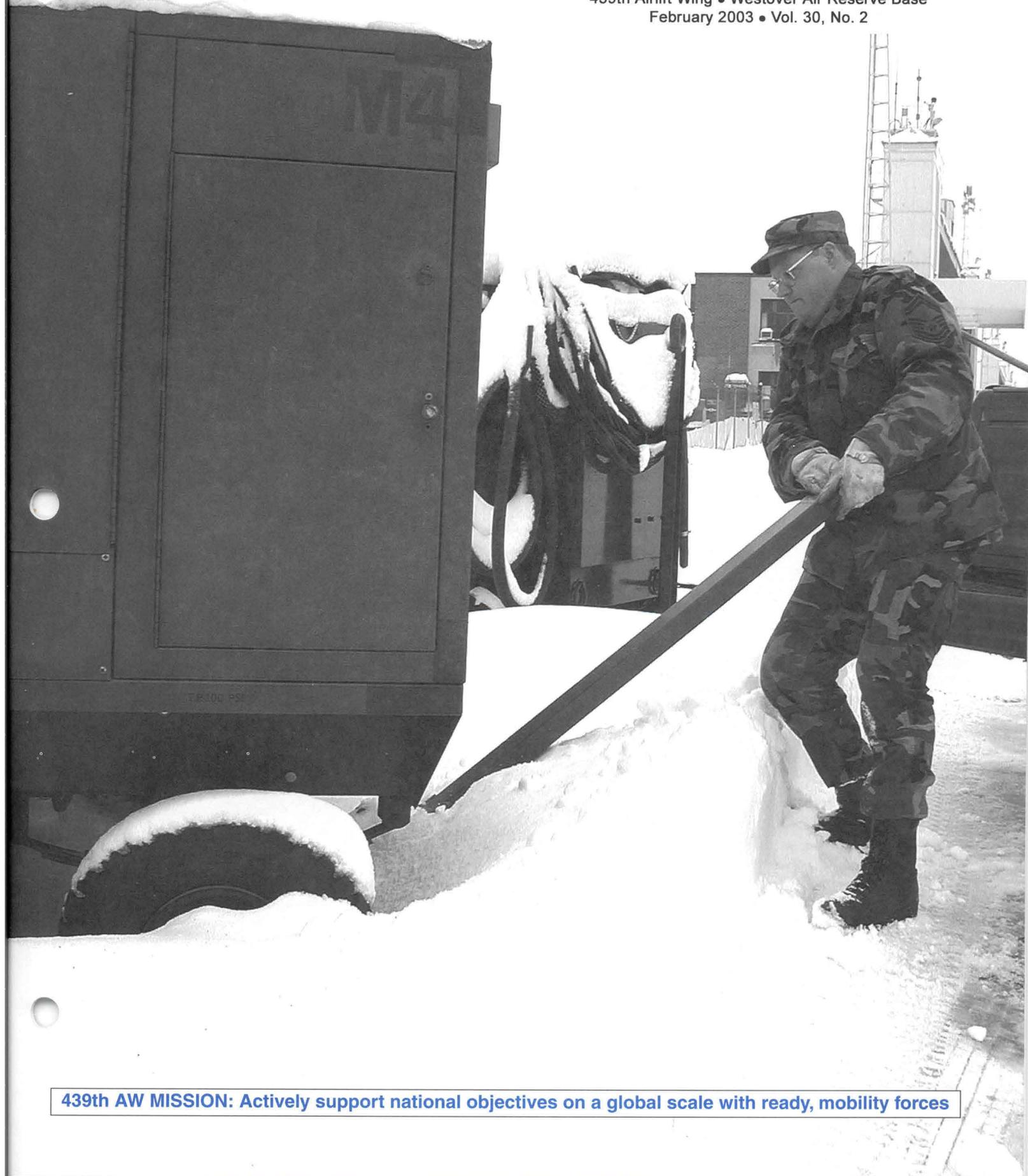


PATRIOT

439th Airlift Wing • Westover Air Reserve Base
February 2003 • Vol. 30, No. 2



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

Is mobilization in my future?

Wouldn't you like a definitive answer to this question so you can plan your life this year? Bottom line is we just do not know.

We have been issued a general alert order to be ready and there isn't a day that goes by when somewhere in the country there is a Reserve or Guard unit being called to active duty. While the president is using his full range of national power options in dealing with Iraq, the military option is certainly one our nation is preparing for.

So what can you do to prepare? Don't ignore that fact that it may be you that will be activated. Use your mobilization guide to prepare yourself and your family for a call-up and possible deployment. Our job is to report and be ready to deploy within 72 hours, so there is not a lot of time.

We have a wealth of help for you at your unit, the military personnel flight, family support or on-line. Public Affairs and the legal office can help you with employer issues and questions. We have a lot of resources available to help you be ready, but only you can prepare your family. Take the time now.

Thanks for all you do!

by Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick
439th Airlift Wing Commander



Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick

Military officers association offers \$1,000 scholarships

ROBINS AFB, Ga. - The Military Officers Association of America will give \$1,000 college scholarships at random to sons and daughters of military personnel, including reservists in Air Force Reserve Command. Deadline to complete the online application form is March 1.

Formerly known as The Retired Officers Association, the MOAA will honor 100 college-bound or current undergraduate students with individual \$1,000 scholarship grants for the 2003-2004 school year. Of the few eligibility requirements, applicants must be under the age of 24 and provide basic information such as their SAT score and college. If an applicant served in the military before attending college, the maximum age for eligibility will be increased by the number of service years, up to five years.

Membership in MOAA is not mandatory, and there is no GPA requirement to be selected. Semifinalists will be notified by e-mail in March and may be asked to provide more detailed information. The scholarships will be dispersed by late August.

