

PATRIOT

439th Airlift Wing • Westover Air Reserve Base
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439AW MISSION: Actively support national objectives on a global scale with ready, mobility forces.

'We care!' makes all the difference

Each of you is doing a great job. The evidence is the kudos coming from those outside our organization. By the time you read this we will have completed a couple thousand aircraft operations through Westover ARB since Feb 2.

Things are running well and those of you I've talked to like the contribution you are making. We have integrated the TDY help into our operations and you have made these folks feel at home. We have started to see returning troops and cargo within the last couple of weeks. The welcome home you give these soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen has been first class! The aircrews and warriors passing through often ask me how we can keep doing this at all hours. My answer is simple: "We care!" And that makes all the difference in the world.

As far as future operations, I will predict that we roll out of 24-hour operations by July 1. At that time we will assume 16/7 ops. I still see a rather robust role for our aircraft and aircrews through the summer. When I can nail this down with Air Mobility Command I will get the word out. Our wing is not in this AEF bucket, however I would expect a call for volunteers on MPA tours to fulfill the new tasking that will arise out of Operation Iraqi Freedom. More to follow as the picture becomes clear.

On a final note, I wish to say goodbye to one of our best leaders. Retirement calls to Lt. Col. James P. Carey, 42nd Aerial Port Squadron Commander. He has made a career of taking care of his people and has led the "Red Hats" to outstanding achievements in the last couple of years, culminating in the present operations and the squadron being selected as the Outstanding AMC-gained aerial port for 2002. A job well done Jimmy, we will miss you!

Thanks again everyone for all you do!

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



Sergeant thanks Patriot Wing members

Brig. Gen. Mazick,

It's not every day someone falls off an airplane, but if I had a choice, I would do it again at Westover.

Thank you for the card, and thank you for Lt. Col. Kohut, Lt. Col. Moore, and the chief engineer, taking their time to visit me.

I am truly impressed with the fire department's response time, and the maintenance individual who identified

himself with emergency medical skill, and helped me out.

One thing I learned from PSAB is, "One fight, one team," and Westover truly lives up to it. Once again, thank you for taking care of me. Westover is definitely the "Super Wing"!

CURTIS LEW, MSgt, USAF
Flight Engineer, 21st Airlift Squadron
Travis AFB, Calif.

Briefs

Girl Scouts donate summer sessions

The Girl Scouts of the Pioneer Valley are donating summer sessions for children that have a parent who might be an activated reservist.

The scouts are donating two one-week sessions at day or overnight camp for two girls whose parent is activated and financially needy. Day camp is offered for first through 12th-graders, while overnight campers are second through 12th-graders.

Camp is offered at Chicopee State Park July 21-25, July 28-Aug. 1, and Aug. 4-8. Overnight camp is available June 28-Aug. 15.

Those people interested should contact TSgt. Kim Babin at the family support center at Ext. 3024 or e-mail at kimberly.babin@westover.af.mil.

85th APS changes command at Hanscom

The 85th Aerial Port Squadron, located at Hanscom AFB, Mass., has a new commander. Maj. Henry G. Birkdale recently took command of the squadron from Lt. Col Robert B. Bremmer.

Birkdale enlisted in the Air Force in 1977 and, for his first tour, served in Air Force Intelligence in West Berlin, Germany and the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Md. He re-entered the Air Force in 1985, through the Air Force ROTC program at St Michael's College, Winooski, Vt.

The 85th APS is a geographically separated unit of the 439th Airlift Wing. The squadron's mission is to safely load and unload cargo and passengers on aircraft. More than 160 men and women are assigned to the 85th.

Cover photo

BACK HOME - (From left) Maj. Charles R. Kerr, MSgt. Steven P. Savage, and SrA. Rebecca E. Hinch, 439th AES, were among the first four Westover reservists to return from Operation Iraqi Freedom on May 2. In what has become common at the base following the end of combat operations in Iraq, a welcoming party greeted the AES members on the flight line. For more on the AES return and what their mission entailed in Iraq, see page 3.

— photo by MSgt. W.C. Pope

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Westover greets its first reservists returning from war



Westover volunteer Margaret Cote greets SSgt. Steven P. Savage, 439th AES, as he arrives at Westover on May 2 following his 38 days serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Article and photo
by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

American flags, smiles mixed with emotion and relief, welcomed the first four Westover reservists who returned from their 38-day tour of duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The first of five aeromedical evacuation liaison team (AELT) members from the 439th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron arrived in a C-5 at Westover on May 2.

The AES members who were aboard the Dover AFB, Del., C-5 were Maj. Charles R. Kerr, Capt. Daniel J. McCarthy, MSgt. Steven P. Savage, and SrA. Rebecca E. Hinch. About 30 other Air Force personnel from Nellis AFB, Nev., were the other passengers.

While the Nellis members were dressed in desert uniforms, it was easy to spot the Westover reservists who wore their battle dress uniforms for the flight.

Kerr was the first Westover member to shake hands with Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick, 439th AW commander. Kerr, who lives in southeastern Massachusetts, looked forward to the final leg of his trip home.

"It feels great," Kerr said. "We were away for only a month and a half. But that's a long time when everything was going on the way it was."

Kerr and the other three AES members make up an AELT team. The reservists supported Army and Marine medical airlift opera-

tions during the war.

A group of flag-waving Westover workers, ranging from USO volunteers to civilian employees and reservists, gathered outside the passenger terminal to greet the group.

Also on hand to welcome home the reservists was Col. Belinda R. Morrone, AES commander. "It's wonderful. I'm really happy to see them back," Morrone said. "I've been looking forward to getting them back here."

CCMSgt. Jeffrey B. Sherwin, 439th AW command chief master sergeant, joined Mazick and Morrone with the welcoming party on the flight line.

A former AES member, Sherwin is the wing commander's senior enlisted advisor now. He was pleased to see people return whom he had trained for just such an event. Sherwin was NCOIC of an AES AELT during Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

"We've never had this many AELT teams deployed before, even during the first Gulf War," he said. "We had two AELT teams during that war."

As of press time, mission requirements had not allowed the remaining four Westover AELT teams to come home. The reservists are still kept busy with evacuating people who may be injured by unexploded ordinance and other events from the war in Iraq.

More than 60 Westover reservists were still deployed in early May in America's continuing war on terror.

Medical specialists wins hearts of Kurds in northern Iraq

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

Two Westover medical specialists won the hearts of the Kurdish people of northern Iraq while serving as a medical liaison team for Army troops.

