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Westover Air Force Base

HOME OF THE 439TH TACTICAL AIRLIFT WING
AIR FORCE RESERVE
"The Patriot Wing"

The dream of having an international airfield in Chicopee to serve Western Massachusetts emerged in 1926, during the "roaring Twenties" and only 23 years after the Wright Brothers' first flight.

That first flight, incidently, would not spanned the wings of one of the C-5A Galaxies scheduled to be assigned to Westover Air Force Base.

The 439th Tactical Airlift Wing (AFRES) today operates turboprop C-130E Hercules transports to haul troops and supplies and to air drop cargo and paratroopers.

Westover AFB is the nation's largest Air Force Reserve base and about two thousand men and women from New England are members of the many units on this 2,300-acre base.

Westover AFB has a 47-year history of serving the needs of the nation. The wide and long runways are among the best on the East Coast.

The concept of turning Chicopee's tobacco fields into an airfield came during a golden post-war era when the nation was prospering and the future of Western Massachusetts was bright.

The vision of a major Greater Springfield airport here was promoted by Anthony J. Stonina, a young Polish immigrant and first-term Chicopee alderman.

Faded newspaper accounts from the late 1920s indicate Stonina could not convince local officials of the soundness of his idea

to turn the flat tobacco plains into an airport. Local politicians said the concept of air travel was too extravagant for a small industrial city.

When the stock market crashed in the autumn of 1929, Stonina was three years into his political career and a mayoral candidate. He won the election and tried to save Chicopee from slipping into bankruptcy.

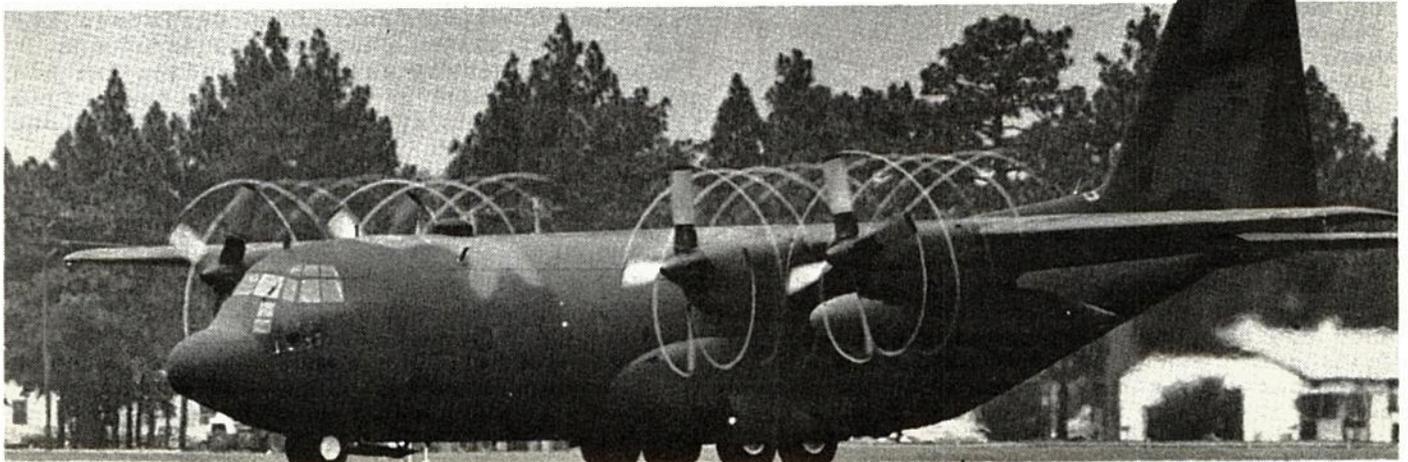
Five years later, Congressional leaders spied the gathering war clouds in Europe and passed the Army Air Base Bill, better known as the "Wilcox Act," calling for construction of several air fields deemed vital to the security of the nation. One major military airfield was to be in the Northeast.

In late 1938, General Henry "Hap" Arnold became Air Corps chief of staff after his friend, Major General Oscar Westover, died in a plane crash. As one of his first acts, Arnold recommended the War Department appoint a board of officers to select sites for the modern airfields authorized by the Wilcox Act.

By then, Mayor Stonina was in his fourth term in Chicopee's city hall.

When he learned of Arnold's recommendation, Stonina fired off a telegram to the Secretary of War suggesting Chicopee as a suitable site for the Northeast Air Base.

Continued on Page 2



In July 1939, a small contingent of officers visited the Pioneer Valley to tour the Springfield Airport, where the GeeBee air racers were born, to examine Bowles Airport in Agawam and to survey the flat Chicopee tobacco plains which extended into Ludlow.

Within only two months, Chicopee was to garner more interest from the War Department. On Sept. 1, 1939, Nazi forces smashed into Poland and the European war was ignited.

Stonina was angered by the Nazi invasion of his native land and rushed to Washington, D.C. to meet with Arnold and to push for construction of the Northeast Air Base.

Within only two weeks -- on Sept. 15, 1939 -- the Secretary of War announced that Chicopee would "become an important link in the chain of East Coast defense" because the city had been selected as the site for the Northeast Air Base.

A short while later, \$2,070,918 was allocated by the War Department to purchase a 7 1/2 square-mile plot for the Northeast Air Base.

On April 6, 1940 -- which was designated "Army Day" -- Air Corps officers, state and city dignitaries and thousands of Greater Springfield residents gathered for the official dedication ceremonies. In keeping with the American military tradition of naming ships, tanks, forts and airfields to honor departed heroes, the Northeast Air Base approved by the Wilcox Act was named in honor of Arnold's pal, Maj. Gen. Oscar Westover, the former Army private who had learned to fly.

Westover was a Michigan native, born in Bay City in 1883. He enlisted in the Army in 1901 and the following year he was accepted at West Point. He was graduated in 1906 and trained in California at The School of Musketry at the Presidio of Monterey before being assigned to the 14th Infantry Regiment in the Philippines.

