

PATRIOT

439TH AIRLIFT WING • AIR FORCE RESERVE • WESTOVER AFB

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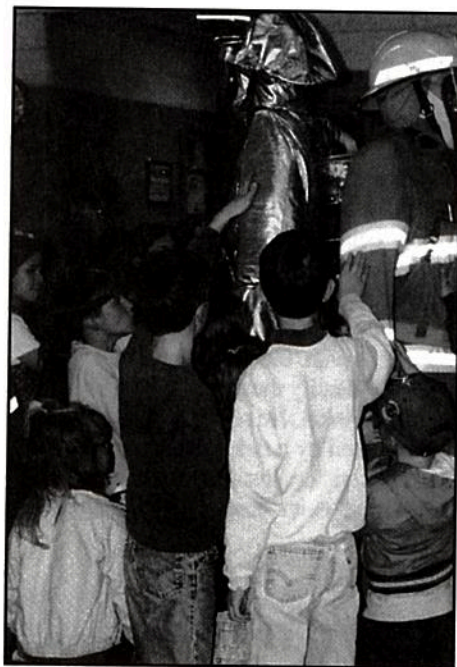
MAY 1998



HISTORICAL LANDMARK — Thousand of visitors flock to Westover each year to tour the C-5 and learn more about the base's vital role in recent history. It is the field trip of choice for all age groups. The base hosted more than 350 tourists in April and averages nearly 3,000 each year in base tours alone. Members of Western Mass. Homeschoolers are shown as they toured the C-5 and the fire station in April.

(photos by MSgt. Sandi Michon)

Tourist Season



Open House offers something for everyone

by MSgt. Gordon A. Newell

Since 1990, the Great New England Air Show and Open House has become one of the premier shows in the United States, drawing more than 600,000 spectators in two days.

This year's edition, scheduled for Sept. 12 and 13, featuring the popular Air Force Thunderbirds, should prove to be just as big an attraction according to Lt. Col. Dan Nichols, chief pilot with the 337th Airlift

Squadron and operations chief for the Air Show.

"For months we have been contacting flying units from all around the world, inviting them to come to our show," Nichols said. "By now, we have a reputation for having great crowds of appreciative fans, so many aircrews love coming to Westover."

In addition to military aircraft, the Westover show has also become a favorite stop for owners of vintage aircraft as well

as civilian aerobatics teams. One very special Warbird that will be here is the "Spirit of Freedom," a C-54 that took part in the Berlin Airlift and that is taking part in an historic commemorative flight to Berlin. The plane, with Col. (Ret.) Gail Halvorsen, the original "Candy Bomber," aboard, made a nostalgic stop at Westover May.

"We always try to have something here for everyone," said Nichols. "That's part of the reason our show has become so popular

continued on page 3

Gruesome course provides vital training

by MSgt. Sandi Michon

It's a job you train for, but hope you never get called.

That's the sentiment of three Westover dentists who attended the Forensic Dentistry Course in Rockville, Md., March 8-14.

Lt. Cols. Burt Finkel, Barry Cunha and Allen Oshana told grisly tales of the course presented by specialists in the fields of forensic science, criminal investigation and law. Sponsored by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology and the American Registry of Pathology, the training equips graduates to work on an identification team with local coroners or medical examiners, particularly in a mass casualty situation.

The intense, "educationally-gruesome" course included lectures, mock trials, films, labs and a disaster scenario — with death as the common denominator. "We saw every possible way one man could hurt another," said Oshana.

"You can't see that much brutality without being affected," agreed Cunha. By the end of the week, Finkel said, "we had had enough."

Although macabre, the dentists were impressed with the course content. "It is critical to identify the dead as soon as possible," said Finkel. He referred to legal bottlenecks created by a delay in a positive death certificate, such as insurance monies, settling estates, and even possible remarriage. "It



"You can't see that much brutality without being affected."

Lt. Col. Barry Cunha

closes a chapter for family left behind," said Cunha.

Even with the advent of DNA, dental identification is still very important, according to the base dentists. They cited the six-to-eight-week minimum wait for test results and the \$3,000-\$4,000 price tag per DNA test as possible hurdles.

As they learned through actual case studies, identifying the dead through dental means is often a complex matching game. They showed x-rays to detail anatomy of root structure, nerve passages, contour of teeth, sinus shape, jaw joints and even the

contour of individual fillings which vary greatly in each person. They learned to determine race, gender and age from a skull.

They participated in teams working a mock disaster where a small commuter plane had crashed in a park. Using actual dead body parts, anti-mortem records, and any shred of evidence, they labored to identify the dead. "You can't believe how many obstacles you come up against," explained Cunha. Everything from foreign records, incomplete records, political situations, religious considerations and legal delays challenged their objective.

"It's a very dynamic process until you reach a definitive conclusion. You can't rush, but you have to work quickly," Finkel said.