Tea with village officials and negotiations for the services of interpreters are part of the life of Capt. Cal, a medical services coordinator, and Capt. Mark, a flight nurse.

The two 439th AES officers are serving in the homeland of the Kurds in northern Iraq where they are acting as a liaison team for aeromedical evacuation. Their job is to move wounded or injured troops out of the AOR to areas where they can receive more complete medical care. They have been in northern Iraq since late March.

"The local Kurdish people love us. They said they would like to become the 51st U.S. state," Capt. Cal wrote in a recent e-mail to CCCMSgt. Jeffrey Sherwin, 439th AW command chief master sergeant.

"I had an official visit with the village mayor to try to find interpreters to help at our entry control points. We had tea in his village office," he wrote. He also negotiated with the Kurds for bulk water.

Capt. Cal described their arrival in another

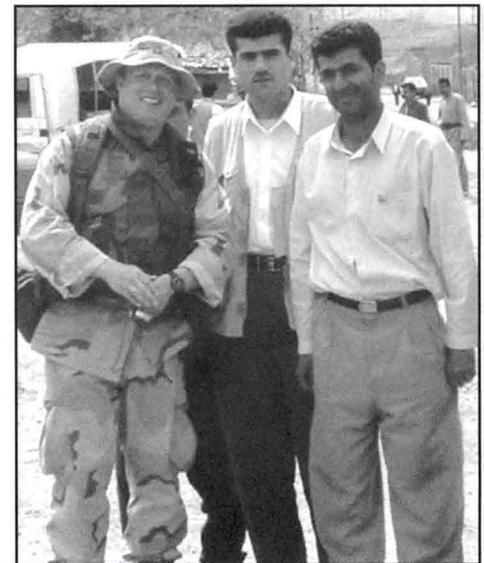
e-mail transmitted to the Command Chief by cell phone hooked up to a lap top.

"Our job was to support Army troops who jumped into Iraq from C-17s and secured a very remote airfield a couple of days earlier. They were fortunate to have minimum injuries, but still needed long-term aeromedical evacuation. At the last minute, on the last flight into our area, the flight nurse and myself filled the last two open seats on a C-17. We could only bring one bag and an iridium cell phone. Nothing else. If we couldn't carry it, we had to leave it behind, including the rest of our team and all our equipment," Capt. Cal wrote.

They had been in a country near the Iraq border before moving to Aviano, Italy, in anticipation of deploying to Iraq. Left behind in Aviano were radio operators TSgt. Paul and SSgt. Kenneth.

More than three weeks after Capt. Cal wrote the e-mail note, the two radio operators were still in Aviano and the two medical officers were living day to day with one spare uniform and what they had been able to carry in-country.

"The first night we arrived Mark and I slept on the floor of the forward surgical team patient holding tent. After that, we borrowed two cots and found a tent we could share with



Capt. Mark poses with some of the Kurds with whom Americans have built rapport in recent weeks.

eight other people. The tents are small, so the cots almost touch each other," Capt. Cal wrote.

"There's not much where we are now.
see IRAQ on page 9

Reservists activated in comm, aerial port, family support

While the war continued to wind down in Iraq, 55 more Westover reservists were activated - including a unit mobilized to support the huge cargo volume that still moved through the base well into April.

An MPF mobilization line in the Dining Facility processed 40 aerial porters, 11 members of the 439th Communications Squadron, two members of Wing Safety and one each in the Military Personnel Flight and Family Support Center.

The communications specialists called to active duty include members assigned to computer support, communications security and runway communications support.

Almost all of the activated 42nd APS aerial porters had previously served at least two months on days in support of 24-hour operations since the start of the Enduring Freedom surge in February.

They include the full gamut of aerial port specialties to keep C-5s, equipment and troops moving, including members to support loading operations, ATOC, passenger services and fleet services.

Lt. Col. James Carey, 42nd APS commander, expressed confidence in the ability of his aerial porters to carry on the grueling air bridge mission. "We've been here 60 days. We know what's going on. We're ready for anything they throw at us," he said.

Among the activated aerial porters was TSgt. Philip Nadeau who is employed as a manufacturing engineer at V.S. Tsubaki, Chicopee.

During Desert Shield and Desert Storm he served here nine months with the 42nd Red Hats. From last June through September he

Airlift control flight deploys to Baghdad

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

The living conditions are primitive, but the sense of being in the eye of the storm is a morale booster for members of the 439th Airlift Control Flight serving in Baghdad, said their commander, Lt. Col. James.

The ALCF members left Westover on April 29 aboard a C-17 Globemaster III.

Their job is to conduct the air flow at the Baghdad airport until a more permanent operations support squadron and command post are established.

Upon arrival, the Patriot Wing members were billeted in hardened facilities without power or water at the Baghdad airport. In May they were still awaiting the erection of a relatively more comfortable tent city.

Despite the austere conditions, duty at the Baghdad airport has its rewards, Lt. Col. James said.

"This is the best operational thing we've

was with 21 other aerial porters at Al Udeid AB, Qatar.

Nadeau will serve as the aerial port liaison to the Command Post. He volunteered for activation, he said, "to protect the country, to keep my 22 nieces and nephews free."

ever seen in the history of the 439th ALCF...there is so much going on it is unbelievable," the commander said. The Westover airlift control specialist are conducting the air flow of troops returning home, the deployment of fresh troops and equipment into the AOR and the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Speaking in May, Lt. Col. James said there were still sniper and RPG (rocket propelled grenade) skirmishes and fighting between Iraqi factions in Baghdad. Two American soldiers had been killed in attacks in Baghdad within days.

Aircraft coming in frequently dispensed flares due to the threat assessment. The Patriot Wing members, like others, kept their weapons with them 24 hours a day and carried the weapons when they moved around the airport.

Also in Baghdad were 13 security specialists of the 439th Security Forces Flight, two members of the Westover Intelligence shop and a finance specialist.

Airmen experience first class Patriot Wing reception

Article and photo

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

The airmen who supported the first strike

Andrews AFB commander praises Westover welcome

Dear General Mazick,

One of my pilots, Lt. Col. Craig Edkins, recently returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom, where he supported General Franks' flying mission.

Colonel Edkins had the pleasure of transiting through Westover ARB and came back to Andrews singing praises for the warm reception he and his fellow travelers received.

I want to personally thank the men and women of Westover, both military and civilian, who took the time to leave their homes in the middle of the night to welcome our airmen to American soil.

