

PATRIOT

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439th AW MISSION: Actively support national objectives on a global scale with ready, mobility forces

Command chief takes a look back

The past 12 months have been a challenge not only to the men and women of the 439th Airlift Wing but also to the base infrastructure. Starting on the first day that personnel were called to active duty, the computer system at the Flyers Inn crashed and a temporary computer and hastily written program had to be put together to meet their needs. Billeting on base was short because one of our five airmen lodging buildings was under renovation, and two others were scheduled to start. That meant that many personnel had to be housed in area hotels, adding security concerns and long lines at the gates during shift changes.

The number of activated personnel grew to over 1,300 - a little more than half of our wing - more than any other wing in Air Force Reserve Command. Our people were deployed overseas in support of operations, some serving directly in harm's way on the front lines against al Qaeda forces, and others serving in countries where they fended off rock-throwing demonstrators. Many of our aircraft and crews were tasked to the limit and flew more than double the number of hours of any year since the Gulf War. The aircraft generation and maintenance squadrons worked around-the-clock to keep our planes flying, while the security forces squadron operated in a Force-Protection "Charlie" environment, securing the C-5's long runway, flight line, our extensive base perimeter, and dealing with traffic moving in, out and around the base.

The folks in military personnel, finance, family readiness and the clinic processed so many activations in such a short time that the average person would think that the system would just be overwhelmed. But through it all the men and women of the Patriot Wing responded with determination to overcome obstacles and work through problems. Although we have personnel from 37 states assigned to this wing, everyone displayed a spirit of "Yankee ingenuity" as they tackled one issue after another.

Someone once said that those who fail to learn from the mistakes of history are destined to repeat them. We have learned many lessons during activation which will make us smarter and more efficient if we are called upon again. I can never adequately express my pride in the performance and determination of every member of this wing. We were called upon to do more than any other wing in AFRC, but that does not surprise me, as we truly are the "Team of Choice." As we return to our civilian lives let us not forget those who are activated for another year, those remaining on manday tours, and the volunteerism of those going out on Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) rotations. Security of the base must continue, and we must continue to bring the "beans and bullets" to our troops serving overseas.

As we look at what has happened to our country over the past year and wonder what will happen in the coming year, I leave you with the thought that I have always tried to instill in those I supervise: "Pray for peace but prepare for war." Be the Minuteman that our wing mascot represents; go about your lives and your civilian jobs as normal as possible but be prepared to grab your "musket" with a moment's notice and defend your homeland.

-by CMSgt. Jeffrey B. Sherwin, Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant-



CMSgt. Jeffrey B. Sherwin

Briefs

Wing will conduct two spouses' flights

The 439th Airlift Wing will conduct two spouses' flights in November.

Those who are eligible to invite their spouse's include reservists who are aircrew members, in aircraft maintenance, aerial porters, members of the security forces, members of the operations group and those in life support. In addition, anyone occupying an authorized bonus AFSC is also eligible.

The orientation flights are planned for Friday and Saturday afternoon, Nov. 1-2.

Reservists may register with their group commanders through their unit orderly rooms. Further details will be available from the 439th AW Public Affairs office.

Four Seasons moves to section of base gym

The Four Seasons recreational rental facility has moved across Patriot Avenue to the base gymnasium.

Rick Heller, fitness center director, said the Four Seasons relocation has forced the gym staff to postpone karate, kickboxing, and aerobics classes.

The former Four Seasons building near base operations is scheduled to be torn down.

For more information, call the fitness center at Ext. 3958.

October UTA schedule
A UTA Oct. 5-6
B UTA Oct. 19-20

Cover Photo

HUGS AT HOME — SSgt. Christopher W. Davis, 439th MXS, his wife, Beth, and son Derek share a special moment upon Davis' arrival at Westover on Aug. 16. Davis was among the last groups of maintenance personnel returning from three-month tours in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (see article and additional photos on page 4).

—photo by SSgt. Andrew S. Biscoe

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Ceremonies renew war on terror, commemorate fallen heroes

MSgt. Tom Allocco

The Westover family and guests remembered those who have fallen in the war on terrorism, honored those who stand guard and carry the war to the enemy and pledged their renewed commitment to America during Sept. 11 ceremonies in the Fuel Cell Hangar one year after the attack on America. From the eight silver swords held aloft by the Westover Honor Guard to the moment of silence and slow, solemn flag presentation, every step spoke of tradition and values that enable a people to sustain and overcome adversity.

Lt. Col. Patricia J. Hale, 439th LSS, introduced honored guests, including a contingent of former prisoners of war; Maj. Gen. Robert St. Onge, advisor to the assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs; Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Mike Walker, former wing commander; Chicopee Mayor Richard Kos; and Massachusetts Senators Linda Melconian and Michael Knapik.

CMSgt. Kathleen M. Wood, 439th AW, read a poem which recalled "when a flag had covered a coffin of a brother or a friend." A Ludlow firefighter played the bagpipes before the Westover Color Guard posted the Colors. TSgt. Sirita Day, Westover recruiter, sang the National Anthem.

Master of ceremonies Capt. Patrick S. Ryan, wing executive officer, spoke of why they were gathered on the solemn occasion. "On a morning that began like any other one year ago today the very fabric of our lives was irrevocably torn. Our values were under attack. Our beliefs were under siege," Ryan said.

"We are here to remember and to pay tribute. We are here to salute courage and sacrifice. To pay respect to those who went before us and to those who will come after," he said.

The ceremonies also celebrated the 55th anniversary of the United States Air Force. In honor of more than 600,000 men and women of the Air Force, the



photo by Lt. Col. Sally Nutt Morger

ONE YEAR LATER - Hundreds of military and civilian people gathered in the Fuel Cell Hangar at Westover on Sept. 11 to honor the nation's heroes in the war on terrorism.