For more information and to apply for MOAA's Base/Post Scholarship program, go to <http://www.moaa.org/Education/2003> (AFRC News Service)

February 2003

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SrA. Tom R. Ouellette
Administration
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Nicole L. Lessard

Briefs

First quarter award recipients announced

Westover's Quarterly Awards Board has selected the following first quarter award winners for the fiscal 2003.

Airman:

SrA. Wayne A. Baptiste, 439 SFS

NCO:

TSgt. Victor M. Fuentes Jr., 439 AMXS

Sr. NCO:

MSgt. Earl E. Duncan Jr., 439 AMXS

Company Grade Officer:

Capt. Rex H. Steves, 439 AMXS

Civilian:

Ronald Seymour, 439 MSS

Civilian Supervisor:

Charles T. Van Gorden, 439 CES

Marine squadron changes command

A change of command in the Marine Air Support Squadron-Six took place on Dec. 15 in the fuel cell hangar.

Lt. Col. Kevin C. Sawyer took over command of the squadron from Lt. Col. Rui M. Moura.

Two hundred Marines are assigned to the support squadron, which is one of the many tenant units of other armed services based at Westover.

Antiterrorism web site available to reservists

MSgt. Scott C. Daigneault, antiterrorism NCO for the 439th Security Forces Squadron, has prepared a web page with information that reservists may find helpful.

The address is <https://wwwmil.afrc.af.mil/439aw/msg/sfs/antiterrorism.htm>

Cover Photo

DIGGING OUT — SMSgt. Paul E. Beachell, 439th MXS, pulls a hydraulic test stand out of the snow near the flight line following the Jan. 4 Nor'easter. The storm dropped nearly a foot of snow on New England and forced the cancellation of half of the A UTA (see article and additional photos on page 3).

— photo by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe



photo by SMSgt. Sandi Michon

SIGNS OF WINTER — A Nor'easter storm dumped nearly a foot of snow on Westover January 3 and 4.

Storm blankets base; forces cancellation of half of January UTA

by SMSgt. Sandi Michon

A classic Nor'easter dumped nearly a foot of snow on the base Jan. 3 and 4 prompting Westover officials to cancel half of the January UTA.

Traveling reservists coped with up to two feet of snow with areas in New York and New Hampshire hit the hardest.

While reservists dug out of their homes on Saturday, Jan. 4, Westover was unusually quiet. Evergreen trees around the base seemed to bow in surrender under the heavy snow. The only sound was the muted whir of snow

plows clearing piles of snow from Westover's array of runways, ramps, roads and parking lots.

According to Westover meteorologist Robert W. Schwaber, the latest storm pushed the season's snow accumulation total to 36.6 inches — a quick jump on the 49-inch season average — and way above the 25.6-inch total from the previous winter season.

On Sunday, reservists resumed normal operation navigating around car-height snow banks. More snow was in the forecast for the following week.

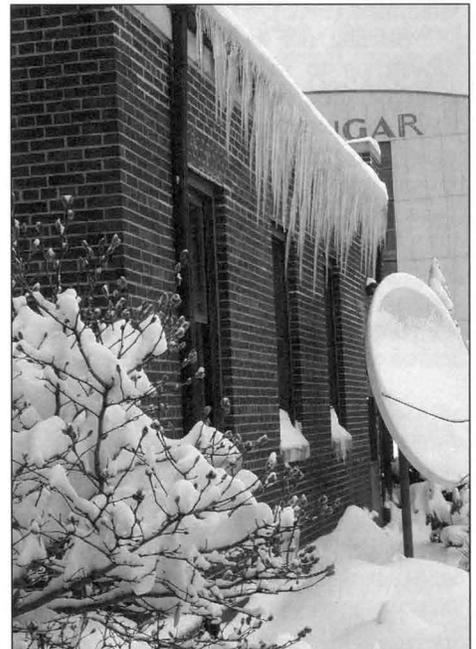


photo by SMSgt. Sandi Michon

MELTDOWN — Icicles added to the heavy snow cover in photo at right, and the first 2003 snow-storm really slowed things down at Westover during the January UTA (bottom right).



photo by SMSgt. Sandi Michon

STRIPES OVER SNOW — Looming snowfall frames the Stars and Stripes at the base ellipse.

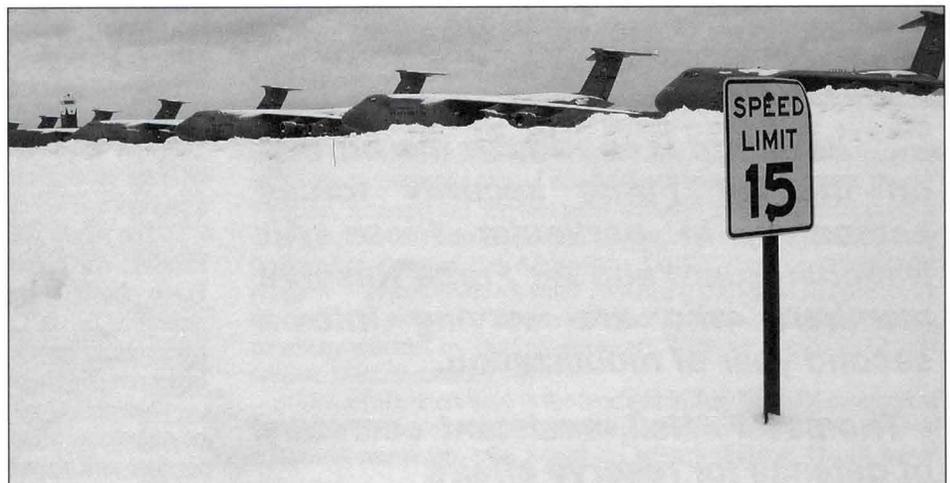


photo by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

Chief Boyer retires after 28 years at base fire department

by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

Westover's fire chief reported to his job for the last time on Jan. 3, after protecting base resources for 28 years.

