

PATRIOT

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

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(photo by Maj. Peter Gray)

READY FOR DUTY -- Army troops await the unloading of their equipment from a Galaxy upon their arrival in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The mission was performed by a Westover aircrew under the command of Maj. Peter Gray.

Desert Shield stretches 337th crews to limit

by TSgt. Tom Allocco

When you stand at parking spot "Quebec 1 West" on the flight line at Rhein- Main AB you could look across the road and see the soaring monument to the Berlin Airlift. Under a full moon, the white stone was clearly in view on the September night when a Westover aircrew preflighted their Galaxy. They were taking part in the Desert Shield airlift that will rank with the Berlin Airlift rescue effort.

The aircrew under the command of Lt.

Col. James Gallin, 337th Military Airlift Squadron commander, had passed another symbolic moment. They had been the first aircrew to leave the Westover runway after the playing of taps and a flag-lowering ceremony on the ellipse in memory of those lost in the C-5 crash at Ramstein AB in support of Desert Shield.

The white stone monument and the ceremony illustrate much of the story of the Desert Shield airlift; they are symbols of herculean effort and sacrifice in a modern airlift that may someday surpass the Berlin Airlift.

The other side of the story is the day-to-day contributions of the pilots, flight engineers and loadmasters who took the Galaxies "down range" across the Mediterranean, Egypt, the Red Sea and Saudi Arabia. Their acceptance of long hours, frustrations and tedium made Desert Shield possible.

The mission of Colonel Gallin's aircrew started with a briefing at which they received atropine kits, masks to protect against the sand and some last-

(Continued on page 6)

EDITORIAL

Public support is greatest gift

We're not alone.

In the fluid situation in the Middle East, that much is clear. The American public has rallied behind those of us in uniform and that support has been unstinting.

Wherever you look, you can see evidence of how the American public feels about their fellow citizens in the Armed Forces.

At Westover, the most visible show of support is the stream of gifts being delivered through the Red Cross for those involved in Desert Shield. Bundles of newspapers, boxes of paperbacks, packets of letters from school children, bags of personal items and more are flowing to Saudi Arabia when space is available on Galaxies. The Westover passenger terminal is also well stocked with donated amenities for the comfort of those on the long trip to Saudi Arabia.

Each donation from individuals and companies is a testament to the backing we have during this crisis. The resulting boost in morale is obvious in the letters and written comments from passengers. They glow with words of appreciation for the way they are being treated.

More important than the gifts themselves are the support they represent. Every package of gifts that is delivered to Saudi Arabia strengthens the Desert Shield mission. They tell the men and women in uniform here and abroad that they are not alone. The American public stands behind us. For that support, we can be grateful.

-- By TSgt. Tom Allocco
Public Affairs Specialist



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Briefs

Danger pay

WASHINGTON, D.C. --Defense Secretary Dick Cheney approved imminent danger pay for Operation Desert Shield Sept. 19, putting an extra \$110 a month in the paychecks of qualified officers and enlisted people deployed to the mideast.

Eligible for the special pay are deployed service members on the Arabian Peninsula and in the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden and the Northern Arabian Sea.

New gym hours

The base gym is now open from 0600 until 2200 seven days a week for the convenience of Westover personnel as well as transients traveling through the base in support of Operation Desert Shield.

Gray area retirees

DALLAS, TEX. -- Retired "gray area" Reservists now have full Army and Air Force Exchange Service privileges.

Retired Reservists in a nonpay status, eligible for pay at age 60, can shop in exchanges. This change, effective Oct. 1, also applies to authorized family members of Reservists.

Reservists must have their ID card annotated with "RET". Eligible family members must have a service-specific Reserve dependent ID card or a DD Form 1173-1 annotated with "RET" in the service member grade block. Eligible family members who do not have a valid Reserve dependent ID card must accompany the service member when visiting an Exchange facility.

While Reservists and their dependents are getting their proper ID cards, AAFES will accept the present ID with a copy of the order transferring the member to retired Reserve status.

Operation Paperback

More than five tons of paperback books and magazines were delivered to the Base Hangar by the Connecticut State Police for those serving in Saudi Arabia following a state-wide drive dubbed Operation Paperback in October. The donations were shipped overseas as space became available on Galaxies.

Memorial honors deceased wing members

by SrA. Christine Mora

Westover's First Sergeant's Association paid tribute to deceased members of the 439th Airlift Wing when a memorial was dedicated during retreat ceremony on the October UTA.

"The monument will stand as a lasting reminder of our deceased members in a place of honor," said MSgt. Edward Kolodjay, first sergeant of the 439th Avionics Maintenance Squadron, who chaired the memorial committee. The white granite monument stands in front of the flagpole on the parade grounds of the base.

"What we in the 439th Military Airlift Wing are today is a result of these men and women who laid the foundation of our unit," he added.

The memorial, sponsored by the First Sergeant's Association, salutes dead Wing members since its formation in 1949 at Selfridge AFB, Mich. The unit moved to Westover in 1974.

As the 439th Civil Engineering Squadron and Westover's Honor Guard performed the retreat ceremony, Brig. Gen. Frederick D. Walker, wing commander, Col. Thomas G. Hargis, base commander, Col. Ralph Oates, vice wing commander and other members of the 439th MAW participated in the dedication ceremony.

"What we in the 439th MAW are today is the result of the contribution of these men and women who laid the



(photo by SrA. Christine Mora)

SOLEMN TRIBUTE -- MSgt. Kathleen Wood, a training supervisor with the 439th Field Maintenance Squadron, places a wreath on the monument honoring deceased members of the 439th Airlift Wing during retreat ceremony on the October UTA.

foundation of our unit," said General Walker. "We salute those who have gone before us and hope to live up to their example."