By course end, all three were touched by the frailty of human life, but were also changed in the way they saw their dental profession, both in the military and civilian life. "We all came away with an increased awareness of the importance of accurate and thorough dental records," Finkel said.

For reservists, it is important to have current x-rays, especially the panorex and bite-wing x-rays. "It also makes you look at your private practice more closely, to make sure every record entry is clear," said Cunha, a dentist in Lexington, Mass.

All three dentists can now be called upon as members of the American Registry of Pathology in the event of a mass casualty. Although each found the course challenging and informative, they said, almost in unison, "I hope I never have to use it."

PATRIOT

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Goff retires with 31 years

by Capt. James Bishop

The advice Col. Benjamin F. Goff often gives to others has served him well: "accentuate your positives and minimize your negatives."

Goff retired this year after 31 years of service.

At his April 5 retirement party, Goff, who trained as a chemist, told the audience that if he hadn't seen a billboard advertising the Air Force Reserve, he probably would have become one of those straggly-haired scientists in a white lab coat who is completely out of touch.

At the ceremony, he received the Legion of Merit award and a certificate of appreciation from President Clinton. In presenting the award, 439th Wing Commander Gen. James Bankers said Goff "exemplifies integrity and respect. I can't offer higher praise than that."

In 1996, after his promotion to colonel, the longtime Chief of Social Actions became Westover's first full-time inspector general.

Goff began his career as an ROTC cadet at Tuskegee Institute (later Tuskegee University) studying chemistry. He was commissioned in 1967, and after 18 months at a chemical warfare unit at Eglin AFB, he served at the Rocket Propulsion Lab at Edwards AFB.

Goff helped test rocket fuels for their

explosivity and usability. He said the work was fun, but the location was desolate. The rocket propulsion lab was located in a remote site in the Mojave Desert, some 27 miles beyond Edwards.

In 1971, Goff ended his active duty career, and started working for Polaroid Corporation in Waltham. Driving back across the country, he stopped at Lowry AFB to ask about a Reserve position, but was told the Reserve didn't need chemists.

He thought his Air Force career was over. Three years later, however, he saw a billboard advertisement for the Reserve. He called, interviewed, and by April, 1974, he became Chief of Westover's newly-developed office, Social Actions.

Some of those first months were tough, Goff said. Bussing was a huge issue in South Boston at the time, and some of the six-hour race-relations training sessions were "tumultuous," Goff said.

In 1994, after two years as 439th mission support commander, Goff was chosen to take charge of senior officer investigations at 22nd Air Force at Dobbins AFB, commuting to Atlanta on weekends.

Along the way, he earned a doctorate in Environmental Engineering from Kennedy Western University, and he started his own environmental consulting company, Goff-Chem.



Col. Ben Goff

Over the 31 years of his career, Goff said he has seen tremendous positive change in the Air Force. "Social Actions is the best thing that could have happened to the Air Force Reserve," he said.

Goff, originally from Georgetown, S.C., is married to the former Josephine Mitchell. They have three children: Bernise, Benjamin Jr., and Brian.

Airshow attractions... from page 1



over the years."

Another special attraction this year will be the Red Devils, a highly-skilled parachute team that is the pride of the British Army.

Nichols and his committee is also working diligently to bring the Air Force's latest aircraft to the show.

"We have requests in for a B-2 bomber, as well as a C-17, the Air Force's newest cargo plane. We had a C-17 fly-by here in 1996 and this year hope to have one on the ground so folks can get a closer look," he said.

The Thunderbirds and Red Devils will perform both days and flying demonstrations will take place throughout each day. Gates will open at 9 a.m. There is no admission or parking fee. Coolers, bicycles and roller blades will not be allowed on the flightline.



PISTOLS “Excellence in Competition”



DOWN RANGE — More than 60 shooters fired 9mm Baretta pistols (M-9) at Westover’s firing range as part of Excellence in Competition challenge held in April.

At top, Col. Tom Mauzaka, 439th ALCF commander, heads a long line of military members taking aim at the target 25 meters away.

In the middle photo, targets are checked for competition results.

At right, TSgt. Duane S. Manville, combat arms instructor (left) and MSgt. Paul A. Carroccia, 439th AGS take a closer look for the tally sheet.



photos courtesy Westover photo lab

Reservists turn ABCs into college degrees

by MSgt. Sandi Michon

When you learn how much you know, you may know how much more you want to learn.

While confusing at first glance, that is exactly what some reservists at Westover are doing.

The ABCs of the education office are turning PME, CLEP and DANTES and CCAF into college degrees — *often without ever sitting in a classroom — or paying a single cent.*

Reservists are earning college credits for their Air Force technical training, and earning other credits through independent study programs like CLEP (College Level Entrance Program) and DANTES (Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support). All these programs are administered free to reservists and their spouses through the base education office.