Continued on page 9

Demobilization under way in September

by Lt. Col. Sally Nutt Morger
and USAF sources

While many of Westover's activated reservists prepared for demobilization through the month of September, 128 members of the 439th Security Forces Squadron buckled down for a second year of active duty. They were among 14,000 Guard and reserve members across the United States who are filling the manpower shortage in the Air Force.

Nationwide, nearly 67 percent of the reserve component members who are having their tours extended are filling security forces requirements. With 12 new bases in central Asia and a new mission of homeland defense, the Air Force has not been able to meet the increased security requirements from within the active duty force. It says continued support of Guard and Reserve is crucial to protecting the force.

Extensions could last up to an additional 12 months, but Air Force leaders plan to keep people mobilized just long enough for the active force to realign manpower so that requirements created by the war against terror can be supported in a more predictable steady-state proc-

ess. Ideas being examined to realign people resources include handing over certain jobs in the active force to civilians and civilian contractors, similar to what happened within the Air Force Reserve over the past two years.

The security forces extended at Westover make up the entire 439th Security Forces Squadron. Many of them have deployed around the world since Sept. 11 to such places as Pakistan, Oman, Germany, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Nine of them were scheduled to retire last Oct. 31, and though Stop Loss has been lifted from all career fields to include security forces, reservists on mobilization orders may not retire or separate until they are deactivated.

Elsewhere on Westover, over 50 people filling support type functions such as personnel, medical, legal and communications who were activated months after Sept. 11, could remain on active duty until the end of their year-long orders. But things can change, says CMSgt Tammy H. Vezina of the 439th Military Personnel Flight. "The rumors are thick and fast. Until you hear official word, don't pay much heed."

Air Force extends per diem entitlement for reservists

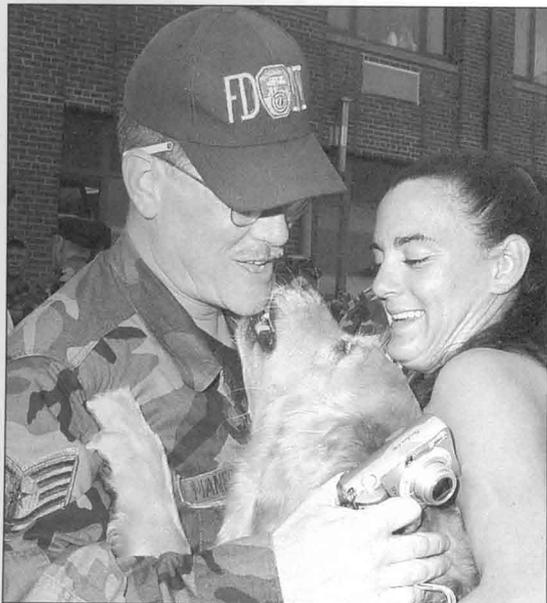
WASHINGTON — Reservists in the Air Force Reserve Command called to active duty in support of Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom may now receive per diem for up to 730 days at one location.

Michael L. Dominguez, assistant secretary of the Air Force for manpower and reserve affairs, signed a waiver Aug. 21 extending his original entitlement waiver for the payment of per diem from one year up to two years. His initial waiver of Sept. 22, 2001, had authorized per diem entitlements for members up to 365 days at one location.

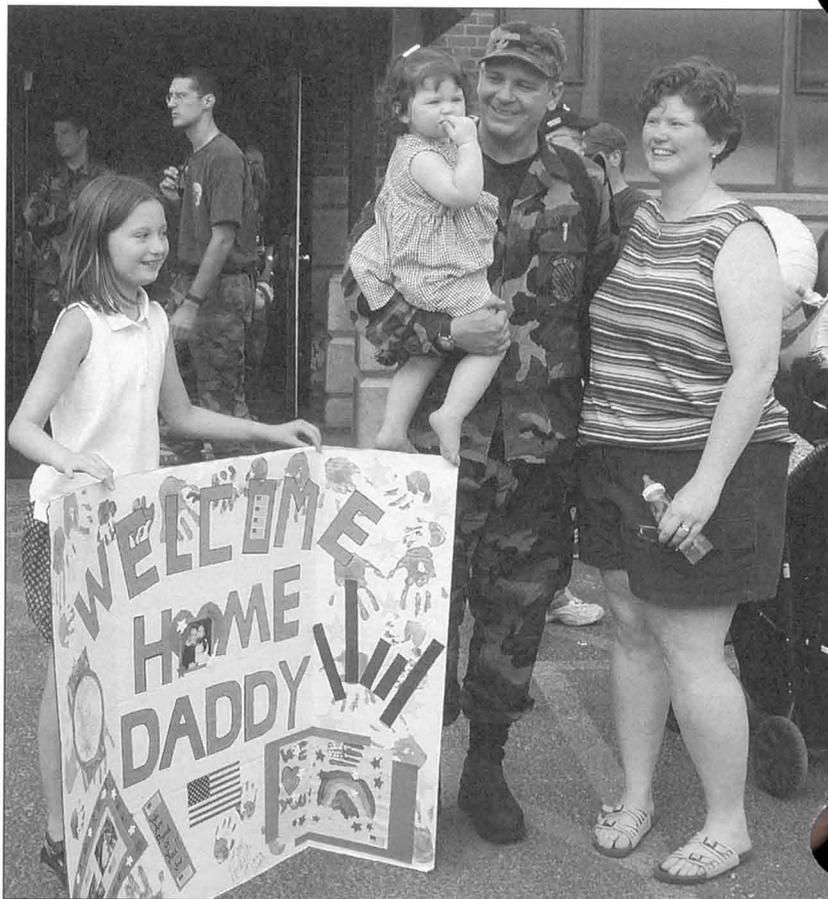
According to officials in the Office of the Air Force Reserve's Directorate of Personnel, per diem entitlements under this authority are not taxable and cannot be arbitrarily reduced. Per diem is not payable to people in a commuting status.