In 1911, he returned to the U.S. Military Academy as an instructor in the Department of Drawing. Following an assignment in Alaska in 1914, Capt. Westover was again assigned to West Point in 1916 as an assistant professor in the Department of Drawing.

During World War I, Westover rose to colonel and was assigned to the Signal Corps and the Bureau of Aircraft Production. From November 1918 to October 1920 he was acting executive of the Air Service.

In his first 20 years of service, Westover -- the musketry soldier/professor/planner -- had witnessed a dramatic change in the needs of America in the Twentieth Century. He had traveled widely and had seen how modern technology was revamping tactics and defenses. He was determined to learn all he could about aviation.

At age 38 and back to his permanent rank of major, Oscar Westover enrolled in the Balloon School at Omaha, Neb. After graduation, he enrolled in the Airship School at Langley Field, Va., graduating in April 1922. Eight months later, he entered the Air Corps Primary Flying School at Brooks Field, Tex., graduating in June. By 1923 he had graduated from Advanced Flying School and was made commander of Langley Field.

In 1926 he entered the Air Corps Tactical



Maj. Gen. Oscar Westover

School and, two years later, the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. After graduation, he stayed on at the school as an instructor and chief of the Air Corps section.

In 1930, he was finally promoted to lieutenant colonel, the temporary rank he had held a dozen years earlier during the war.

By 1932, Westover was a brigadier general and assistant chief of the Air Corps. He was promoted to major general on Christmas Eve 1936 and designated Chief of the Air Corps.

Westover quickly gained attention for his strong endorsement of developing a "so-called flying fortress type of bomber" for long distance missions.

On Sept. 21, 1938, Westover and his crew chief, Sgt. Sam Hayes, were killed after their plane backfired and exploded while landing at the Lockheed Aircraft Corp. field in Burbank, Calif.

Fifteen months later, Westover's former assistant, "Hap" Arnold, announced that the modern super-airbase under construction in Massachusetts would be named in honor of the visionary pilot who had guided the concept of long-range airpower.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 439TH TACTICAL AIRLIFT WING
WESTOVER AFB, MASSACHUSETTS

Welcome to Westover Air Force Base.

As the current caretakers of this historic 47-year-old air base, we in the Air Force Reserve take pride in our operations at Westover and our service to this nation.

This base was an important training site during World War II -- the state-of-the-art high technology, the Norden bombsight, was placed aboard B-17 "Flying Fortresses" here before they flew to Europe. During the Berlin Airlift, Westover was a hub for humanitarian services.

In the early 1950s, Westover AFB was operated by the Military Air Transport Service and serviced Europe. From 1956 until 1974, the Strategic Air Command launched thousands of B-52 bombers, KC-135 and KC-97 tankers from these runways.

The Air Force Reserve has operated Westover since 1974 and based C-123s and C-130s here. As we near the half-century mark, this base is scheduled for a series of major construction projects to prepare for long-range C-5A Galaxies.

We at Westover take great pride in the heritage of this base and the tremendous support of our friends and neighbors in the cities and towns of the Pioneer Valley.

Brig. Gen. Frederick D. "Mike" Walker
Commander, 439th Tactical Airlift Wing



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THE THUNDERBIRD LEGEND



In North American Indian lore, the Thunderbird is an omnipotent being, a deity with the power to hurl thunderbolts from his place in the sky.

Because of his great power and infinite strength, the Thunderbird was revered and respected by many Indian tribes. For them, the Thunderbird had the same majesty as the Earthmaker and the Sun God. He commanded the elements, willing thunder and lightning to crackle and flash in the sky in awesome displays of sound and light. He caused the rain to fall upon the earth below.

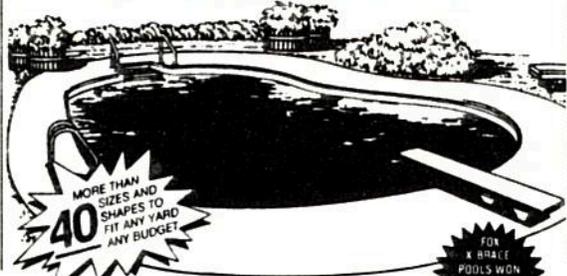
The Thunderbird controlled the forces of good over evil, light over darkness, and for the Indian warrior, the Thunderbird could grant victory in battle.

Indians envisioned the Thunderbird as a huge creature of the sky, with features resembling those of both the eagle and the hawk. Thunder rolled from his wings and lightning flashed from his eyes. The sky was his abode, and from there, he ruled over his domain. Indian drawings depicted the bird in the red, white, and blue colors typical of southwestern Indian culture.

When the Air Force's air demonstration team was first formed in 1953, it was based near Phoenix, Ariz., an area rich in Indian lore — and so selection of the name "Thunderbirds" was a natural choice. Their stylized logo of the Thunderbird — in traditional red, white, and blue — echoes our national colors.

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BIRDS ALL BEGAN



Since their first aerial demonstration in 1953, the Thunderbirds, the Air Force's official air demonstration squadron, have traveled throughout the United States and to 47 countries in the Free World. They have logged 2,752 performances before nearly 202 million people.

The Thunderbirds performed at Westover AFB in 1980 and were seen by a crowd estimated by police at nearly 200,000 people. Last year, the Thunderbirds returned to Westover, but the team's 1986 demonstration was rained out.

Before their F-16s left Westover the next day, team members promised the thousands of people, who had turned out hoping for a New England weather change, that the Thunderbirds would try to juggle their 1987 schedule to make certain Westover was at the top of their next season's list of demonstration sites. And the Thunderbirds kept their word.

Prime ministers, presidents, foreign dignitaries, celebrities and countless fans have turned out around the world to meet and watch the team, giving the Thunderbirds the unofficial title of America's "Ambassadors in Blue."

F-16 Fighting Falcons

Naturally, the most visible part of the Thunderbirds team is the aircraft. The squadron flies the General Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon.

After starting out in the F-84G Thunderjet in 1953, the squadron switched to the swept-

wing F-84F Thunderstreak in 1955. Both of the F-84s were subsonic, but in 1956 the squadron moved into its first supersonic aircraft, the F-100C Super Sabre. The switch to the Sabre made the Thunderbirds the first supersonic demonstration squadron.