TSgt. Anthony Grant, 439th MXS integrated electronics technician, earned 24 college credits in less than a year through CLEP testing. He will CLEP one more test this month to earn an associates degree through Community College of the Air Force. He will have saved between \$2,000 - \$3,000 in college expenses by earning the credits through CLEP. The 18-year veteran reservist decided last May to get serious about his education, and now plans to pursue a

bachelor's degree in criminal justice or business administration.

Not always such a scholar, Grant said he was a C-student in high school and flunked out of college his first time around. "I feel I can do more now," he said. He spends about three to four weeks preparing for each CLEP test, using a CLEP strategy book he purchased at a local bookstore.

He feels everyone should pursue such educational opportunities. "As you get older, you want more out of life. Education can give you more job options," Grant said.

SSgt. David Rodrigues, 439th MXS aerospace maintenance journeyman, earned 18 college credits through CLEP tests and received his CCAF degree in February. He had a few community college credits, but used his reserve technical education, PME and CLEP tests to finish his associates degree. On the two work days Rodrigues doesn't commute back to his Fall River, Mass., home, he can be found holed up at the Chicopee library, reading and studying. He has alternated CLEP tests with PME, and is now accomplishing the squadron officer PME course. Although a staff sergeant, he is eligible for the course as a wage-grade-10 employee. "I'm in the learning groove. It's hard to stop once you get going," he quipped. "Focus is the key."

Rodrigues praises God for helping him learn, but also praises the education office staff for their help and encouragement. He credits his wife, Donna, for her support and for tutoring him in math. He now plans to pursue a history degree at the University of Mass. where he can get free tuition as a veteran. "I want to better myself. I don't want to turn wrenches when I'm older," said the 32-year-old reservist.

Since Westover became a testing site one year ago, more than 100 CLEP and DANTES tests have been administered. According to SMSgt. Kristine Seney, education chief, the pass rate is 55 percent. There are 30 CLEP subject exams that cover the general education requirements typically taken the first two years of college. There are almost 40 DANTES tests which measure proficiency in more specific study areas, many of which are job-related.

According to Base Education Officer Maj. Tom Schwechheimer, many colleges accept credits from CLEP and DANTES tests, especially CLEP, which is regionally accredited.

"People might be surprised to learn how much they already know," said Schwechheimer. "Taking advantage of these programs is a win-win proposition."

Additional information is available at the base education office, or by calling Ext. 2042, or 3441.

New IDEA program offers minimum of \$200

by MSgt. Gordon A. Newell

A new and improved Suggestion Program that promises to put more money into the pockets of those taking part, is now in effect for all employees of Westover, both civilians and reservists.

According to Susanne M. Schmidt, manager of the program, the minimum cash award to \$200 for the approval of a submitter's idea that is outside their job responsibility.

"This should really create some interest," said Schmidt whose new title is IDEA analyst. "Prior to this, the amount was set at \$25.00."

She added that the \$200 amount applies to ideas submitted as of Oct. 1, 1997 that meet eligible criteria for monetary awards.

Other changes to the program are listed below:

- The name is changed to Innovative Development through Employee Awareness (IDEA) Program.
- The suggester is now called the submitter.
- Your suggestion is now called your IDEA.

- AF forms 1000A (IDEA instructions and ineligible criteria); 1000 (IDEA application) and 1000-1 (IDEA evaluation and transmittal) are now available in Jet Form.

- New award scales.

- Award (monetary and nonmonetary) will be made upon approval not implementation.

- Suggestions submitted on or before Sept. 30, 1997 are grandfathered and awarded will be paid in compliance with the awards scales in use prior to Oct. 1, 1997.

- Approved separate improvement process forms AFTO 22 and 135 may be attached to AF Form 1000 for recognition through the IDEA program.

The program will be implemented in three stages, Schmidt said. Changes listed are Phase 1. Phases 2 and 3 will involve streamlining the evaluation process and an automated system will allow users to submit and evaluate ideas electronically.

Further information on this program is available from Schmidt at Ext. 2871.

Security forces provide protection in the desert

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

When the U.S. needed to cut through Saddam Hussein's most recent bluster, a team of 45 Westover security force members helped deliver the message. With minimum advanced notice, the volunteers said goodbye to their families in late February and joined the biggest build-up in the Middle East since Desert Storm.

The standoff with Iraq became a diplomatic contest in March, but the Westover security members still considered themselves on the front line, where home is a tent and the USO provides entertainment. Members of Westover's Force Protection Flight, under Capt. Michael Christoph, will serve at the undisclosed location for a four-month tour.

The American response to Iraq's blocking of U.N. arms inspections was a surge of airpower that forced Saddam Hussein to blink. Based on past lessons learned about the terrorist threat, the deploying forces were backed up by a unique security group formed specifically for such a crisis.

