

PATRIOT

439th Airlift Wing | Westover ARB, Mass. | Volume 38 No. 5

May 2011 | Patriot Wing -- Leaders in Excellence



photo illustration by W.C. Pope

Putting the **ORI** pieces **together**

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ON THE COVER Almost all of the "pieces" of training, preparation, checklists, and mobility lines are in place, with one missing -- the Operational Readiness Inspection, scheduled for June 19-26, in Alpena, Mich. Turn to pages 6-9 for photos and story on the Operational Readiness Exercise held in March.



FAMILY FITNESS Military children run on the Base Ellipse during Family Fitness Day April 9. More than 100 family members of reservists attended the event. In April, President Barack Obama made caring for military families a national priority, calling to action his entire administration and communities across the U.S. on their behalf. "The strength and the readiness of America's military depend on the strength and readiness of our military families," the president said. "This is a matter of national security. It's not just the right thing to do. It also makes this country strong." For more photos, visit westover.afrc.af.mil. (photo by Senior Airman Charles Hutchinson IV)



Colonel Swain

Before the final push for the ORI in June, I'd like to remind you of the caliber of people who work shoulder to shoulder at Westover to make this operation successful. Since

October, the men and women of the 439th Airlift Wing have proven repeatedly that they're the best in the world at what they do: moving people and cargo anywhere in the world, and maintaining and supporting those operations.

Our track record speaks for itself:

In October, we earned the Lt. Gen. James Sherrard Award as the top reserve wing among the 32 wings in the Air Force Reserve Command.

That same month, Westover won the Gen. James McNeil Award for Human Resource Development Council Excellence. We made history by winning the biannual award two times in a row. We

won in 2008 and tied for the win in 2010.

Then in November, the 439th Maintenance Group was named best medium aircraft maintenance group in the command. Finally (so far), in December, the Airman and Family Readiness office won the 2010 Department of Defense Reserve Family Readiness award for the second time in three years.

That adds up to four national awards among the Reserve Command's 32 wings in three months. Our four-fold accomplishment would be like a college winning NCAA championships in men's and women's basketball, football, and baseball – all in the same year. It's a tremendous testament to the hard and smart work of the men and women of the 439th AW.

In addition to the formal honors is the fact that the Patriot Wing has the highest mission capable rate of any C-5 unit in the Air Force two years running, a testament to our knowledge and dedication to the mission.

This has allowed us to surge for the Libyan operation "Odyssey Dawn," continued

overseas contingency operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and humanitarian relief in Japan.

These accolades highlight what I already knew: the "mission capable rate" across all base elements is high. The awards are well-deserved tributes to people who support the fight day after day.

We didn't peak at the ORE and that is a good thing. We have some areas to practice and perfect before we show the AMC/IG what an outstanding wing looks like at the June ORI.

There is no such thing as perfection, but enroute to striving to perfection you have become an outstanding wing by every metric. I am amazed at all that you do day in and day out and I am honored to continue to lead this great organization.

My best to you and your families as we enter a wonderful spring and more opportunities to be "Leaders in Excellence"!

by Col. Robert Swain Jr.
439th Airlift Wing commander

BRIEFS |

No base Tricare

The Westover Tricare Service Center closed April 1. Servicemembers who need help or information can contact 1-877-Tricare or visit healthnet.federalerservices.com.

Tricare is closing 15 service centers in the Northeast region with "very low use," according to its website.

Top 3 volleyball

Top 3 organizers are holding a volleyball fund-raiser at 4 p.m. June 4 (the A UTA) to benefit the Enlisted Scholarship Fund. The tournament will be held at the new pavilion by the base exchange. Cost is \$5 per person. For more information, call Master Sgt. Christopher Lane at 557-3441.

Employer Day set for August UTA

The 439th Airlift Wing Employer Day is scheduled for Aug. 6 (the A UTA). This year's event – an annual tradition for more than 20 years – will feature a new joint-service theme.

