

# PATRIOT

439th Airlift Wing • Westover Air Reserve Base

January 2004 • Vol. 31, No. 1

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## Outstanding!

### 439th AW earns AF award for second time in three years

For the second time in three years, the 439th Airlift Wing has earned one of the Air Force's most prestigious honors, the Outstanding Unit Award.

Maj. Gen. John J. Batbie Jr., Air Force Reserve Command vice commander, announced the award on Dec. 9, which recognizes the wing's efforts from Oct. 1, 2001 to Sept. 30, 2003.

"During this period, the 439th Airlift Wing was integral to the national strategic response to terrorism, ready on short notice to meet and exceed the highest expectations of the Total Force and Aerospace Expeditionary Concepts," the award citation reads.

Topping the accomplishments list on the award citation was the 2003 surge, in which the Air Force called on Westover to become a staging base similar to the first Gulf War.

"Westover launched 1,103 C-5s during this surge period, which was more than any other Air Mobility Command (AMC) location in the world. Westover's exceptional performance was clearly evidenced by maintaining a 90.1 percent departure reliability rating for its C-5 operations, exceeding AMC's goal of 85 percent.

Volunteers wing-wide established a hospitality area for deploying troops, providing chaplain services, a mini-exchange, lounge area, cots, meals around the clock, computers for internet and email access, books, magazines, writing material, televisions, VCRs, video games and telephones."

While the surge highlighted 2003, reservists also deployed across the country and the world.

"Westover personnel conducted a variety

of other critical operations while maintaining an active role in the war effort," the citation reads.

"Security forces squadron personnel supported several taskings for Aerospace Expeditionary Forces 7 and 8. Other wing members volunteered to fill shortfalls for these operations. At the request of AMC, members of the 439th Airlift Control Flight deployed to Chad, the Dominican Republic, South Pacific and Russia to perform airfield surveys, including two short-notice presidential support surveys. In addition, aircrews, maintainers and aerial porters sustained numerous Phoenix Banner presidential support missions."

Other highlights on the citation included recognition of reservists' volunteering to paint a house for Habitat for Humanity in Springfield.



**SURGE SUCCESS - A row of C-5A and B models sits on the Westover flight line in March, awaiting the next missions during the surge of operations for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Air Force Reserve Command leadership recognized the efforts of the Patriot Wing to support the surge at the base from February to June 2003, and announced the wing had earned the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.**

- photo by Maj. Patrick Ryan

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

## Award points to 439<sup>th</sup> AW dedication

Congratulations!

For the second time in three years the 439<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing has earned the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. All levels of command in both the Air Force Reserve Command and the regular Air Force have recognized your hard work and dedication over the last two years, and now the wing has been officially rewarded for a job well done. I can assure that the competition for this award is very intense. You can be proud that Westover is one of the best of the best. When I came here in August, I got the feeling that was the case and the more time I spend here I am sure of it. Now this award just confirms that feeling. Your former wing commander, Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick, wants me to pass on his congratulations as well and thanks you for your outstanding efforts while he was at the helm.



I also want to congratulate you on two other accomplishments.

First, we exceeded the Combined Federal campaign goal! We went over by almost \$4,000 and bested last

### Commentary

year's total by more than 29 percent!

Second, kudos are in order for the way we "weathered" this year's first major snowstorm. Despite the terrible conditions during the December UTA, many folks still made it in for Sunday training and, just as importantly, many more made a good decision not to come in. Also, as far as I know, none of our folks were involved in a serious accident.

As we begin the New Year, we will face many challenges, some new, some old. One challenge this year will be the new fitness standards. Hopefully all of you have already begun preparing for this new challenge and will be ready when we start testing in the next few months.

Another challenge we will face is meeting the demands of the missions we are tasked to accomplish. They are especially challenging as we enter a third year of greatly increased operations tempo. You all have done a great job meeting those demands and I have no doubt the members of the 439<sup>th</sup> will continue to do so.

While you face these challenges I want you to remember one thing: do it safely or not at all. If we are not safe then it's very likely someone will get hurt or we will damage a valuable piece of equipment. Another key aspect of safety, both on and off base, is wearing your seatbelt. I am surprised and a little shocked at the level of non-compliance we have found over the last couple of months. I strongly urge you to buckle up. If you don't, you may soon be in my office explaining why you think you don't need to, or worse, waking up in a hospital bed asking yourself the same question! Please wear your seatbelt; I need ALL of you to get the mission done.

Finally, have a happy, prosperous, and SAFE New Year!

by Col. Wade Farris  
439th Airlift Wing commander

## Briefs

### Medical facility issues flu shot schedules

The immunizations clinic at the 439th AMDS medical facility is going to standardized hours for non-physical vaccinations and tuberculosis reads.

The clinic staff will provide flu shots on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. and from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Flu shots for reservists will be provided on Jan. 10 during the A UTA.

Units wishing to send over large groups of people need to call the clinic at Ext. 3565 in advance to set up appointments.

### First quarter award recipients announced

Westover's Quarterly Awards Board has selected the following first quarter award winners for the fiscal 2004.

**Airman:**

SrA. Edward H. Marchbanks, 439th AMXS

**NCO:**

TSgt. Vincent T. Bovino, AMXS

**Senior NCO:**

MSgt. Nicole D. Remy, 439th LRS

**Civilian:**

Ronald A. Ploof, 439th OG

**Civilian Supervisor:**

Roy O. Green, 439th MSS

**Company Grade Officer:**

Capt. Robert N. Oliveri, 439th AMDS

### Mideastern souvenirs may be health hazard

Some souvenirs being purchased by soldiers, airmen and marines in Iraq, Kuwait and other Persian Gulf areas may be hazardous to your health.

According to Air Force Health Services, objects such as unglazed/partially glazed coffee cups, pewter mugs, copper pots, etc. may not meet U.S. standards. People who have acquired them should be very careful about using them for food or beverages.

They should also be concerned if they have sent such objects home to families where children could be using them for juice drinks.

For more information, call Marian G. Mathieu, chief of bioenvironmental services, at Ext. 2663.

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**439th Airlift Wing commander**

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# Two-fisted Nor'easter shuts down December A UTA

## Storm dumps 16 inches of snow in two waves on base through weekend

by TSgt. Andrew Biscoe

A December Nor'easter that bore down with two systems on New England forced base officials to cancel the December A UTA.