The Westover force protection troops make up "A" Flight of the 820th Security Forces Group, which has its headquarters at Lackland AFB, Texas. The group has been in existence for less than a year, and was organized with flights from all major commands. The Westover flight represents the Air Force Reserve Command.

This is the unit's first operational deployment and it's a job the security forces take seriously. They work 12-hour shifts, with one day off every six, providing the full gamut of force protection, including perimeter and convoy security, for aircraft operations and a radar site.

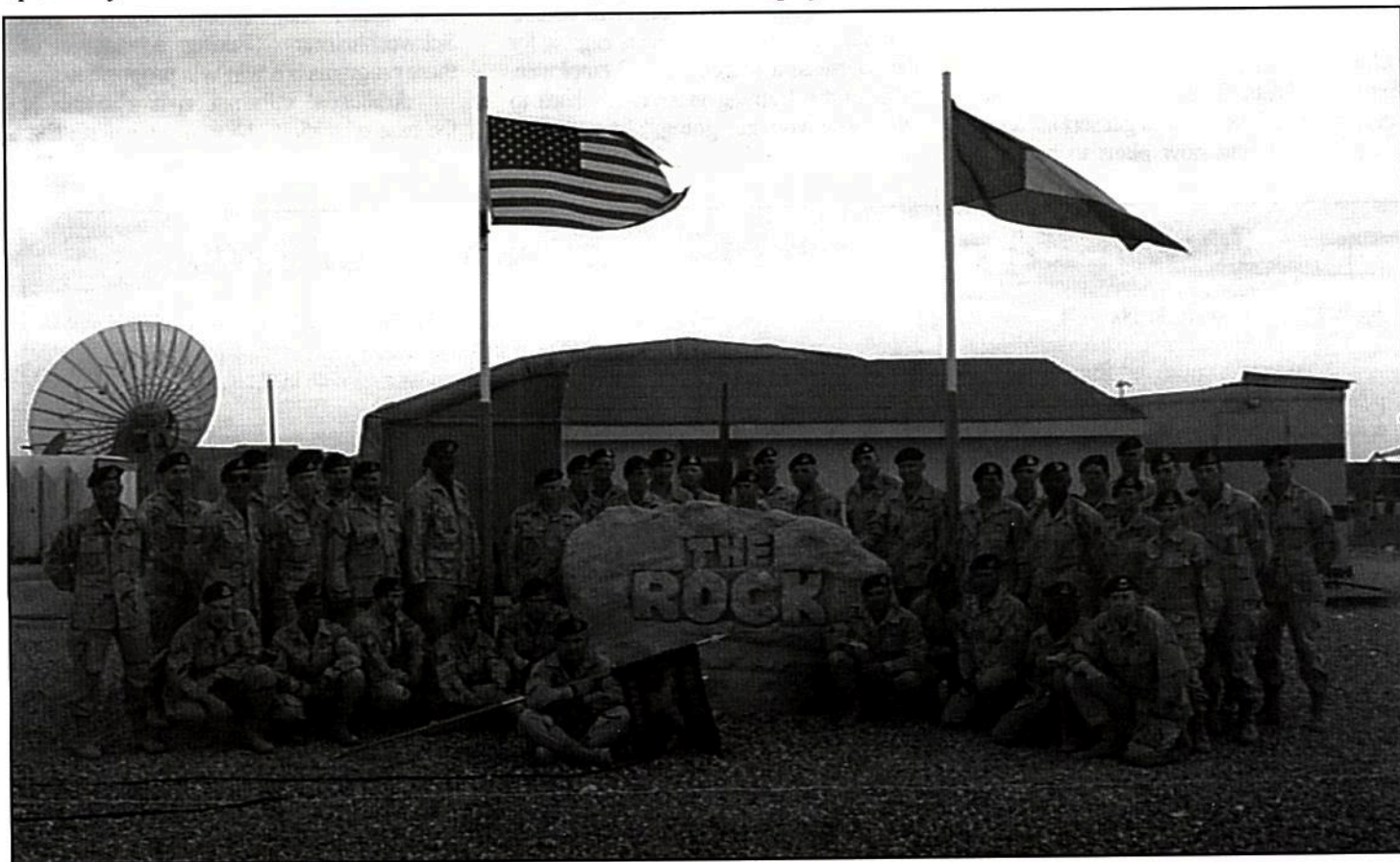
"The 820th was formed in response to the Khobar Towers bombing and the changing environment our forces will face in the future. The group developed a new concept that unifies all the elements of security — force protection, intelligence, OSI, disaster preparedness, communications and others — into a single operation



PEACE OF THE ROCK — Capt. Michael Christoph, from Westover, (above) commands the 820th Security Forces Group. The unit, pictured below in front of a display with American and Kuwaiti flags, was deployed to Kuwait after the latest saber rattling of Saddam Hussein.

photos courtesy of the 820th SFG

continued on next page





under one command element," said Maj. Roger Summerlin, 439th Security Forces Squadron commander.