Philip E. Boyer, 54, retired after serving in a variety of positions since June 1974. He first arrived at Westover just two months after the Air Force Reserve had taken control of the base from the Strategic Air Command (SAC).

Starting out as a firefighter, Boyer moved up to lead firefighter, assistant chief of fire prevention, and finally to chief six years ago. Having worked so many different areas, Boyer felt it was time to take a new direction in his life. "I have met all of my career goals," he said. "It's time for me to take on new challenges, and to spend more time with my family."

Boyer and his wife, Gayanne, both retired on Jan. 3. Gayanne worked at



Boyer

Westover for 21 years as a real property specialist in civil engineering.

"We plan to enjoy our next challenges in life together," Chief Boyer said. "I'm having mixed emotions about leaving. I'm leaving a career that is oriented around leadership and family. I'm leaving part of my family behind – the firefighters."

Boyer, who lives in Ludlow, plans on keeping tabs on Westover. He will also spend more time with his six grandchildren who live in East Longmeadow, Chicopee, Georgia and Texas.

The fire department plans a retirement party for Boyer on Jan. 31 at the Knights of Columbus in Chicopee.

AFRC picks assistant chief as best civilian fire officer

Westover's Assistant Fire Chief Charles T. Van Gorden is the best civilian fire officer in Air Force Reserve Command for 2002, officials recently announced.

Van Gorden, assigned to the fire department since May 1995, received his award from Col. David Sweat, AFRC civil engineer, during ceremonies in Kansas City, Mo., last year.

"Being told you're the 'best of the best' in Air Force Reserve is a pretty rewarding accomplishment," Van Gorden said. He credited the fire department staff's professionalism as the reason for his command-wide honor. "Without good people to supervise, I wouldn't



Van Gorden

have gotten this award in the first place," Van Gorden said.

Fire Chief Philip E. Boyer cited Van Gorden's leadership skills and accomplishments in his award package. Besides running the base 911 center, Van Gorden is the primary logistics officer and recently developed two software programs. He was a program facilitator for headquarters AFRC to replace the existing computer training program at the fire department.

Local recognition of Van Gorden's award took place in December when Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick, 439th AW commander, presented the award to Van Gorden during a commander's call for civilian employees.

Army National Guard soldiers to augment base security operations

by staff and AFRC News Service from a DOD news release

WASHINGTON – The Army National Guard is due to arrive at Westover in February to help protect the installation.

The Army Guard is scheduled to send a platoon-sized element to the base at the beginning of the month. That number could be about 50 soldiers, said Maj. Timothy S. Donnelly, acting commander of the 439th Security Forces Squadron. "Once they become familiar with our security operation and standards, they will be completely integrated into our base security," he said. Members of the 439th SFS have been activated since October 2001.

"Our intent is to reduce the burden on the Air Force security forces personnel, in particular those Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members who are serving into a second year of mobilization."

- Thomas F. Hall, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs

Mobilized Air Force Reserve Command security forces personnel may return home earlier than anticipated because of a memorandum of agreement signed by the Departments of the Air Force and Army.

Under the agreement, the Army will mobilize approximately 9,000 Army National Guard soldiers. Westover is one of 163 Air Force installations in the United States where the soldiers will augment security.

"We are leveraging all of our active and reserve assets, in the spirit of joint operations and inter-service cooperation," said Thomas F. Hall, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs. "Our intent is to reduce the burden on the Air Force security forces personnel, in particular those Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members who are serving into a second year of mobilization. We believe this is a prudent and judicious use of our reserve component forces."

The Army will augment security to enhance force protection at stateside Air Force installations for up to two years while the Air Force phases in permanent solutions to address its long-term force protection needs. Long-term solutions might include shifting military resources to stressed career fields, contracting security and making better use of technology, said Department of Defense officials.

National Guard soldiers mobilized for this mission can expect to be ordered to active duty for one year. Mobilization figures for both services will fluctuate in the upcoming months as the mobilization, transition and demobilizations occur.

2002 Stakeholders Report Executive Summary

by Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick
439th Airlift Wing commander

Mission:

The 439th Airlift Wing will actively support national objectives on a global scale with ready, mobility forces.

Stakeholders:

Priorities for 2002 were Readiness, Recruiting and Retention, One Standard, Quality of Life Improvement and Infrastructure Improvement. Stakeholders include: 439 AW members and their families, Westover tenant units, Griffin Services Inc, Galaxy Community Council, State of Massachusetts, 22nd Air Force (22AF), 21st Air Force (21AF), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Tanker Airlift Control Center, Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC), Air Mobility Command (AMC), Air Combat Command (ACC), United States Transportation Command, Air Force Material Command, United States Strategic Command, Air Force Space Command, United States Southern Command, Air Force Electronic Systems Command, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), United States Customs Service, Defense Accounting and Finance Services, Air National Guard, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and National Command Authorities.