Headquarters Air Force will issue an official message providing administrative information concerning this entitlement.

(AFRC News Service)



BACK IN THE U.S.A. — Clockwise from above: TSgt. Frank A. Manegio, 439th MXS, greets his golden retriever, Brandy, who edged out Manegio's fiancée, Katie, by a nose to welcome him first; TSgt. Andrew A. Booker, 439th AGS, and his wife, Michelle, celebrate his return with daughters Katherine and Kristen; TSgt. Michael S. Laffond, 439th AGS, is all smiles with his family; CMSgt. Joseph R. Strouse, 439th AGS, and TSgt. Scott A. Tracey, 42nd APS, are welcomed home by Col. Martin M. Mazick, 439th AW commander, and CMSgt. Jeffrey B. Sherwin, 439th AW command chief master sergeant.



Last maintenance deployers return from rotational tours

The last groups of maintenance personnel returned to Westover on Aug. 16 and 19 after serving tours at Rhein-Main AB, Germany, and in the Arabian Peninsula. Most of the returning men and women were with the 439th AGS and MXS, and were deployed for three months to service C-5s passing through Europe.

Reservists' families eagerly awaited their arrival while coffee, doughnuts and other refreshments were prepared for the welcome. The 439th Airlift Wing — kept busy with constant activations and rotational tours — now faces scheduled demobilizations of more than 1,000 reservists this fall.

- photos by SSgt. Andrew S. Biscoe





ALL TUCKERED OUT — TSgt. Don Durand (left), cuddles his napping 11-month-old daughter Olivia during the family picnic on Sept. 7, while, below, a family tries the “ski-walk” to prepare for a race.



HOPPING GOOD TIME — Six-year-old Allie Pope has fun jumping in the sack race in the photo above, while another young girl is mesmerized by floating balloons in the photo at lower right.



“SERVING” HIS COUNTRY — Lt. Col. Joel S. Bogner, 439th AMDS flight surgeon, (left) serves a volleyball during the tournament his team won.

Wing picnic

photos by SRA. Tom Ouellette

“Fun” was the word of the day on Sept. 7 as the wing hosted a family picnic — in sharp contrast to what most families endured as loved ones served their country this past year during the war on terrorism.

“This is a great opportunity to say ‘thank you’ to all of the wing’s members and especially to their families,” said Col. Martin M. Mazick, 439th Airlift Wing commander. “Without the support of family, friends and spouses, we couldn’t do our jobs.”





LOADING UP — Members of the 42nd Aerial Port Squadron take part in a load preparation and inspection during their 90-day deployment supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

-Courtesy photo

The price of our oath and the dividends of our service

EDITORS NOTE: *Members of Westover's 42nd Aerial Port Squadron, and units from six other bases, deployed to serve in an Expeditionary Air Mobility Squadron in the Middle East. Thousands of miles from home, SMSgt. Steven D. MacKay, NCOIC Aircraft Services, narrates the essence of "service before self" through conversations heard during a long, pre-dawn bus ride to their duty station.*

We leave our quarters and talk of the things that we miss and love in our lives.

TSgt Bob Roberts' (42nd APS, aircraft services journeymen) daughter is sick and the infrequent and sketchy news he receives doesn't provide him reassurance. MSgt. Miguel Colon, load planner with the 42nd APS, and SMSgt. George Edwards (from another base) speak of their daughters. They talk of their daughters' birthdays and their sweet sixteen parties. They tell of the plans and the preparation for this event in their daughter's lives. It only comes once in a lifetime for a young girl and their fathers will be here. The girls say they understand and they grudgingly accept the cost of their father's service because they know its value to our country. The talk of birthdays missed is a common conversation.

People describe their children and family members with love and admiration. Their ages range from two to forty. TSgt. Dan Breckenridge's (42nd APS, aircraft services journeymen) wife is having her 40th birthday. He is looking forward to his morale call so he can tease his wife with, "Lordy, lordy, Nancy's forty." He had planned to have all this fun at his family reunion that he'll miss.

My family seems to have the month of July covered for birthdays, with my father's, wife's and daughter's birthday one week after another in July. I jokingly talk about the proverbial drain on the old checkbook. SSgt.

Morris Moore (from another base) is celebrating his own birthday. He turns fifty here in the desert. What a milestone in your life, to miss being with your family.

TSgt. Tom Wilk, 42nd APS aircraft services journeymen, tells of his family. His boys celebrate their birthdays. His oldest son attended his first day of kindergarten. His anniversary has come and gone as well.

We usually follow birthdays missed with talk of missed anniversaries. We remember that we must send that card in plenty of time to arrive for the big days. Most of our team are married or have significant others who understand. We'll make up the time and the event when we return home. Some newlyweds haven't even been able to celebrate an anniversary. TSgt. Rich Barklow and SrA. Dave Demers, both 42nd APS passenger services journeymen, married their wives less than one week before they received our activation notice. Some honeymoon, staring at a mug like mine, instead of their bride's.

As we talk, SSgt. John Fashing (from another base) is rather quiet. We ask what is on his mind. He says he is trying to consider how he will manage. He has served here for four months. When he returns home, he will have only thirty days to visit with his wife and reconnect their relationship. He has to pack his house, prepare his personal effects and pack his bag again to serve a one-year remote assignment in Korea immediately following his time here. You have to wonder how his wife completes the calculation. In 24 months they will be separated for 16.

Death is a foe that follows us no matter where we go. SSgt. Crystal Gill (from another base) has lost an aunt and can't be there for the funeral. An old face has rejoined us this morning. Our brother-in-arms, TSgt. John Drobnicki (from another base) has returned from his emergency leave.

John's dad passed away while he was here. He heard the bad news on his dad's birthday, which happened to be the day after his own birthday. By the time he made it home, the funeral was already over.