MSgt. John Spencer, 439th MAW first sergeant, was the master of ceremonies and MSgt. Kathleen Wood, a training supervisor with the 439th Field Maintenance Squadron, placed a wreath at the base of the monument.

The logo of the 439th Airlift Wing is engraved on the front of the granite

stone. Below the logo is the statement, "Dedicated to the deceased members of the 439th Airlift Wing."

Sergeant Kolodjay explained that the 439th has been known by different designations, including Strategic Airlift Wing, Tactical Airlift Wing and the present Military Airlift Wing. The memorial committee decided to dedicate the monument to the 439th Airlift Wing to cover all past and future designations of the unit.

'Patriot' staffer collects AFRES awards

Patriot staff member SrA. Christine Mora, whose coverage of Westover's role in Operation Just Cause was reprinted in *Citizen Airman* magazine, was named Air Force Reserve Photojournalist of the Year and second place Journalist of the Year in October.

The 1990 AFRES Media Contest also honored Major Richard Dyer, wing public affairs officer, for his features and editorials and SSgt. Vin Blanchard, staff member for his cartoon series in the *Patriot*.

Airman Mora won the photography and journalism honors for her news ar-

ticles and an editorial in the *Patriot* after accompanying three of the eight Westover missions to Howard AB, Panama during Operation Just Cause last December. *Citizen Airman* magazine reprinted her coverage with accompanying written material and photos by Major Dyer and TSgt. Frank Faulkner, 337th MAS operations specialist, in a four-page spread and on the back cover of its March issue.

Airman Mora's photograph of a Westover C-5 on the Howard AB flightline was also recognized by the AFRES judges as the best single photo entered in the media contest.

Major Dyer earned second place for newswriting and second place for editorial and commentary material.

Sergeant Blanchard was recognized for a popular cartoon series he initiated last year which offers wry observations on aspects of life at Westover, from weigh-ins to traffic rules. He received the third place award in the "information graphics" category.

The *Patriot* was earlier named best newspaper in its category in 14th Air Force and TSgt. Sandra Michon received the 14th Air Force Individual Photojournalism Award.

Military efforts bolstered by community spirit

Article and photo

by TSgt. Sandi Michon

When it comes to giving, Santa Claus has nothing on the hundreds of community individuals and businesses who are rallying behind American service members supporting Desert Shield.

Westover's Air Passenger Terminal resembles Santa's workshop as boxes of goodies line the wall and workers are busy distributing the gifts. The wide variety of donations are passed on to the more than 300 military members who pass through Westover each day enroute to Europe of Saudi Arabia.

The list of individual donors goes on ad infinitum and there are pages of businesses that have contributed money, services, merchandise or a combination. While base personnel have worked with the American Red Cross to solicit donations, many donations stream in with no other motive than to show support to our troops.

The Air Passenger Terminal is staffed by reservists from the 42nd, 58th and 59th aerial ports and is augmented by a steady flow of Red Cross volunteers. Other military and civilian people also volunteer their time. According to SSgt. Mindy Wheeler, air passenger terminal NCOIC, the public response has been overwhelming. Eleanor Lammers, director of emergency services with the Springfield chapter of the Red Cross agrees. "The level of interest in our efforts has been outstanding!" she said. She coordinates all of the donations and also runs a tight ship of Red Cross volunteers which staff the terminal from 8 a.m. to midnight each day.

When asked why volunteers offer the gift of their time and themselves, the responses varied. "I'm a military man. Anything I can do to help, I want to be a part of it," said Peter Karetka, a Chicopee resident who served in the Navy from 1940-46. A mother and son combination represented serving family-style. Mary Snyder and her 26-year-old son Ollie Schmith related the joy they derived from serving others.

One mother, Jan Douyard, a V.A. Medical Center employee in Northampton, helps pack the hundreds of Gulf Bags that the V.A. Center donates to Westover. Mrs. Douyard had the



UNLOADING CARGO -- Eleanor B. Lammers, director of emergency services with the Springfield Chapter of the Red Cross, left, unloads donations from her car with the help of Mary Snyder and her son Ollie Schmith, both from Northham.

pleasure of handing her son Peter, a staff sergeant with the 595th Medical Company, his gulf bag as he departed Westover on October 7 well before dawn.

Donations have come in many shapes and forms. Many people have offered money, but were instead told what items were needed and the appropriate items were purchased and delivered. Many people have formed groups to consolidate efforts. Projects such as Operation Cookie and Operation Dessert Shield combine baking efforts and supply hundreds of dozens of cookies on a continuous basis. Many of the cookie packages contain labels from the family that baked them, often with encouraging comments. These packages are distributed to the troops during their stay at Westover or as they depart.

Various community organizations and businesses have instituted donation drives. Chicopee schools provide collection boxes and BlockBuster Video provides collection boxes and discounts for videos when donations are made. Local radio station WMAS ran a one-day drive for donations which yielded a half-truckload of much-needed materials. They plan a repeat drive in the near future.

The Vietnam Vets of Quabbin Valley in Ware and the VFW posts throughout Western Massachusetts have been very active in support of Desert Shield. Various local restaurants such as MacDonalds, Bridge Cafe, Abdows Dunkin Donuts and Friendly's have donated food

(Continued on Page 9)

Westover becomes key link in Desert Shield airbridge

by Maj. Rick Dyer

Westover has quickly become a strategic link in the United States' massive "airbridge" to the Persian Gulf region.