In addition to employers of Air Force reservists, bosses of Army, Marines, and Navy servicemembers assigned to Westover are invited to join the activities which are scheduled to include a base tour, C-5 simulator "ride," working with cargo pallets aboard a C-5, "meals ready-to-eat," and much more.

For more information on Employer Day, call the public affairs office at 557-2063. Sign-ups take place on-line by going to westover.afrc.af.mil.

Leadership development class

Staff sergeants and technical sergeants are encouraged to sign up for the NCO Leadership Development Course being held at Westover in July. The course has an excellent history, having trained about 60,000 reservists during its 22-year existence, said Chief Master Sgt. Dwight Badgett, Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Reserve Command.

Classes will be held from July 11-22. Interested Airmen should speak with their supervisors. Any questions may be directed to Tech. Sgt. Jessica Fry-Hamilton at 557-3439.

Home Base

The 2011 Run to Home Base is seeking a few good military members.

The organization announced in March that 45 spots have been made available for military members to participate in the 9K race that will take place May 22, inside Fenway Park in Boston.

For more information, visit runtohomebase.org/military.

Patriot deadline

The deadline for each *Patriot* is Sunday of the A UTA prior to the following month's issue. Public affairs welcomes articles and photos for the base web site as well, which is westover.afrc.af.mil. For more information, call 557-2020.



CHIEF TO CHIEF Command Chief Master Sgt. Michael Thorpe, left, shakes hands with 22nd Air Force Command Chief Master Sgt. Steven Larwood, following the change of authority ceremony at the Base Hangar April 9. (photo by Master Sgt. Andrew Biscoe)

New command chief joins wing leadership

by Master Sgt. Andrew Biscoe

Chief Master Sgt. Michael Thorpe's sharp salute to the wing commander April 9 heralded the new command chief's tenure.

Col. Robert Swain Jr., 439th Airlift Wing commander, led the change of authority ceremony, held in the Base Hangar. Hundreds of Patriot Wing reservists and family and friends watched as Chief Master Sgt. Zigmund Skawski capped his 33-year career at Westover. Chief Skawski was command chief from January 2006 until the April A UTA.

Chief Thorpe then stepped

forward to begin the newest chapter in his 23-year career.

Chief Thorpe was born in Worcester, Mass. He entered the Air Force Reserve in March 1988. He holds two associate degrees and a Bachelor of Arts degree in criminal justice from Anna Maria College in Massachusetts.

Following technical school, he began his career at Westover as a combat arms craftsman with the 439th Security Forces Squadron. His career also included being activated here during Operation Desert Shield/Storm.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information on Chief Thorpe, go to www.westover.afrc.af.mil

Chief Skawski reflects on decades of service

by Master Sgt. Andrew Biscoe

EDITOR'S NOTE: Retiring Command Chief Zigmund Skawski interviewed with the public affairs staff in early April. The following is a portion of that interview. For the full story, please visit Westover on the web at westover.afrc.af.mil

Q: Please provide us a brief summary of your 33-year career.

I started here in 1978 with 901st Aerial Port Flight supporting the C-123s. We spent a lot of time on the drop zone packing parachutes as we had an airdrop mission back then. In 1982, the 901st and 905th merged into the 42nd Aerial Port. From 1982 to 1985 we were still supporting the C-130s. In 1985 Westover started transitioning to the C-5s. The aerial port went to a new strategic mission -- the airdrop mission went away. We became an aerial port squadron. I became a unit training manager for awhile. Desert Storm came along in 1991 to

support C-5s going to the theater of operations. In 1998, I became the chief for the aerial port, and in January 2006, I became the command chief.

Q: What's the most important thing a command chief does for Westover?

He is the enlisted advisor to the commander, but more specifically involved in the development of the Airmen in this wing. Wing command chiefs can influence policy at the command level. They take a look at enlisted force development.



COMMAND CHANGE Chief Master Sgt. Zigmund Skawski holds the Stars and Stripes during his retirement ceremony April 10 held at the Westover Conference Center. (photo by Tech. Sgt. Brian Boynton)

Q: As a command chief you get a different view of the wing and base. What surprised you when you took on the job?