The then modern F-100 was traded for the F-105B Thunderchief in 1964. The transition was short-lived as the Thunderchief flew only six official air demonstrations. Instead of cancelling the entire 1964 schedule, the squadron returned to the F-100, this time using the air-refuelable "D" model. After five more seasons in the Super Sabre, the most used aircraft for the squadron, a total of 1,111 shows had been performed in the two models.

In 1969 the squadron flew the F-4E Phantom II for the first time during graduation ceremonies at the U.S. Air Force Academy. The team switched to the sleek T-38A Talon in 1974, and to the modern F-16 in 1983.

Many awards adorn the walls of the squadron's museum at Nellis AFB near Las Vegas, the unit's home since 1956. Plaques presented by various civic organizations and military squadrons are on display for thousands of visitors who tour the squadron each year.

Among the awards is the coveted MacKay Trophy, presented to the squadron in 1959 for its Far East tour as the Air Force's most meritorious flight of the year. There are also seven Air Force Outstanding Unit awards

Continued on Page 40



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THE GOLDEN KNIGHTS

Along with demonstrations at bases such as Westover, members of the U.S. Army Parachute Team, the "Golden Knights," jump in competition.

Free-fall parachute competitions are divided into two major categories. The first is Style and Accuracy which is an individual event, and the second is Relative Work which is a team event. Army Parachute Team members participate in both events.

A Style and Accuracy event is made up of two separate actions which are combined for overall points.

In the Style event a competitor exits the aircraft at 6,600 feet and performs a prescribed series or "set." A set is composed of six maneuvers -- two left turns, two right turns, and two backloops.

The maneuver sequence is determined prior to take-off and all jumpers perform the same series of turns and backloops.

Judges time the Style set from the first maneuver and to the last. This time, plus any added penalty time, determines the competitor's total time.

Penalties, expressed in tenths-of-seconds, are added to a jumper's total sequence time when a judge believes a competitor performed the sequence incorrectly, or did not complete 360 degrees or did not backloop correctly. The lowest time wins.

An average time for a world-class competitor's Style series is less than seven seconds.

During the Accuracy event, a single jumper

exits the aircraft at 2,500 feet, deploys the main parachute and attempts to land on a target five centimeters in diameter -- less than two inches.

Judges use an electronic device to score how close the jumper strikes to the dead center with the heel of his or her boot.

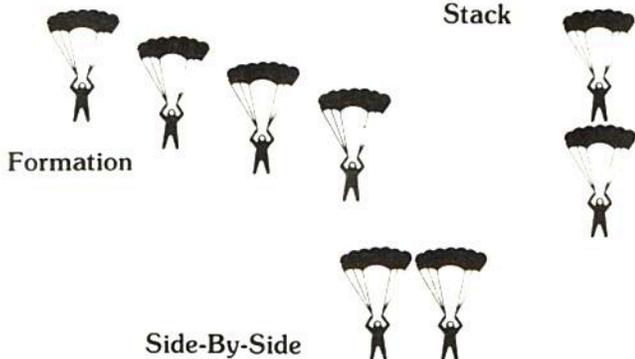
If, however, the competitor misses the dead center, the distance from the outside edge of the five centimeter target to the first point of contact determines the score. After a number of jumps, individual scores are tallied and the lowest wins.

In recent National and World Championship meets, Accuracy winners had a 10-round score of only one centimeter -- meaning, nine perfect landings and one jump less than a half-inch off center.

Scores from both events are combined and the competitor with the lowest score is crowned overall champion.

The Relative Work category consists of three events: a four-jumper sequential, eight-jumpers and the 10-jumper speed star.

Four- and eight-way sequential relative work begins at 9,000 and 11,000 feet respec-



Flag Jump

tively, with all jumpers exiting the aircraft together.

Scoring begins when each team exits the aircraft and races the clock to complete as many predetermined geometrical formations as possible. Four-way teams have a quick 35 seconds of working time and eight-way teams have 50 seconds.

If a team completes the predetermined number of formations and still has time, they continue to repeat the sequence of formations in proper order until their scoring time expires.

The team completing the most formations, for a fixed number of jumps, wins.

Four-way teams average 12.5 formations per round and eight-way teams average 11.5 formations.

The 10-way speed star competition is scored on the time necessary for jumpers to complete a prescribed formation. Jumpers exit the aircraft in single file and the team closing the formation most quickly wins. A top team complete the formation within 10 seconds.

The U.S. Army Parachute Team has dominated free-fall competition ever since its beginning in 1959. In their 28-years, the "Golden Knights" have won more than 68 National, nine World, and several Pan-American championships, and even more military, local and regional titles.



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C-130E

The C-130Es assigned today to the 439th Tactical Airlift Wing at Westover AFB have performance capabilities which allow take-off in less than 2,000 feet of dirt runway.

A Hercules can transport 92 combat troops, airdrop 64 fully equipped paratroopers or carry 74 litter patients plus nurses.

The C-130 is capable of hauling more than 35,000 pounds of cargo. The sturdy workhorse can airdrop small bundles or large military vehicles weighing up to 20,000 pounds.

Various models of the Hercules are in use by more than three dozen nations.

Built by Lockheed-Georgia Company, the C-

130E is powered by four Allison T56-A-7 turboprop engines of 4,050 horsepower each.

The tactical airlift plane carries a crew of five: two pilots, navigator, flight engineer and loadmaster.