In a role reminiscent of the one it played during the Berlin Airlift more than 40 years ago, the base is serving as a key stage area for Operation Desert Shield.

Planes ferrying troops and equipment to Saudi Arabia have been landing here around the clock since early September.

"We are a key player in the huge task of getting American personnel and cargo to the Middle East," said Brig. Gen. Frederick D. "Mike" Walker, commander of the 439th Military Airlift Wing. "It's another chapter in Westover's long history as an important airlift facility."

Military officials have said that the Desert Shield deployment is the largest military airlift operation since the Berlin Airlift in 1948-49. Then, thousands of tons of food and humanitarian supplies were flown to the blockaded German city aboard Air Force cargo planes, many of which came from Westover.

Since President Bush initiated Operation Desert Shield in response to the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq last August, more

than 11,000 troops and 21,000 tons of cargo have landed here enroute to the Persian Gulf.

At Westover, weary passengers eat at the dining facility and rest in the base's new passenger terminal, while the big cargo planes are refueled and receive maintenance.

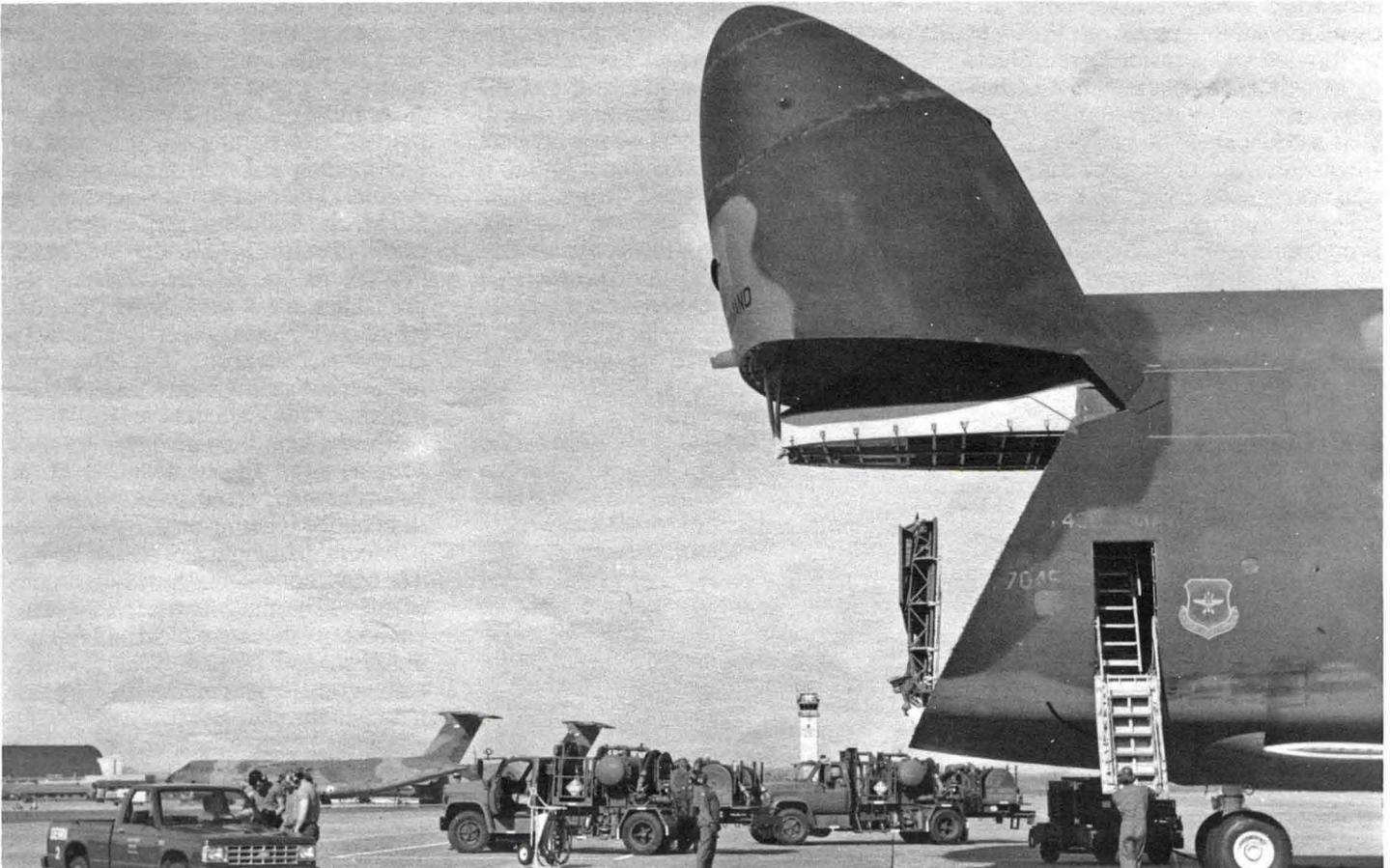
Like a modern-day version of the Pony Express, replacement aircrews - assembled here in a pool from units throughout the nation - are assigned to each flight.

From Westover, the aircraft fly to a base in Spain or Germany. After another stopover there, a relief crew based in Europe will fly the aircraft on the final leg of its journey to the Middle East.

"The crews stop for rest at the various points along the way, but the planes keep moving," explained Gordon Newell, Westover's public affairs officer. "After they rest, the crew members go back into the rotation and are assigned to fly another mission along the next leg of the route."

Military transports landing in Saudi Arabia are quickly unloaded and often spend only a few hours there, according to Mr. Newell. Once they depart, the entire process is reversed.