According to Robert C. Gentile, a weather forecaster with the base, 16 inches of snow had fallen by Dec. 7, the Sunday of the A UTA. Gentile said the first snowflakes fell beginning Dec. 5 – the eve of the monthly training weekend, just as some reservists arrived at the base. "It was a one-two punch," Gentile said. "The first system went through, then the second one came in on Saturday."

Blowing and drifting snow added a dangerous element to the storm, making it harder for people to see because of the wind speeds, and harder to clean up. Drifts of snow loomed over the main streets of the base.

Gentile said this storm wasn't as large as the big one on Presidents Day in February 2003. And although it classified as a Nor'easter, its winds did not pack enough power to make it a blizzard. Winds must exceed 35 mph in order to be part of a blizzard, he said.

Reservists who traveled on Friday for the UTA made it to work Saturday. Many also came in Sunday, but the piling snow forced commanders to release reservists earlier than normal in the duty day.

The storm had tapered off by mid-morning on Dec. 7, but not before it had set a record for the most snow at Westover in a December, Gentile said. The last storm to do so was one that dropped 15 inches on Dec. 28, 1967.



photo by MSgt. W.C. Pope

**KEEPING UP** - Snow plow crews work at controlling the blowing and drifting snow swirling around a C-5 on the flight line on Dec. 7. The snowstorm almost reached blizzard conditions as winds topped out at 35 mph.

## Construction adds new look with buildings, lights

by TSgt. Andrew Biscoe

The Westover landscape is taking on a new look as the base enters its 64<sup>th</sup> year of service to America.

Construction sites and renovations pepper the base's 2,500 acres. The more than \$12 million dollars' worth of construction extends onto the airfield too.

New lighting is being installed in and around Runway 5/23, the main runway that stretches 11,600 feet. The \$1.6 million project will ensure the safety and effectiveness of one of the longest runways on the East Coast.

"All of the pilots landing at the base are going to notice a big difference when they arrive here," said Joseph Alfonso, engineer technician with the 439<sup>th</sup> Base Civil Engineer organization. Because of winter weather conditions, the approach lighting to the Runway 5 end will not be completed until the spring.

Additions, improvements and new buildings – including the Marine Reserve squadron's new headquarters on Patriot Avenue – make up the new look of the base.

The new \$8.2 million Marines building houses the Marines Corps

**BUILDING continued on Page 10**



Courtesy photo

**LIGHTING UP** - A construction crew works on the lighting on the main runway at Westover. The new lighting is among many new projects modernizing the facilities at Westover. Runway 5/23 is one of the longest runways on the East Coast at 11,600 feet long and 300 feet wide.

# Uzbekistan deployment forges 42nd into winning team

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

After four months of being almost as far away from home as you can get, home for the holidays was on the minds of Patriot Wing aerial porters serving in Uzbekistan as Christmas approached. About two dozen members of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Aerial Port Squadron who missed Thanksgiving away from their families while in the AOR were scheduled to return to Westover a few days before Christmas.

The "Red Hats" squadron members were planning to come home with a fistful of honors for what they accomplished conducting aerial port operations out of the former Soviet air base.

The aerial porters deployed last August and were on the road for 54 grueling hours, passing through seven different civilian and military airfields before arriving at their destination of Quarshi-Khanabad, an Uzbek Air Force base north of Afghanistan. The base was dubbed K-2 at the beginning of Enduring Freedom. Uzbekistan is an area of high, arid plains, surrounded by several mountainous regions. The entire region is very dusty and hot in the summer; it is cold in the winter.

NCOIC of the aerial porters was CMSgt. Bruce L. Westcott, ATOC superintendent, who wrote back to Westover during the later part of the deployment that the team members were more than earning their pay.

"We are over 100 days into the mission, still hearing 'BEST in the AOR, your guys are the best, dedicated professionals,'" the chief wrote.

"The departing group commander says we were the best porters he has seen in his 34 years! And we are only doing what we believe to be our job. This team has truly lived up to the 42<sup>nd</sup> motto of 'Pride and Professionalism,'" Westcott said of his deployed aerial porters.

The chief noted that the 42nd had troops in seven different countries at the beginning



ON THE JOB - 42nd APS reservists load cargo onto an Air Force transport.

Courtesy photo

of December, which could be a first for the aerial port community, active or reserve.

"As we contact other ATOCs in the AOR we hear the familiar voices of the 42nd. Our last officer, Capt. John A. Dugan, air terminal operations center officer, transited here last week en route to Bagram (Afghanistan). We have moved everything from blood to bullets, litter patients and fallen comrades.

"By the time we leave we will have worked over 1,600 aircraft, 7,000 tons of cargo and moved over 9,500 passengers through the only Air Force controlled passenger terminal at K2. Our passenger terminal has been recognized as the best run in the AOR by the Army."

Westover's aerial porters have earned appreciation from a number of senior leaders, including President George W. Bush when the commander-in-chief visited troops at the Baghdad International Airport on Thanksgiving Day.

"I've met Marine Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We forward deployed SrA. Christopher P. Harry on a sensitive support mission. He met Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld in Afghanistan. And then Lt. Col. Thomas G. Clark, 42<sup>nd</sup> APS commander, met the president in Baghdad," Westcott wrote.

Singled out for personal recognition during the deployment were MSgt. James P. Garrity, who was named Senior NCO of the Month, first of the expeditionary squadron and then the expeditionary group; TSgt. Kevin R. Nee, NCO of the Month for the expeditionary group and then the wing; and Harry and SrA. Jodi L. Habbinger, who each were cited as expeditionary squadron Airman of the Month. TSgt. Michael J. Downs was named NCO of the Month by

his expeditionary group while serving at Manas, Krygyzstan, an international airport from which American, French, Australian and Canadian airmen have operated in support missions in Afghanistan.

Days were long and full for the aerial porters who worked around the clock, lived in a tent city and found diversion in a well

42nd continued on Page 5



photo by SSgt. Patrick Minihan

SECRETARY VISITS - Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld meets SrA. Christopher P. Harry, 42nd APS air cargo specialist, on Dec. 4. Harry is deployed on a two-week mission in northern Afghanistan.