Our friend, TSgt. Mike Walbridge, 42nd APS special handling journeymen, talks of his grandmother and her passing. He decided to remain here and serve with his team. He speaks warmly of her. She sounds like all of our grandmothers and reminds us how much we miss them.

Lost in thought is TSgt. Lewis Garrett, 42nd APS aircraft services journeymen. He has a very unique set of circumstances to ponder. His wife is managing the sale of their home and the purchase of their new home by herself. She has maneuvered the lawyers and administrative nightmares and the monumental stress that comes with such a major life event. She tells Lew that all is fine; her pregnancy is going well and that the baby is fine.

Then the quietest of all of us reminds us why we are here. His name is TSgt. Fred Williams, 42nd APS passenger services journeymen, and he is a United Airlines flight attendant. He is a retired police sergeant enjoying a second career with the airlines. He was in the air on Sept. 11. He speaks of the dear friends he lost on Flight 93 which crashed in a Pennsylvania field after the passengers fought back against the terrorists. He is a soft-spoken person who is generally jovial. But his tone speaks of our country's sorrow and for lost friends, but also a quiet and unwavering determination for our mission. He reminds us that the core of our country is unshaken. We all are reminded why we are here.

The conversations come to a close as we arrive at our destination.

It is sunrise; the men and women of the our composite unit resolutely assume their posts.

AFRC Command Chief Master Sgt. Cheryl Adams visits

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

The busiest person on base during the September A UTA was CMSgt. Cheryl Adams, Command Chief Master Sergeant for Air Force Reserve Command, who tried to be everywhere, meeting everyone with a smile, handshake, and a thank-you.

Because you learn by doing, the AFRC enlisted advisor to the commander left her office at Robins AFB, Ga., flew here for the UTA and crammed as many experiences as possible into the weekend tour. She was here for a two-way dialogue with those who wear stripes in the Patriot Wing.

Her mission kept her moving from breakfast with the wing chiefs to commanders calls, Wing Family Day picnic, tours of the flight line, maintenance hangars and the clinic, and countless impromptu exchanges with members of the Westover family.

During her first trip to New England, the native of St. Louis, Mo. found time to keep up a running joke about Westover's Patriot logo and the "painful" reminder of her Rams' Superbowl defeat by New Englanders. At the end of her visit, Adams received a memento photo of herself in front of a Patriot logo.

On a more serious note, she fielded numerous questions ranging from Tricare family health coverage, to employer support, to forecasts for the war on terrorism.

"An open forum with E-4s and below was planned for an hour. People spoke their minds. There were so many good questions it went 15 minutes over schedule," said CMSgt. Jeffrey B. Sherwin, 439th AW Command Chief Master Sergeant.

"Her point of view is that if it is a local question, she asks local leadership to work it out. If she hears the same issue at a lot of units she visits, she goes to the AFRC command and asks them to look at it," Sherwin said.

Adams said she came to Westover aware of how much the wing has contributed to the war on terrorism, but was still impressed by the "Minuteman spirit."

"I wanted to get to see the folks who were part of the missions of the past year, those who deployed and those who supported them. I'm very impressed by the people and most of all the pride they take in their accomplishments. It's evident in everything, it really is," the command chief master sergeant said.

"People stepped up, ready to talk about what they did and they know why they are here. And they love doing it," she said.

During the Wing Family Day picnic Adams visited security forces who were on duty while others were having fun.

"They had a sense of duty. They were sharp on post. I never heard complaints about missing the picnic. They are the folks in the critical AFSC going into their second year. They talked of their civilian jobs, but they're also ready to do their duty. They know this is where they are needed. You can tell," she said. "You can pick out anyone in any AFSC. Across the board, I found excellence."

A reservist since 1977, Adams served as facility nursing superintendent at Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. As a civilian she is an ordained minister. Since becoming AFRC chief master sergeant in February, 2001 she has frequently been on the road visiting units during UTAs.

Adams left Westover with a salute to the Patriot Wing's NCO corps. "I saw very strong enlisted leadership. I am very impressed by that," she said.



— photo by MSgt. W.C. Pope

CHIEF STARS — AFRC's Command CMSgt. Cheryl Adams, and the 439th Airlift Wing's Command CMSgt. Jeffrey B. Sherwin, applaud promotees and award winners at the commander's call held in the Base Hangar on Sept. 7.

"Town hall" meeting airs AF issues

Concerns about family health care, training and activations for the war on terrorism were on the table when a Pentagon advisor for reserve affairs invited all Westover reservists to an informal "town hall" meeting in the wing conference center in September.

Army Maj. Gen. Robert St. Onge, advisor to the assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, was introduced by Col. Martin M. Mazick, wing commander.

"You are the kind of Americans that step up to the plate and take on something bigger than yourselves. You've done it with tremendous spirit and confidence. The nation appreciates you. The Department of Defense holds you in tremendous high regard," St. Onge said.

He said he came here to listen and learn, to offer what information he could and to take back to the Pentagon the input of the Patriot Wing.

"We're moving in the right direction," St. Onge said of ongoing Pentagon efforts to improve Tricare health coverage for families of activated reservists who have concerns about transition and other issues.

The burden on reservists of lengthy military schools is under review, he said. Possible options include schools in two-week increments, giving credit for civilian training, focusing training on segments of a course that are needed and greater investment in distance learning.

St. Onge addressed a question about future activations in the war on terrorism. He said he has no crystal ball on the response to the threat of Iraq, but advised that the war on terrorism may be a long campaign. The national leadership is committed to a "prudent and judicious use of reservists" in the context of that campaign, he said.

In conclusion he said, "Thank you for being in uniform..."

"Be proud of yourselves. Be proud of your service. And look out for each other.... We honor you. We honor your service. Our prayers are for those still doing service."