Their gratitude to our returning troops is heartwarming and I know much appreciated.

Thank you for taking care of them in such a first-class style. I hope to be able to do the same for yours one day!

Sincerely,

GLENN F. SPEARS

Brigadier General, USAF

Commander, 89th Airlift Wing

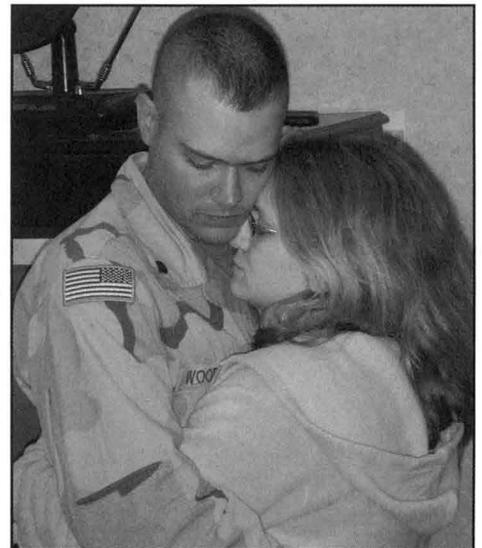
of Operation Iraqi Freedom were the first returning troops to land at Westover on April 19. They came home with lifelong bragging rights that they serviced the F-117s that delivered the four GBU 27 2,000-pound bombs on a Saddam bunker on the opening night of the campaign to liberate the Iraqi people.

The 73 airmen experienced a welcome fit for heroes when they touched American soil at Westover. The Patriot Wing spoke for all America when it cheered the 49th FW munitions systems and maintenance specialists who arrived here after a stop at Rota, Spain on their long flight from their F-117 air base in the AOR to Holloman AFB, N.M.

Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick, 439th AW commander, stood at the C-5, shook hands and repeated 73 times, "Welcome back!"

Outside the bunting-draped passenger terminal they were welcomed by a cheering group that ranged from World War II veterans to scampering children of Patriot Wing members. Lee Greenwood's "Proud to be an American" from a tape player sounded the theme as USO members handed each airman a small American flag.

Unit pride was on the mind of F-117 crew chief SrA. Fernando Vasquez of Texas. "I'm part of the squadron that went out first, had the first strike of this war. It's kind of admirable that we were picked first, to take out a target that first night," he said.



TOGETHER AGAIN - After six months apart, Army Specialist Andrew Woodward of Utica, N.Y., is welcomed home by his wife, Michelle, in the passenger terminal in April. He served with the 414th Civil Affairs Group, a Utica Army Reserve unit, during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The heroes' welcome was the closing of a circle for SSgt. Robert Duke of Georgia. Twelve years earlier he had been a high school
see WELCOME continued on page 5

Security forces squadron reports to first demobilization

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

Days after M-1 tanks rolled into Baghdad, Westover marked a second milestone in the war on terrorism with the first deactivation of security forces.

On April 11, a demobilization line was set up for 25 members of the 439th Security Forces Squadron who were activated in the aftermath of 9/11. About 20 more members were expected to be deactivated in early May.

Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick, 439th AW commander, addressed the security specialists as they started the demobilization process. No one at Westover, he said, paid a bigger mobilization price.

"I can't overestimate the value of having you here almost two years, creating a safe work environment so we could get the mission done. Be sure when you get home to thank your families and employers," the wing commander said.

The first security specialist through the demobilization line was SSgt. Chris Dion, who had been in uniform since November, 2001. In the uncertain days after 9/11, he was among those who bolstered security at the gate and reinforced the security patrols on the flightline and along the fence perimeter.

Later, he spent six months at MacDill, AFB, Fla., home of Central Command and Special Operations, where his duties included working with the K-9 program. He had his picture taken with General Tommy Franks, commander of Central Command.

Now he's planning to marry the Florida woman he met at MacDill and transfer to Homestead ARB, Fla. He leaves the PatriotWing with good memories.

"One of the reasons I switched from the Army to the Air Force was because I saw the opportunity for activation and a greater role. It's definitely been an interesting year and a half. The deployment to MacDill was a real world situation," he said.

TSgt. Tim Brock was activated just a few weeks after 9/11. He spent the summer of 2002 at Kapaun AS, Germany guarding mobile radar sites supporting Operation Joint Forge Bosnia missions.

He looked forward to returning to his job for the Veterans Administration, Northampton. He knows what a long activation means to those left at home.

"I was proud to serve my country. But, it was difficult not knowing if you were going to be deploying next week, if you were going to war.

"My wife is not from a military background. It was stressful for her not knowing. She kept saying, 'if you've got to go, you've got to go. I support you all the way, but...'. It was almost a relief when I went to Germany because at least we knew," he said.

TSgt. Chris Kellam flew Phoenix Raven missions out of a Pakistan Air Force base into Afghanistan from August through December, 2002. He was part of a 13-member 439th SFS squad headed by MSgt. Greg Quill which flew security missions on C-130s into Bahgram Air Base and the cities of Kandahar, Kost, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif while they were in on the frontline of the war on terror.

After working most recently in Combat Arms, he returned to his job in the Chicopee Police Department.

"All the guys who went on the deployment were happy to go to Afghanistan. We felt we did the mission we trained for. There was a sense of fulfillment after 9/11. I think we all wanted to get over there and do our part," Kellam said.

WELCOME continued from page 4

...cheering the 82nd Airborne when they came home to Fort Benning. Now the F-117 avionics specialist was on the other side of the welcoming line. Holding a small American flag, he recounted 110-degree heat and a blinding sandstorm that ripped out tent pegs and brought his 76-member tent down around his head.