"In this deployment you see this concept of operations bearing fruit. The headquarters has all the specialists assigned to it and can immediately draw on their expertise in any contingency," Summerlin said.

The sophisticated security operation also includes an effort to address human relations issues that develop when men and women are separated from their families.

"Our people have a computer in their tent and are staying in touch with their families by e-mail. They've sent back photos and we put out a newsletter to let their families know they are as comfortable as can be expected in a desert deployment," Summerlin said.

"Hot meals are prepared four times a day and are delivered to those who are at their post. They don't get much time off, but they are making the best of the situation. They are fixing up their tents with scrounged lumber and recently a USO band put on a performance," he said.

"General Henry Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is among those who have toured the base," Summerlin said.

Most team members are veterans of Desert Storm or later deployments to Southwest Asia, but tours overseas are never easy for families. That makes it a priority effort to bolster those at home.

"The other night a mom called me from Texas just to talk to me about how her son was doing and what was up," Summerlin said.

"The Family Readiness Center, with Linda Rieth, has just been outstanding. We've had minor family problems with our

people and Linda has been taking care of our families," he said.

Barring a new crisis, the Westover security team will return home in late June. They expect to come back with experiences to share, and also with bragging rights.

"On the very first day, an Army area commander met one of our airmen at his post. The general was so impressed he gave him one of his commander's coins," Summerlin said.

"So far, we consider this deployment a success story," Summerlin said.

TANNING MISSION — Everything from tents to cammies are tan in the desert climate of Kuwait. Above is the tent compound that is home to 45 Westover security specialists. Below, the Chairman Joint Chief of Staff's General Shelton meets with security troops.



Mitchell back in the Air Force

by SrA Andrew Reitano

Patience is a virtue. Good things come to those who wait. Popular phrases we're accustomed to hearing but may not always prove true. But for one member of the Patriot Wing they have become a reality.

Alice Mitchell, 439th Aircraft Generation Squadron, finally achieved a long-time goal on Jan. 21 when she became a member of the Air Force Reserve at Westover ARB. Mitchell, orderly room manager for AGS, has been trying to join the Reserves since 1990.

"I don't know any other way of life but the military way of life," said Mitchell. "Even though I continued working for the government as a civilian at Westover, I missed the military aspect of my government service. I've always enjoyed the military way of life. Westover is my extended family. Now I am able to serve in a two-fold capacity."

Mitchell did not re-enlist in the active duty Air Force because she couldn't commit herself 100 percent, and become a full-time

mother. Having separated from active duty in 1985, Mitchell was unable to join the Reserves initially in 1990 because of certain Air Force regulations. Because her husband, at the time, was also a reservist, Mitchell would have been obligated to give up unconditional custody of her two children. Placing her family first, she put her return to uniform on hold.

"The legal ramifications of joining the Reserves was too high," explained Mitchell. "Morally and legally it wasn't something I could do. These are my children. To give unconditional custody, how could I call myself their mother? There was no way I was going to give up my children."

Through her eight-year quest, Mitchell never lost hope. In September 1997, MSgt. Jackie Stanley from the local recruiting office contacted Mitchell about the change in the law. "Shortly after the change occurred, the military personnel flight contacted me about Mitchell wanting to join the Reserves," said Stanley. "I wasted no time in contacting her when I



SSgt. Alice Mitchell

found out how long she had been trying to get in."

After almost eight years of trying, it's mission accomplished for Mitchell. "Going back in is the best news I've had in a long time. I encourage anyone who's been thinking about the same thing to go ahead and go for it."

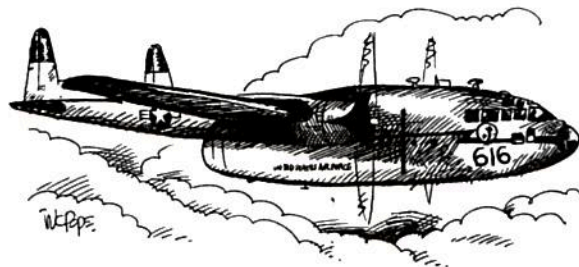
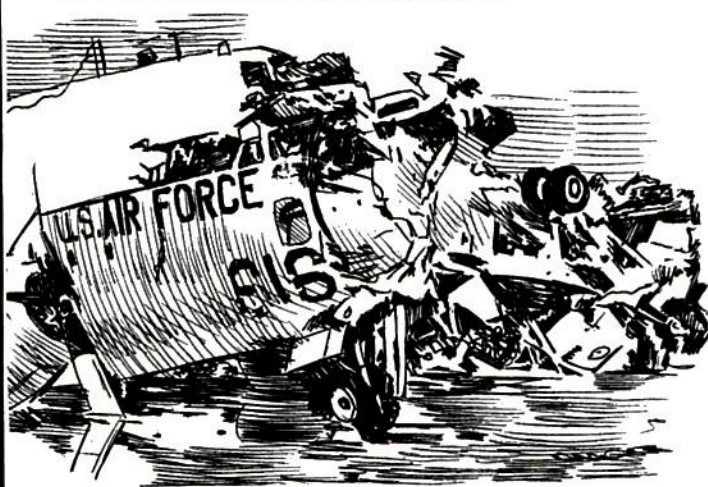