I wouldn't call it a surprise -- but I was taken aback by the people out there who are doing such a good job. They rise to the challenge. When they're successful, it is a success for

everybody. They perform admirably. You see it when the awards come in.

Q: If you had to boil it down to one thing in your career that stands

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TAIL END A German Air Force photographer shot several images of this C-5 on overseas mission to Afghanistan earlier this year. The C-5, which is the largest Air Force aircraft, is 247 feet long from the flight deck to the tail. The jet's tail reaches 65 feet into the air. Patriot Wing crews support the warfighters all over the world, with missions from Westover two to three times per week. (photo illustration by Senior Airman Alexander Brown)

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out the most, what would that be?

I don't think I can put my finger on any one thing. Being the best here and now. Letting the process work, Making the most of the opportunities. As you progress, things become more clear as to where you want to go.

Q: When you were a newly enlisted Airman, was command chief something you aspired to?

No. I wanted to be the best at what I was doing then. I was ready for a change – and the position came available.

Q. You have been a guiding force and mentor for the Junior Enlisted Advisory Council (now the Rising 6) members. What advice can you provide these Airmen as

Westover's infrastructure continues its improvements as a reserve base?

Make the most of the opportunities that are presented to you -- it is 90 percent you and 10 percent seizing the opportunities. It is what you do with the opportunities.

Be as successful as you can. It really comes down to you. You have the ability. You have the effort. You get out of something what you put into it. Any leader anywhere should give the people the most opportunities to be successful.

Q: What message or advice would you leave for the junior enlisted?

Get more involved with what is going on. Get out and about the Westover community. The NCO courses. NCO academy. Interface with the other air components. Sometimes the sister

services too. Go outside the walls of your unit to better understand other folks.

Q: Do you have a tour of duty or annual tour that stood out?

When I deployed to Southwest Asia in 2002 for 90 days, it was like the capstone of a course. You take all of these different theory and courses and labs and you put it all to use.

It was the most defining and most rewarding. The base was still in its build-up phase --austere conditions with tents.

Q: What's next?

I will enjoy my weekends in a different way now. I typically worked two UTAs per month. Now I'll be able to spend more time with my family. There is a long list of things to do. I will not be bored.

Q: What will you miss?

The people. I had the opportunity talk with an Airman who is going to ALS. He said, "Chief, you may not remember me, but several years ago, I didn't know where to go. You gave me things to look at."

That is what I am going to miss. Being able to help people -- seeing them be successful and showing the excitement when they win awards. Or, "We launched an airplane...we launched it on time." I never thought my career would have gone this long or that I would attain this position. I couldn't have done it without good mentors who encouraged me, and challenged me to do better.

I am not going far. I expect to come back and watch this base and its people grow, and be Leaders in Excellence.



**114 AEW
goes to
war**





photos by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara and Tech. Sgt. Timm Huffman

ORE challenges deployers with snow, sacrifices

by Master Sgt. Andrew Biscoe

Spanning 24-hour cycles over three days, more than 400 Patriot Wing reservists shuffled through mobility lines and climbed aboard military aircraft to deploy for March's Operational Readiness Exercise.

Through the nighttime hours and by day, a send-off cadre of unit control centers, unit deployment monitors, the base contractor, and personnel Airmen, processed groups of deployers for the ORE, which took place March 21-26 at the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center in Michigan.

Westover's wing commander said Patriot Wing members sealed the last preparation for the flagship Air Force inspection looming in June. The Operational Readiness

Inspection will also be held in Alpena. "You did this at the same time we have stepped up to additional overseas taskings for three current overseas contingency operations and humanitarian relief [US

efforts to help the victims of the Japan tsunami and earthquake]," said Col. Robert Swain Jr.

Although spring made its debut during the ORE, a lingering Michigan winter blew in a snowstorm and cold at the deployers – but Mother Nature's presence didn't stop services Airmen from setting up a mobile kitchen as a new day dawned March 23.