Dimensions: wingspan -- 132 feet 7 inches
length -- 97 feet 9 inches
height -- 38 feet 6 inches

Performance: speed -- 320 knots
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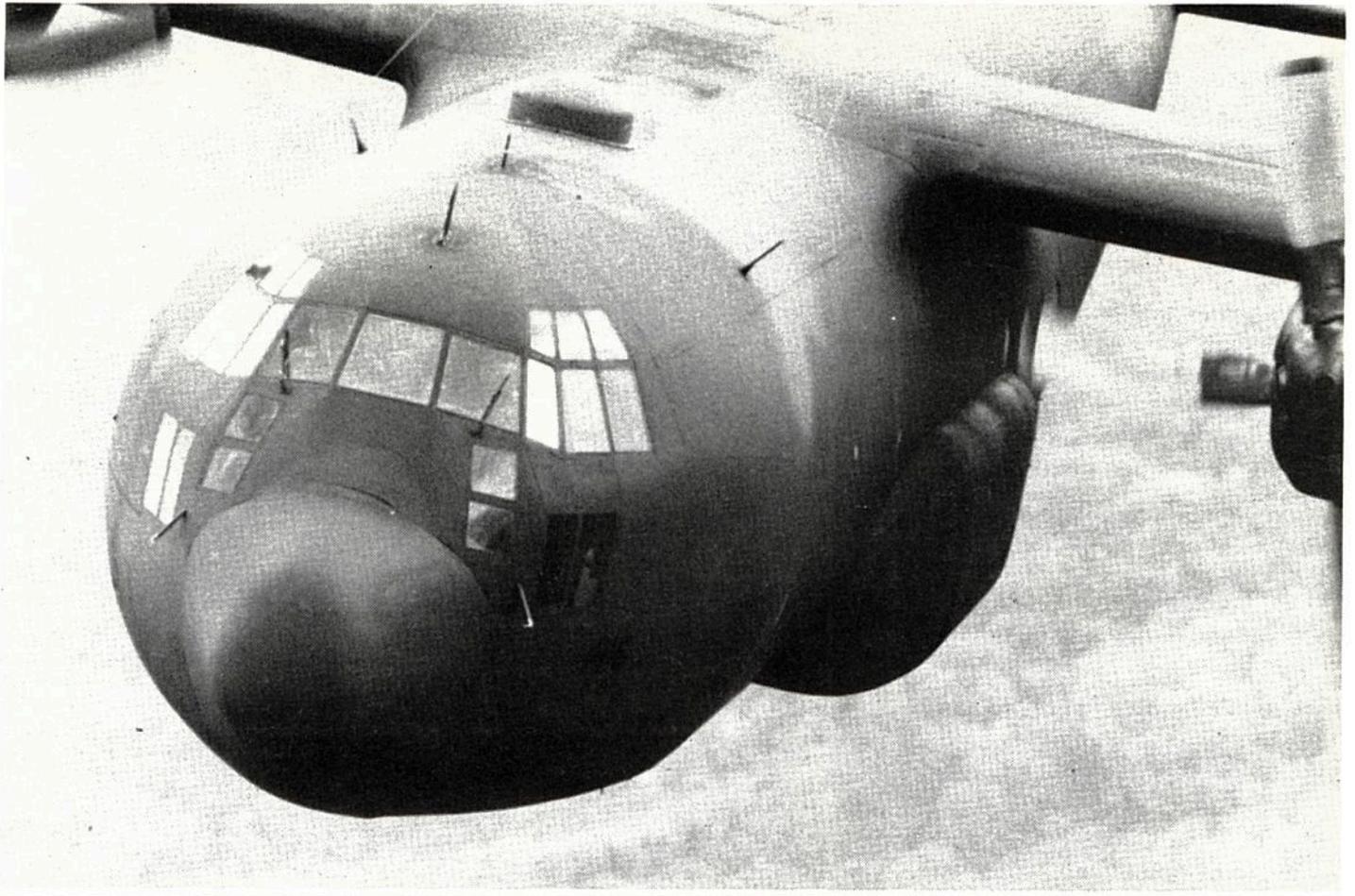
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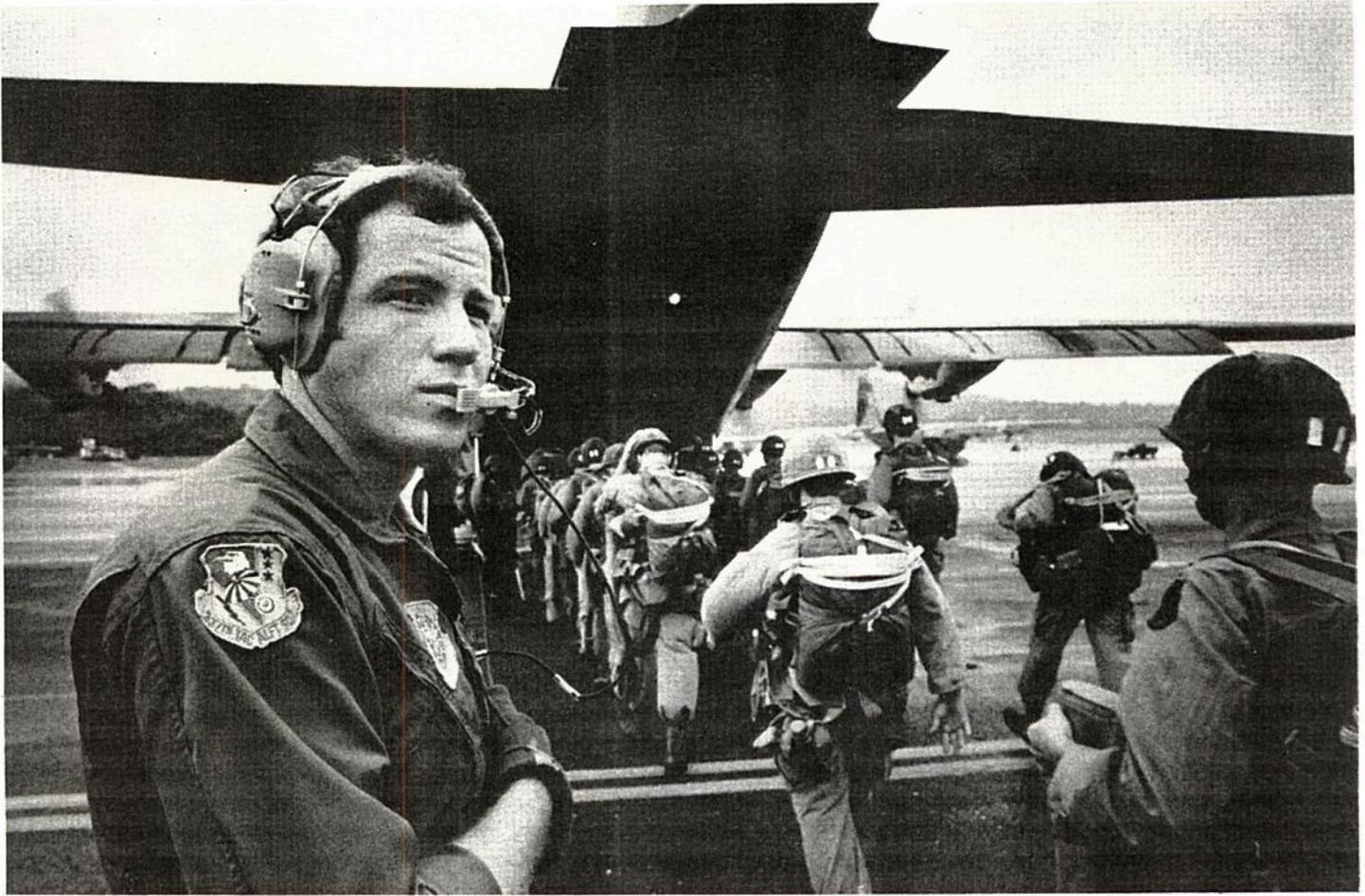
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Westover's flying squadron, the 337th Tactical Airlift Squadron, drops paratroopers and cargo at "Beanbag Drop Zone" at Westover AFB.

