



photo by SrA. Alexander Brown

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UTA SNAPSHOT |

Sunday

Family day, Base Ellipse
Sept. 11 from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Events will include honoring re-
tiring wing members and food,
volleyball, horseshoes, a dunk tank
and bounce houses.

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CEREMONY OF TRADITION The ranks of the 439th Airlift Wing stand at ease during the Aug. 6 change of command ceremony held in the Base Hangar. For more on the change of command, and Purple Heart and Bronze Star awards, turn to page 4.

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Nicole Clark



ON CAMERA A local television news crew interviews Col. Steven Vautrain near the flight line, just before he took command of the 439th Airlift Wing, Aug. 5. For more on the new commander, visit the Westover web page at westover.afrc.af.mil. Also pictured is Lt. Col. James Bishop, wing chief of public affairs. Turn to page 4 for additional coverage of Col. Vautrain. (photo by W.C. Pope)



Col. Vautrain

Katie and I truly appreciate the warm welcome we have received from the men and women of the 439th. You've already made us feel like part of the Westover family. I still find it hard to believe that I have been selected to lead such an outstanding team of professionals. The wing has been working hard over the last year to prepare for the Operational Readiness Inspection and you performed magnificently. Inspections can be hard on a unit, but the 439th came through this ORI well, and we have a bright future ahead of us.

As we mark the tenth anniversary of the attacks on America, the Patriot Wing is still an integral part of our nation's defense. The 439th has provided steadfast support to Operation Enduring Freedom from the very beginning. You stepped up to the challenges of worldwide combat operations.

Your selfless service made it possible for our three-component Air Force to excel

across the globe, regardless of whether you served at home or abroad. Whether it was deploying troops to Afghanistan, supporting humanitarian missions around the world or redeploying troops from Iraq, you met the nation's call during a time of crisis.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your service to our country. Your ability to balance the "Reserve Triad" – the Air Force, family and civilian employer – allows us to remain a critical component of our national defense. I appreciate the sacrifices made by your families and employers in support of your service. Pleasing family, civilian employers and military supervisors at the same time isn't an easy task; there are times when the Reserve needs you and times when your civilian employer needs you, but your family always needs you.

Many of you have endured lengthy deployments away from loved ones. I thank you for your sacrifices. It's very important that you pay attention to your family and give them the support that they give to you. Cherish your family time.

My first goal as your new commander is to get to know the people. Many of you

will see me around the base in the near future. I will start with the senior leadership, but we all know that it is the people in the offices, in the maintenance shops, on the flight line and in the field who are the heart and soul of a unit, especially a reserve unit.

Many of you have been in the 439th for a long time. I'd like to get to know you and hear your stories of how the wing has evolved and discuss ways in which we can make our wing even better.

It took a team effort to be recognized as the best wing in AFRC. Without the support of the entire wing we could never maintain this level of excellence; the men and women in operations, maintenance, support and our medical squadrons consistently work together to exceed Air Force requirements.

I thank all of you for your support and look forward to leading the Westover team. Katie and I are proud to be the newest members of the Westover family; we wish you all a happy and safe remainder of 2011!

**by Col. Steven Vautrain
439th Airlift Wing commander**

BRIEFS |

CFC kickoff

The Pioneer Valley Combined Federal Campaign will kick off at 7:30 a.m. Sept. 27 at Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield, Mass.

The CFC will run through Dec. 15. This fall's campaign goal is \$50,000. For more information, visit cfc.org.

Taking command

Col. Samuel "Bo" Mahaney, 439th Operations Group commander, will soon leave Westover to become commander of the 459th Air Refueling Wing, Andrews Air Force Base, Md. He will take command of the KC-135 wing Oct. 23.

Tuskegee Airman to speak at base

Charles Cross, one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, will be part of a formal ceremony Sept. 11 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. at the Westover Conference Center.

The Putnam Vocational High School Honor Guard and Drill team, from Springfield, Mass., will present the colors and perform a short ceremony. For more information, contact Lt. Col. Donald Gomes at 557-2220.