1948-1998

Out of the Blue

Old "Six-One-Six", a C-119 Flying Boxcar with over 75,000 flying hours, met its fate on October 3, 1979, as a tornado ripped through what is now called the New England Air Museum at Bradley International Airport in Connecticut.

Back in 1965, what was supposed to be its final flight, "Six-One-Six" was flown to Bradley Field, Conn., for its retirement. It was put on display with numerous other veteran aircraft.



Over the years many people visiting the museum have strolled through the cavernous interior of "Six-One-Six" and fantasized about its missions.

Within moments on that stormy day in 1979, "Six-One-Six" took its "last flight". What was left of it fell to the ground a hundred yards away in a nearby field. It lay mangled alongside other museum aircraft wings, engines and assorted unrecognizable parts.

Although "Six-One-Six" lay in a crumpled heap, with its tail section forever missing-in-action, it was able to show its pride one last time. For days, pictures of old "Six-One-Six" were displayed on national television and in local newspapers showing the devastation of the tornado.

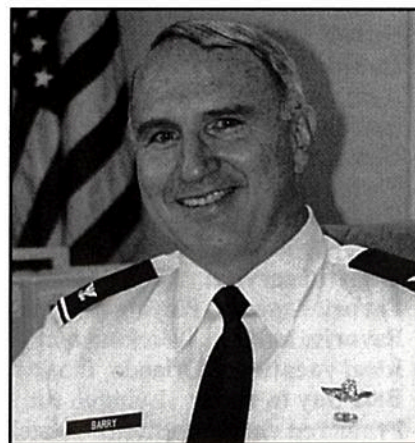
By TSgt. W.C.Pope

Source: "Patriot," July, 1980 & Springfield Morning Union



CHAMBER SALUTE — The Chicopee Chamber of Commerce saluted Westover's airman (SrA. Bryan Perry) and Senior NCO (SMSgt. Tammy Vezina) of the Year, at a breakfast held in April. Brig. Gen. James D. Bankers, 439th AW commander (left), and Lt. Col. James Joyce, 439th SG commander (right), joined the salute.

Barry earns stars



NEW STARS — Brig. Gen. Marvin Jay Barry, former vice commander of the 439th Airlift Wing, was promoted to his present rank in February. Barry, who is now the Mobilization Augmentee to the commander of the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph, AFB, Texas, was assigned to Westover from September 1995 until 1997.

To your health

Carcinoma of the prostate is the most common cancer in men, according to Col. Yash P. Malhotra, 439th MDS commander.



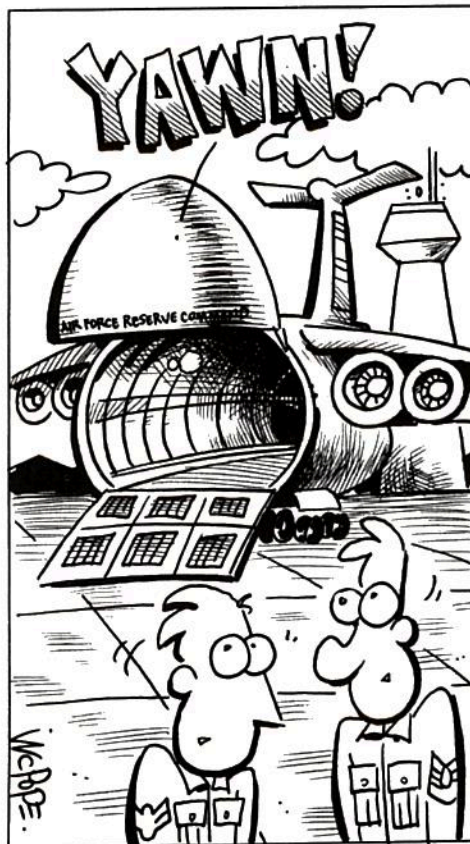
There are 250,000 new cases and 40,000 deaths each year to this disease which commonly afflicts men over the age of 45. Only early detection, through screening procedures, PSA (Prostatic Specific Antigen), and rectal examination, offers a chance for a cure.