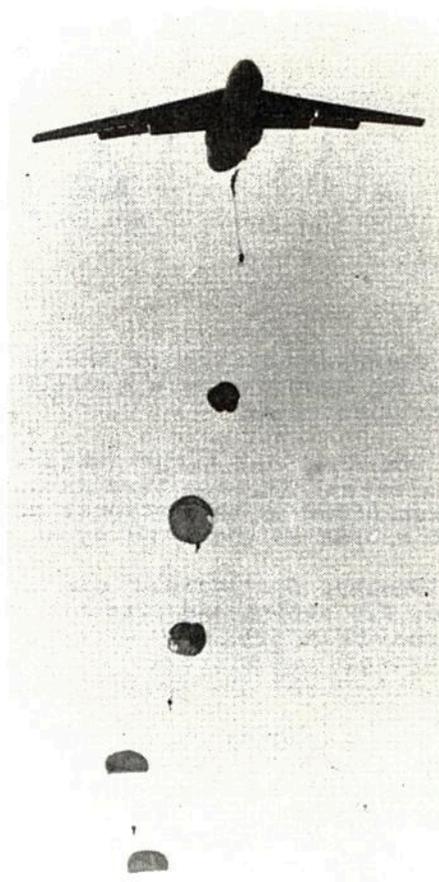
In the photograph on the left, a loadmaster from the "Patriot" wing's 337th TAS counts Army paratroopers as they load one of Westover's C-130Es at Howard AB in Panama. The C-130 Hercules can carry 92 combat troops or 64 combat-loaded paratroopers.

When fully loaded with combat equipment -- helmet, rifle, ammunition, medical equipment, rations, radio and/or rucksack, unit equipment, main parachute and reserve parachute -- an American paratrooper exits the aircraft as a bulky and heavy bundle.

Drop zones are measured in seconds -- the amount of time the aircraft passes over the safe landing area. Westover's drop zone is short and accuracy is important to 337th TAS crews and the men who jump from the C-130s of the 439th Tactical Airlift Wing.

The drop zone at Westover is also used by aircraft assigned to other military bases. In the photograph on the right, a C-141 Starlifter from the 439th Military Airlift Wing at McGuire AFB in New Jersey drops 10th Special Forces troopers at Westover.

The C-141 can carry 155 paratroopers -- a rifle company -- with full combat gear. The Starlifter was the first jet aircraft from which U.S. Army paratroopers jumped. A system known as Intraformation Positioning allows up to three dozen C-141s to maintain formation regardless of visibility and to precision drop 36 infantry companies -- 5,580 paratroopers, the equivalent of nine airborne infantry battalions -- on a drop zone.





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AIR RACING

Representatives of the United States Air Racing Association are visiting Westover for the first time.

The Army Air Corps decision to locate the Northeast Airbase here in Chicopee may have been aided by the national acclaim brought to this area in the 1930s by air racing.

Greater Springfield was once a focal point for air racing and aircraft development. The Granville Brothers Aircraft Co. at the old Springfield Airport, now a shopping center, manufactured the world-famous GeeBee racers.