Milestones:

The War on Terrorism continued to be our main focus for the new year as we had 1,047 mobilized reservists, including 116 deployed. Besides real world taskings, we continued with training and readiness missions. In January, the "mission ready" 42nd APS was the best aerial port seen by the AMC IG team when 52 members moved 315 tons of cargo during a three-day Readiness Inspection at Pope AFB, N.C. The Wing Plans office planned the mission, the 439th SFS provided security and the 42nd APS processed 780 National Guard soldiers, their weapons and luggage when they flew out of Westover to support security at the 2002 Olympic Games in Salt Lake City. At the request of HQ AFRC, 50 civil engineers transformed five former base houses at Dobbins ARB, Ga., into an Expeditionary Combat and Support Training and Certification Center to provide wartime training for more than 4,000 nationwide reservists. One of our LSS officers at the Pentagon helped streamline aircraft parts availability for Predator, Global Hawk, and B-52 aircraft flying in Southwest Asia, simultaneously briefing JCS members on the progress. A high point of the month was the announcement that the wing earned one of the most prestigious Air Force awards, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

In February, two PERSCO members performed 90-day tours supporting the continental US NORAD Region. They worked on daily strength reporting all the way up the chain of command to the President. In support of Operation Fundamental Justice, some of our SFS officers planned the movement of over 500 prisoners from Afghanistan to Cuba and served as mission commanders on multiple flights. Aircrew airlifted a 168,000-pound Navy mini-sub from Washington to Hawaii to support SEALs missions. Fourteen of our maintainers recently back from de-



photo by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

DADDY'S BOY — SSgt. Christopher W. Davis, 439th MXS, holds his son Derek in August 2002 shortly after Davis returned from a three-month overseas deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

ployments visited local schools to thank children and teachers for their many cards and letters.

In March, 60 aerial porters of the 58th APS deployed to support OEF, Northern and Southern Watch. On the home front, our congressional and AFR leaders joined the Westover family in unveiling "Let's Roll" tributary nose art on a C-5 Galaxy. Our PA staff once again garnered AFRC media contest honors, including several first place wins. For the second time in three years, the Wing, in April, was named Lt. Gen. Armstrong Award winner as outstanding Air Force Reserve wing in 21st AF. Two members of our chaplain team underwent two weeks of combat training. The chaplain earned the Warrior Spirit Award for exceptional leadership, attitude and overall performance. One AES radio operator was selected by HQ AFRC as an interpreter for the US Southcom Drug Interdiction Program, while another operator supported an exercise in Thailand, working with civilian contractors for a tele-medicine program. Developing relationships with local students, our recruiters innovatively promoted the Air Force Reserve and patri-

otic values as Junior Achievement volunteer instructors at two high schools.

In May, the Wing showed its true colors in a rare precedent as we successfully passed five major inspections in one month. When we earned top marks in a Unit Compliance Inspection, the AFRC IG team cited 29 superior performers and seven superior teams, the most ever seen. Our AMDS and ASTS medical people aced their Health Services Inspections, the most comprehensive of all medical inspections. The AFRC IG honored 14 individuals and two programs, and praised the performance of our flying squadron during an Aircrew Standardization/Evaluation visit. Meanwhile, our Air Traffic Standardization Evaluation Program was well received. The Wing also hosted Team Yankee, a joint medical field exercise in which 600 service members spotlighted all five echelons of military medical care, from the battlefield to evacuation. Our TALCE team deployed the first reserve ALCE members to ever support a European Command Joint Exercise aimed at increasing U.S. and NATO interoperability.

To foster community support through education, the wing commander flew 42 civic leaders to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio in June on a C-5 for an overnight tour of this hallmark base which houses the AF Museum. A six-person Services team deployed to Kuwait to support the dining facility, recreation center and lodging. A seven-member AES team deployed to Pakistan and Afghanistan for 100 days, operating under primitive wartime conditions while performing command and control for evacuation of patients to Europe and other locations. In a ribbon cutting ceremony attended by local congressman, Westover opened its new \$4 million, 10-story control tower.

Our aerial porters were in the limelight in July when 24 members of the 42nd APS deployed to Al Udeid to accomplish the first U.S.-involved equipment movement of a Romanian infantry division. On 48 hours'

STAKEHOLDERS continued on page 8

**Command Chief
Master Sergeant**
CCMSgt. Jeffrey B. Sherwin



**439th Airlift Wing
Commander**
Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick



439th Maintenance Group
Col. Charles A. Brown Jr.



439th Operations Group
Lt. Col. Michael B. Kohut



439th Aeromedical Staging Squadron
Col. Sarah F. Waterman
SMSgt. Michelle M. Dunfield



439th Operations Support Squadron
Lt. Col. John E. Riley Jr.
MSgt. William R. Jebb



337th Airlift Squadron
Lt. Col. Michael A. Vinsky
SMSgt. Pamela J. N. White



439th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
Lt. Col. Daniel W. Allen
CMSgt. John M. Budenas



439th Maintenance Squadron
Lt. Col. Jacquelyn B. Crothers
CMSgt. David F. Carbin



439th Aerospace Medicine Squadron
Col. Ronald R. Coffey
SMSgt. Barbara A. Bender



439th Airlift Control Flight
Lt. Col. James R. Hosey Jr.
TSgt. Gary F. Sanderson



439th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron
Col. Belinda R. Morrone
MSgt. Brian P. Major



439th Logistics Support Squadron
Lt. Col. Patricia J. Hale
SMSgt. Paul M. Cincotta

439th Airlift Wing

February 2003



Special Assistant to the Wing Commander

Col. Thomas A. Mauzaka



439th Mission Support Group

Col. Dana S. Marsh



439th Civil Engineering Squadron
Lt. Col. Paul Babin
MSgt. Bruce Buechele



439th Communications Squadron
Maj. Qais "Casey" M. Ajalat
MSgt. Robert E. Smith



439th Services Squadron
Maj. Charles R. Zaorski
SMSgt. Calvin C. Brown



42nd Aerial Port Squadron
Lt. Col. James P. Carey
SMSgt. Michael R. Brunetti



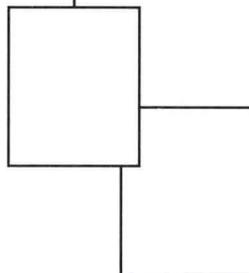
58th Aerial Port Squadron
Lt. Col. Peter A. DeTone
SMSgt. Norman N. Hoskeer



439th Mission Support Squadron
Maj. Richard M. Cockley
SMSgt. Clifford M. Wittman



439th Security Forces Squadron
Maj. Mary Ann Lutz
SMSgt. Michael F. Thorpe



439th Logistics Readiness Squadron
(pending)



85th Aerial Port Squadron (GSU)
Lt. Col. Robert B. Bremmer
SMSgt. James H. Keay

STAKEHOLDERS continued from page 5

notice, 26 airlift specialists of the 58th APS deployed to an overseas tent city to run a stand-alone aerial port operation. Our PA office hosted an Employer Appreciation Day, including a C-5 flight for 35 employers of activated reservists. The Newman's Own Awards for Military Community Excellence granted \$3,000 to the Pioneer Valley USO for "Operation Pillowcase", a brainchild of our own Family Support Center in which a deployed member's picture is transferred onto a pillowcase as a gift for their children.