Anti-terrorism chief to compete in Ironman championship

by SrA. Tom Ouellette

Winning a lottery is generally considered a sign of good luck. Yet, when the prize involves spending 12-15 hours of continuous running, swimming and cycling over difficult terrain under a brutal, hot sun, many wouldn't feel so fortunate.

But a Westover reservist, a winner of such a lottery, said he couldn't be happier.

Maj. Elliot H. Graves, assigned to the 439th Security Forces Squadron as chief of anti-terrorism, will compete as a member of the Air Force team in the Ironman Triathlon World Championship, the world's most prominent Ironman competition, on Oct. 19 in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii.

An Ironman competition involves swimming 2.4 miles, biking 112 miles and a marathon-distance run of 26.2 miles.

"What separates this Ironman competition from others is the difficult conditions. The biking involves going through mountainous and windy terrain," Graves said. "Some cyclists were literally blown over guardrails last year

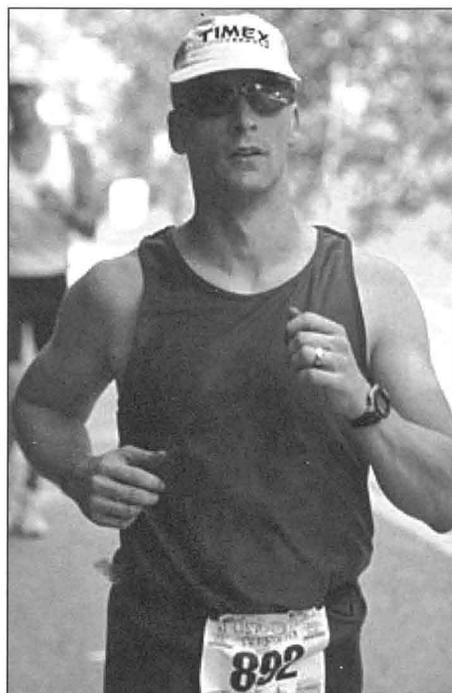
by gusts of wind. And even in October, it is very hot in Hawaii, which makes running more challenging."

He explained that due to the event's prestige and popularity amongst Ironman competitors, organizers limit the field to only 1,500 athletes. However, the original founder of the competition specified that any athlete, not just the elite, should be able to participate. As a result, organizers set aside 1,200 of the 1,500 slots to qualifiers, leaving 300 slots available to anyone via a lottery system.

Every military branch sends a contingent and is guaranteed at least seven slots, five for males and two for females. Three male Air Force members qualified and two, one being Graves, won by lottery, he said.

The 33-year-old Graves said he has been competing in Ironman competitions for four years and his best time is 13 hours, 12 minutes. He trains 18-20 hours a week and plans on improving his best time by at least one hour.

"This is the Super Bowl of triathlons. Every triathlete wishes to compete in this event. It's a once in a lifetime chance and I'm very excited and happy to be going," Graves said.



Courtesy photo

MARATHON MAN — Maj. Elliot H. Graves competes in the Timberman Triathlon held near Lake Winnepesaukee, N.H., in August.

Maintainers keep 'em flying with one more wartime "first"

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

Since September 11, every day brings new challenges as the war on terrorism pushes aircraft and airmen to maintain the stepped-up tempo of worldwide operations. Westover maintenance members, who have been on the front lines of the wartime effort since the first day, passed a milestone in July with a first-time engine pylon change here.

The 337th Airlift Wing has been flying C-5s since 1987, but this was the first time that maintenance teams were called on to do the complex job of replacing an engine pylon at Westover.

TSgt. John A. Evelyn, 439th AGS aerospace maintenance specialist, first tagged the pylon as defective when he spotted a crack in the number four engine pylon during routine maintenance inspection.

Pylons have been replaced in the past during extensive depot inspections conducted periodically at Robins AFB, Ga. But it was the first time a defective pylon was spotted and the decision made to replace it at Westover.

A pylon is attached to the wing with only three bolts and three back-up bolts, but it is a far more complicated piece of equipment



THE MIGHTY PYLON — Maintainers move an engine pylon into place to start the complex job of the first-ever C-5 pylon replacement performed at Westover.

—photo by SSgt. Andrew S. Biscoe

than it appears. Each of the six C-5 pylons is loaded with hydraulics, electric cables, fuel lines, a bleed air system and more. Disassembling all the components to remove a defective pylon and replacing it with a new one can be compared to doing surgery.

To do the job, a team of five troubleshooting crew chiefs, hydraulics specialists and electricians from the active duty 622nd Combat Logistics Support Squadron, Robins AFB, drove here with a new pylon on a flatbed truck. MSgt. John M. Manna was team chief. The maintenance specialists were TSgt. Herman B. McDaniel, TSgt. Lawrence D. Craven, SSgt. Steven Markowski and SSgt. Alex W. Murray.

Col. Charles A. Brown, 439th Logistics Group commander, rated the C-5 engine pylon change as one more milestone in a long series for maintainers who have been doing everything that could be asked of them and more since the first days of the war on terrorism.

"Westover maintainers have distinguished themselves in rising to the challenge of a two and a half times increase in flying since Sept. 11 while maintaining substantial overseas deployments. The wing has been successful in keeping cargo and troops moving in support of the war on terrorism because every logistics member is giving 110 percent," the group commander said.

Security forces member devotes leave to military camp

by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

SSgt. Chris S. Dion stood at attention in a familiar atmosphere this past summer. This time, it wasn't his own basic training experience, but the Westover security forces member was grooming a new generation.

Dion volunteered a week of his leave as a leadership instructor at Camp Leadership Challenge in Westminster, Vt., for 22 kids, ages 13 to 17. Besides military drill movements, Dion taught infantry training in the woods during night missions, first aid, a ropes course, and how to cross a simulated minefield. A local Vermont sheriff's department runs Camp Leadership Challenge, while Vermont law enforcement and military units sponsor the campers.