Wing honors quarterly winners

Westover's quarterly awards board has selected the following winners for their outstanding contributions to the 439th Airlift Wing mission for the third quarter of 2011:

Airman: SrA. Thomas Lennon, 439th Aeromedical Staging Squadron; NCO: SSgt. Nestor Lagares, 439th Maintenance Squadron; Senior NCO: MSgt. Douglas Clark, 439th Security Forces Squadron; Company Grade Officer: 2nd Lt. Andre Bowser, 439th Airlift Wing; Civilian: Alan Dedinas, 439th Mission Support Group; Civilian Supervisor: Jeffrey Whitehead, 439th Security Forces Squadron.

DADT repeal

Congress repealed the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law effective Sept. 20. On July 22, President Barack Obama certified to Congress that the U.S. armed forces were prepared for repeal of the DADT law.

This certification started a 60-day waiting period until the repeal becomes effective.

Airmen can access the DADT repeal training through the Advanced Distributed Learning Service link on the Air Force Portal.

Additional information is available at the local judge advocate offices.

Col. Vautrain joins as 12th wing commander

by TSgt. Timm Huffman



WELCOMING COMMITTEE Col. Steven Vautrain, and his wife, Katie, talk with Patriot Wing members following the wing's change of command of the 439th Airlift Wing Aug. 6 at the Base Hangar. (photo by TSgt. Timm Huffman)

The reins of leadership at the 439th Airlift Wing shifted hands Aug. 6 during a time-honored change of command ceremony held in the Base Hangar.

Col. Steven D. Vautrain became the commander of the Patriot Wing as Col. Robert Swain Jr. prepared to move on to a new assignment.

Maj. Gen. James T. Rubeor, 22nd Air Force commander, presided over the ceremony. Katie Vautrain, wife of Col. Vautrain, Diane Swain, Col. Swain's wife, family members, friends, local community leaders and almost 1,100 Westover troops attended.

Col. Vautrain comes to Westover from U.S. Transportation Command, Scott Air Force Base, Ill., where he served as the Chief of the Deployment and Distribution Operations Center. He is a command pilot with more than 5,100 hours in the C-17, C-130 and T-37.

He is a 1983 graduate of the University of Miami, with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. He also holds a Masters Degree in Military History from Norwich University, Vt.

For more on Col. Vautrain, view his official biography at westover.afrc.af.mil.

Col. Swain, the commander at Westover since 2008, will move to the Pentagon. He thanked his Westover family for all their hard work and exceptional performance during his tenure as wing commander. Under his tenure, the 439th Airlift Wing earned some of the most prestigious awards in the Reserve Command, including the 2010 Lt. Gen. Sherrard Award as the top Reserve wing in the command.

"Westover is a very special place and it is truly where our heart is," he said. General Rubeor presented Col. Swain with the Legion of Merit, First Oak Leaf Cluster, for his accomplishments

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New commander shares goals, vision of wing mission

by MSgt.
Andrew Biscoe

Twenty-eight years ago, 2nd Lt. Steven Vautrain, fresh out of ROTC, visited Westover to get his first military ID card.

The young officer was as pleased with the reception he received that day as the one people gave him as a senior officer last month – as

Westover's newest commander of the 439th Airlift Wing.

"I remember the outstanding support from the wonderful people here. They took care of me," said Col. Vautrain. "In fact, when I in-processed in August, I saw some of the same people from that first time I was here. They're still outstanding."

The colonel's near three decades of service includes a

six-month deployment in 2009 to Kabul, Afghanistan, as chief, USTRANSCOM Deployment and Distribution Operations Center – Forward.

"This wing is about its people, and the 439th has an excellent reputation as the best wing in the command," Col. Vautrain told TSgt. Stephen Winn, public affairs broadcaster, during a taping Westover's base cable channel 50, in early August.

The colonel plans to observe how the wing goes about its business for the first month of his time here.

And he looks forward to catching up with local sports favorites. "I had to leave the area for the Red Sox to win two series," he said. "The Red Sox and the Patriots are much better now," he said.

His roots trace to neighbor-
ARRIVAL continued on page 5

SF NCOs earn Purple Heart, Bronze Stars

by SrA. Kelly Galloway

Two Westover reservists from the 439th Security Forces Squadron received commendations during the Change of Command Ceremony Aug. 6 for actions while deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

MSgt. Arjel Falcon was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for exceptionally meritorious service while serving as an assistant flight chief. He responded to twenty rocket attacks, one of which he was credited with performing life-saving first aid by applying a tourniquet and packing a deep abdominal wound.