In August four Westover reservists initiated a new streamlined DD 214 Report of Separation program that was implemented throughout the Air Force. The intense pace of inspections continued with Occupational Health Compliance and Environmental Compliance Assessment evaluations resulting in no notices of violation. The Patriot Wing Force Protection Program was named "Best in AFRC" following an AFRC Vulnerability Assessment in which three programs were distinguished as benchmarks and six security specialists named "star contributors."

September was bittersweet in many ways. On the 11th, hundreds of wing members and local civilians gathered together to honor and remember our nation's fallen heroes in the War on Terrorism. We celebrated "Family Day" with food, games and just plain fun to thank our families for their support. Visits from the AFRC Command Chief and the Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs showed appreciation for the great job we were doing and took our concerns up the chain. By the last day of the month, more than 1,000 reservists had been demobilized, ending a long year supporting our nation's wartime goals. A few hundred more of our folks, mainly Security Forces and EOD, would remain mobilized past year's end.

With October came more honors, when our ASTS was cited as Best Medical Unit in the Air Force Reserve and our AMDS earned the Pioneer Valley Business Excellence Award. The 42nd APS qualified as "mission ready green" when the AMC IG evaluated four equipment UTCs. Our TALCE survey team led two short-notice surveys to Russia for Presidential Support and was awarded an honorary coin by White House Airlift Operations for outstanding performance. To hone deployment skills, 160 reservists participated in Patriot Harvest III conducted at home station and Quonset Point, R.I.

Westover proudly saw stars in November when the wing commander received Senate confirmation as a brigadier general. Major construction projects underway included the \$1.3 million EOD facility, a 3,100-square foot addition to the fire station, replacement of parking lots, covered walkways and repair and renovations of restrooms.

In December, the AFRC vice commander was on hand to pin on the wing commander's stars when our wing-wide Commander's Call celebrated promotions, individual and team awards, and the 30 CCAF graduates of 2002. The good cheer was tempered by the awareness that our Medical and Security Forces reservists continued to be deployed overseas at year's end, a visible reminder of the Wing's ongoing role in the War on Terrorism and commitment as the nation's force in readiness.

Outlook:

Coming off a banner year like we had in 2002, the Patriot Wing's future looks bright, yet undetermined. Today, we are an incredibly well-trained force. Our performance in this next year will be based on the solid experience gained as a result of our mobilization and deployments. We



photo by MSgt. W.C. Pope

DAD'S STAR — With his family by his side, Westover's sixth brigadier general pinned on his flag officer rank Dec. 8 during Commander's Call. With Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick are, from left, Marty, Helen, Martin, and Matthew Mazick.

will continue to improve our readiness by immunizing our force against anthrax and smallpox and training in the new Counter Chemical Warfare Concept of Operations.

Over 900 new mobility positions will be established throughout the wing. We will say farewell to approximately 14 percent of our force and welcome new members - 40 percent of whom will be non-prior service. This will place a premium on skill training and our veterans will need to share their "wartime" experiences with these new reservists. While no decision on mobilization has been made as of this writing, if we see another year on active duty, we know we will be ready and our performance will continue to prove why we are the "TEAM OF CHOICE."

Conclusion:

Giving meaning to "force in readiness," wing members deployed as units and small teams to 35 countries for a full range of aerospace taskings, including strategic airlift, security, maintenance, medical, aerial port, command and control, and more in support of the war. At the peak, 1,309 of the wing's 2,500 people were mobilized. The Westover family was reinforced each day by the tremendous support of the community from municipal, state and federal legislators, to schools and churches and civic groups. Their visits, cards, letters, cookies, band performances and prayers for our mobilized folks were a testimony to our "citizen-airmen" relationship. Our aircrews flew 200 percent (8,369 hours) of allocation to support stakeholders worldwide. Our maintainers set the benchmark by leading the command with an 88.5 percent departure reliability rate. At home station alone, our aerial porters serviced 1,689 aircraft, supported 6,290 passengers and processed 2,052 tons of cargo. When tested in war and peace, the men and women of the 439th AW proved themselves as the "TEAM OF CHOICE" by justifying their stakeholders' investment and trust in them as a wing and as individuals.



photo by Lt. Col. Sally Nutt Morger

EXTENDED DUTY — Members of the 439th Security Forces Squadron entered their second year of activation, handling around-the-clock security duties at Westover. The squadron also deployed people for AEF support and Operation Noble Eagle.

Holiday house fire wreaks havoc

by SMSgt. Sandi Michon

Just one day after opening their Christmas gifts, the Gontarek family lost their gifts – and almost everything else – to a devastating house fire.

Kevin Gontarek, Westover Club manager since August, was visiting relatives in Rhode Island when he learned of the fire. His pastor had recognized the Gontarek house from local news coverage and tracked Kevin down in Rhode Island. “My wife Sue took the call,” Kevin explained. “I came downstairs and saw her on the floor crying and I initially thought something happened to her mom,” he said.

“When she told me our house had burned, I was stunned. It seemed unreal. How could you be gone for only two days and everything you left is gone?” Kevin related.