The 439th MDS now offers prostate screening during periodic and full-flight physicals. This is not currently an AFRC requirement, and will be offered strictly on a voluntary basis to men in the following categories:

- **Age 45 and above: African-American and individuals with family history**
- **Age 50 and above: Caucasians**

If the test is positive, it will be repeated in one month to exclude a false-positive result. If positive again, member will be put on Profile 3 and required to see a urologist for confirmatory ultrasound or biopsy as indicated.

Call the clinic at Ext. 3565 for more information.



Patriot People

Name: Ron Baldwin
Rank: TSgt.
Age: 40
Address: Chicopee, Mass.
Unit: 439th SVS
Position: Fitness Center NCOIC
Civilian position: Owner of power equipment company
Favorite food: Seafood
Years of service: 20
Favorite sport: Playing pingpong
Favorite hobby: Working out
Ideal vacation: Orlando, Florida
Best way to relax: Lying in sun by pool
Preferred entertainment: Watching my children have fun
Favorite hero: Fifth-grade teacher
Favorite music: Whatever is on the radio
Favorite movie: *Time Bandits*
Favorite aircraft: C-5
Pet peeve: Prejudiced people
What I would do if I won \$1 million: Take a long vacation, build my own house, invest



SSgt. Vin Blanchard

TSgt. Ron Baldwin

Patriot Praises

PEP PROMOTIONS:

CMSgt. Kolodjay, Edward T.
 CMSgt. Podkowka, Gerald
 SMSgt. Carbin, David F.
 SMSgt. Brady, James R.
 SMSgt. Szmurlo, Charles M.
 SMSgt. Robert, John F.
 MSgt. Jordan, Ronald M.
 MSgt. Mitchell, James T.
 MSgt. Olshefski, Karen A.
 TSgt. Bates, Randy J.
 TSgt. Feltner, Wilbert
 TSgt. Larsen, William M.
 TSgt. McCarthy, Jeffrey E.
 TSgt. Mello, Stephen F.
 TSgt. Nee, Kevin R.
 TSgt. Robitaille, Shane C.

Enlistments

TSgt. Russo, Joseph S.
 SSgt. Caldas, Gustavo A.
 SSgt. Jourdan, Thomas D.
 SSgt. LeBlanc, Douglas A.
 SrA. Traugh, Steve E.
 A1C Granahan, Timothy I.
 A1C Harrison, Bradford S.
 A1C Myers, Chad A.
 A1C Moodie, Shannon C.
 Amn. Marjault, Eric G.
 AB Kwasnik, James F.

Reenlistments

SMSgt. Perrett, Fred W.
 MSgt. Groeber, William D.
 MSgt. Turpin, Richard W.
 TSgt. Delia, Guy F.
 TSgt. Griffin, Scott G.
 TSgt. Kenneally, Kenneth G.
 TSgt. Manegio, Frank A., Jr.
 TSgt. Snider, Richard L.
 SSgt. Cassidy, Patrick C.
 SSgt. Egan, Matthew J.
 SSgt. Lafleur, Joann K.
 SSgt. Lasky, Todd J.
 SSgt. Latter, Michael J.
 SSgt. Munley, Timothy P.
 SSgt. Sullivan, William J.
 SSgt. Walton, Jeffrey A.
 SSgt. Whelton, James M.
 SrA. Beaudry, Keith M.
 SrA. Bonvicini, Marie L.

Community College of the Air Force graduates

SMSgt. Frank Lobianco 58 APS
 MSgt. Daniel Turner 42APS
 MSgt. Catherine Newton 58 APS
 SSgt. Joanne Boczanowski 85APS
 SMSgt. James Ryan Brady 439 AES
 TSgt. Lorenda Absous 439 AES
 MSgt. Sean R. Powell 439 AGS
 TSgt. Robert S. Preble 439 ASTS
 TSgt. Michael MacLeod 439 ASTS
 MSgt. Donald Butler 439 CES

SMSgt. Tammy H. Vezina 439 MSS
 TSgt. Timmy Chapple 439 MSX
 TSgt. Glen Gerrans 739 SPF
 TSgt. Stanley Barringer 439 AGS
 SSgt. William Fullam 439 MSX
 TSgt. Paul Cloutier 439 MSX
 SSgt. Vonsicia Nunnally 42 APS
 SSgt. Christopher Clark 337 AS
 MSgt. Garth Parker 337 AS

Awards and Decorations

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

Maj. Jan R. Backenstoe
 439 AES
 Capt. Andrew P. Hoffman
 337 AS

AIR FORCE COMMENDATION MEDAL

Capt. Vito E. Addabbo
 337 AS
 MSgt. Kenneth L. Morytko
 439 CES
 SSgt. Michael R. Davis
 439 SFS

AIR FORCE ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

MSgt. John T. Givner
 439 SFS
 SSgt. Lee J. Holland
 439 SFS
 SSgt. Ronald J. Lebreton
 439 CES
 SrA. Andrew V. Reitano
 439 AW

President salutes AFRC

I am proud to salute the men and women of the United States Air Force Reserve Command for a half century of dedicated service.