HANDSHAKE FOR THE HERO Family and friends congratulate SMSgt. Christopher Kellam, Aug. 6 in the Base Hangar. (photo by SrA. Alexander Brown)



STAR OCCASION Maj. Gen. James Rubeor, 22nd Air Force commander, congratulates MSgt. Arjel Falcon on his earning of the Bronze Star, Aug. 6 at the Base Hangar. (photo by SrA. Kelly Galloway)

SMSgt. Christopher Kellam was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medal for exceptionally meritorious service while serving as a superintendent of operations. During the unit's support of combat operations in Afghanistan, he led the field response with only 60 percent of his unit's manpower being filled, to 20 rocket attacks. SMSgt. Kellam's unit ultimately performed four life-saving actions while deployed.

EDITOR'S NOTE: To read more about the security forces' deployment to Afghanistan, visit westover.afrc.af.mil.

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ing South Hadley, Mass., where his grandparents used to live and his mother still lives. Col. Vautrain remembered coming home to western Massachusetts from college.

His former position at U.S. Transportation Command at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., allowed him to see how Department of Defense air, land, and sea forces move enormous amounts of sup-

plies all over the globe. "It was interesting to see all three work together," he said.

He's been at the controls of plenty of airlift missions too. A former C-17 pilot, Col. Vautrain has accrued more than 5,000 hours of five different types of Air Force aircraft. Now, he looks forward being able to focus on the airlift mission with the Air Force's largest – the C-5. But he knows the real strength in the airlift

muscle is its people. "I'm very happy Maj. Gen. (James) Rubeor selected me," he said. "I see people still here when I stepped foot on the base 28 years ago," he said. "That speaks well for this base and the wing. I want to see people like that stay around."

And he believes his home state roots will suit him well. "I think they'll appreciate having a New Englander in command," Col. Vautrain said. He is scheduled to attend the C-5 schoolhouse

at Lackland AFB, Texas, in October to become qualified on the C-5.

"Because I am known as a C-17 guy, people have been asking if Westover is getting those airplanes. We are not getting C-17s," he said, adding he looks forward to the renewed future of the Air Force's largest airlifter.

"I hope I'm still here in 2015 when the 439th is scheduled to begin flying the M-models."

Employers 'mobilize' for August A UTA

by MSgt. Andrew Biscoe

Employers of Westover reservists got an authentic view into military life Aug. 7.

The 439th Airlift Wing Public Affairs staff set up a tent and camouflage netting in the Base Hangar to simulate a deployment. To add more realism, employers received a set of personalized dog tags, mobility folders, and a sampling of meals-ready-to-eat.

Other wing units assisted PA: Explosive ordnance disposal technicians brought in a bomb-sniffing robot. They suited one of the employers up in a bomb-proof suit. The base chaplain and personnel specialists from the military personnel flight worked the

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Clockwise on both pages: Security forces and explosive ordnance disposal technicians explain their equipment during the 2011 Employer Day, Aug. 7.



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mobility line, just as they would with the real thing. Experts from security forces demonstrated the proper breakdown of the M-9, M-4, and M-16.

Out on the flight line in front of the hangar, a C-5 was on display. The bosses also got an idea of the aircraft's cavernous cargo deck as aerial porters instructed them on how to properly tie down cargo. The employers got handed pairs of gloves and tied the cargo down themselves.

One of the employers talked about how comprehensive the program was.

"The program was wonderful in showing employers many aspects of our employee's jobs with the Air Force," said Stephen



PORT PLAN TSgt. Christopher Harry, 42nd Aerial Port Squadron, instructs employers on how to tie down cargo inside the C-5 during Employer Day, Aug. 7. (photo by SrA. Alexander Brown)

Rappoport, employer of MSgt. Sonja Deyoe, 42nd Aerial Port Squadron. "Employer Day gave us the opportunity to observe first-hand how Sonja contributes to our armed forces in both our war efforts and humanitarian efforts."