The losses were particularly painful as the Gontareks had settled into their rental home just four months earlier, after living in a hotel for six weeks – and they had no insurance. “We spent a month fixing it up – it was in really rough shape when we moved in. We just got it to where it felt like home,” he said.

As disbelief spawned reality, Kevin’s next reaction was to locate shelter for his family. After calling the base to secure billeting for the night, the Gontareks headed back home, or rather, what used to be their home. Kevin and Sue walked through the rubble with flashlights, and even in the dim light, the scene was grim. The smoke alarm still beeped softly beneath the debris.

They both cried, but tears of joy mixed with tears of grief as they both played out the what-ifs. They were thankful no lives were lost. “What if I had been there and tried to save our possessions and got trapped in the fire” was one scenario Kevin suggested, “or what if Sue had died, or the kids...” Kevin’s voice trailed off.

Despite the grief, Kevin became resolute to rebuild their lives. They learned of a two-bedroom condominium in Agawam which would allow their two children, Abbey, 7 and A.J., 10, to attend the same local school.

Four days after Christmas, the church collected donations and church members brought four truckloads of practical supplies to the condo. “We watched in awe,” Kevin explained. “They wouldn’t let us help. ‘Just sit back and watch God work’ they said.”

Another local church Sue had visited responded with donations and monetary collections and the local Red Cross provided immediate needs like mattresses and other household items.

As they attempt to resume “normal” life, the lost items list grows. “You go to sweep the floor and realize you have no broom. You make a pot of pasta and the colander is missing,” said Kevin, who loves to cook. “All the stuff you took for granted – it’s not there,” he explained, but then clarified his new perspective by adding, “It’s just stuff.”

Even so, some things are irreplaceable. Sue’s eyes filled with tears when she spoke of the destroyed videos of her son and daughter’s earlier years... or the burned afghans that were handmade by her mother and antiques given by her now-deceased father.

The Gontareks are overwhelmed by the kindness of so many, but Kevin admits that it has been very humbling. “I much prefer to be on the giving end,” he explained. Both Sue and Kevin believe all the details of their situation have happened for a reason. “God has a purpose in all of this... in time He will reveal the extent of that purpose,” they said.

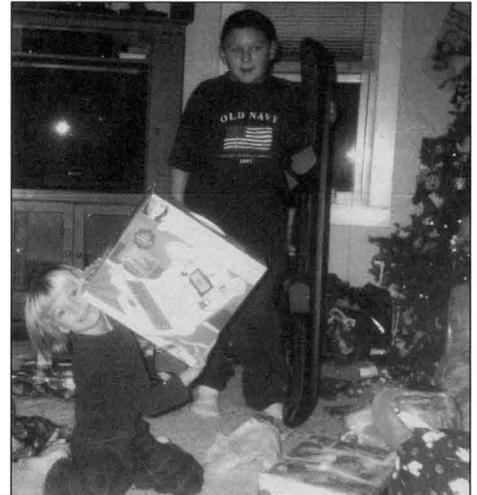
The Gontareks figure that it will take three to four months to set up housekeeping, but they also hope to find other housing so their son and daughter can both have a bedroom. “It’s been hard on them,” Kevin said. “Abbey’s constant activity seems to be her way to avoid facing the loss of all her belongings,” he observed. Kevin thought his son A.J. was taking it the hardest. “To help him adjust to our move, he picked out the paint and wall hangings. He had just made it home, and now it’s gone,” he said.

Although much of the items donated to the Gontareks are used, both Kevin and Sue say they have received a whole new outlook on life. “You don’t need as much stuff as you think you do,” was a new thought, as was, “Don’t sweat the small stuff – it’s not worth it.” But most importantly, both agreed that their experience has brought them a deeper, stronger faith that all will be okay. “God has and will take care of us,” they said firmly.

Westover’s Chiefs’ Council is taking donations for the Gontarek family. Contact CMSgt. Kathy Wood at Ext. 2876 for more information.

“When she [his wife] told me our house had burned, I was stunned. It seemed unreal. How could you be gone for only two days and everything you left is gone?”

**Kevin Gontarek
Westover Club Manager**



BEFORE AND AFTER — Abbey and A. J. Gontarek open their gifts on Christmas day (above). One day later, (below) a house fire consumed the tree, their gifts and most of their belongings.

photos courtesy of the Gontarek family



Westover commemorates African-American History Month

by Maj. Wilson Camelo

The contributions of African-Americans and all those serving in the military will be commemorated in February during National African American History Month.

At Westover, the month will serve as a time for reflection and appreciation for the contributions all African Americans have made to the wing and the Air Force, said MSgt. Lisa A. Spence-Elder, NCOIC of the wing's Military Equal Opportunity office.

While many have heard the heroic tales of the Tuskegee Airmen and The Buffalo Soldiers and may associate the celebration with these and other historical figures, Spence-Elder said it's also a time to recognize the day-to-day contributions of all African Americans. And locally, they are going a long way toward bettering race relations in the 439th AW, she said.

However, the role of the Tuskegee Airmen can't be overstated, she said. Having recently returned from the Tuskegee Airmen International Conference, Spence-Elder said today's young troops need to learn about

this and other historical events.

The Tuskegee Airmen's resounding success in World War II - where they destroyed or damaged more than 400 enemy aircraft, flew more than 15,000 sorties and never lost a bomber in 200 combat escort missions - helped convince the Army Air Forces that full integration could work. As a result, in the spring of 1948, the early Air Force was the first branch of the military to begin moving toward integrating its ranks.

Soon after, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981, fully integrating the armed services, and created a Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces to help carry out his order.

Today, Spence-Elder says race relations have definitely improved, but there is still far to go.