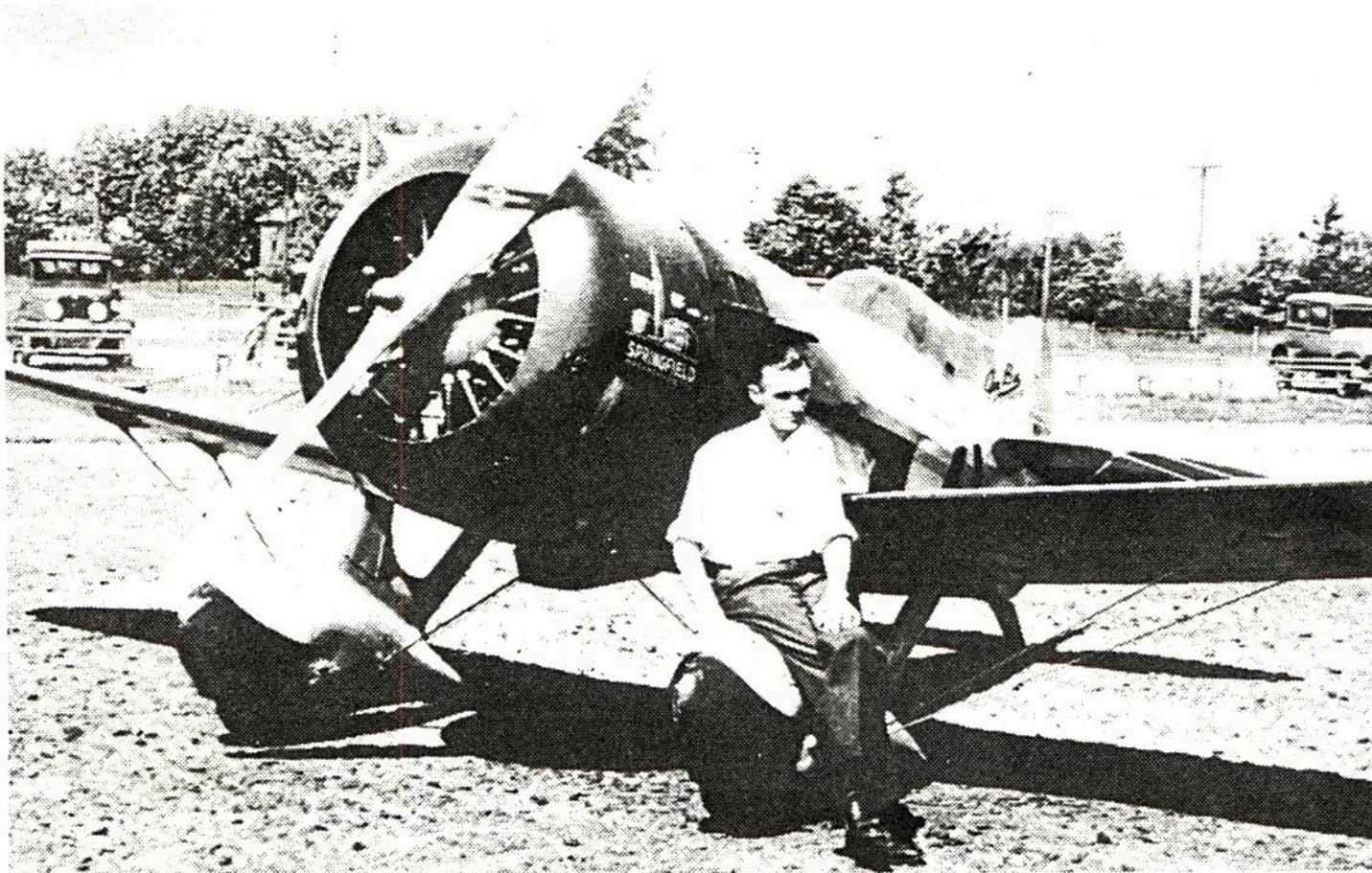
Speed records were set during the 1930s at the Cleveland National Air Races by various models of GeeBees, including "The City of Springfield."

Monarch Capital Corp. of Springfield has purchased a flying replica of the GeeBee "Z" Racer "The City of Springfield" and company officers say the yellow and black racer will someday be on permanent display locally.

A few miles south of Westover, an exhibit of GeeBee and air racing memorabilia is on permanent museum display at Springfield's "Quadrangle."

Military regulations do not permit air racing, but members of the U.S. Air Racing Association will display and demonstrate the nation's top Formula Vee racing aircraft which today continue in the spirit of the experimenters at the old Springfield Airport.

The U.S. Air Racing Association conducts



KILLED IN CRASH — Pilot Lowell Bayles and the GeeBee known as the "City of Springfield. The plane crashed at Wayne County Airport outside of Detroit on Dec. 5, 1931 during an attempt to set a world speed record. Bayles, who was 31, was killed. A loose gas cap that flew into the canopy may have caused the crash.

closed-course pylon races around a two-mile oval. The first air race was held in 1909 in Rheims, France.

Air racing was most popular in the 1930s. In those days the annual Cleveland National Air Races were as well known as the Indy 500 auto race is today.

Watching Lowell Bayles, Eddie Rickenbacker, Maude Tait, Bob Hall, Roscoe Brinton and other pilots from the Springfield Air Racing Association was a popular -- and cheap -- form of entertainment here during the Depression. The Springfield newspapers carried many articles on the accomplishments -- and risks -- taken by test pilots in the skies over this area.

The most successful GeeBee models used supercharged radial engines developed by Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Co. in nearby Windsor Locks, Conn. The GeeBees won many

races were among the most widely known and recognized racing planes of the era.

The air racers developed just two miles off Westover's main runway made significant contributions to the development of fighter aircraft such as the P-47 and for the engines which powered America's long-range bombers during World War II.

The rapid development of military aircraft during the war years caused a change in air racing. Races held in the immediate postwar years featured converted fighter planes -- such as the P-51 Mustang -- which were termed "Unlimiteds."

The first class of home-built "specification" racers, the Goodyear class, also dates from the postwar period. This class, now known as Formula One, still is going strong.