"You did a wonderful job," a USO volunteer told TSgt. Kathy Riley of New Mexico, a supply NCOIC. Riley was with her squadron on the

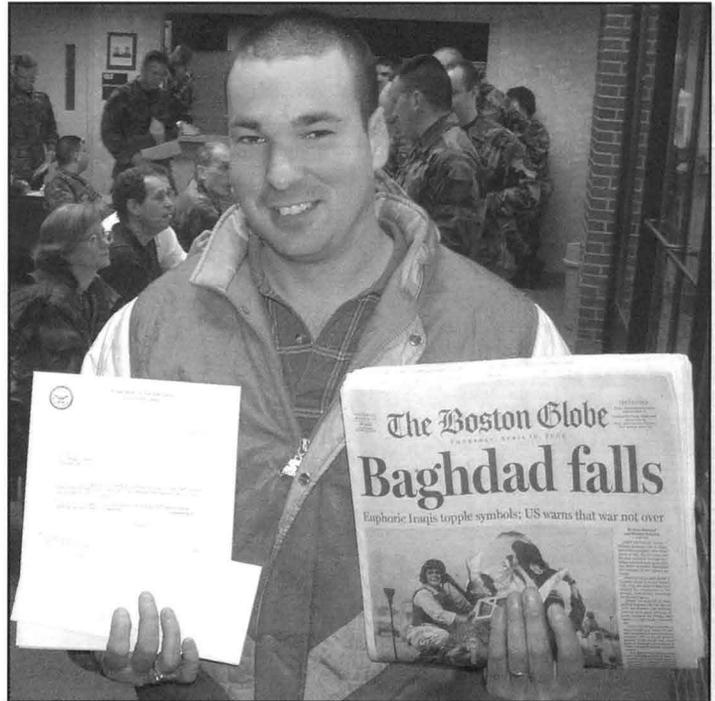


photo by MSgt. W.C. Pope

HISTORIC DAY - SSgt. Chris Dion shows off his deactivation papers and an Iraqi Freedom souvenir as the first security forces member through the demobilization line.

Like others, he agreed that the deployment was toughest on families. He left behind his wife and 10-year-old son. "The first sergeant, MSgt. Dan Major, stayed in contact with our families. That really helped," he said.

SrA. Raymond Harris was working as security forces ART on Sept. 11, 2001. He was sleeping that morning after the midnight shift when his brother called with news that planes had crashed into the World Trade Center. He immediately reported to his squadron.

"A lot of others just came in. There was a sense of pride. They just knew they had to be here when needed, to prove that it's not a one weekend a month job," Harris said.

MSgt. Thomas Gaglione returned to his job as an Essex County Sheriff after serving as NCOIC of Force Protection. He was among the first activated following 9/11.

He was among security members who organized a summer picnic for everyone on base and made donations to the Family Support Center. Security specialists were working 12 hour shifts and many were staying on base at night. "The Family Support Center helped a lot of families. When troops were in need, they assisted them," he said.

Gaglione and others said they were leaving with mixed emotions while fellow security specialists are serving here and overseas. "That's the hardest part of being the first group to demobilize," he said.

"The camaraderie of the troops and the morale they displayed are going to be missed because I won't be with them until we join back up on the UTA...the morale stayed strong through everything," Gaglione said, speaking for himself and everyone who wears the blue beret.

flightline on the first night when the two returning F-117 pilots came across on a flyby and landed. "When they raised their canopies, everyone cheered."

Another memory is sitting in the mess tent watching TV as a Saddam statue toppled.

Between those two events "we liberated a lot of people who were living in fear. These people don't have to live in torment. I think our being a first strike unit made a difference," she said.

Rock solid defense

Westover's bunker protected nation from nuclear attack

by SrA T.R. Ouellette

Roughly 50 years ago a military bunker, known locally as "The Notch," played an integral part in our nation's defense. Few people knew it existed then, and even today, many still don't fully understand its role. It remains one of Westover's best-kept secrets.

Carved deep into Amherst's Bare Mountain, off Route 116 the atomic-bomb proof bunker is located about 11 miles north of Westover. The bunker lies 32 feet under the ground, has an 18-inch-thick concrete floor, and a four-foot-thick, lead-reinforced concrete roof topped with an additional 25 feet of rock and seven feet of earth.

Its creation began in the early 1950's in direct response to the Cold War.

Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, a former

commander of operations at Westover in the 1940's, was appointed commander of Strategic Air Command in 1948. In April 1955, SAC officially took command of Westover.

SAC's responsibility was to deliver retaliatory strikes in the event of a Soviet nuclear attack. The primary site to carry out the mission was Offutt AFB, Neb., SAC's headquarters.

Recognizing that the Soviets would strike Offutt first in hopes of destroying the nation's ability to retaliate, SAC needed numerous alternative command sites to ensure its capability of carrying out its mission.

For this purpose, Westover's bunker was created.

Known officially as the Westover Communications Annex, operations began in 1956. Had war ensued, the bunker's solid design enabled it to withstand an attack that would have flattened Chicopee.

"Numerous local construction companies poured thousands of pounds of concrete and built the bunker in only 3 to 4 days," said Aaron Hayden, Amherst College's chief physical plant engineer who oversees the bunker's maintenance.

So secret were its operations, even those who served in the bunker knew little of the facility.

Harry Wolfe, a retired Air Force intelligence officer and a current South Hadley resident, served as Offutt's command center tour guide before coming to Westover from 1961-1963.

"The whole time I was here at Westover I had no involvement with the bunker. Very few did," Wolfe said.

Remembering his days at Offutt, Wolfe said tours were not extensive.

He said visitors saw very little because most areas were highly restricted, only those who worked in certain areas were allowed entry, Wolfe said.

"Even as a guide I was never allowed to go near many, many areas," he said.

Aaron Hayden, Amherst, has heard many similar accounts.

He said retired officers tell him that when they worked in the bunker they always needed an escort. They would report to duty, an officer would bring them to their workstation, which they were never to leave until they were escorted out of the bunker at the end of their day. The only area of the bunker they saw was their own specific work area. They had no idea what was happening in the room right next to them, Hayden said.

The bunker was crucial to SAC communications during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962.

As SAC evolved in the 1960s, its operations would be drastically affected at Westover. In 1968, the bunker was closed. Only two years later, SAC pulled its Eighth Air Force headquarters out of Westover. In 1974, SAC turned control of the base over to the Air Force Reserve.

Once an ardent defender of America, the two-story, climate-controlled bunker, along with its 44,000 square feet of storage space, is proving to be an excellent defender of something completely different.

Today, the bunker protects valuable books and periodicals for five local colleges. The steady climate, kept at a constant cool temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit with regulated humidity, is a book's perfect defender against the harm of nature's elements.

The bunker's transformation started in the late 1980's when Amherst College was facing a severe shortage of library space and had few options available to correct the problem.

Original estimates to enlarge their current library were set at \$26-\$29 million. College trustees not only balked at the steep price, but also found downscaled estimates, totaling \$12 million, too expensive as well, said the Librarian of Amherst College, Willis E. Bridgman. But a doable remedy soon presented itself when the trustees learned that the Westover bunker was available.

In 1992, Amherst College bought the bunker from the Federal Reserve for \$510,000, or \$11.59 per square foot.