C-5 crews from the 337th MAS have been flying Desert *(Continued on page 9)*



(photo by TSgt. Sandi Michon)

PIT STOP -- A C-5 Galaxy is refueled on Westover's ramp before leaving on a mission to the Middle East. Since the

beginning of Operation Desert Shield, over 400 C-5s, 150 C-130s and 14 C-141s have landed at Westover.

Desert Shield

(continued from page 1)

minute instructions on their chemical warfare gear.

They also picked up flak jackets and survival vests. Before the mission was over, crew members had reason to curse the weight of the chemical and combat gear while hauling luggage in more than a dozen "bag drags" up and down Galaxy ladders.

The crew headed to Fort Campbell, Ky., where they picked up 101st Airborne troops and their vehicles. The young troops marched in loose formations and filed up the C-5 ladders under the eyes of quiet, grim-faced older NCOs.

Seven uneventful hours after take-off, Colonel Gallin and pilots Lt. Col. Nelson Newhouse and Maj. Thomas Frisbee landed at Torrejon AB in view of the lights of Madrid. Another C-5 taxied nearby and F-14s and F-16s roared overhead as the troops fell into formation with their weapons and chemical warfare gear.

Torrejon was a major Desert Shield transit point. Over one period of 27 days there were more than 1,300 sorties by C-5s and C-141s, with one plane every 10 minutes. One maintenance member, who was among those TDY from the U.S. and Germany, said he worked on 48 aircraft during his first four days. They worked 12 hours a day and slept on bunk

beds in a locker room area of the base gym.

Westover's maintenance teams received a tip of the hat from one counterpart at Torrejon. Not knowing the aircrew, he described Westover planes as among the cleanest and best maintained of those he had seen.

SMSGt. Charlie Andersen, flight engineer; and MSgt. Bud Wiehe, loadmaster, rated Desert Shield as the biggest airlift they had seen during their years going back to Vietnam. That includes the 1968 airlift to Korea following the Pueblo seizure; the "Nickle Grass" resupply of Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War; and Operation Just Cause.

"There's been nothing like this volume in such a short time," Sergeant Wiehe said.

For younger crew members, like loadmasters SSgt. Maureen Gamlin and SrA. Alan Beebe, it was an opportunity to gain experience. "It's concentrated; you learn a lot real fast," said Airman Beebe, a student loadmaster under the watch of Sergeant Wiehe, who fired questions at him and demanded precise answers on a loadmaster's duties.

Sergeant Wiehe and MSgt. Ken Gilbert, flight engineer, had experienced the heat and long hours on missions to Bahrain to support the Navy in 1988 during the Iran-Iraq war. Now on his third Desert Shield mission, Sergeant Gilbert passed his 18th wedding anniversary at Torrejon on Bravo Alert.

"A lot of people are getting tired from long days and short crew rests," the senior flight engineer said. "It's fatiguing being on alert six or eight hours when there are problems. People would rather be flying."

Sergeant Gilbert's first mission started with a 10:30 p.m. telephone call at home.

"I was told to pack my bags for five days and they wouldn't say anything more. I went in, and my wife didn't hear from me for eight days," the senior flight engineer said. He spent his first two nights at Torrejon on a cot in a gymnasium.

From the first days of Desert Shield the Spanish base was a crossroads for MAC aircrews.

A recreation area next to the dormitories was filled day and night with aircrews coming off missions. They wore the active duty, Reserve and guard patches from Dover, Kelly, Travis and other bases. Colonel Gallin's crew was met by those from Maj. Colin MacDonald, Major Fred Castle, Capt. Michael Marten and others. They discussed activities at Westover and speculated on what units might be mobilized next.

A bulletin board displayed the patches and sentiments of dozens of crews going and returning from Saudi Arabia. There were the patches of the 6th MAS, "Bully Beef Express"; the 8th MAS, "Best in MAC"; the 14th MAS, "Pelicanus Excellere." Among the printable slogans were "Sand Dune Express" and "Hussein Feel the Pain." An anonymous member of the 337th MAS left the unit's mark with a patch and the promise, "You Call and We Haul!"

Delays kept the aircrew at Torrejon long enough to see General H. T. Johnson, MAC commander, twice walk through the billeting area to get aircrew members' perspective of Desert Shield. The MAC commander heard complaints of inflated beer and food prices since the beginning of Desert Shield and full billeting charges for cots. The next day, among other changes, the aircrews saw a drop in the price of beer.

Colonel Gallin crew continued with a mission to fly soldiers from the 27th Field Artillery and their rocket launchers from Fort Sill to Dhahran.

Cruising at about 500 mph, the Galaxy flew the 3,700 miles to Dhahran in about seven and a half hours. At about 30,000 feet they flew over the spine of Crete and crossed the coast of



(photo by Maj. Peter Gray)

OFF-LOADING -- A Galaxy crewed by members of the 337th Military Airlift Squadron is unloaded at an air base in Saudi Arabia.



(photo by TSgt. Tom Allocco)

ON THE FLIGHT LINE -- A Patriot Wing Galaxy is unloaded at a base in Saudi Arabia, under the

guard of flightline security. The watchful security personnel use all-terrain vehicles to patrol the desert airbase.

Egypt within sight of Alexandria on the left.

From the air the Nile River appeared as a swath of green, like a ribbon laid across the desert. For 120 miles they followed the Nile until flying east at Luxor, across Egypt's coastal lava flows, the Red Sea and into Saudi Arabia.

The Galaxy flew over the holy city of Medina, burial place of Mohammed, and Riyadh, capital of the nation with a population of seven million Saudis and four million foreigners in an area the size of West Europe. To the south was the area reputed to be the location of King Solomon's mines and the burial site of Eve at Jeddah, which in Arabic means grandmother.