Continued on Page 16



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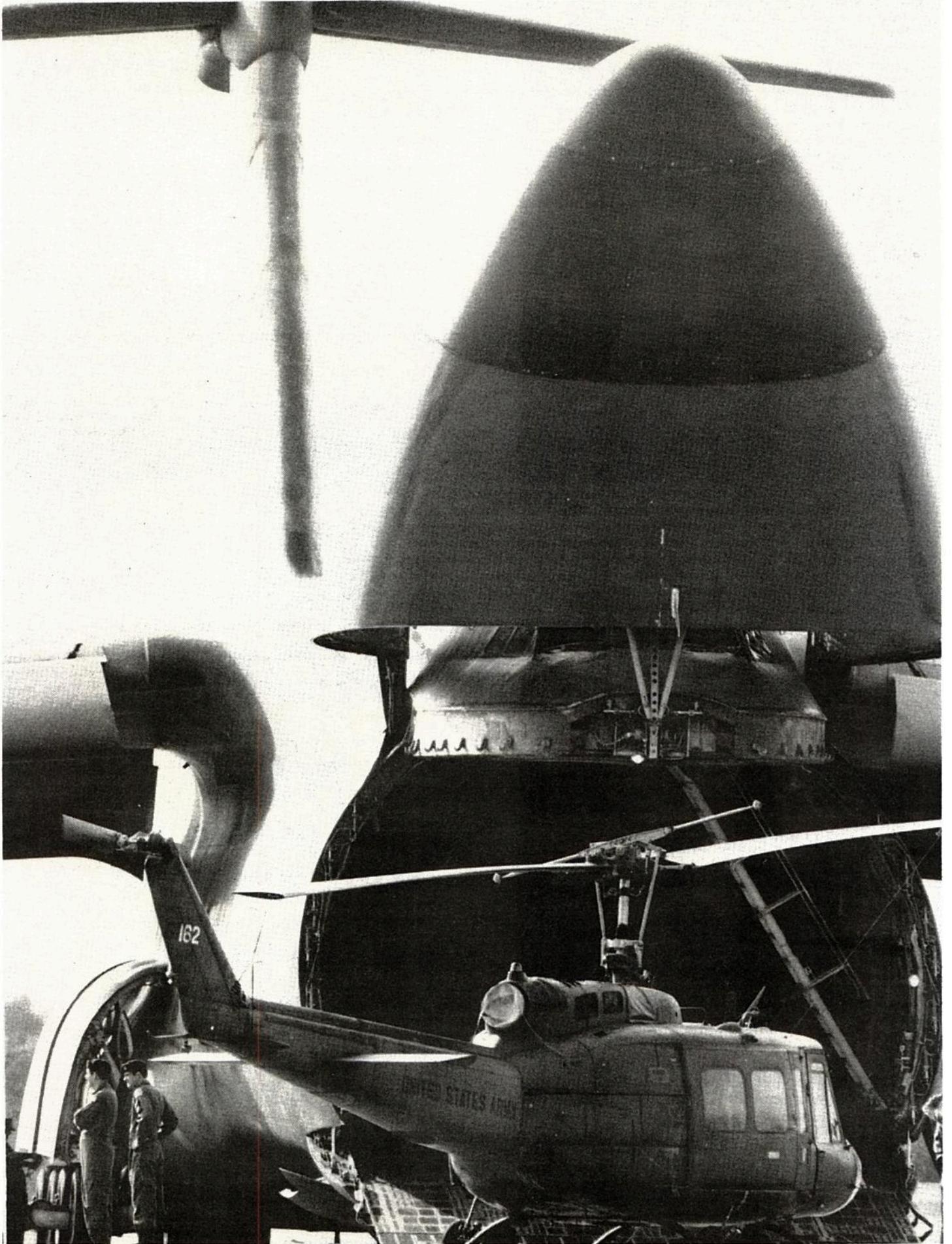


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Other classes of home-built plans include the Sport Biplanes and the Formula Vees displayed at Westover AFB.

Today, the National Championship Air Races are held each year in Reno, Nevada. In addition, there are numerous races for the home-built racing planes throughout the country and in Europe.

Formula Vee category aircraft are home-built racing airplanes equipped with Volkswagen automobile engines. The Formula Vee rules call for a stock 1600 cc air-cooled VW engine (as used in the VW Beetle.)

The aircraft must have at least 75 square-feet of wing area, and must be equipped with a fixed-pitch propeller and non-retractable landing gear. In addition, the class requires good all-around visibility and high structural strength.

The Formula Vee class is the newest of the five established classes of air racing aircraft. Formula Vee raceplanes can typically achieve speeds of up to 160 miles per hour around the race course. It costs about \$6,000 to build a Formula Vee racer.