***"The departing group commander says we were the best porters he has seen in his 34 years! And we are only doing what we believe to be our job."***

***-- CMSgt. Bruce L. Westcott, ATOC superintendent, 42nd APS***



*Courtesy photos*

**GENERAL VISIT - Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, meets CMSgt. Bruce L. Westcott, 42nd APS.**

**42nd continued from Page 4**

equipped gym. Team members estimated that between the long hours, diet and fitness center, among them they shed 300 pounds.

When not working the flight line, the aerial porters were also cracking the books. Ten members passed CDC and PME tests while deployed.

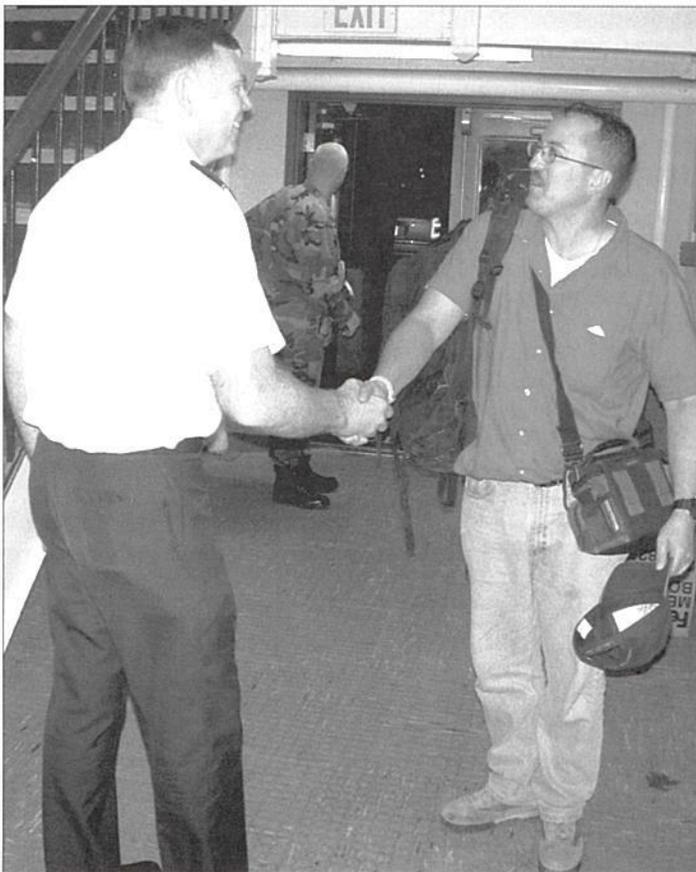
Westcott said that the experience of serving in the AOR made the aerial porters veterans of the front lines of the War on Terrorism who feel pride in what they accomplished and brotherhood with all those who serve far from home.

"I could not be more proud to have led this team out here and to have represented the 42<sup>nd</sup>, the Wing and everyone back home. Pride has new meaning today," he wrote.

"We cannot forget all of our brothers fallen, wounded or working. We have been one team, one fight...we may not have been the tip of the spear, but we were the mettle of that instrument," Westcott wrote.



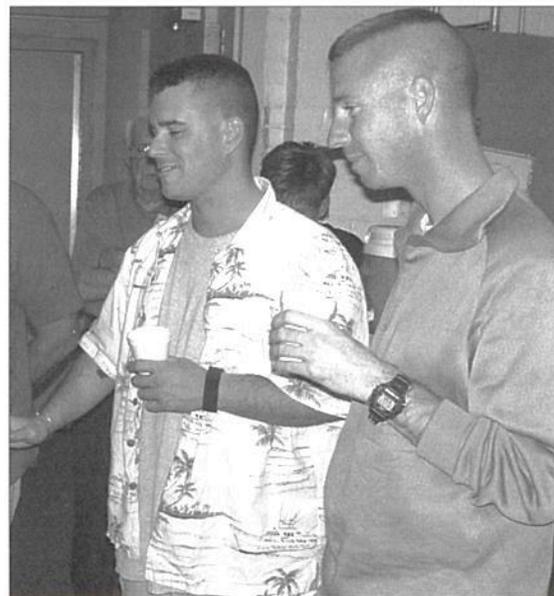
**DANGER - This sign illustrates the danger that surrounds the Patriot Wing deployers.**



*photos by TSgt. Andrew Biscoe*

**TSgt. Thomas E. Cowern, 439th CES EOD, shakes hands with Col. Wade Farris, 439th AW commander, upon Cowern's arrival at Hangar 7 at Westover on Nov. 19. Cowern was deployed for four months in northern Iraq. He and two other EOD members first arrived at Bradley International Airport to meet family and friends, and then traveled to Westover for a homecoming set up by CES members.**

**EOD members return from Iraq deployment**



**TSgt. Keith A. Latarski, left, and SSgt. Arthur Derderian Jr., 439th CES EOD, describe the conditions in Iraq shortly after their arrival at Westover. They said emperatures frequently soared above 100 degrees. One day, Latarski said, the mercury rose to 138 degrees.**

# ASTS returns following eight-month deployment

by TSgt. Andrew Biscoe  
 Photo by Capt. Deresa Helems,  
 439<sup>th</sup> ASTS

Members of the 439<sup>th</sup> ASTS welcomed home their reservists from Ramstein AB, Germany on Nov. 9. MSgt. Jeffrey Picard, a reservist with the 439<sup>th</sup> AMDS, also returned after having served with the ASTS members since March 2003.

The reservists arrived late in the evening at Westover aboard a Patriot Wing C-5, which had flown a mission to Europe earlier that month and flew back through Ramstein.

Once on the ground, ASTS senior leadership greeted the reservists. The group boarded a bus on the flight line and arrived at the passenger terminal to find their families and friends awaiting them. Pioneer Valley USO volunteers were also on hand and provided refreshments.

"It came together nicely," said SMSgt. Michelle M. Dunfield, ASTS first sergeant. "Everybody's family was there. I must have called people five times. We're breathing a big sigh of relief."

Col. Sarah F. Waterman, 439<sup>th</sup> ASTS commander, praised Dunfield for her homecoming efforts.

"The first sergeant was the linchpin in all of this," she said.

Dunfield said the entire squadron is plan-



**BACK HOME** - SSgt. Rebecca L. Pina, 439<sup>th</sup> ASTS, is welcomed home by her father, Art, on Nov. 9 at Westover.

ning a get-together and reunion in January. A Christmas party went on as scheduled on Dec. 6, but a snowstorm prevented many members from attending, she said.