In her civilian job, MSgt. Deyoe works for an East Providence, R.I., law firm.

"I'm very proud of what Sonja does in these turbulent times," Rappoport said. "I will always cherish my memories of that day."

The base's new wing commander, Col. Steven Vautrain, thanked employers for taking time out of their weekends to support their employees.

"The reserve counts on our men and women to be ready to serve our country," Col. Vautrain said. "It is because of employers like you that we can maintain a robust force of traditional reservists who dedicate their weekends – like this one – to ensuring they are ready to accomplish our mission."

Air Force Reservist brothers reunited at Rodeo

by 2nd Lt. Andre Bowser

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. -- The Air Force's premier airlift competition has reunited two Airmen brothers after they were more than a year apart, including a deployment to Iraq, and miles of separation.

The siblings, who are reservists stationed on opposite sides of the country, were reunited at Air Mobility Rodeo 2011, the biennial international competition that focuses on mission readiness, including airdrops, aerial refueling and other events that showcase the skills of mobility crews from around the world.

The event, which lasted from July 24 to 30, brought

diverse groups of Airmen together for a week of competition, and in the case of the two brothers, precious time to catch up.

SrA. Todd Tetreault, 30, a Reservist with the 452nd Air Mobility Wing at March Air Reserve Base, Calif., and an air transportation specialist with the 50th Aerial Port Squadron, reunited with his brother SrA. Nathan Tetreault, 26, a reservist with the 439th Airlift Wing's 42nd Aerial Port Squadron.

Nathan Tetreault said he hadn't seen his brother since before he deployed to Iraq for more than four months during the summer of 2010.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more on Rodeo, visit westover.afrc.af.mil.



Knucklebusters take top Rodeo award

by 2nd Lt. Andre Bowser

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. -- Westover Air Reserve Base won the Knucklebuster award at the Air Mobility Rodeo 2011 competition. This Air Force level award recognizes the maintenance team with the highest standards of professionalism, dedication and mutual respect for competitors.

Teams from around the world participated in the competition, which is held every other

units won or partnered to win 28 of the 80 categories in the 2011 competition.

At the closing ceremony, the Rodeo commander addressed the thousands of people who had traveled from around the world to the competition.



"We came to learn everything we can and work hard. Today, we hope to have a little fun as well, as we honor the competitors and their efforts," Brig. Gen. Rick Martin said.

In his address during the closing ceremony, Brig. Gen. Martin

called Rodeo "an opportunity to get together with our teammates from across the Air Force and around the world - to trade lessons learned and build camaraderie; to increase readiness and improve our military capability."

"We never know where we'll be operating next, whether it's aeromedical evacuation, support after a natural disaster, or delivering cargo, passengers or troops where they're most needed," Martin said. "The more partnerships we can build around the globe, the better we can perform our mission. That's what makes Rodeo so important," he added.

The following teams were named the winners at Rodeo 2011:

- Best Air Mobility Wing -- 97th Air Mobility Wing, Altus Air Force Base, Okla.



- The Knucklebuster Award, which recognizes the top maintenance team: 439th Airlift Wing, Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass.

RODEO ROUNDUP





MISSION CONTROL Members of the 439th Communications Squadron work at Operation Delta Care. (Courtesy photo)

COMM deploys south

Reservists from the 439th Communications Squadron participated in Operation Delta Care, Task Force Razorback, in West Helena, Ark., in July.

“The timing couldn’t have been better,” said Maj. Jeremy Downer, 439th CS communications officer. Although this deployment was planned more than one year ago, participants provided real-world medical support to the flood-ravaged Mississippi River Delta region. “The deployment happened to coincide with the time just after the flooding began to roll back,” said Maj. Downer. “So the initial response teams had just left, and we followed up with medical care for people in the community.” The Taskforce Razorback Arkansas Medical Innovative Readiness Train-

ing health screening clinic in McGehee, Ark., served the residents of a seven-county area known locally as the Arkansas Delta region with Army, Navy and Air Force reserve units providing a variety of medical, eye, dental and veterinary services to the residents in the economically depressed region.

