardt
MSgt. Theron E. Kelley
MSgt. Joseph E. Kusiak
MSgt. Faith E. Longfield

MSgt. Pat E. Lougher
MSgt. Allen B. Misner
MSgt. Robert A. Sousa
TSgt. Donald E. Anderson
TSgt. Elton B. Caudle
TSgt. Earl W. Cole, Jr.
TSgt. Frank S. Godek

TSgt. Tobert C. Harmon
TSgt. Richard J. Matte
TSgt. Mary R. Michaud
TSgt. Michael A. Spano
TSgt. John W. Spencer
TSgt. Teresa M. Testa

Some will continue their education and join the Senior NCO Academy program in order to qualify for promotion to E-8 and E-9. Their completion of the NCO Academy program is a major step in that process."

Patriot Profile

Olympic flame is a beacon for Celio Hernandez

By Capt. Rick Dyer

When he laced up his first pair of running shoes four years ago, Celio Hernandez viewed the sport as pastime — a diversion that seemed healthier and more exciting than watching TV reruns.

Today, 8,000 grueling miles later, he sees it a little differently. Running has become a focal point in his life, a passion which burns as brightly as the Olympic flame which he one day hopes to see in person.

A former junk food aficionado who never ran a competitive step until he was 27, Hernandez has recently been establishing his credentials as one of New England's premier long distance runners.

During the past year, the 31-year-old 439th CAMS member has won the Berkshire Autumn Marathon, the Holyoke Marathon and the Holyoke Catholic 10-kilometer road race.

There have been a host of other victories in shorter runs — including four consecutive triumphs in the Westover Turkey Trot five-mile race. For the most part, however, the smooth striding technical sergeant prefers the loneliness of the longer distances.

"I'm better at the longer ones, like marathons and 10-K races," Hernandez said. His record, and his crowded trophy case, confirm the statement.

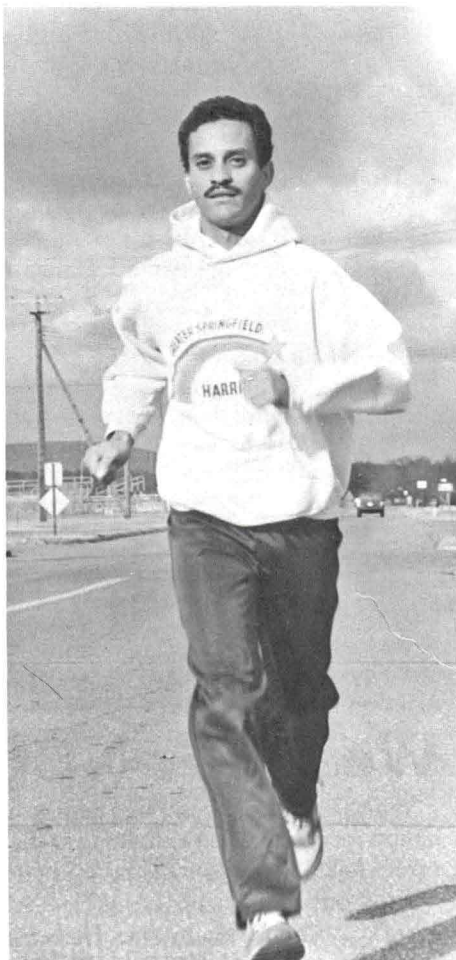
The 145-pound Reservist defeated some of the best runners in New England in his recent marathon wins. He covered the difficult 26-mile, 385-yard course in Holyoke in 2:35:14, and captured the Berkshire grind in 2:27:54.

While neither time would earn him an Olympic medal, Hernandez says that his times have improved in each of the three marathons he has run. He also plans on getting faster.

"I've just started running marathons, and I've gotten better with each succeeding race. I know that there's still a lot of room for improving my times."

The Westover NCO says that he has a simple strategy when he competes in long distance races. "At the start, I just worry about finishing," he explained. "As the race develops, I begin to concentrate more and more on the pace, and the competition."

Despite hamstring and knee injuries (the occupational hazards common to



Celio Hernandez

road race runners) Hernandez has made steady progress since he started jogging "for something to do" in 1980.

After just four months of training, he placed ninth out of 100 runners in a six-mile race. Savoring the taste of his initial success, Hernandez grew serious about the sport.

He increased the length and speed of his workouts. He gave up junk foods

and switched to a diet that emphasized poultry, chicken, vegetables and carbohydrates. Hernandez the casual jogger was gone, and Hernandez the serious athlete was born.

He now runs 80 miles a week, mixing 10 and 15 mile runs with a series of half-mile "sprints" designed to quicken his speed.

When he's at Westover, Hernandez uses time off from his hydraulic mechanic's job to train. He's been known to run from his home in Springfield to the base on UTA weekends.

Although he started running competitively at a relatively advanced age, Hernandez believes that he is still a few years away from reaching his prime.

"Many long distance runners don't peak until they're in their thirties," he said. "The fellow from Portugal who won the Olympic Marathon last summer was 37."

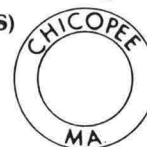
Westover's "Running Reservist" has an immediate goal. He has begun training for the fabled Boston Marathon which will be held in April. "My objective is to run it in 2:20 or better," he said.

As he pounds the pavement on his daily workouts, Hernandez admits that he is uncertain where the thousands of miles will lead him. "I'm not sure how far I'll be able to go with this, how much I'll be able to improve," he commented recently. "But I do have an ultimate goal — to make it to the Olympic trials in 1988."

In the meantime, Celio Hernandez plans to continue doing exactly what he's been doing every day for the past 48 months. He'll run the endless miles through the streets of Springfield and Chicopee and Holyoke, and he'll think about the Olympic flame.

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