"We're so glad to have everyone back," she said. "It's like a Christmas present to the unit. We're having a celebration in January."

## Deployed couple reflects on separation from children

by TSgt. Andrew Biscoe  
 Photo by Capt. Deresa Helems, 439<sup>th</sup> ASTS

A husband and wife were among 16 Patriot Wing reservists who touched down at Westover on Nov. 9 after eight months of duty in Germany.

TSgts. Phaly S. Walker and Silas P. Villarreal, 439<sup>th</sup> ASTS medical technicians, volunteered to deploy while separated from their two young children. They were part of a contingency aeromedical staging facility (CASF) with the 86<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing at Ramstein AB.

Walker said daughters Seanna, 7, and Alaina, 4, often got anxious and believed their parents were deployed in Iraq instead of Germany.

"Our kids would hear stories on the news and got worked up. They worried a lot," she said.

In her civilian life, Walker is an accountant for a Boston accounting company. Villarreal is a student at Massasoit Community College.

After nine years in the Air Force Reserve, Villarreal said he was excited about his first deployment in March. "This is what we train for," he said. But his euphoria soon wore off.

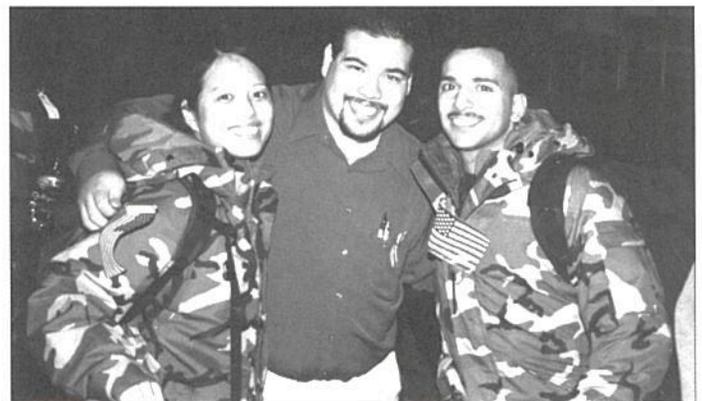
"The second month really got to me. It kind of hit me hard," Villarreal said. He recalled his long distance call with SMSgt.

Michelle M. Dunfield, the 439<sup>th</sup> ASTS first sergeant, and how the call made him feel closer to home. "It was good to hear her voice," he said.

Back on the job, there wasn't much time to think about home. The pace of Operation Iraqi Freedom kept he and his wife very busy.

"We recovered patients from downrange," Villarreal said. "Our main goal was to stage the patients leaving on their way to CONUS."

**COUPLE continued on Page 9**



**FAMILY HUG** - TSgt. Phaly S. Walker, left, and her husband, TSgt. Silas P. Villarreal, celebrate their reunion with Walker's brother, Mason. Villarreal and Walker voluntarily deployed for eight months to Ramstein, leaving behind their two young children.

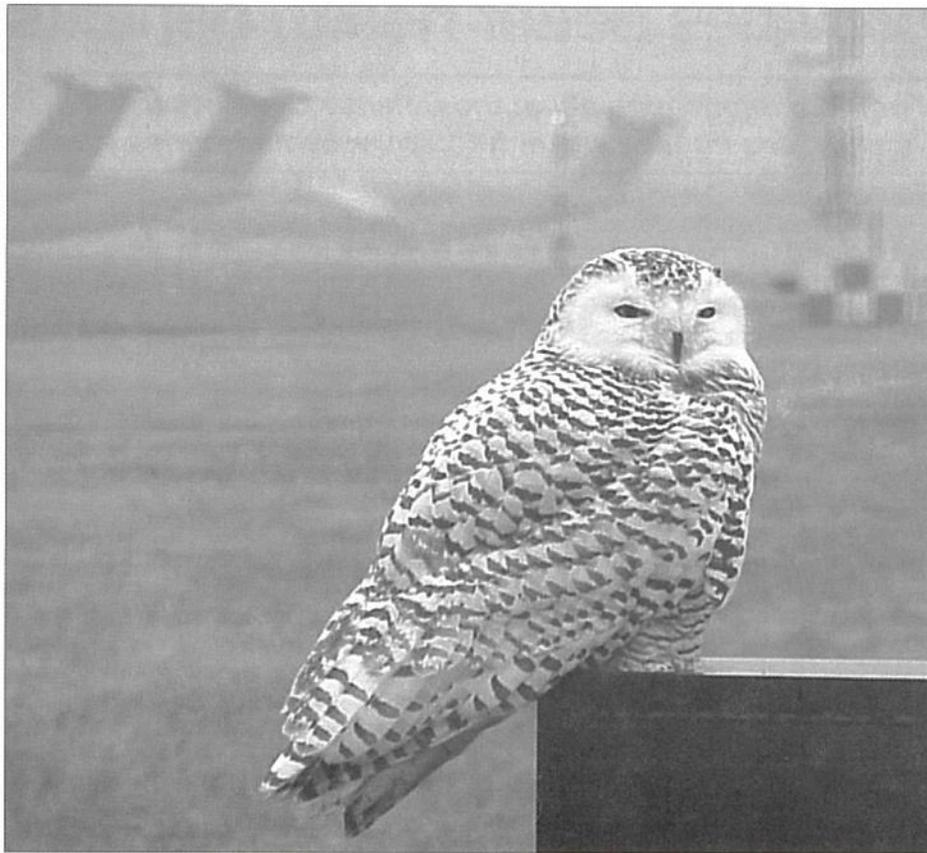


photo by Jack Moriarty, environmental engineer

**SNOW BIRD** – This snowy owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) spent a few days resting at Westover during its migration south in November. Ranging from 20 to 27 inches in length, the snowy owl spends most of its time from northern Canada to the Arctic but will migrate as far south as Tennessee. In order to prevent a possible altercation with a C-5, a representative from the United States Department of Agriculture was able to scare the bird away. If she (the female of the species tend to be more spotted) reappeared, the USDA was prepared to trap and relocate the owl.

## Great New England Air Show to soar again

### *Thunderbirds scheduled to perform at two-day event*

Work is already under way for the return of the Great New England Air Show set for Aug. 14-15.