The 439th CS was one of six communications units deployed to the exercise. Westover communicators set up and maintained the central node in the network. They ran network control for five other sites as well as communications support for Army staff and the task force commander. The eleven 439th CS members worked in two separate teams, providing advance and operational support.



Bowen’s comeback

MSgt. Kevin Bowen, a Patriot Wing maintainer, said he had his protective equipment to thank when he was struck by a driver while riding his motorcycle last summer.

A long hospital stay followed the nearly-fatal experience, and months after the incident a 30-year-old Ludlow man pleaded guilty in early June for his role in the crash last summer, according to local media.

The Springfield *Republican* newspaper reported that the crash, which happened in July 2010, was resolved a year later in court. The man who struck Bowen was sentenced to nine months at the House of Correction, MSgt. Bowen said.

“Carlos F. Serrazina, who was operating a 1992 BMW when it collided with ... Bowen’s motorcycle at Fuller and Cherry streets in Ludlow in July 2010, said little at the hearing before Judge Patricia T. Poehler in Palmer District Court,” according to the Springfield *Republican* article. “Serrazina was charged with operating under the influence of alcohol, serious bodily injury, and reckless operation of a motor vehicle. On the latter charge, he received three years supervised probation. He will lose his driver’s license for two years as a result of the conviction. He also must remain alcohol free, seek counseling, and be subject to random testing.”

MSgt. Bowen described Serrazina’s actions as “reckless behavior,” and he detailed the six blood transfusions and 13 surgeries he underwent after the crash. His injuries included a shattered left leg and near-amputation of his left foot. Recently on crutches, MSgt. Bowen said he felt much better and that he was training to take the Air Force physical fitness test.

“I’ve been motivated in recovering quickly to care for my daughter Paige,” he said.

EDITOR’S NOTE: MSgt. Bowen will write about his accident and how his personal protective equipment helped save his life, in the October Patriot.



PTSD expert speaks to Westover's first responders

by 2nd Lt. Andre Bowser
and SSgt. Katie Kiley

Noted post-traumatic stress disorder expert Bob Delaney spoke to 30 people at the base conference center Aug. 7, during an intimate talk with first-responders from the military and local community.

Delaney said that in his long career as a New Jersey state trooper, he learned first-hand how tough being a first responder can be, and how many police officers, firefighters and emergency medical workers face post-traumatic stress.

Standing before the audience in the conference center, Delaney said he has taken up the charge of sharing his story with as many first responders as are willing to listen.

"There's so much talk about post-

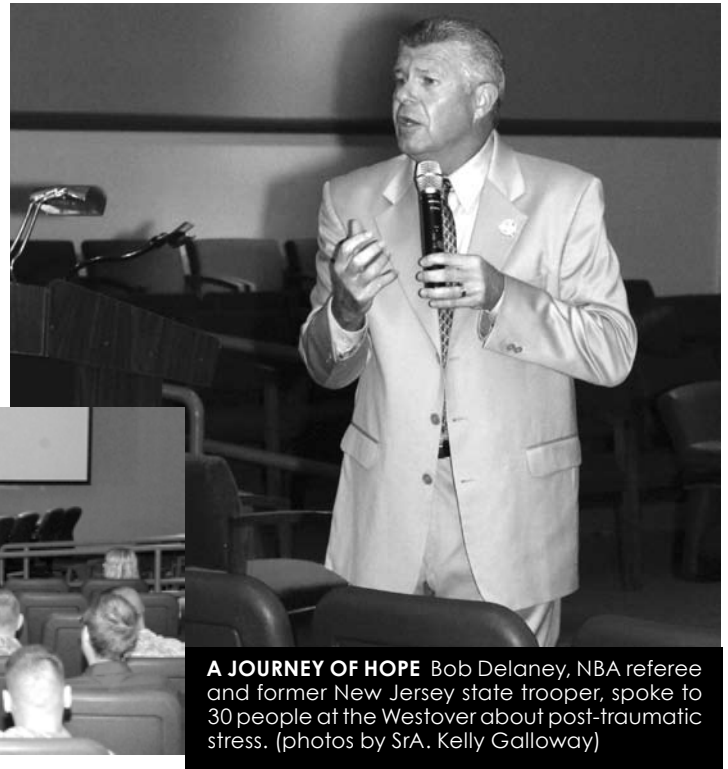
traumatic stress disorder," Delaney said. "We can treat post-traumatic stress before it can become a disorder."