"The raw weather in Michigan also added to the challenges that you faced," Colonel Swain said. "The preparation, initial response, deployment, employment and redeployment were impressive. Every one of you had a part in its success."

This year's ORI teams 439th AW reserv-

the overseas Air Force objectives.

While the deployers shouldered the mobility bags and chemical warfare gear responsibilities, scores more reservists worked around the clock to be sure the ORE players made their way to Alpena – quickly and safely.

Master Sgt. LaWanna Viers, 439th Communications Squadron, enlisted the help of her children's grandmother, who came from Arlington, Texas to Massachusetts in support of the deployment. Once in Alpena, Sergeant Viers helped link deployers to the cyberworld in a matter of hours.

Airmen with the 439th Logistics Readiness Squadron worked with the base contractor to coordinate the massive movement of pallets people to put aboard C-5s, C-130s, and KC-135s supporting the ORE.

Tech. Sgt. Jessica Fry-Hamilton, 439th Force Support Squadron, asked her sister to travel here from Dover AFB, Del., to assist with child care so that she could work continued on page 9

"The preparation, initial response, deployment, employment and redeployment were impressive. Every one of you had a part in its success."

-- Col. Robert Swain Jr. 439th AW commander

ists with the 109th Airlift Wing, Stratton Air National Guard Base, N.Y., Each deployer's collective effort is to support a bare-base mission, where strategic and tactical airlift assets are in place to support

TROOP TALK | What did you learn from the March ORE to bring to the ORI?



"Even though it's chaotic with a lot going on and a lot to take in, I feel it is a great learning experience as far as how life would be should you deploy."
Senior Airman Andrew Pont, 439th Logistics Readiness Squadron

"A new-found perspective of our wartime mission capabilities."
Tech. Sgt. Shannon Gratton, 439th Force Support Squadron



"Trust in your troops to do their jobs because we have a great team. Communication is the key...and let them do their jobs."
Senior Master Sgt. John McCassin, 439th Communications Squadron



photos by Senior Airman Kelly Galloway



SNOW-R-E Snow blankets a services mobile kitchen during the 114th Air Expeditionary Wing's Operational Readiness Exercise in March. The 114th AEW -- comprising reservists from Westover and Airmen from the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing -- trained at the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center in Michigan. The ORE was the final preparation for the June Operational Readiness Inspection, also to be held in Alpena. (photo by Tech. Sgt. Timm Huffman)

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the mobility line and night shift.

In his vice commander spot for just three months, Col. John Healy was ORE commander. He will lead the Patriot Wing contingent under the scrutiny of the black-hatted Air Mobility Command inspectors in June.

"The ORE showed me this wing's attitude with all things deployed," Colonel Healy said. "It is second to none. We have some minor adjustments to make for the ORI between now and June. I look forward to showcasing the readiness of the Air Force's Reserve's best wing to those AMC inspectors in June."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tech Sgt. Lisa Dufresne, 439th Force Support Squadron, contributed to this story.

Patriot Puns

by W.C.Pope



Flight engineer soars to 22nd AF award

by Tech. Sgt. Stephen Winn

Tech. Sgt. David L. Owens, 337th Airlift Squadron flight engineer, was recently named the 22nd Air Force Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

Sergeant Owens' representation of 22nd, which comprises 15 Air Force Reserve units primarily from the eastern United States, will compete at the Air Force Reserve Command level in April.

He attributed his diverse professional background

prior to entering the Air Force with helping him excel as an Airman – part of which included being a crewman on a 84-foot yacht.

“Sailing around the world required a lot of coordination, discipline... a very hard working environment,” Sergeant Owens said, acknowledging the work ethic he developed helped him in his flight engineer position at the flying squadron.

The unique mission he carries out as a flight engineer is what he find most interesting about the time he spends at Westover. Flight engineers are the only enlisted aircrew members positioned in the flight deck of the C-5. They are responsible for the overall flight performance of the aircraft.