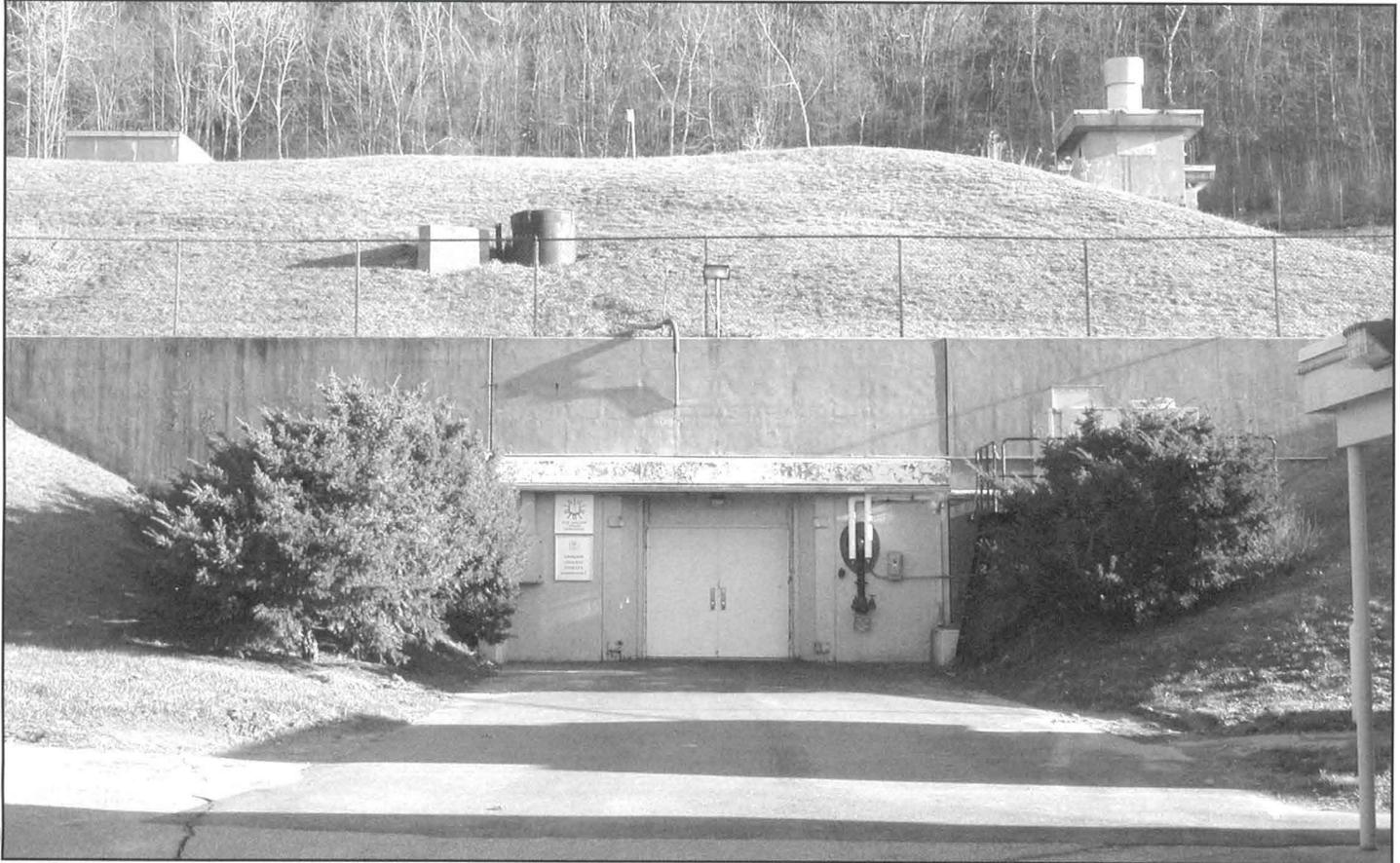
The bunker will ultimately store more than 500,000 books and periodicals.

"It's a success story. We were thrilled



photo by SrA. T.R. Ouellette

NOOKS AND CRANNIES - Long rows of shelving are in place ready to accommodate books and documents in a protected environment. The cavernous open spaces and controlled climate are ideal for archivists.



ENTER HERE - The main entrance once held 3-foot-thick lead doors. They are gone now, sold for scrap.

photo by SrA. T.R. Ouellette

about the bunker. And it costs us one fourth the expense to house these books in the bunker than here on campus," Bridegam said.

In recent years, the bunker has been completely restored. Over nine miles of shelving, standing 12-feet tall, fill rooms that once housed colossal antique computers.

All that remains from the bunker's military days is a glass-enclosed balcony overlooking the war room, a sign that reads "Senior Battle Staff Only," and a stash of old "girlie" magazines airmen hid into a crawl space. "We have also kept the bunker's 1962 renovation blueprints," Hayden said.

Amherst College invited local colleges Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Smith and the University of Massachusetts to use the bunker, forming the Five College Library Depository.

The addition of the other colleges strengthens an existing spirit of collaboration between the schools, but also helped Amherst College with procuring grants to cover over \$1 million in renovation costs also used to help defray the costs of transferring the books from the schools to the bunker. Amherst will keep ownership and lease about 10,000 square feet to the other schools.

Many retired military members express interest in touring the bunker, but the college has no plans in turning the bunker into a

tourist destination.

The bunker may never have performed the task for which it was created, but even today, serves as a noble and permanent

reminder of the Cold War's dark menace, the Air Force's faithful resolve to defend the nation, and Westover's critical role in meeting the challenge.



photo courtesy of Amherst College

BALCONY OF HISTORY - The above balcony is the bunker's only significant remaining element from the SAC era. The balcony overlooks the former war room.

Growing demand stretches Patriot Honor Guard thin

by SrA. T.R.
Ouellette

As the reputation of the Westover Patriot Honor Guard continues to grow, so does the demand for its services.

Indeed, since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on America, patriotism soared nationwide. As a result, an unprecedented growth in Honor Guard appearances followed, up 400 percent from the previous year. Although the Honor Guard always appeared in various community parades and ceremonies, as well as base protocol events, never in their 22-year history has the demand been so high.

In addition, the Honor Guard has seen a massive increase in the rendering of military honors at funerals, the Honor Guard's main mission.

Covering a region of more than 90,000 square miles, with Hanscom AFB's Patriot Honor Guard, Westover's Patriot Honor Guard is responsible for military funeral honors in a seven-state area. Last year alone, Westover's Patriot Honor Guard rendered military honors at nearly 100 funerals, averaging about two per week.