His message was finding ways to cope and alleviate post-traumatic stress before it can become a disorder. To that end, Delaney wrote the book, "Surviving the Shadows: A Journey of Hope into Post-Traumatic Stress," which is forthcoming from publisher Sourcebooks.

Since his days as a state trooper, Delaney was invited to be embedded with the 25th Infantry Division in Mosul, Iraq, and he lent his wisdom about PTSD to the troops at Fort Hood after a devastating shooting rampage there.

He said his main goal is to help first-responders understand that their first line of defense is talking to each other, because no one can relate more to what they're going through than someone going through the same thing.

"I'm a big believer in peer-to-peer therapy," Delaney said. "Cops need to talk to cops; firefighters need to talk to fire-



A JOURNEY OF HOPE Bob Delaney, NBA referee and former New Jersey state trooper, spoke to 30 people at the Westover about post-traumatic stress. (photos by SrA. Kelly Galloway)

fighters; military need to talk to military."

Delaney said the potential gains are worth it. "That's what will prevent PTS from becoming PTSD," he said.

The former state trooper said he developed PTS after going undercover as part of a three-year operation to infiltrate the mob.

"Everyday—I felt like I was going to get whacked," he said. "I was on an emotional roller coaster."

After completing his assignment, and seeing many of the mobsters he'd become friends with get sent off to jail for long prison terms, Delaney said he eventually left the career field to place himself in more positive environs.

He became an NBA referee, after years of experience as a volunteer referee for various sporting associations.

"I knew I wanted to be around something that was good," he said. "For those of you who serve in uniform, I encourage you to find that inner peace."

COMMANDER continued from page 4

as commander at Westover.

Col. Vautrain is already familiar with the local area. A Winchester native, his mother lives in South Hadley, Mass., where his grandparents lived for years. "It's great to be back home," he said.

"We look forward to becoming active members of the community."

In his speech to the hundreds of Airmen gathered in formation, Col. Vautrain spoke highly of the men and women of the 439th Airlift Wing and said he was looking forward to serving alongside them.

"My goals as commander are to continue the reputation of Westover in the Air Force and promote the core values of integrity, service before self and excellence in all we do," Col. Vautrain said in closing.

REMEMBERING 9/11

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is reprinted from the October 2001 issue of the Patriot.

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

Like the Pearl Harbor generation we will always know where we were when America came under fire.

We'll remember hearing the first word as we went about our business mid-morning on a Tuesday, Sept. 11. We'll never forget standing around TV sets watching the world unravel, how we spoke in short outbursts,

how faces were taut in disbelieving shock. We'll recount how unthinkable, impossible images exploded through the morning – flaming buildings; dying firefighters; final, doomed words spoken into cell phones.

Like Pearl Harbor generations, we will have the satisfaction of knowing that those who hurt us, misjudged us. Even as the blows were still coming, we fell back on instinct and training.

America's military worldwide went to Force Protection Condition Delta, the highest alert, used only to signal that an attack is in progress.

The new, grimmer face of Westover started with heavy equipment operators lowering red-topped cement jersey barriers at parking lot and street entrances. Military and civilian members left their desks to set up plastic cones and yellow ropes around their buildings and move away their trash cans.

They locked entrance doors in their buildings and set up tables at main entrances to check ID cards and take names of those coming and going.

The Westover senior leadership established a Crisis Action Team in the Command Post. Its mission was twofold: to protect Westover's people and property, and to prepare aircraft, flight crews and support people who might be called into military or humanitarian action.

Offices around the base began receiving calls from reservists who volunteered to report for duty if needed. Some traditional reservists like Col. Sarah Waterman, 439th ASTS commander, and Lt. Col. Terry Thomas, 439th MSS commander, simply showed up. "I couldn't stay home," Waterman said. The medical units called members and assembled rosters of volunteers available for short-notice alert.

Westover closed its gate to all non-mission people. Incoming vehicles were subject to German shepherds of Massachusetts State police dog handlers and Westover Marines joined wing security members at the gate.