Dion said the camp taught the students to learn from their mistakes and failures, and to accept responsibility for their actions. "We show them facing

movements and teach them how to march. We put the students in leadership positions," Dion said. Like the military, a chain of command was established on the first day of camp. "It was changed daily to allow all students to hold a major leadership role and learn the lessons from that role," he said.

Dion was with the Vermont National Guard's Company B, Second Battalion, 172nd Armor, before joining the Air Force Reserve last year. Dion was called to active duty shortly after he arrived at Westover following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, but still volunteered at the camp for the fourth consecutive year.

SSgt. Reuben Ouellette, also with



Dion

the Vermont National Guard, was the camp NCOIC. He praised Dion for his professionalism and dedication. "He works really well with young people," Ouellette said. "He instilled leadership and pride in the kids, and he was with the kids 90 percent of the time, even during his down time."

Dion said the camp is a vehicle for him to reach out to young people. "I enjoy the training aspect of it. It gives them a sense of discipline and order. I think that's missing in today's world."

Ouellette said he looks forward to working with Dion again. "I definitely will be asking him to return next summer," he said.

Dion knows that kids face a lot of pressures as teenagers. "Your average kid is facing peer pressure. We're the role models and the support system for them," he said. "We let them lead and learn how to lead. It's entirely their show during graduation."

September 11 commemoration... from page 3

Air Force Song was sung as Col. Martin M. Mazick, wing commander, and AB Jeffrey S. Burgess, 439th SFS, Westover's newest airman, cut an anniversary cake with the Air Force Academy sword of Maj. Michael J. Barden, 439th LSS.

The wing commander offered "heartfelt appreciation to the men and women of the 439th" as he noted the wing has flown almost 8,000 hours on missions to six of the seven continents in support of the war on terrorism.

He thanked the volunteers of the USO, American Legion, Galaxy Community Council, school groups and all the others of the community who have stood with the wing since Sept. 11. "I assure you it made a difference to our families and to us," he said.

A memorial tribute on the dais included four black curtains symbolizing the four undamaged walls of the Pentagon and two spotlights represented the Twin Towers.

A small Table of Honor held a variety of symbols recognizing POWs and those who have fallen. Among them, as explained by 2nd Lt. Jason E. Rose, EOD, were service hats and a

civilian cap symbolizing everyone who has served in all conflicts, a slice of lemon reminding us of the bitter fate of POWs, and salt which represents the tears of their families.

Keynote speaker Maj. Gen. Edward Mechenbier of Air Force Materiel Command, who survived six years as a prisoner of war in Hanoi, North Vietnam, said those who came forward after Sept. 11 averted further calamity. "Their continued efforts today make the country and world secure..."

"We need a strong military to preserve freedom, our way of life and to protect us from those who would deny us the inalienable rights our forefathers came to this country for.

"This day, let us recall the victories, provide comfort to families and resolve to go forward to make America better and safer," he said.

Mechenbier concluded that the fourth verse of the Star Spangled Banner applies as much today as on the hot summer night Francis Scott Key penned it, "because truly we are the land of the free and the home of the brave."



photo by MSgt. Mike Degiule

IN HONOR — TSgt. Steven Langevin, Westover Honor Guard, stands at ceremonial at ease during the Sept. 11 events.

Legion re-introduces Blue Star Service Banner to honor military

by SrA. Tom Ouellette

The American Legion, in an effort to stimulate American pride and to honor sacrifices of military personnel following the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, has re-introduced the Blue Star Service Banner.

The banner, also called the Service Flag, is an 8-by-16-inch white field with a blue star sewn onto a red background for each family member serving in the military during times of conflict. A banner can have up to five stars, signifying that five members of that family are currently on active duty. Gold stars replace blue stars for those died in service. For banners displaying many stars, the gold star (s) takes the place of honor nearest the staff.

The banner was instituted in 1917 when World War I Army Capt. Robert L. Queiss-



photo by SrA. Tom R. Ouellette

MILITARY PRIDE — MSgt. Thomas J. Roe, superintendent of Westover's Honor Guard, displays the Blue Star Service Banner.

ner of the 5th Ohio Infantry had two sons serving on the front lines. He created and patented the banner and it quickly became the unofficial symbol of a child in service.

During World War II, the Department of War issued specifications concerning the design of the banner, as well as when and who could display the service flag.

Today, the Blue Star Service Banner can represent any family member serving in the armed forces, including members of the National Guard or Reserves.

To obtain a banner, or receive more information, contact the American Legion at www.legion.org.

Information for this article was obtained from <http://www.legion.org/downloads/bluebannerfact.htm>.

Reservists may soon drive with 'United We Stand' license plates

Massachusetts reservists may soon have another way to show pride in defending their country.

A proposal creating new, special license plates designed to promote patriotism and benefit anti-terrorism efforts has

been presented before the state legislature. The red, white and blue plates, available to all state motorists, feature a minuteman standing before the American flag with the words "United We Stand" in bold letters across the bottom.

Proceeds from the sale of the \$30 plates will benefit the Rewards for Justice Fund, a federal program that uses reward payments to turn terrorist sympathizers into terrorist informants, and will also benefit the Massachusetts's Office of Commonwealth Security, the state's anti-

terrorism response network.

Rep. Joseph F. Wagner (D-Chicopee), is one of three state congressmen sponsoring the legislation creating the new plates.

Kim Haberlin, an aide to Wagner's office, said the legislation for the plates was introduced in early June. She expects the bill to pass.

All specialty plates can be ordered from the Registry of Motor Vehicles via the Internet at www.state.ma.us/rmv.

Contractor pulls Cold War relic to ground as hundreds watch

by SSgt. Andrew S. Biscoe

A looming orange sunrise framed the demolition of a Cold War relic at Westover on July 30.