The 2002 total of military funeral honors nearly doubled those from 2001. In the first quarter of fiscal year 2003 alone, the Honor Guard has rendered military funeral honors at 40 separate occasions, clearly indicating the growth is continuing. "The increase in funeral activity can be attributed to three factors," said MSgt. Thomas Roe, superintendent of Westover's Patriot Honor Guard.

In January 2000, Congress passed legislation that mandated all veterans, not just retirees, are entitled to military funeral honors. Also, the somber reality is many of our

Reservists interested in becoming a ceremonial guardsman of the Honor Guard should stop by Bldg. 3284 near the Fairview Gate, or call Ext. 3342.



photo by AIC Alison Rodgers

PRECISION PRACTICING - Westover Patriot Honor Guard firing party members constantly practice for upcoming events. The Honor Guard faces a growing commitment to military events largely attributed to a passing generation of World War II veterans.

World War II veterans are passing away, Roe said.

According to Air Force statistics, more than 1,500 World War II, Korean, and Vietnam veterans pass away daily nationwide. That number is expected to peak at 2,500 daily nationwide in 2006. Honor guards nationwide are already performing at more and more funerals, Roe said.

The third reason for more military funeral honors is the opening of the Massachusetts Veterans Cemetery last year in Agawam. The new cemetery seems to have stimulated awareness and heightened interest in obtaining military funerals.

As if the increases aren't challenging enough, it comes at a time when Honor Guard's membership has decreased, although for justifiable reasons.

Since Sept. 11, Honor Guard membership has remained just under 40 members, while 18 were activated for the War on Terror. Twelve were recently activated for the War in Iraq, shrinking the available membership needed to meet the Honor Guard's mission.

"It is always understood that the Honor Guard is strictly a volunteer assignment and service to one's unit must come first," Roe said. "It does make it harder to meet our

commitments, but it's understandable. Fortunately, not all of the members activated were deployed so many units made sacrifices and allowed these members to be released for funerals. I'm grateful to these units. Without them we could not have achieved our mission."

Roe lauded many from Westover for their assistance.

"The support has been tremendous. Transportation provides us vehicles, co-workers and immediate supervisors have been understanding with the workload, and the first sergeants, chiefs, and commanders from all the units have been very, very supportive," he said. "Plus, the spouses and family members have been very patient and understanding."

Of course, additional members would help ease the demands facing the Honor Guard, Roe said.

"We are looking to bring in more people to the Honor Guard, particularly if anyone can play the bugle," he said.

Training for the Honor Guard is a one-week course held at Westover. Members receive applicable pay and allowances, points towards retirement, free uniforms, free dry cleaning, and the privilege of wearing the distinctive Honor Guard badge.



photos by MSgt. W.C. Pope

Mission on the "J"

Above, MSgt. Nancy Clegg, left, and Capt. Denise Claffey, 439th AES, discuss aeromedical evacuation procedures aboard a C-130J Hercules. Right, AES members discuss the April 26 mission with the Hercules in the background. The B UTA mission was one of the first times that AES has trained on the "J" model of the famous airlifter.



Air Force launches new Parent Pin outreach program

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Secretary of the Air Force James G. Roche and Air Force Chief of Staff General John P. Jumper officially launched a new Air Force outreach program on May 7. The program is designed to thank parents of all airmen for supporting their military service.

Secretary Roche and General Jumper presented USAF Parent Pins to the parents of one active duty airman, one Air National Guard airman and one Air Force Reserve Command airman.

The presentations took place in the office of the Secretary of the Air Force.

The Parent Pin program gives every Air Force member the opportunity to register online and request a letter of thanks jointly signed by Secretary Roche and General Jumper be sent to up to two parents (or parental figures).

Included with the letters will be lapel pins displaying the letter "P" cradled in the Air Force symbol. Parents are asked to wear their pins as signs of support for their children's military service.

"Military service is no longer a rite of passage," said Secretary Roche. "We now have an entire generation of Americans who do not understand the military culture. The Parent Pin can narrow the gulf between those who serve and the community at large. It opens the

door for the parents of our airmen to explain to others what their children are doing for the Air Force and what the Air Force has done for their children."

The Parent Pins are a contemporary adaptation of the World War II "E" flags that were used to recognize companies for contributions to the war effort. They are presented to parents on display cards that explain their lineage.

The accompanying letters address recipients and airmen by name and are intended to communicate to parents the importance of their children's military service, to express sincere gratitude for parents' continued support, and to convey a sense of partnership between the Air Force and the parents of America's airmen.

"It is in the best interest of our nation to develop public understanding of the Air Force's mission and objectives," said Secretary Roche. "The parents of our airmen might not always understand our mission, but they nonetheless are helping us meet our objectives through their continuing support of their sons and daughters - the men and women serving today, and those who decide to serve in the future."

The point of contact at Westover is CCMSgt. Jeffrey B. Sherwin, 439th AW Command Chief Master Sergeant. He may be reached at Ext. 2214. His e-mail is jeffrey.sherwin@westover.af.mil.



IRAQ continued from page 3

No latrines, no showers, no laundry and just MREs with water. We also don't have much for personal supplies. I've since learned what we really need to survive, and that's many years of good training with the 439th AES and others at Westover ARB. We've been able to do our job with just that, a cell phone and a couple of borrowed cots," he wrote.

On April 18, Capt. Cal wrote: "We moved one urgent patient last night, three patients the night before, and two the night before that... we moved patients nearly every day with the little we have."

Three days later he wrote: "We've had two casualties from hostile fire, and all the rest have been injuries. The worst thing is the rain. It

rains every two or three days, and everything gets covered in mud. You get about two inches of mud stuck to the bottom of your boots, just from walking 10 feet.

"We had a small stream of water flowing through our tent. Even with sandbags and trenches, there's just no way to stop the water."

Capt. Cal concluded an e-mail to Chief Sherwin with advice based on his hard experience.

"Please let others know that the most important survival asset is good training and complete notes. Anything else is just 'frosting on the cake,'" Capt. Cal wrote.



photo by MSgt. W.C. Pope

In honor

SALUTE TO RETIREES - The May 3 Retiree Appreciation and Memorial Day Ceremony recognized military and civilian employees of Westover who recently retired from their service to America. Each of the retirees received a certificate of appreciation from Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick, 439th AW commander. The Chicopee High School Band also performed for the ceremony.