The route from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf was across more than 850 miles of Saudi desert. The landscape varied in color and consistency. The scene changed from blowing sand made pink by the sunlight to a brown, hilly and broken expanse of nightmarish qualities. In the east the desert yielded to some green circles of irrigated land.

The C-5 taxied past Saudi Arabian Airlines planes bearing the kingdom's green flag with scimitar and, in Arabic script, "There is no god but God. Mohammed is the messenger of God."

On the the military side, the Galaxy parked next to a Patriot Wing C-5 with a Dover aircrew. A strip of sand separated the flight line from a series of low-slung administrative buildings.

Overhead flew Saudi camouflaged Eagles and U.S. F-15s from Langley AFB. Westover's first Desert Shield mission had been in support of the F-15s.

By 10 a.m., the temperature was over 100 degrees, hot enough to make the C-5s metal stair railings painful to hold. Auxiliary power units were kept on even during refueling to provide protective air conditioning for the on-board computers.

Sergeant Wiehe had earlier offered an accurate weather forecast: "It will be hot, followed by stinking hot, followed by 'God, it's hot!'"

The Galaxy was on the ground about three hours as TDY aerial porters and maintenance members from Maguire AFB serviced the aircraft while Saudis refueled it.

The aerial porters spoke of 12-hour days and 45-minute waits in line for small amounts of ice to cool drinking water. They had good words for their hosts. "The Saudis are friendly. They'll offer you whatever they have," one aerial porter said.

An 18th Airborne Corps Artillery ser



(photo by Maj. Peter Gray)

SIGN OF THE TIMES -- Signs posted at the MAC passenger holding area indicate that it is 457 miles to Baghdad and 7,013 miles to San Antonio, Texas.

geant who had just returned from the field said the mercury had stood a few weeks earlier at 131 degrees. The breeze "felt like opening a dish washer on the dry cycle...water left in a vehicle became so hot it could burn your lips, like drinking coffee with no flavor," he said.

A steady breeze across the open flightline took some of the edge off the powerful sun. The breeze was forecast to gain force and blow sand as the fall season approached.

After delivery of the artillery soldiers and their rocket launchers the Westover aircrew flew west, leaving Saudi Arabia at Ras Nasrani at the point of the Sinai. Out of sight but not far away was the U.S. fleet blocking the entrance of the Gulf of Aqaba to Iraqi shipping.

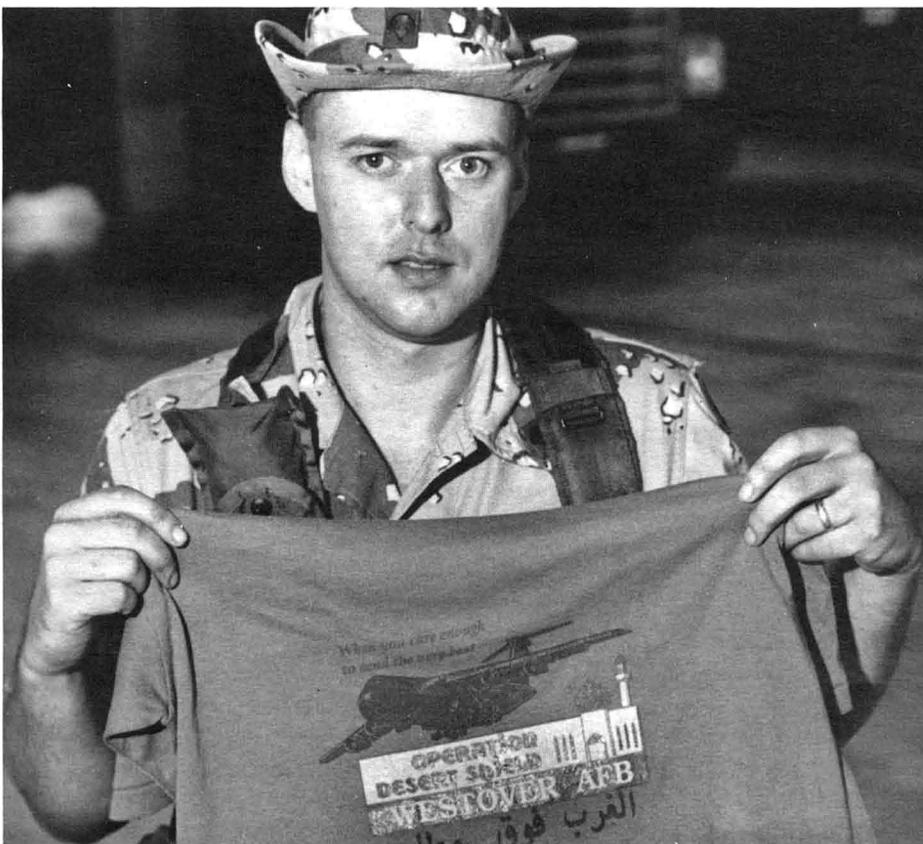
Following a rest at Ramstein AB the aircrew returned to Westover to conclude its 10-day mission. Their reward was a 12-hour crew rest, after which they were eligible to go back on bravo alert for the next Galaxy to Saudi Arabia.



(photo by TSgt. Tom Allocco)

HOME DELIVERY -- Sergeant Reginald Young, 436th Military Airlift Squadron, Dover, Del., unloads bundles of Boston Heralds delivered to Dhahran aboard a Westover C-5A.

Passenger terminal honors 10,000th guest



Army Spec 4. Daniel Peter

The stream of men and women in desert camouflage flowing through Westover for the Middle East was interrupted briefly when a Fort Bragg, N.C. soldier was tapped as the 10,000th guest of the passenger terminal on Oct. 27.