While a demolition crew carefully removed its foundation, the base's 40-year-old control tower still seemed defiant to the end. First, crews took cutting torches to the tower's foundation and severed its beams. Then, five giant earthmovers tugged on large cables, and the 104-foot tower jumped several feet and stood on its own for several seconds as cameras rolled. It then toppled on its own weight into a heap of debris and dust. Hundreds of people lined the Westover flight line at 6:30 a.m. to watch the last day of a landmark from the Cold War era.

During Westover's heyday in the 1950s and 1960s, the base bustled with Air Force flying activities. Air traffic controllers guided thousands of military aircraft landing and departing. The tower was completed in June 1962 at a cost of \$177,000. SAC immediately put the tower controllers to work in the new building. By year's end, controllers had guided more than 87,000 landings and departures at the base.

Carl F. Limberg, a veteran Westover air controller, was a military controller during some of the most tense days of the Cold War. Besides the B-52s, Westover housed KC-135 and KC-97 tankers, which flew around-the-clock missions. In those days, it was common for flying to take place at all hours of the day and night, Limberg said.

"We'd be guiding B-52s around the pattern at 2 a.m.," he said,

adding that while the tower was new, the Air Force had packed it full of 1960s state-of-the-art equipment — with little room left for the controllers.

"We were just jammed in up there," said Limberg, who is now a Department of Defense controller at Westover. His boss, Ron J. Bainbridge, worked the old tower for three years. While he felt a bit sentimental about the building's demise, Bainbridge knew its demolition was necessary.

"It was time for the new tower. The old one was cold in the winter, and too warm in the summer," he said. "The equipment was vintage 1963. Equipment was breaking down and parts were difficult to get."

While the tower's demolition might have seemed to illustrate the passing of an era, Bainbridge was happy to see things move along. "I suppose I felt a twinge of remorse, but it didn't last very long," he said, as he recalled driving on to the base and catching a different sight on the flight line. "It seemed very strange to only see the new tower," he said.

While the new tower includes an elevator, the controllers didn't have that luxury in the old one. "There were 147 steps to climb each time you came to work," Bainbridge said. The controllers' office was on the second floor of the nine-story tower; the bathroom was at the bottom.

The new 10-story, \$4.1 million tower rises 123 feet above the airfield. It began operations in April. The pull-through hangar, built in 1990, had blocked the view of some parts of the airfield from the controllers in the old tower. Controllers can now see 100 percent of the airfield. An elevator ferries them to the top each day, where they are surrounded by 21st century air traffic control equipment.

Patriot People

Name: Karen M. Hutchinson
Rank: SSgt.
Age: 27
Address: Rome, N.Y.
Unit: 439th ASTS
Position: Health services management technician
Civilian position: Graphic designer
Favorite food: Lasagna
Years of service: Six
Favorite sport: Basketball
Favorite hobby: Reading
Ideal vacation: Key West
Best way to relax: Listening to music
Preferred entertainment: Reading
Favorite hero: Grandma
Favorite music: Classic rock
Favorite movie: Stigmada
Favorite aircraft: C-130
Pet peeve: Dirty dishes
What I would do if I won \$1 million: Put all my nephews in private schools and pay for their education

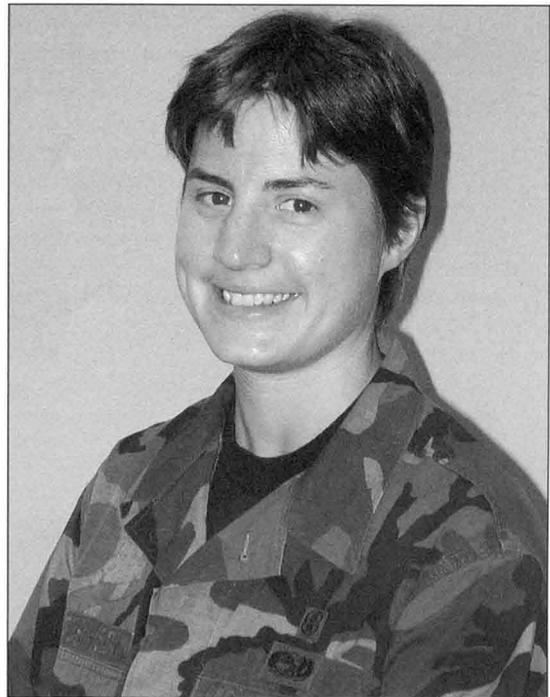


photo by TSgt. Andrew V. Reitano

SSgt. Karen M. Hutchinson

Patriot Praises

Assignments:

SSgt. Blake, Kevin R.
 SSgt. Brazee, Lloyd W.
 SSgt. Peach, Douglas W.
 SSgt. Risley, Donald E.
 SSgt. Sherman, Stephen E.
 SSgt. Susty, Ian M.
 SSgt. Watson, Kenneth L.
 SrA. Ayusorivera, Carlos A.
 SrA. Branco, Anthony D.
 SrA. Cruz, Moises A.
 SrA. Gladding, Kenneth W.
 SrA. Goodfellow, David E.
 SrA. Kirkman, Alvin S., Jr.
 SrA. Lucas, John S.
 SrA. Praga, Albert D., III
 SrA. Rogers, Timothy M.
 A1C Clark-Doyle, Samantha D.
 A1C Crane, Crystal R.
 A1C Gordon, Aishea N.
 A1C Graves, Michael L.
 A1C Hammack, Cassandra C.
 A1C Hassan, Ahmed N.
 A1C Herpin, Eric V.
 A1C Kerbein, Patrick A.
 A1C King, Krystal Lynn
 A1C Louis, Audrey N.
 A1C Phul, Seyla
 A1C Monge, Jorge A.
 A1C Provost, Heather A.
 A1C Rosado, Erika V.
 A1C Solitario, Robert G.
 A1C Stanley, Turkquoise S.
 A1C Tran, Jenny N.
 A1C Zambrano, Carlos D.
 Knight, Danielle Leona N.