It was announced in mid-December that the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds will perform during the show at Westover on both days.

Base officials cancelled the 2002 edition because of the base's heavy involvement in Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Officials decided it would be impossible to put on an air show with hundreds of 439<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing members deployed overseas.

Col. Thomas A. Mauzaka, special assistant to the wing commander, has been the overall director of the last two shows. He said plans for the GNEA are progressing.

"We once again welcome the Galaxy Community Council as our partners in producing an air show of which we can all be very proud," Mauzaka said. "Over the years, the Great New England Air Show has become one of the top five or six shows in the country and we intend to continue with that tradition this year."

Since 1990, the two-day event, which typically draws more than 500,000 people to Westover, has been held every two years.

The Thunderbirds performed here in 1996, 1998 and 2000 and were scheduled for the 2002 show before it was cancelled. In 1990 and 1992, the Canadian Snowbirds were the star attraction while the Italian Frecece Tricolori team appeared in 1992 during the 500<sup>th</sup> celebration of Columbus discovering America.



File photo

**GALAXY SHOW** - Crowds gather inside and outside a Patriot Wing C-5A and scores of other military aircraft during the Great New England Air Show held in August 2000. More than 500,000 people attended the two-day show. Westover's first air show in four years is planned for Aug. 14-15.

Other attractions include a contingent of the always-popular Warbirds, a parachute demonstration team and a large array of static and flying military aircraft.

As always, the show and parking will be free while refreshments will be available.

# Bill boosts pay, provides better health benefits

WASHINGTON – The fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act offers reservists and their families unlimited commissary privileges, better health benefits and an overall average military pay raise of 4.15 percent.

President Bush signed the defense bill Nov. 24. It allows reservists in the Selected Reserve, reserve retirees under age 60 and their families to have access to commissaries on the same basis as active-duty people, retirees and their families.

The act authorizes a minimum pay hike of 3.7 percent to everyone with additional increases to mid-grade and senior NCOs and mid-grade officers.

To improve readiness, the law permits the Department of Defense to provide immediate medical and dental screenings and care to reservists who are assigned to a unit that has been alerted or notified of mobilization.

Reservists can obtain improved TRICARE coverage until Dec. 31, 2004, under the follow-

**For more information about the Defense Commissary Agency, see its Web site at <http://www.commissaries.com/>**

ing circumstances:

Non-mobilized reservists and their families can enroll on a cost-share basis if the reservist is unemployed or the employer does not offer health insurance.

Coverage for mobilized reservists and their families can begin up to 90 days before the start of the reservists' active duty. Previously, coverage started only when the active-duty period began.

Coverage can continue up to 180 days after separation from active duty. Previously, coverage lasted up to 60 or 120 days after separation, depending on the years of service.

Some benefits offered by defense bills are not immediate because DOD and Air Force must implement policies and programs before these benefits are delivered to service mem-

bers.

Another change expands eligibility for family members to enroll in Department of Defense Dependent Schools on a space-available, tuition-free basis. In the past, this benefit was limited to families of reservists who were recalled from an overseas location.

The change also permits DODDS enrollment if reservists are recalled from a continental United States location.

On Sept. 30, the president signed the FY 04 DOD Appropriations Act, which allocates \$368.2 billion to operate and man all of DOD during the fiscal year that ends Sept. 30, 2004. The funding represents a \$51 billion increase in last year's spending.

This year Air Force Reserve Command gets \$3.47 billion, which permits a Selected Reserve end strength of 75,800 – 74,140 traditional reservists, and a full-time Active Guard and Reserve cadre of 1,660 members. Last year the command received funding for an end strength of 75,600, which included 1,498 AGRs.

Under the reserve personnel appropriation, the Air Force Reserve receives nearly \$1.29 billion to cover pay, allowances, clothing, subsistence, travel and other related expenses. Last year's RPA budget was for nearly \$1.24 billion for the Reserve.

Another \$2.18 billion goes to operation and maintenance funding to train, organize and administer the command this year. O&M funds pay for flying hours, depot maintenance, repair of facilities and equipment, travel and transportation, civilian pay, recruiting, and communication, as well as procurement of services, supplies and equipment. The command receives an additional \$20 plus million this year compared to last year's O&M budget.

Although funded for in a separate DOD account, the Air Force Reserve receives \$45 million for equipment that will improve readiness and combat capability. Congress added these funds in a special National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation.

(AFRC News Service)

## Reservists allowed unlimited access to commissaries

By staff and American Forces Press Service

The Department of Defense announced Nov. 24 that with the president's signing of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, effective immediately, the following members and their dependents will be permitted unlimited access to commissary stores:

Members of the Ready Reserve (which includes members of the Selected Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve and Inactive National Guard) and members of the Retired Reserve who possess a Uniformed Services Identification Card.

Former members eligible for retired pay at age 60 but who have not yet attained the age

of 60 and who possess a Department of Defense Civilian Identification Card.

Dependents of the members described above who have a Uniformed Services Identification Card or who have a distinct identification card used as an authorization card for benefits and privileges administered by the Uniformed Services.

Guard and Reserve members were authorized only 24 commissary shopping days per calendar year until Nov. 24 when the president signed the National Defense Authorization Act, which contained provisions eliminating the restrictions. Commissaries have immediately adopted the new provisions, which means Guard and Reserve members will no longer have to present a Commissary Privilege Card when they shop.

Although there is no commissary at Westover, others are at Hanscom AFB, Mass., and at Groton Naval Base in New London, Conn.

For more information about the Defense Commissary Agency, see its Web site at <http://www.commissaries.com/>

## Kiosk with pay information coming to billeting office

The Air Force has chosen Westover as a test site for a new kiosk that will allow people to take a look at their pay and personnel information.

As of early January, active-duty, Guard and Reserve airmen, ci-

vilian employees, retirees and beneficiaries will be able to see their information in the kiosk, to be located in the base billeting office.

Similar to an ATM, the kiosk will be a secure enclosure with a recessed monitor for privacy for people, said Rebecca Cross, Westover financial services officer.

Users will be able to access the virtual MPF and CPF, MyPay, travel pay, Thrift Savings, family support, and more, Cross said.