42nd APS to hold retirement party for commander

The 42nd Aerial Port Squadron invites Westover people to honor squadron commander Lt. Col. James P. Carey in his retirement. The retirement party will be held on June 7 at Heidi's Restaurant in South Hadley.

Dinner will be served from 6-7 p.m. followed by presentations from 7:30-9 p.m. Dancing will conclude the party from 9 p.m. to midnight.

Cost is \$15 per person and attire is business casual. Those people interested in attending the party should RSVP by June 2 to Maj. James Finneran or Thomas Clark at Ext. 3276.

Carey has been a reservist for 28 years. He has been the 42nd commander since May 1996.

New chief aims to expand cooperation with area departments

by SrA. T.R. Ouellette

Due to an impressive resume and fresh from winning two significant awards, an eight-year veteran of Westover's Fire Department was selected as its new fire chief.

Charlie Van Gorden was promoted to the position officially on April 20.

Prior to serving here, Van Gorden served in the fire departments at Griffiss AFB, N.Y. for eight years and Malmstrom AFB, Mont. for four.

He recently earned both the Air Force Re-



Van Gorden

serve Command's "Best Civilian Fire Officer of the Year" and Westover's "Civilian Supervisor of Quarter" (First quarter-2003).

At 39, Van Gorden may be one of the youngest fire chiefs serving in the Air Force Reserve.

Contributing to his selection as fire chief, Van Gorden is currently the only member of Westover's 62-member fire department to have achieved the Department of Defense's highest levels of certification in every category in the fire prevention occupation.

"I'm happy to have been selected, but a fire chief doesn't make the department. The department makes the manager. I can only be as good as they are and we have a very knowledgeable and experienced staff," Van Gorden said.

The new chief already has set some goals for the base's fire department.

His main, long-term goal is to change the

impression that the department exists only to fight fires. He would prefer his department be known as "Westover's Fire and Emergency Services Department" because of the many non-fire related problems they handle.

"If there is a problem, we want to be the ones you call," Van Gorden said. "We have EMTs on duty 24 hours every day, we are the only department in the local area certified in technical rope rescue (used for high angle/confined space rescues), and as of June 1, every one of our fire department members will be certified at the highest level of hazardous material training," he said.

His short-term goal is to expand the tradition of cooperation with community fire departments.

"Without ever hurting our mission needs here, I'd like to strengthen our relationships with local fire departments for the benefit of our community," Van Gorden said.

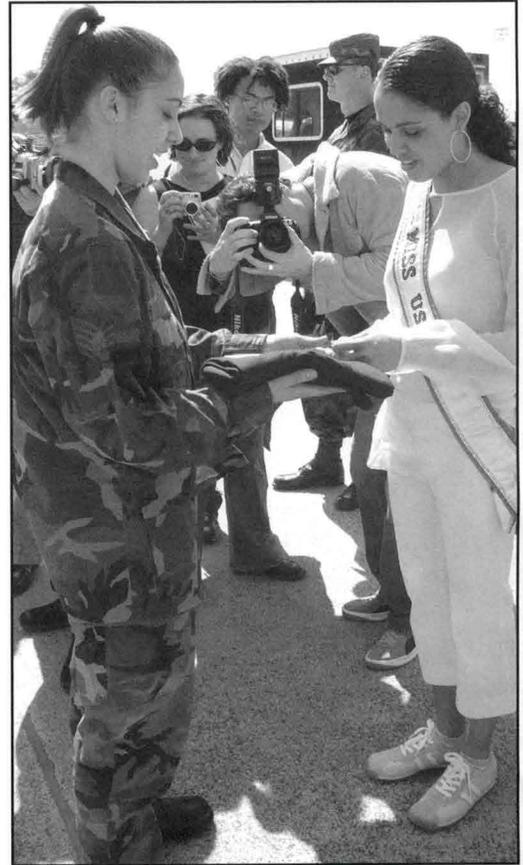


photo by MSgt. W.C. Pope

Beauty visit

FROM THE TROOPS - Miss USA, Susie Castillo, accepts a 439th AMXS coin and squadron T-shirt from SSgt. Kara B. Davis, an AMXS crew chief, during Castillo's visit to Westover on April 25. During her two-hour visit, Castillo greeted troops returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom troops in the passenger terminal where she autographed photos.

Patriot People

Name: William Powers
Rank: SSgt.
Age: 49
Address: Warrensburg, N.Y.
Unit: 439th CES
Position: Firefighter/driver
Civilian position: Correction officer
Favorite food: Surf and turf
Years of service: 26
Favorite sport: Baseball
Favorite hobby: Collecting baseball cards
Ideal vacation: Home with family
Best way to relax: Work out
Preferred entertainment: Watching my boy play sports
Favorite hero: The Duke
Favorite music: Classic rock
Favorite movie: Quiet Man
Favorite aircraft: AC-130
Pet peeve: People who think they're better
What I would do if I won \$1 million: Kids' college and spend

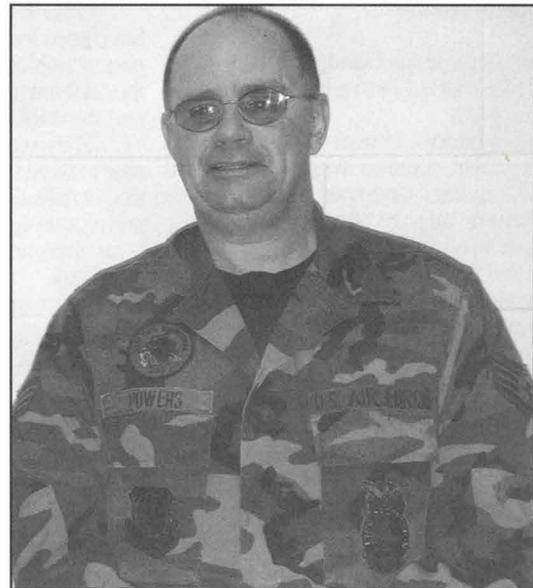


photo by SRA. T.R. Ouellette

SSgt. William Powers

Patriot Praises

Enlistments:

SSgt. Didomenico, Guy
 SSgt. Gambino, Earl G.
 SSgt. Podkowka, Matthew D.
 SSgt. Poulin, Jacqueline R.
 SSgt. Roberts, Jason E.
 SrA. Bentley, Steven P.
 SrA. Herbert, Paul J.
 SrA. Langevin, Robert L., Jr.
 SrA. Monita, Eduardo R.
 A1C Anderson, Christopher J.
 A1C Coleman, Darrell I.
 A1C Darisse, Matthew F.
 A1C Dillon, Michael B., Jr.
 A1C Echeverri, Yurany
 A1C Finn, Daniel J.
 A1C Green, Skylet W.
 A1C Guilbeaux, Chrystopher J.
 A1C Holness, Warren A.
 A1C Isaacs, Justin L.
 A1C Jones, Michael B.
 A1C Kilnapp, Joshua B.G.
 A1C Koniszewski, Joseph X.
 A1C Kostiuk, Geoffrey S.
 A1C Kulewicz, Michelle H.
 A1C Leonard, Jason Ernest
 A1C Martin, Christopher S.
 A1C Park, Nicholas Y.
 A1C Pinkerton, James R.
 A1C Rosa, Roberto R.
 A1C Stephan, Ronald L.