Army Spec. 4 Daniel Peter, 27, of Rhinelander, Wisc., was surprised to be pulled from the line of soldiers who arrived on the morning C-5 flight from North Carolina by welcoming committee headed by Col. Andrew Kasznay, ATOC commander.

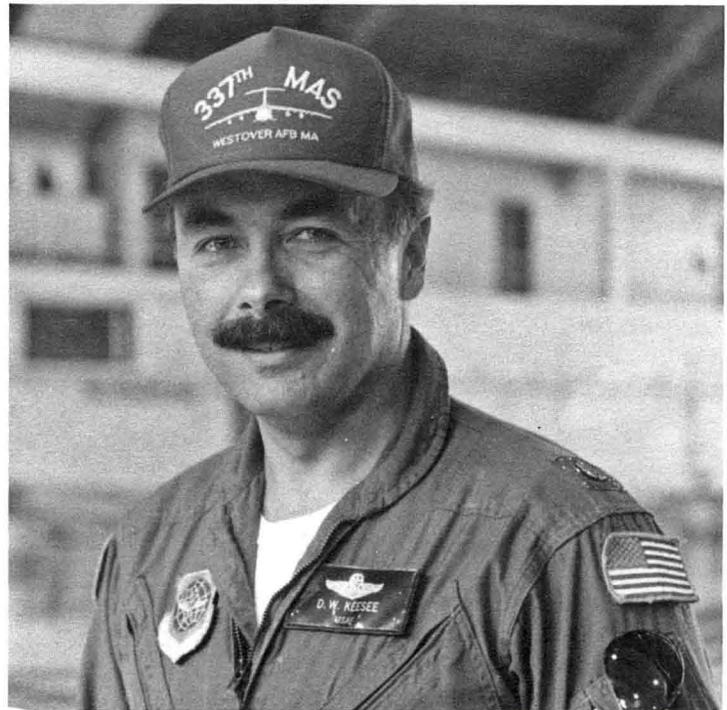
In recognition as 10,000 Westover passenger, Specialist Peter received an Operation Desert Shield T-shirt donated by Westovers Galaxy Community Council. The soldier was also presented a copy of the book "Westover: The Man, Base and Mission."

Since the Aug. 2 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, more than 20,000 tons of cargo had passed through in support of Desert Shield.

In honoring the 10,000 passenger, Colonel Kasznay also recognized the efforts of Westover members, others on temporary duty here and volunteers from the community. "If necessary, we will be ready to welcome the 20,000 passenger in support of Desert Shield," he promised.

"Patriot People"

Name: Wayne Keesee
Rank: Maj.
Age: 44
Address: Somers, Ct.
Unit: 337th MAS
Position: pilot
Civilian position: Airline pilot
Favorite Food: Mexican
Years of Service: 20
Favorite Sport: Downhill skiing
Favorite Hobby: Wood carving
Ideal Vacation: South Seas with my wife
Best Way to Relax: Good way to relax
Preferred Entertainment: Listening to music
Favorite Celebrity: Clint Eastwood
Favorite Music: Country Western
Favorite Book: *Cosmos*
Favorite Color: Black
Favorite Car: Saab
Pet Peeve: Being late
Best Thing About Westover: Boys and girls
Worst Thing About Westover: Management



Maj. Wayne Keesee

Airbridge

(Continued from page 5)

Shield missions since early August and were placed on active duty Aug. 24 when the President ordered the mobilization of 40,000 U.S. reservists.

Since Desert Shield began, approximately 400 C-5s, 150 C-130s and 14 C-141s have landed at Westover as part of the airlift operation.

Almost overnight the urgent influx of aircraft created some major changes at the base.

Westover's dining facility, previously open only on training weekends, began around-the-clock operations. The base created a passenger terminal to service desert-bound soldiers and airmen and put key operations such as the control tower, fuel service, maintenance, and billeting on 24-hour a day status.

With only the 337th MAS called to active duty, base officials have been relying on reservists serving voluntary active duty tours, and civilian workers on overtime, to meet the dramatically increased work loads.

"Thus far, we've been able to handle everything that Desert Shield has thrown at us," General Walker said. "I'm extremely proud of the response of our people, and of the important role we're playing."

Community spirit

(Continued from page 4)

supplies and hosted entire military units at no cost. Friendly's donated two ice cream coolers and a continuous supply of ice cream for as long as necessary.

Retail stores such as Bradlees, Lechmere, Milton Bradley and Spalding have donated countless items such as video equipment for the terminal, games and sports equipment. Avon distributors have contributed personal care products, local orchards have donated apples and Coke has provided free soda and a cooler.

The list is long and still growing. If the donations do not carry a specific message in themselves, the collective gesture communicates a great deal. The military mem-

bers passing through Westover's air passenger terminal are amazed when they see the care and support represented by all the donations. "I've been in eight years and I've never seen this type of support. It's remarkable," said Army SSgt. Michael Holden, a Maryland native with the 14th Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit at Fort Devens. PFC Samuel Colletta, a Florida native with the 1st Marine Division in 29 Palms, Calif. was impressed with their reception at Westover. "This all makes us feel real good," he said, "Hopefully, we'll get the same support when we get back."

It is lack of space and not lack of gratitude that prohibits a complete rundown of all contributors. The entire military community, which also accounts for many personal donations, has received the message that people care and appreciate the role of the military in our country.



TIME OUT -- Approximately 300 military members pass through Westover's air passenger terminal each day. The

variety of baked goods and services donated provides an appreciated morale boost before their departure.