The billeting office is in Bldg. 2201 on Airlift Drive. For more information about the kiosk, call Cross at Ext. 3460.



photo by MSgt. W.C. Pope

**TOP OFF** - TSgt. Glenn G. Connon, 439th AMXS and Combined Federal Campaign co-chair, tops off the base campaign thermometer on Dec. 5. Also pictured, are, from left, Linda Markwald, Community Health Charities; Col. Wade Farris, 439th AW commander; and MSgt. James T. Mitchell, 439th AMXS and also a CFC co-chair. This year's final amount, \$34,234, was nearly 30 percent more than what was raised in the 2002 campaign.

## Wing commander invites new airmen to breakfast

Col. Wade Farris, 439th AW commander, invites new wing airmen to join him for breakfast at the dining facility beginning quarterly on Jan. 11.

MSgt. Elaine J. Perreault, wing career assistance advisor, said the breakfast will serve as an incentive to the airmen. "They will also have the chance to receive some first-hand mentoring from the wing commander himself," she said.

Topics will include career progression, mentoring, and "Starting Off On The Right Foot."

Perreault said the target audience will be individuals recently returning from basic training and technical school, but commanders may include all airman basic through airman first class.

Airmen need to be in place at the dining facility no later than 7 a.m. A quick uniform check will take place as well as a review of the ground rules, Perreault said. Dress will be uniform of the day. Breakfast will take place from 7:15 to 8:15 a.m.

Each unit in the wing nominates one airmen per quarter to attend the breakfast.

For the second quarter of the calendar year, the breakfast is scheduled for April 4. A unit commander's nomination information must be delivered to Perreault no later than March 14. The information must include the member's name, rank, and phone number.

For more information, call Perreault at Ext. 3435.

## Base firing range off-limits to unauthorized personnel

Westover's small arms range is off-limits to unauthorized personnel, said SMSgt. Michael F. Thorpe, superintendent of combat arms.

"Trespassing on the range is not only illegal, it is also dangerous because of live fire," he said. People with a need for valid entry to the range should contact the law enforcement desk at ext. 3557.

The small arms range is located off Training Avenue.

### COUPLE continued from Page 6

He managed to say hello to Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch too. The reservists were part of the medical team that treated the Army soldier when she made headlines as a prisoner of war in Iraq.

Villarreal said Lynch was exhausted, so he only spent a moment talking to her.

"I said, 'Here's your equipment,' and left the room," he said.

Walker said she and her husband eventually shared a suite in the Ramstein guest quarters.

They credited the support from their family, the Air Force family support system, and their local school in their hometown of Rockland, Mass., while they were gone.

"I missed my daughters. The family care plan was excellent," Walker said. "We had great support from the school in Rockland too."

The couple got excellent support from their grandmother, who watched the kids each day and comforted them.

In their off-duty time, Walker and Villarreal traveled to such places as Paris and

Holland. Villarreal even got to visit his brother, who is assigned to the 52nd Fighter Wing at Spangdahlem AB, also in Germany.

Once he did leave Ramstein with his wife, he worried about the welfare of his patients. "I was wondering if the people that were replacing me were doing the job," Villarreal said. Was I telling them everything they needed to know? I was dedicated to the job, and devoted to my patients."

Col. Sarah F. Waterman, ASTS commander, said the dedication shown by Walker and Villarreal is indicative of the squadron's commitment to the military.

"These folks volunteered for this - to be away from their children. It's not something you see every day," Waterman said. "It's about 'service before self.' Our unit is loaded with people like this. They take it all in stride."

Meanwhile, the ASTS mission goes on. Members learned that an AEF tasking is fast approaching in 2004, Dunfield said. ASTS members are gearing up for the tasking in September, which is expected to be 90 days. More than 80 people from the squadron are expected to deploy.

## Patriot Wing reservists who served at Ramstein

Col. Mark S. Smyczynski  
 Maj. John P. Cornish  
 Maj. Marc A. Gautreau  
 CMSgt. Mark S. Gilyard  
 MSgt. William J. Forbes  
 MSgt. Jeffrey Picard  
 MSgt. Gary Van Wie  
 TSgt. Michael T. Hickson  
 TSgt. Colleen M. Hitt  
 TSgt. Reginald L. Wilson  
 TSgt. Phaly S. Walker  
 TSgt. Silas P. Villarreal  
 SSgt. Rebecca L. Pina  
 SSgt. Jose A. Cabrera  
 SSgt. Patrick J. Carlin  
 SrA. Joseph A. Niedziela  
 SrA. Sean C. Palmer

**SIGN HERE** - In Concord, N.H., Gov. Craig Benson signs a proclamation declaring Nov. 17-23, 2003 as Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week. He is flanked by representatives of the seven Reserve components, including one of the 123 Patriot Wing reservists who live in the Granite State. Lt. Col. Theresa A. Negron, 439th AW staff judge advocate, is standing behind Benson. The other 28 states represented by 439th AW reservists also took part in the nationwide proclamation ceremonies on Nov. 14. In the East Room at the White House, President Bush signed the national proclamation honoring those employers who have shown their support of the Guard and Reserve.



*Courtesy photo*

## Fed grants administrative leave to demobilized reservists

WASHINGTON – In a Nov. 14 memorandum, President Bush directed executive departments and agencies to grant five days of uncharged, administrative leave from civilian duties to federal employees returning from active-duty to reservist status.

“The federal government will continue to be the model for employer support to the Guard and Reserve,” wrote the president in the memo-

### **BUILDING continued from Page 3**

Support Squadron 6, and Marines Corps Support Squadron 474, Detachment B. A ribbon-cutting is planned for Jan. 10.

Another \$1.2 million provided new addition and renovations to the Westover Fire Department building.

Fire Chief Charles Van Gorden and Col. Dana S. Marsh, 439th Mission Support Group commander, took part in the new areas for the fire department with a ribbon-cutting held Nov. 24. Officials from Eastern Contracting, the builder of the fire station addition, also attended.

“It came out beautiful,” Van Gorden said. “Our firefighters spent many hours wallpapering and repainting the walls and building a new patio too,” he said.

Bedrooms, a restroom and TV room are among the new amenities for the 63 civilian firefighters housed in the building on Hangar Avenue. Another 34 Air Force Reserve firefighters also staff the building on UTA weekends.

Eastern General Contractors of Springfield recently finished up the addition to the base fire

station. “We are the guarantors of the rights of returning service members under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, and I am personally committed to providing each of them with our full support, recognition and assistance.”