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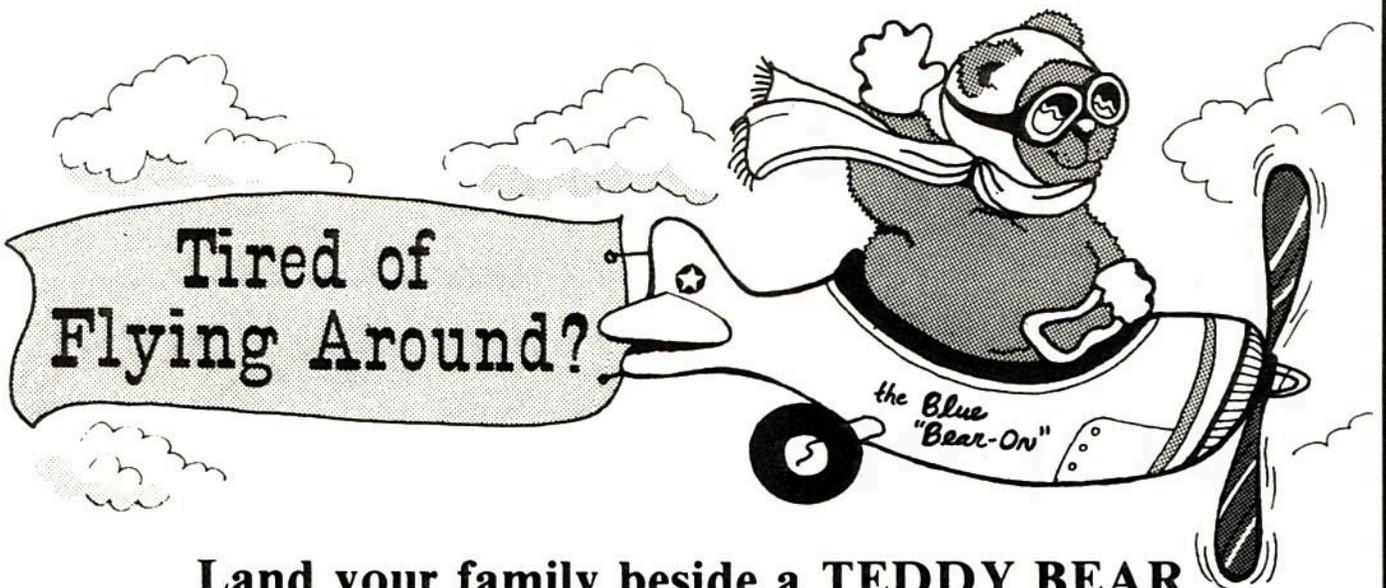
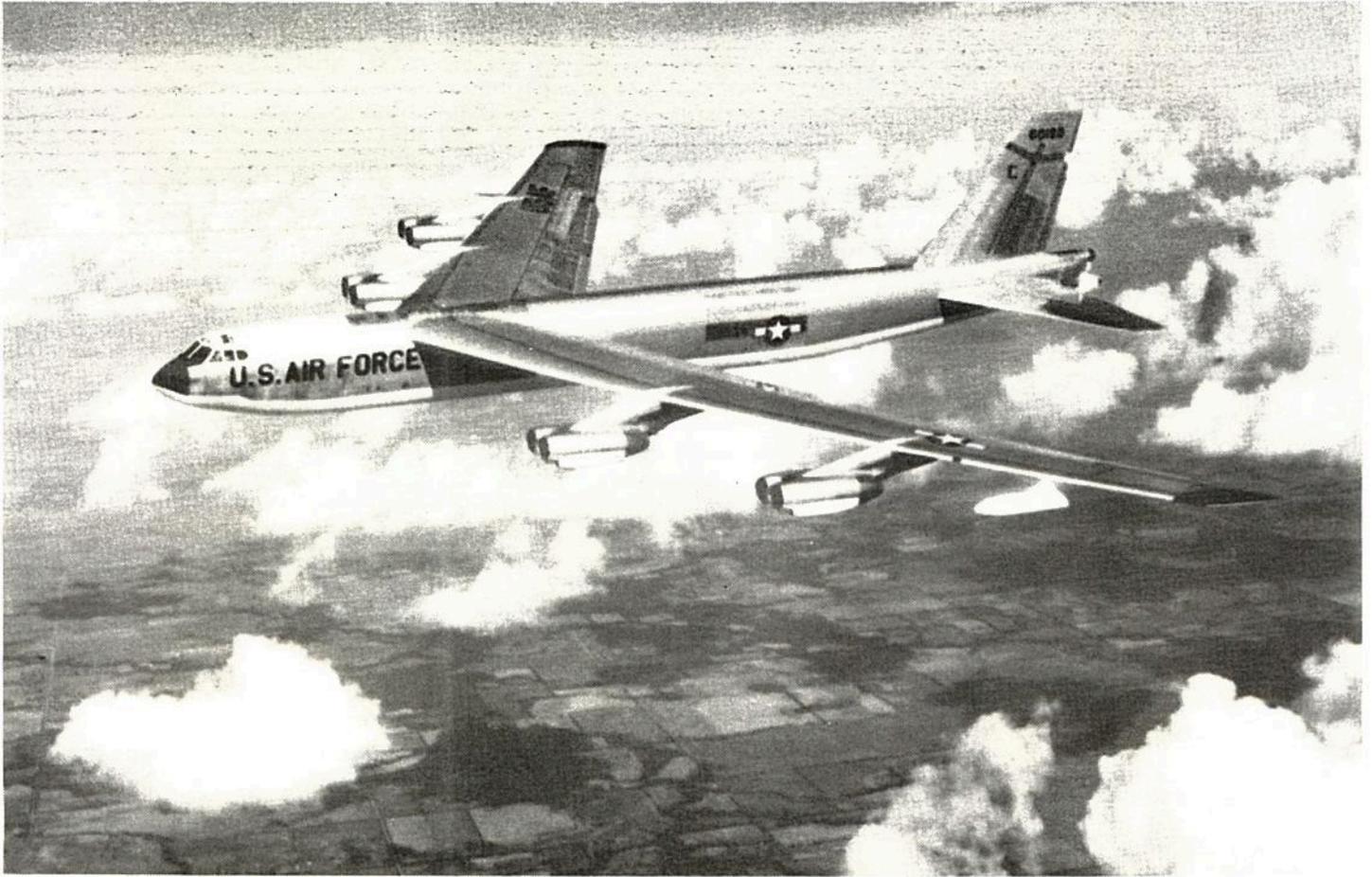


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B-52

For nearly 18 years, the thunderous roar of B-52Ds was background noise for the residents of Greater Springfield.

Chicopee residents still speak today of windows rattling and telephone calls interrupted when the eight-engine jet bombers would be launched in waves from Westover AFB when the base was the headquarters of the Eighth Air Force.

Today, the B-52H has much quieter engines, TF33-P-3 Turbofan jets which each produce up to 17,000 pounds of thrust and are more efficient, allowing an unrefueled ferry range of 8,800 miles.

More than 260 Stratofortresses remain in the Air Force inventory as part of the Strategic Air Command.

The heavy bomber is capable of flying at 650 miles per hour and at altitudes up to 50,000 feet.

For more than 30 years, the B-52 has been the primary heavy bomber. But the aircraft can also assist the U.S. Navy in anti-ship operations, mine laying missions, and ocean surveillance. A team of two B-52s can, for example, cover 140,000 square miles of ocean in two hours.

The B-52 has been a reliable craft. The B-52A first flew in 1954 and the first of 744 B-52s entered active service in 1955.

The Strategic Air Command came to Chicopee in 1956 and Westover also became the headquarters for the Second Air Division and the 99th Bomb Wing.

The B-52 can carry more than 20,000 pounds of ordnance -- ranging from short-range attack missiles under the wings to bombs and short-range attack missiles carried internally -- or air-launched cruise missiles. About 70 G-models have been modified to carry a dozen air-launched AGM-84 Harpoon anti-ship missiles.

All Stratofortresses are equipped with an electro-optical viewing system using forward-looking infrared and low-light-level television sensors to augment the terrain-following system and further improve low-level flight capability. The electro-optical viewing system is located in two steerable turrets beneath the nose of the B-52.

Built by Boeing Military Airplane Co., the B-52 has a wingspan of 185 feet, a length of 160 feet 11 inches and a height of 40 feet 8 inches.

The maximum take-off weight of the B-52 is 488,000 pounds.

The aircraft carries a crew of six -- pilot, co-pilot, radar navigator, navigator, electronics warfare officer and gunner.



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