"The biggest lesson we're still trying to teach is to understand and accept people for



Spence-Elder

who they are," she said. "We're not all the same, and it's OK to recognize people's differences and not feel self-conscious about those differences. As a result, our overall goal as an office is to educate commanders on the diversity of their units to ensure they are being inclusive for all cultures."

At Westover, African Americans make up approximately eight percent of the wing, according to MEO. Spence-Elder said the race climate at Westover overall is very good, but she'd like to see that percentage increase to better mirror the community and the Air Force, where African Americans make up about 16 percent of the total force.

The overall situation, however, has certainly improved as racial minority representation in the Air Force has risen from 14 percent in 1975 to 27 percent today, according to the Air Force Personnel Center.

Spence-Elder said her goal for this year's African American History Month is to increase the awareness of the commemoration and to plan events at the base. Those interested in assisting in the effort may contact her at Ext. 3581.

Payment comes due for abuse of government credit card

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

Your government credit card can be your best friend when on orders, but the plastic card can lead to grief if you don't treat it with care.

Westover reservists are less likely than the national average among those in uniform to have problems with delinquent payments and misuse of government credit cards, but they are not immune to financial irresponsibility.

In an extreme case, one wing member was discharged, and others have been disci-

plined since use of the cards became widespread.

If you use your government credit card while on orders you are expected to pay promptly upon receiving a mailed bill from the credit card company, said Lt. Col. Theresa A. Negron, staff judge advocate. The credit card company will report individuals to their units who have not paid their bill after 30 to 60 days following the credit card transaction.

A first-time delinquency can lead to a warning, counseling or reprimand. A pattern of delinquent payments can prompt discipli-

nary action, including demotion or Article 15 proceedings, Negron said.

Each month, members' records of transactions are sent to unit orderly rooms where they are reviewed for unauthorized use and misuse.

"The commanders are doing a good job of communicating policies on misuse of the government credit cards," Negron said.

Those who use the government credit card while not on orders or for unofficial transactions while on orders are subject to a range of disciplinary action from counseling to discharge.

Limited tax assistance available for reservists on inactive status

ROBINS AFB, Ga. - Unless on active duty during tax preparation time, Air Force reservists are not entitled to Air Force tax assistance through base legal offices.

Due to manning constraints and regulatory restrictions on legal assistance, AFRC installation and wing legal offices do not offer tax preparation and filing services to reservists in an inactive status. However, unit reservists participating in an inactive status are entitled to mission-related legal assistance - wills and powers of attorney.

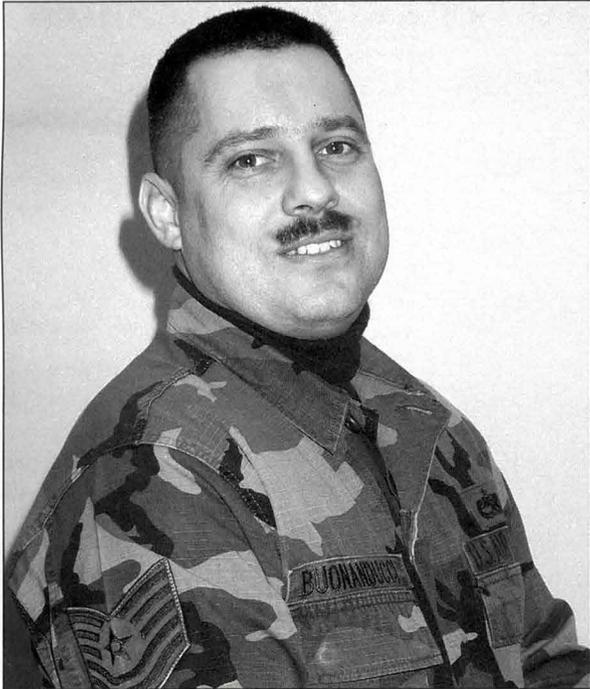
Reserve legal assistance officers should be able to address specific tax questions from members on active duty as part of their legal assistance program. These officers should also be able to direct activated military members to the closest active-duty location offering

full tax preparation services. Tax preparation centers are found on most active-duty military installations and normally operate from late January to April of each year.

Reservists on active duty should present their identification cards and orders to the personnel at the tax center to show their entitlement to the service. The military services operate tax centers on installations, ships at sea and at deployed units throughout the world.

Overall, service tax programs save service members and their families more than \$57 million. And, with electronic filing and direct deposit, service members often receive refunds in less than a week.

(AFRC News Service)



TSgt. Ronald J. Buonanducci

Patriot People

Name: Ronald J. Buonanducci
Rank: TSgt.
Age: 41
Address: South Windsor, Conn.
Unit: 439th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
Position: Aircraft maintenance technician
Civilian position: Field service technical representative
Favorite food: Italian
Years of service: 19
Favorite sport: Football
Favorite hobby: Weightlifting, movies
Ideal vacation: Hiking
Best way to relax: Movies/playing with my kids
Preferred entertainment: Movies
Favorite hero: My dad
Favorite music: Jazz
Favorite movie: Air Force
Favorite aircraft: C-130
Pet peeve: Wet UTAs
What would I do if I won \$1 million: Buy a vacation home on the beach

photo by Sr.A. T.R. Ouellette

Patriot Praises

Enlistments:

TSgt. Murray, Bernard S.
 SrA. O'Connor, Mark T.
 SrA. Seddon, Dana M.
 A1C Berghaus, Angela M.
 A1C Ellison, Todd C.
 A1C Morris, Kenneth W., II
 Amn. Rodney, Andrew L.

Retired:

Maj. Manning, Catherine R.
 SMSgt. Groeber, William D.
 MSgt. Janeczek, Paul J.
 MSgt. Ohearn, Michael J.
 MSgt. Perreault, George A., Jr.
 TSgt. Linton, Robert B.
 SSgt. Brotherton, Peter A.
 Boyer, Gayanne
 Boyer, Philip E.