The five work days of excused absence covers employees who were activated for military service in connection with Operation

Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Federal agencies will release more guidance explaining the excused leave policy.

Employees and reservists at Westover with questions may contact the base civilian personnel office at Ext. 3193.

**(AFRC News Service)**

random. “This dramatically increases the quality of life for the firefighters,” Alfonso said. “They were cramped in there before.”

Marsh noted that the past year was a big one for construction at Westover and that 2004 has more of the same in store.

“Completion of the expansion at the fire station will correct a two-fold problem. First, it will provide much-needed administrative and storage space for our Reserve firefighters who have literally been wedged into our current station, and secondly, it will decrease our response time almost in half for flight line emergencies,” she said.

Eastern is also the contractor for the new 439th Security Forces Squadron building, to be built near CE on Patriot Avenue next spring. Completion is expected in late 2005, said Conrad LaFleur, chief of construction for CE.

“Our biggest project on the books for 2004 is the construction of a new security forces facility,” Marsh said. “Construction will start in the summer with completion about a year later. In addition, several force protection projects

will get under way including a new Industrial Gate design,” she said.

On the other end of the base near the Westover Road gate, a new building completed in December awaits the members of the 439th Civil Engineer Squadron’s explosive ordnance disposal unit. Construction costs on that building came to just over \$1 million. The EOD reservists will soon move into their new home located next to the civil engineering building on Patriot Avenue.

For Fiscal Year 2003, Alfonso said Air Force Reserve Command was awarded \$103.8 million for construction. Westover received \$3,304,500 of that amount.

“All the construction here at Westover helps make a great base even better,” said Col. Wade Farris, 439th AW commander. “The construction of new buildings improves our work environment and helps us better meet the demands of accomplishing our mission. In addition, the runway projects will make our flying environment much safer for both Westover and transient aircrews.”

## Patriot People

**Name:** Richard A. Mitchell Jr.  
**Rank:** A1C  
**Age:** 22  
**Address:** Hamilton, N.J.  
**Unit:** 439th Logistics Readiness Squadron  
**Position:** Information manager  
**Civilian position:** Student  
**Favorite food:** Curry goat  
**Years of service:** One  
**Favorite sport:** Soccer  
**Favorite hobby:** Card collecting  
**Ideal vacation:** St. Kitts Nevis  
**Best way to relax:** Play video games  
**Preferred entertainment:** Going to professional sports games  
**Favorite hero:** Bob Marley  
**Favorite music:** Reggae  
**Favorite movie:** "The Usual Suspects"  
**Favorite aircraft:** Concorde  
**Pet peeve:** Unreliable people  
**What would I do if I won \$1 million:** Build my first house

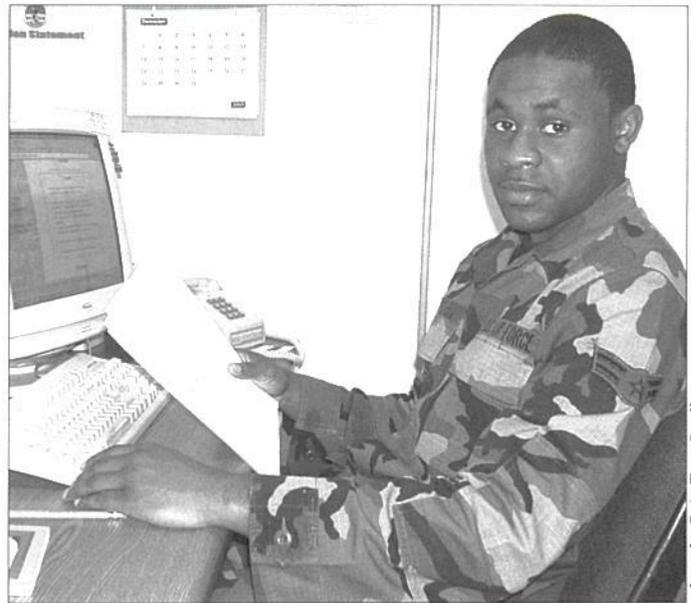


photo by SrA. Tom Ouellette

**A1C Richard A. Mitchell Jr.**

## Patriot Praises

**Enlistments:**

SSgt. Dupont, Richard E.  
 SSgt. Gerena, Dionisio  
 SrA. Desousa, Richard D.  
 SrA. Musicof, Leigh F.  
 A1C Bissonnette, Korey M.  
 A1C Bowens, Eric S.  
 A1C Keyes, Kierra C.  
 A1C Leduc, Jordan M.  
 A1C Lucier, Peter J.  
 A1C Trudeau, Erik T.  
 A1C Zaleski, Alexander J.  
 Amn. Cole, Norman L., Jr.

A1C Burgos, Hevia

**Retirements:**

Lt. Col. Vinskey, Michael A.  
 SMSgt. Stone, George D.  
 MSgt. Cambio, David P.  
 MSgt. Hniedziejko, James F.  
 MSgt. McGinnis, Robert J.  
 TSgt. Batey, Deborah A.  
 TSgt. Rivers, Warren D., Jr.  
 TSgt. Scottsmith, Shari C.  
 TSgt. Weagle, James N.

Airman Leadership School graduate:

**Reassignments:**

TSgt. Chenevert, Vincent E., Jr.

Byrd, SrA. Richard

## Awards and Decorations

**Meritorious Service Medal**

CMSgt. Hugh Cullen  
 SMSgt. Edward H. Brainard  
 SMSgt. George D. Stone  
 MSgt. Timothy A. Burnell  
 MSgt. William R. Jebb\*  
 MSgt. William K. Mick  
 TSgt. Deborah A. Batey

**Air Force Commendation Medal**

Capt. Rex H. Steves \*\*  
 MSgt. John C. Depaoli

MSgt. Gary M. Weber  
 TSgt. Michael J. Carey  
 TSgt. Victor M. Fuentes\*  
 TSgt. Todd R. Panico  
 TSgt. Bruce W. Paradis

**Air Force Achievement Medal**

TSgt. James W. Elkins  
 TSgt. Kevin J. Grof  
 TSgt. Joseph S. Murphy  
 SSgt. Thomas E. Pitts, Jr.  
 SSgt. John J. Vescovi  
 SSgt. Debra J. Wilcox

\*First oak leaf cluster \*\*Second oak leaf cluster

## Briefs

### Military, DOD civilians sought for possible Aero Club

With financial support already in place, military people are being sought for an Aero Club that would operate at Barnes Airport in nearby Westfield, said MSgt. Mike Angelastro, an organizer.