For 50 years, you have helped to preserve our freedom, promote democracy, and advance American interests around the world. Through five decades of challenge and change, America's Air Force Reservists have set the highest standards of professionalism and accomplishment. With quiet resolve, you leave your civilian lives to serve your country when called, often at great personal sacrifice. As warriors, peacekeepers, healers, and builders, you have played a vital part in the Air Force tradition of service.

I commend each of you for your commitment to ensuring that the United States has the finest military force in the world. You can reflect with pride on your success and on your significant contributions to military, peacetime, and humanitarian operations in America and across the globe.

As you celebrate the Air Force Reserve's 50th anniversary, I thank you on behalf of a grateful nation for all you do to preserve America's security and to promote world peace. Best wishes for a memorable celebration and every future success.

by President William J. Clinton
Commander in Chief

COMMENTARY



President Bill Clinton

BX plan being abused

Many of you are beneficiaries of the base exchange's Deferred Payment Plan. DPP allows you to take advantage of the BX's prices and specials while saving the BX millions of dollars in outside credit card fees.

The Deferred Payment Plan can also aid members in establishing a good credit record.

Unfortunately, we have more than 800 reservists, officers and enlisted alike, who are more than 60 days late in their DPP payments. The

BX is taking action to collect from reservists with overdue accounts, including using commercial debt collectors.

Lack of financial responsibility can carry serious civilian and military penalties and may irreparably damage your credit rating. We have worked long and hard to earn this benefit, don't abuse it

by Maj. Gen. Robert MacIntosh
AFRC Commander

Briefs

September will have only one UTA

There will be only one Unit Training Assembly during September because of the Great New England Air Show and Open House, which is to be held Sept. 12 and 13.

All reservists who normally drill on the B UTA will be requested to reschedule from Sept. 26 and 27 to the 12th and 13th of September.

Further information is available from the 439th MSS/DPMSC at Ext. 3436.

Info Symposium set for May 16

The Base Advisory Council will sponsor a second Interactive Informational Symposium May 16 from 1 - 3 p.m. in the 337th Airlift Squadron's auditorium.

Areas of discussion will include Promotion Enhancement Program, Awards and Decorations, UNIT Vacancy Promotion, Professional Military Education and the overall benefits of the Air Force Reserve. Personnel from the Military Personnel Flight and the Recruiters office will provide briefings.

For further information regarding these topics, contact SSgt. Patrick Cassidy at Ext. 3981 or MPF at Ext. 3436.

Westover to receive fire training facility

Westover is one of six Air Force Reserve Bases to receive funding this fiscal year for military construction projects. The total MILCON appropriation for the Reserve is \$30,243,000.

Westover will receive \$1.8 million for a new fire training facility. The project was requested in the budget by the president and approved by Congress.

May UTA dates
A UTA May 2-3
B UTA May 16-17

Reservist opens home to foster children

by SrA. Andrew Reitano

Most parents find that raising their own kids requires a lot of time and energy. But try caring for 17 foster children.

The hours are long, but Rob Merchant and his wife focus on the rewards as they try to make a difference in the lives of society's "forgotten" children.

"I love what I do," said the 439th AMS master sergeant. "I've never grown up," he admitted. "I raise hell with the kids. I roughhouse with them; I build things with them."

Merchant originally had to convince his wife, Venelva, to try foster care, but now they both enjoy it. The Merchants received their first foster child in January 1997 and have cared for a total of 17 foster children, most between the ages of 8 and 18-years-old.

Being a foster parent is an enjoyable experience, but it takes patience and coordination, according to Merchant. "Being a foster parent is more than giving kids a roof over the heads and taking them to appointments — it's making them feel at home," he said.

The diverse backgrounds of the children can be challenging. "The only



"Being a foster parent is more than giving kids a roof over their heads and taking them to appointments — it's making them feel at home."

MSgt. Rob Merchant

thing some of these kids have ever known is neglect. Because no one cared for them, they learned to take care of themselves," he explained. Many foster kids come from homes mangled by divorce, physical, drug or alcohol abuse.

Merchant said some of the kids are frustrated and withdrawn, while some are loveable as teddy bears.

At the Merchant household, where there is a minimum of 20 people on any given day, the foster kids have to get used to being around people. "Foster kids put up a shield. It

takes two to three months to get close to these kids, even with all the different activities we do together," he said.

Although taking in foster kids involves a lot of give and take, the experience is mutually beneficial. "One of the most positive things about having so many kids is that I learn from every situation," he said. "When you see where so many of these kids have come from, you really appreciate what you have."

Merchant and his wife debate continuing foster care. "After reviewing the pros and cons, we decide to keep at it."

PATRIOT



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