Thirty Years of Federal Service Certificates:

Halla, Richard W.
 LaVallie, David E.

**439th Airlift Wing
 Honor Guard
 needs you! Call
 MSgt. Tom Roe at
 557-3342**

Awards and Decorations

Aerial Achievement Medal

TSgt. Jennifer Cutler 439 ASTS

Air Force Achievement Medal

TSgt. William F. Brooks 439 MXS
 TSgt. Teri Destefano 439 AMDS
 TSgt. Sabine Dietrich 439 AMDS
 TSgt. Corey E. Fagullar 439 MXS
 TSgt. Wesley G. Larson 439 MXS
 TSgt. Raymond B. Morehouse 439 MXS
 TSgt. William C. Padden 439MXS
 TSgt. David M. Shattuck 439 MXS
 TSgt. Mark Tourigny 439 MXS
 SSgt. Grace Barnes 439 MXS

Air Force Commendation Medal

Maj. Martin B. Dorey 439 AES
 Maj. Diane M. Murphy 439 AES
 Capt. James C. Miller 337 AS
 1st Lt. Warren D. Smith 439 AES
 SMSgt. McDonald R. Molina 439 AES
 SMSgt. Ralph A. Jamieson 439 MXS
 MSgt. David E. Berube 439 MXS
 MSgt. Michael M. Cuccouia 439 MOF
 MSgt. Michael F. Drenzo 439 MXS
 MSgt. Robert J. Rock 439 MXS

MSgt. Darrell J. Tripp 439 MXS

TSgt. Jean M. Allison 439 AMDS

TSgt. Kimberly A. Babin 439 MSS

TSgt. Aidan F. Evelyn 439 MXS

TSgt. Joseph C. Letourneau 439 AMDS

TSgt. Scott A. MacNeveins 439 AES

TSgt. Shane L. Newhart 439 AES

TSgt. John J. Shannon 85 APS

SSgt. Edward J. Gazaw 439 MOF

SSgt. Shane E. Mortimer 439 AES

Meritorious Service Medal

Col. Sarah F. Waterman 439 ASTS

Maj. Mary McKenna-Colvin 439 AMDS

Capt. Dennis Bromery 439 AMDS

MSgt. Albert F. Trychon 439 AW

MSgt. Joseph A. Beckman 439 MOF

MSgt. Anna P. Bradshaw 439 MSS

MSgt. David C. Pierrepont Jr. 439 ASTS

MSgt. Patricia A. Taylor 439 SVS

MSgt. Daniel P. Hickey 439 MXS

MSgt. Michael W. O'Heame 42 APS

MSgt. Alan D. Parrott 42 APS

MSgt. Stephen H. Rehm 439 AES

MSgt. Keith M. Taylor 85 APS

TSgt. Ronald P. Girard Jr. 439 AMDS

TSgt. Allan S. Reed 42 APS

Maintenance volunteers replace tires on World War II bomber

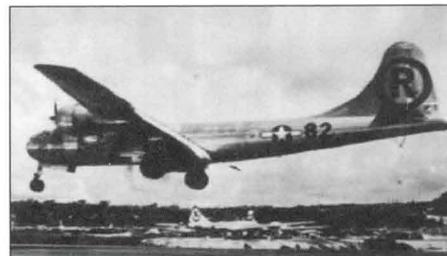
Article and photo by
SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

When the rubber meets the runway, the B-29 Superfortress beats the C-5A Galaxy, at least with the size of its landing gear.

Four Westover maintenance workers recently volunteered to replace the tires on

the famous World War II bomber that is displayed at the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, Conn.

Although the B-29's main gear only included four wheels compared with 28 on the C-5, the maintainers found the bomber's 55-inch tires were 8 inches taller than the Galaxy's.



Courtesy Air and Space Museum



TIRE WORKS — MSgt. Roger A. Dager, left, and TSgt. Joe Stefferson work on the tire of the B-29 Superfortress that is on display at the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, Conn. Dager and Stefferson were among four maintenance volunteers replacing the tires on the main landing gear of the famous bomber. Above right, a Superfortress lands following a World War II mission.

“Once we got the rims out of them, it still took two people to roll the tires,” said MSgt. Steven Skowron, day shift supervisor in the 439th Maintenance Squadron’s aero repair shop. “If they start the wobble, they can get away from you.”

Museum officials called Col. Charles A. Brown, 439th Maintenance Group commander, for help with replacing the tires in December. Brown consulted with Skowron about the feasibility of the project, and let the museum staff know it could be done.

This is the second time in recent history that Westover has helped the Connecticut museum staff with its aircraft displays. In October 2002, a C-5 aircrew airlifted the sections of a RB-47E Stratojet from Westover to Hill AFB, Utah, for display at the museum there.

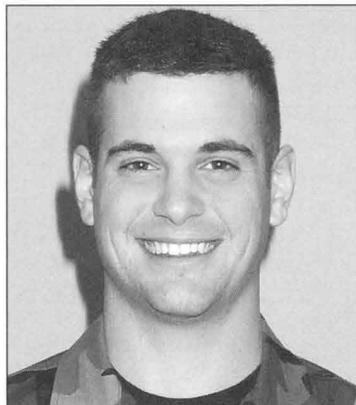
Also volunteering with Skowron were MSgt. Roger A. Dager, TSgt. Joe Stefferson, and SSgt. Richard I. Barry Jr.

While Skowron and his staff are busy with the ongoing maintenance of the C-5s, he hoped that the B-29’s new tires would be ready for the bomber at the museum some time in February.



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

February UTA schedule
A UTA Feb. 8-9
B UTA Feb. 22-23



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Published monthly for Patriots like AIC Adam D. Jackler, from Goshen, N.Y., and 2,549 members of the 439th AW at Westover ARB, and geographically separated units.