Sergeant Owens, a native Australian, said it has been about six years since he last visited home. In his spare time, he enjoys an activity that harkens back to his sailing days: diving.

“There is fantastic diving right here in Massachusetts,” Sergeant Owens said.

“I went diving off Rockport several years ago in about 40 feet of water and a whale approached. It swam near me for about 15 minutes. It was the most amazing thing I have seen down there in the water -- it was huge!”

Prior to his assignment here, Sergeant Owens was a Navy Corpsman with a Marine Corps unit. He described a definable advantage to working as a flight engineer over his previous position with the Navy.

“There is a

stronger sense of teamwork here, and camaraderie, especially in the flight engineer section,” he said. Sergeant Owens credited his supervisors, including Chief Master Sgt. Anthony Colucci, with helping him and other Airmen excel in their Air Force careers.

“There’s great leadership; everyone supports and mentors the junior guys” he said. Sergeant Owens said he could not have made it this far without his supervisors’ efforts.

“I’m carrying a responsibility for the flight engineer section, the 337th as a whole and the 439th Airlift Wing. I believe in the mission and there are a lot of people responsible for getting me to where I am today,” he said.

“This award means just as much to them as it does for me.” Owens was satisfied knowing he is supporting the war effort, as part of a team of pilots, loadmasters and flight engineers and all the other maintainers responsible for getting the C-5 airborne.



TOP FLIGHT Col. John Healy, 439th Airlift Wing vice commander, congratulates Tech. Sgt. David Owens, center, and his son, Samuel, on the NCO's 22nd Air Force award. (Courtesy photo)

TRICARE web site allows better access for patients

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AFNS) -- A new feature on TRICARE Online at www.tricareonline.com now allows users access to expanded personal health data, including lab results, patient history and diagnoses, and provider visits.

These features are an expansion of the current Blue Button capability, which already allowed beneficiaries to safely and securely access and print or save their demographic information, allergy and medication profiles.

The Blue Button features will further encourage beneficiaries to actively engage in their health care. The level of data available will be dependent on where treatment occurs, with the most data available to those who regularly get care at military hospitals and clinics.

The Blue Button was fielded by TRICARE and was made generally available by other federal health care providers in 2010. It is the result of a close interagency partnership between the Department of Defense, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Blue Button already has over 250,000 users.

TRICARE Online is the Military Health System's Internet point of entry that provides all 9.6 million TRICARE beneficiaries access to available healthcare services and information through an enterprise-wide secure portal. TOL users who receive their care at a military treatment facility can schedule appointments, order prescription refills and view their personal health data.

To learn more, go to www.tricareonline.com or visit www.health.mil/mhscio. For more news about health IT news, subscribe to The Portal, the leading news source for military health IT at www.health.mil/mhscio.

PATRIOT PEOPLE |



Senior Airman John Rosado

Name: John Rosado
 Rank: Senior airman
 Squadron: 439th Maintenance Squadron
 Age: 20
 Hometown: Springfield, Mass.
 Position: Crew chief
 Favorite Food: Pizza
 Years of Service: 2 1/2
 Favorite Sport: Baseball
 Favorite Hobby: Working on cars
 Ideal Vacation: Out of New England
 Best Way to Relax: Not working
 Preferred Entertainment: Sports
 Favorite Hero: None
 Favorite Music Style: All
 Favorite Movie: Too many to list
 Favorite Aircraft: C-5
 Pet Peeve: None
 What Would I Do If I Won \$1 Million: Invest it

AT THE CLUB >> Mother's Day Brunch, May 8, 10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. Reservations required, call 593-5531 beginning April 25 and no later than May 4.

BOWLING CENTER >> Mother's Day Bowl, May 5 and 6. Moms bowl free. The mom who bowls the best game wins a trophy! Summer leagues begin in June; sign up at the center. For more information, call 557-3990.

OUTDOOR RECREATION >> Outdoor recreation has recently started producing a variety of etchings on wood, glass and acrylic. They can take care of all your retirement plaques, trophies and more.