Westover's air passenger terminal offers resting place

by TSgt. Tom Allocco
photos by TSgt. Sandi Michon

In the long journey from bases throughout the U.S. to Saudi Arabia, the Westover passenger terminal offers a much-appreciated resting place. Since the beginning of the Desert Shield mission, tired men and women have been welcomed with a smile, words of encouragement and whatever small gifts might ease the journey from home to Middle East.

It started with a few rows of plastic chairs put together as a temporary measure. A television set, VCR, hot coffee and cold drinks were brought in and the area began to look like a real passenger terminal. As the days passed, public support for the Desert Shield effort was demonstrated with a stream of donations of everything from paperbacks and board games to cookies, ice cream and personal items.

The extra touches for those going

oversees included setting up telephones for a last call home and a stamp dispensing machine.

The team behind the effort included Col. Andrew Kasznay, Capt. Wes Carter, MSgt. John Sullivan and SSgt. Mindy Wheeler. They were assisted by the Red Cross which accepted donations from the public and provided volunteers at the passenger terminal.

Letters from grateful passengers tell the story of their reception at Westover.

"Your generous hospitality is really a welcome change after a hard day. Keep the faith for the troops and the folks back home," wrote Specialist David Mortomem of Fort Bliss.

Navy Lieutenant Commander David Foote noted that "at times like this when we are headed for harm's way, knowing that we go there with this kind of support makes you feel good about the people land the country we defend."

"Gives a soldier a final touch of home. Everything is greatly ap-

preciated," wrote Private First Class John Cooper.

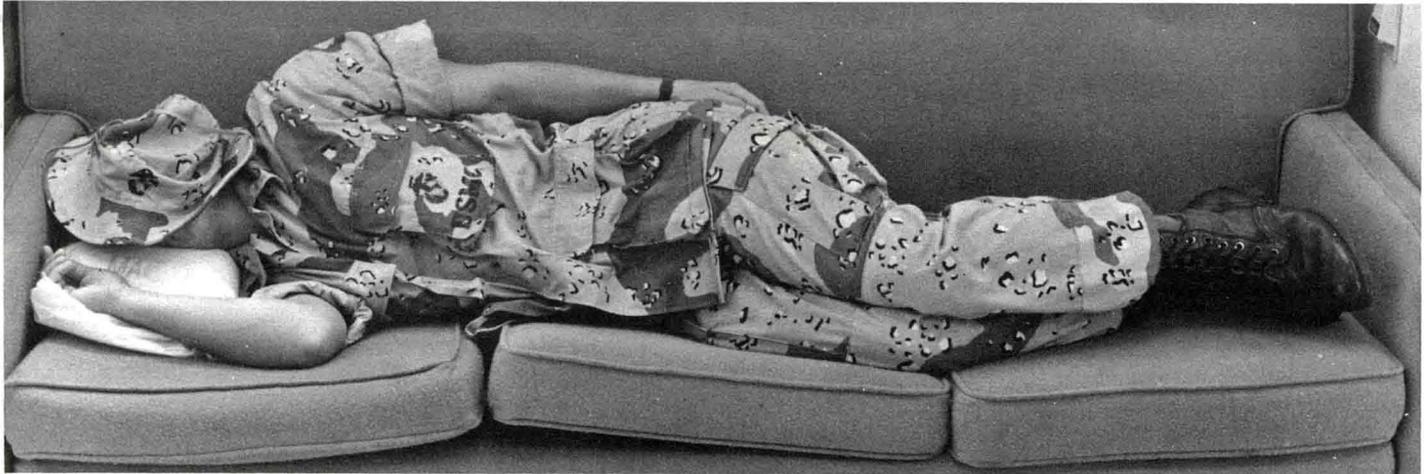
Sometimes just a few words of encouragement and support can make the difference for those who are tired or discouraged.

"One soldier said he slept for two days on the floor before he arrived here. And the only food he had was fast food from the MAC terminal. When you hear stories like that you can understand why they are so appreciative of the welcome they get here," said Capt. Carter.

"By the time they get here they may have been waiting for four or five weeks in anticipation of orders to Saudi Arabia," Sgt. Wheeler said.

"They're not sure what is happening. They may not know if they're going to be here three hours or three days. Sometimes they sleep here on cots," she said.

"When things are like that, they like to talk. Even if it's about nothing in particular, it helps just to have someone to talk to," she said.



"If people can come here, get some rest, clean up with a shower, have a hot meal after eating MREs and leave feeling better than when they arrived, then we in the passenger terminal are doing our job. I feel like I'm doing my part when I can help these people," she said.

There are times when talking to passengers takes all the strength Sergeant Wheeler can muster. That's when men and women pass through the Westover passenger terminal on their way home for emergency leave.

"I remember one captain who was in Saudi Arabia when he received word that his sister was seriously ill. Talking to those coming home on emergency leave is the hardest part of the job," she said.

Red Cross volunteers assist those on emergency leave with rides to train or bus stations or commercial airport.

Typical of the Red Cross volunteers is George Gaudner, a recent retiree of Chicopee. He's a Navy veteran who experienced the heat and hardships aboard ship in the Persian Gulf in 1949, before most of current generation of service people were born.