The club would operate exclusively for reservists, Guard, active duty, and retired military people, and Department of Defense civilians.

In order to get a consensus, Angelastro said people interested in the Aero Club idea may call him at (201) 647-2359.

### Maintenance group to select deserving airman candidate

The 439<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Group will hold a panel next spring to select a candidate for the deserving airman commissioning program. This position will be a reserve maintenance officer working in the quality assurance office of the maintenance group.

Candidate requirements are:

- Thirty-five years of age at time of commissioning (not waiverable)
- Never before held a commission
- Possession of a bachelors degree
- Air Force Officers Qualifying Test (AFOQT) scores
- Agree to attend all training associated with the position
- High moral character

Those people interested in applying to this program need to send the following information to Col. Charles A. Brown, 439<sup>th</sup> MXG commander or Maj. Jeffrey Mullen, deputy MXG commander:

- Copies of latest resume and college transcript
- AFOQT scores
- Dates available for training

All submissions are due by March 15. The panel meets on Sunday of the April A UTA. The successful candidate will be required to attend Officer Training School as well as the Aircraft Maintenance Officer Course.

# Base pumps millions into area economy

by Gordon Newell

This base added more than \$183 million to the economic well-being of Western Mass, during the past fiscal year. In calculating the total economic impact for fiscal year 2003, the Air Force decided to use figures attributed only to its units on a single base. In the past, tenant units were also included. Westover is home not only to the 439<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing but 17 tenant units as well.

Westover's total impact on communities located within a 50-mile radius was tallied for the past fiscal year, which for the federal government runs from Oct. 1, 2002 to Sept. 30, 2003. The impact totaled \$183,542,883.

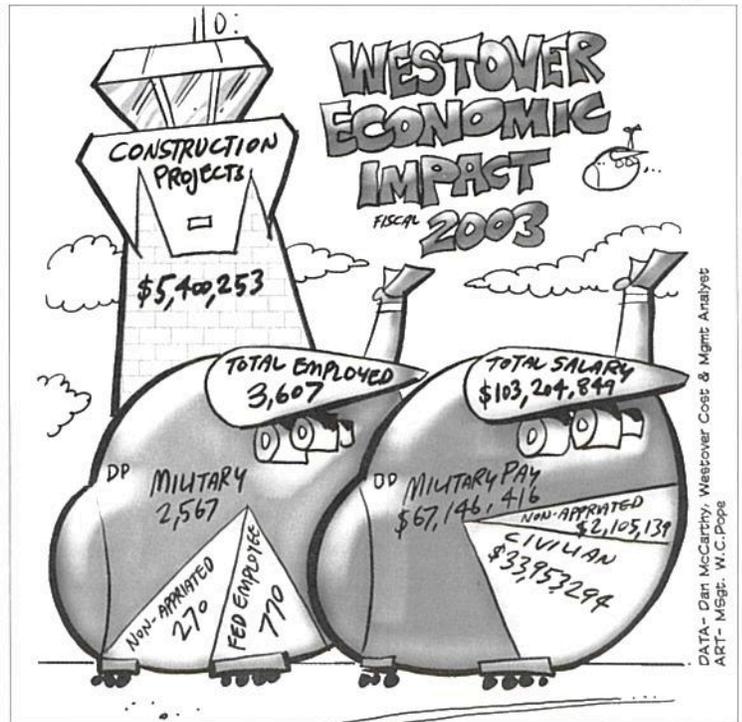
"I am pleased that Westover is able to play such an integral role in the economic well-being of the Pioneer Valley," said Col. Wade Farris, 439<sup>th</sup> AW commander. "Our relationship with the surrounding communities has never been better and I want to offer my thanks for all of their support during the past couple of years."

The base's total salary for the year was \$103,204,849 with military pay making up the largest portion, \$67,146,416. Much of this came from more than 1,000 reservists who were activated during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Of that total, 778 were still on active duty in December.

Civilian salaries stood at \$33,953,294, while civilian contractors and non-appropriated fund workers—employed in such places as the base exchange, shoppette-gas station, bowling alley, gymnasium, Westover Club and billeting office—took home another \$2,105,139.

The number of personnel employed by the Air Force on the base, totals 3,607, including 2,567 active-duty and reserve military people. There are also 770 appropriated fund federal employees and 270 contract and non-appropriated funds workers.

Construction projects contributed \$5,400,253 to the total while service contracts added \$19,566,210. Other expenditures, which in-



DATA - Dan McCarthy, Westover Cost & Mgmt Analyst  
ART - M. Egge, W.C. Pope

cludes materials, equipment and supplies capped out at \$20,520,859. As a result of the base population, the Air Force calculated that an estimated 988 jobs were created in the local area resulting in an annual payroll of \$34,850,712.

In addition to being home to the 439<sup>th</sup> AW, Westover tenant units include: the Army and Air Force Exchange Service; the Army Corps of Engineers; TOW Platoon HQ Company, 25<sup>th</sup> Marines; 319<sup>th</sup> Recruiting Squadron; Army Recruiting Company; 226<sup>th</sup> Transportation Co.; 439<sup>th</sup> AW Recruiting Squadron; Department of Defense Housing; Federal Employee Assistance Program; D Company Army National Guard; MASS-6 MWSS Marine Corps Group; Defense Investigative Services; Navy Reserve Recruiting; 387<sup>th</sup> Army Medical Company; Defense Contracting Command; a National Guard Aviation Support Unit; and the Military Entrance Processing Station that opened in September 2003.

**Fast Facts:**

**Westover's 2,500 acres make it the largest Air Force Reserve base in the country. The base is the closest fully operational military installation to Europe.**



[www.afrc.af.mil/439aw](http://www.afrc.af.mil/439aw)

January UTA schedule

A UTA Jan. 10-11

B UTA Jan. 24-25



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

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U.S. POSTAGE  
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CHICOPEE, MA  
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Published monthly for Patriots like SrA. Leanne J. Sambrook, Nassau, N.Y., and 2,429 members of the 439<sup>th</sup> AW at Westover ARB, and geographically separated units.