FITNESS CENTER >> The center is located on Patriot Avenue. Hours are 5:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday; non-UTA Saturdays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; closed Sundays. UTA Saturdays: 5:30 a.m.-8 p.m.; Sundays, 5:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

FLYERS INN >> The Flyers Inn is located on Airlift Drive behind the 439th Aerospace Medicine Squadron clinic. For more information, call 557-2700.

SERVICES CALENDER | www.westoverservices.com

Retirements

Major
 Danielle Ingram
 Robert Oliveri
 Kenneth Shipley Jr.

Senior master sergeant
 Laurie Briggs
 Matthew Dechaine
 Shelli McCarthy

Master sergeant
 Mark Butler
 Marc Bourgeois
 Gerald Dufresne

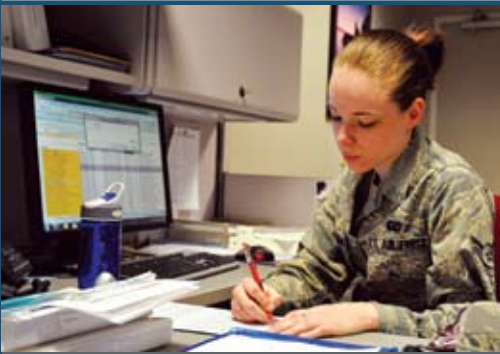
PATRIOT PRAISES | Promotions

Major
 Sheri Boucher
 Jeremy Downer
 Robyn Downer
 Matt Dunphy
 Bakhtiar Pribadi
 David Quinn
Captain
 Richard Mack
 Shelly Martin
 Andrew Roneker
 Phaly Walker
Senior master sergeant
 Timothy Day
 Daniel Lawlor

Irving Little
 Gerilyn Ridzon
Master sergeant
 Pamela Cutt
 James Dupuis
 Joseph Fernandez
 Michael Jump
 David Martinez
 Stephen Salvini
 Peter Zaleski
Technical sergeant
 Arthur Britton
 Jonathan Capan
 Michael Cowley
 Amy Edson

Ryan Hockerlotz
 Henry Talbot
 Christopher Walters
Staff sergeant
 Joseph Blackwood
 Kelly Bodnar
 Gregory Harper
 Hank Hill
 Keith Taylor
Senior airman
 Joseph Bourget
 Alexander Brown
 Curtis Capra
 Adam Cohn
 Michael Decicco

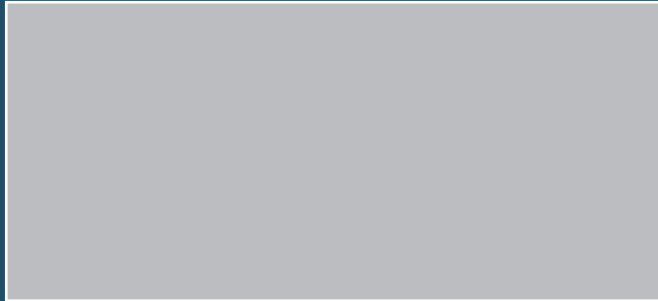
Daniel Gereb
 Alicia Hayes
 Charles Hutchinson IV
 Sean Sagendorf
 Walter Selkirk
 Robert Smyth
Airman 1st Class
Michael Nagle
Airman
 Christopher Myska
 Bevin Rutland



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FIRST CLASS
US POSTAGE
PAID

Published monthly for Patriots like Senior Airman Aleina Bernier-Regan, Manchester, Conn., and the more than 3,600 reservists and civilians assigned to the 439th Airlift Wing.



GETTING NOSY A Westover C-5 approaches the runway at Trenton Canadian Forces Base, Canada, during transition training Feb. 18. Atilla Papp shot this photo of the Patriot Wing aircrew training. Reservists and civilians on base are encouraged to submit high-resolution photos to public affairs for possible publication in the *Patriot* and on the base web site at westover.afrc.af.mil. Photos may be submitted to 439aw.pa@westover.af.mil