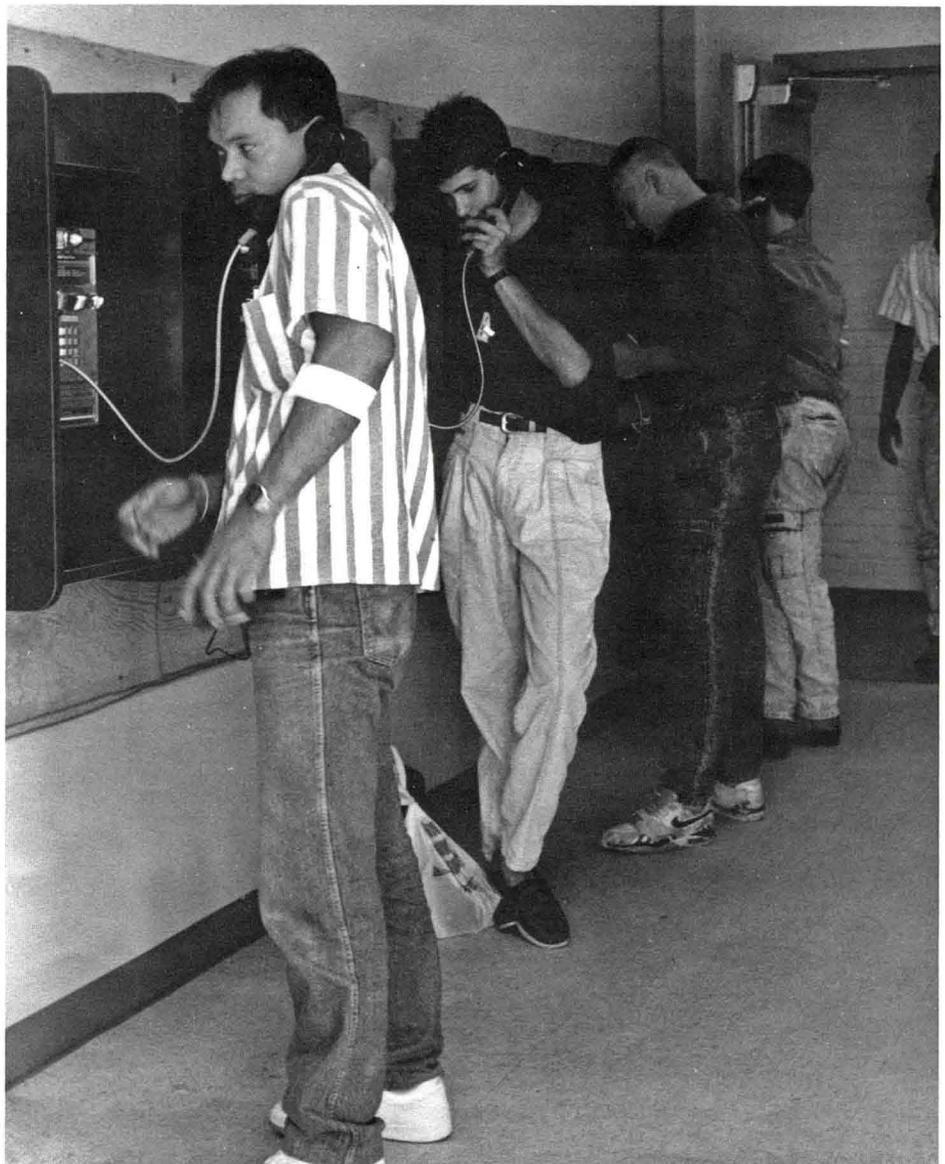
"When I was in the service the Red Cross always helped us out. I try to be sociable and talk to those who need it. Sometimes it's easier to talk to the Red Cross person, someone who's not in uniform.

"Some of the troops haven't even had a chance to tell their family that they're going overseas. Every day you can them lined up at the telephones for one last call home before leaving the U.S."

One soldier rushing on his way to a waiting airplane just had enough time to grab a paperback book and make a last request of the the volunteers in the passenger terminal.

"If I don't get back in time, watch the World Series for me," he asked.

LAST CALL -- Soldiers enroute overseas use their layover time at Westover in a variety of ways. Some rest on couches in the passenger terminal, (above) while others crowd the telephone booths for what may be their last call for quite a while.(below)



439th MAW awarded credit for successful ORI

by TSgt. Tom Allocco

Westover reservists have earned credit for a successful ORI in recognition of their performance in support of the Desert Shield airlift.

Members who had been preparing for the operational readiness inspection shifted into high gear for a "real world" test of their skills following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2. The demands of the Desert Shield airlift led to the cancellation of the ORI which had been scheduled in August.

From the first days of the biggest effort since the Berlin Airlift, 337th MAS aircrews have been shuttling cargo to Spain and Germany and on to the Middle East. Maintenance, aerial port and other support members were also taxed as Westover became a main staging area for Desert Shield. By early October about 400 Galaxies had landed here.

The wing was awarded credit for a successful ORI following a two-day tour of operations by Major General Vernon J. Kondra, MAC deputy commander for operations in September.

Brig. Gen. Frederick D. "Mike" Walker, wing commander, said that in his opinion the performance of wing members had earned, "whatever rating

comes above 'outstanding.'

"I guess that would be outstanding," the wing commander said.

"We're geared up for a three-day ORI

now we're in our third month at that high level of activity. There's no question that we've proved ourselves," General Walker said.



(photo by TSgt. Tom Allocco)

WELCOME TO WESTOVER -- Maj. Gen. Vernon J. Kondra, director of operations for the Military Airlift Command, left, is welcomed to Westover AFB by 439th Military Airlift Wing commander Brig. Gen. Frederick D. Walker. General Kondra brought word that because of Operation Desert Shield, the 439th MAW had been given credit for its Operational Readiness Inspection.

PATRIOT

Coming in December: Fueling the Desert airlift



Published monthly for Patriots like Lt. Charles Barton of New Haven, Ct., and 2,344 members of the 439th MAW at Westover AFB.

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