Newly Assigned:

Lt. Col. McGregor, Udo K.
 SSgt. Blake, Ryan A.

A1C Rodriguez, Angel J.

Promotions:

SMSgt. Colucci, Anthony C.
 MSgt. Carter, Thadius A.
 MSgt. Daigneault, Scott C.
 MSgt. Penna, Michael N.
 TSgt. Christopher, Shawne J.
 TSgt. Dybski, Dawid D.
 TSgt. Fedrick, Michael R.
 TSgt. Foley, Paul M.
 TSgt. Green, Jeffrey A.
 TSgt. Savoie, Craig A.
 TSgt. Theriault, Andre R.
 TSgt. Wilson, Eric M.
 SSgt. Duval, Rebecca J.
 SSgt. Hamm William V.
 SrA. Foss, Jason W.
 SrA. Gentilotti, Brian
 SrA. Moloney, Kevin J.
 SrA. Pisani, Nathan
 SrA. Rodriguez, Angel J.
 SrA. Santiago, Ivette
 SrA. Tenebro, Kenneth L.
 SrA. Wentworth, Kenneth W.
 A1C Cabral, Erin M.
 A1C Ellis, Lateef S.
 A1C Say, David G.
 Amn. Kellam, Rashon Tairek
 Amn. Talamanco, Lyndella M.

Retired:

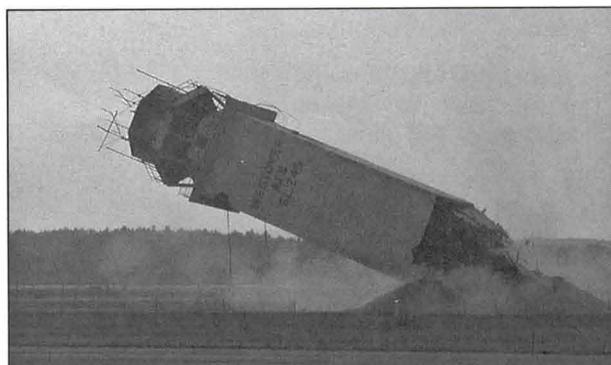
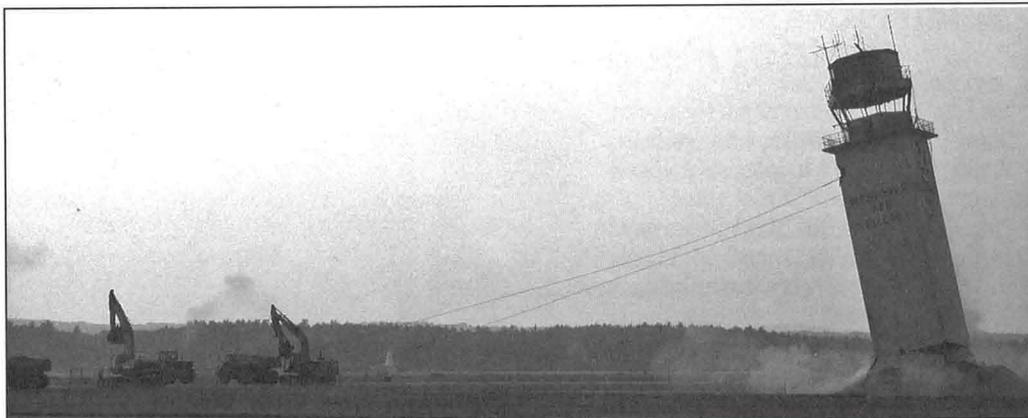
CMSgt. Boidleau, Raymond V.
 SMSgt. Szmurlo, Charles M.
 MSgt. Connolly, George F., Jr.
 MSgt. Manley, Robert R.
 MSgt. White, Nathaniel
 TSgt. Charest, Richard J.
 TSgt. Deitz, Walter E.

Patriot Puns



Force Protection Tip of the Month Precautions at Airports:

- Arrive early: watch for suspicious activity.
 - Look for nervous passengers who maintain eye contact with others from a distance. Note behavior not consistent with that of others in the area.
 - No matter where you are in the terminal, identify objects suitable for cover in the event of an attack (example, pillars, trash cans, large planters); all may be able to provide some protection.
 - Do not linger near open public areas. Quickly transit insecure ticket counters, waiting rooms, commercial shops, and restaurants.
 - Be aware of unattended baggage anywhere in terminal.
 - Observe baggage claim area from a distance. Do not retrieve your bags until the crowd clears.
 - Report suspicious activity to airport security personnel.
- Force Protection Office, Ext. 3807, 3872**



Tower tumbles

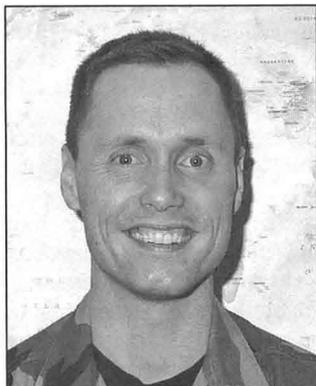
- photos by Nicole L. Lessard

DELICATE DEMOLITION — A local contractor's careful planning felled a Westover Cold War relic on July 30. Welders cut the beams at the foundation of the 104-foot, 40-year-old control tower, and heavy dump trucks and bulldozers strained at steel cables to pull it over at sunrise. A 10-story, state-of-the-art replacement tower became operational in April. See article on page 10.



PATRIOT

PATRIOT online: <http://www.afrc.af.mil/439aw>



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Published monthly for Patriots like TSgt. Mike J. Downs, from Woburn, Mass., and the 2,537 members of the 439th AW at Westover ARB, and geographically separated units.