A1C Swindlehurst, Matthew J.
 A1C Teixeira, Robert
 A1C Willis, Shane D.
 Amn. Avery, Robert J., Jr.
 Amn. Page-Herd, Amesia C.
 AB Hardy-Martin, Matoaca V.
 AB Hiserodt, Andrew C.
 AB Kumar, Sonia K.
 AB Sullivan, Carla J.

Newly Assigned:

2nd Lt. Romanoff, Maria R.
 2nd Lt. Watkins, Christopher D.

Reassigned:

Capt. Hutchinson, David E.
 Capt. Travalent, Michael A.
 MSgt. Evers, Elaine A.
 TSgt. Lussier, Eugene D.
 SSgt. Vaderboncoeur, Kevin
 SrA. Anderson, Robert J., J.
 SrA. Bassett, Adam B.
 SrA. Bayot, Joannalyn C.
 SrA. Pickering, Jesse T.
 A1C Martin, Shelly A.

Retired:

SMSgt. Robert, John F.

MSgt. Devaney, Mary C.
 MSgt. Friguglietti, Albert J.
 MSgt. Jackson, Herald J.
 MSgt. Newton, Edward R.
 MSgt. Whelan, Patrick T.
 TSgt. Blake, Robert P.
 TSgt. Delisle, Neil A.
 TSgt. Dunton, Lovell H.
 TSgt. Hall, Curtis A.
 TSgt. Johnson, Keith A.
 TSgt. Matherson, Gary M.
 TSgt. Reed, Allan S., Jr.
 TSgt. Shannon, John J., Jr.
 TSgt. Tiberii, Louis J.
 SSgt. Valley, Thomas P.

Awards and Decorations

Air Force Achievement Medal
 MSgt. Daniel P. Berry
 MSgt. Joseph E. Fitzgibbon
 MSgt. Steven E. Ross
 MSgt. Edward M. Sierzego, Jr.
 TSgt. Scott S. Crawford
 TSgt. Charlene K. Delesline
 TSgt. Steven C. King
 TSgt. Zona P. Sabatino
 TSgt. Daniel S. Strauser
 TSgt. Thomas W. Zahm

Meritorious Service Medal
 SMSgt. Michael L. Wentworth
 MSgt. Paul Hausman
 MSgt. Michael J. O'Hearn



The PATRIOT is a monthly base newspaper for and about Westover reservists and civilians. The deadline for each issue is the end of the A UTA one month before each issue's publication. To encourage story ideas and other suggestions, contact the Public Affairs staff at patriot.editor@westover.af.mil or (413) 557-2020. The PA office is located in Bldg. 1850, located on Patriot Avenue.

Bird watchers flock to Westover to view winged friends

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

We've got the upland sandpiper. That might not sound like much, but to a birder, an upland sandpiper is gold.

Eighteen birders, known as bird watchers in the vernacular, came to Westover on April 28 to see the upland sandpiper and other birds that nest here or migrate through Westover.

At least two of the birds here, the upland sandpiper and the grasshopper sparrow, are on the endangered list. The grasshopper sparrow wasn't scheduled to arrive here until mid-May.

Lt. Col. David T. Moore, 439th Airlift Wing Chief of Safety, escorted the birders.

"They would have liked to have seen the grasshopper sparrow, but they were delighted to see the upland sandpiper. They're much less common because of the reduction of grassland in Massachusetts," he said.

They also saw two wild turkeys and a red tailed hawk on base.

Other less common birds which they may have been looking for include the hooded merganser, which arrives at the end of February; the northern parula, from late April through May; and the eastern phoebe.

They would have been particularly fortunate to have spotted a yellow bellied sapsucker that is here for a few weeks in April and May and returns in the fall. The common yellowthroat is an uncommon bird that was due to arrive in mid-May.

Westover contains the largest contiguous

grassland in the northeast, 1,600 acres of the 2,600 acres of the installation.

A large wetland complex created by Stony Brook and Wade Lake covers the northeastern part of the base. Grasslands, pine plantations, forested wetlands, sedge meadows and cranberry bogs provide varied habitat.

Moore and others here work with the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife to protect the birds. Large sections of grassland are off-limits to protect them during breeding season.

Easthampton VFW donates \$200 to USO

The Easthampton Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3422 recently donated \$200 to the Pioneer Valley Chapter of the United Services Organization at Westover.

Two World War II veterans, James Zedonis and Walter Sparko, delivered the check to Sandy Wakefield, executive director of the Pioneer Valley USO.

The USO has kept a constant presence at Westover supplying troops with coffee, doughnuts, and other refreshments as they make their way overseas or return home. The USO reception area in the passenger terminal has earned praise from scores of visitors since the surge of operations began at Westover in February.

June 26 - Employer Appreciation Day

Reservist's name, rank and unit: _____

Reservist's home address: _____

Reservist's daytime telephone number: _____

Employer's name and title: _____

Employer's company name/address: _____

Lunch for employer: YES _____ NO _____

Lunch for reservist: YES _____ NO _____

I understand that I may nominate one person annually, and only an individual who is my supervisor, foreman, manager, etc.

Signature _____

(Falsification of information on this form can be punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.)

Return this form to:

439th Airlift Wing/ Public Affairs, 100 Lloyd St., East Wing, Suite 103

Westover ARB, Mass. 01022-1825



www.afrc.af.mil/439aw

June UTA schedule

A UTA June 7-8

B UTA June 21-22



439th AW/PA
WESTOVER AIR RESERVE BASE
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East Wing, Suite 103
CHICOPEE, MA 01022-1825

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Published monthly for Patriots like SrA. Jenilee Shea, Auburn, Mass., and 2,448 members of the 439th AW at Westover ARB, and geographically separated units.