With an FAA order to clear the skies, a Texas C-130 crew returning home from England landed at Westover after a "greeting" by two F-15s about 75 miles north of Springfield. "I'd never had an escort like that before in my



career," the aircraft commander said. Similarly, 10 A-10 aircrews found themselves grounded at Westover on their way home to Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz. from the Middle East.

The first step to tighten security on the flight line and around base was to increase the number of security forces and frequency of patrols. Security forces armed with M-16s and M9 Baretta pistols stood at entry control points to the flight line, patrolled in Humvees and walked the fence line to check for tampering.

The civilian DOD police worked long hours and reservists of the 439th Security Forces Squadron called in to volunteer. The Westover force was supplemented by Massachusetts Army National Guard military police. Maintenance members stood guard at the entry control point to the flight line.

During the week, volunteers of the 439th Services Squadron were in the Dining Facility at 4 a.m. to cook breakfast for the security forces and other reservists.

Lt. Col. Armand Tourangeau conducted a prayer service in the Base Chapel to pray for victims, rescuers and all those in uniform who face the unknown. He chose passages from Scripture reminding that the greatest strength

in times of stress is a core of inner peace.

The wave of solidarity that swept America in response to the attack was felt at the Westover reserve recruiting offices. Westover's recruiting offices in New England and New York received numerous calls from prior and non-prior service people and in-

active reservists.

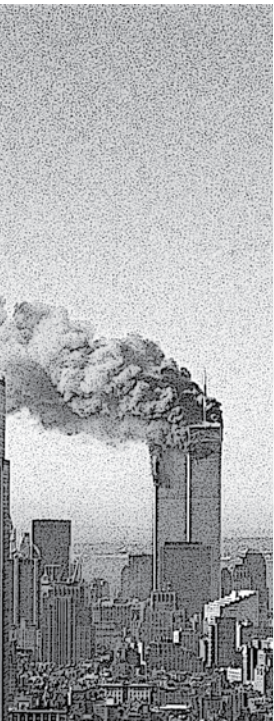
"There has been a surge of patriotism. People want to get involved and do something for their country. They say they want to take a stand," said SMSgt. Ronald Tyson, senior reserve recruiter.

Before the end of Tuesday, security police lowered the base flag to half-staff.

It had been a day of roller-coaster emotions for Americans, among them Kathy Kies, wing JAG legal assistant. All morning and into early afternoon she made nervous calls to family members seeking word about her nephew, a civilian Pentagon employee. After hours of anxiety, a call came that he was safe.

"It was such a feeling of relief. Thank God he was safe, especially when I found out how close he had been. He had just left a room that was demolished. His supervisor was killed," she said.

Like the Pearl Harbor generation, Kathy Kies now looks at the price of war through a mother's eyes. "Now," she said, "I worry about my daughter. Sherri is a sergeant with the 82nd Airborne. I'm afraid of what will come next."



TROOP TALK | Where were you on 9/11?



"I was on the George Washington Bridge and saw the first plane hit. Immediately, I turned around and came to Westover and heard on the radio what was happening."
--TSgt. David Demers
42nd Aerial Port Squadron

"I was in Mr. Deresie's 4th grade class at New Paltz elementary school in New Paltz, New York. We were dismissed early and I went home and remember watching the news all night."
--Amn. Bevin Rutland
439th Airlift Wing command post



"I had just arrived in Sigonella, Italy, for our annual tour. We were watching the morning news at lodging when the planes hit. The base was already locked down and no one could get in or out for two to three days."
--TSgt. Robert Cirillo
439th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

photos by SrA. Kelly Galloway
 (turn to page 14 for another 9/11 account)

Airman shares first-hand 9/11 experience

by SrA. Kelly Galloway

SrA. Elias Aponte, 439th Security Forces Squadron, was attending John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City on September 11, 2001.

"When I got to my class around 7 a.m., there was a posting on the bulletin board notifying us that classes had been cancelled," he remembers. "I didn't think anything of it and took the subway to downtown where I was

working at the U.S. Attorney General's office," SrA. Aponte said. To this day, he still does not know why classes were cancelled so early.

"When I came out from the subway I could see the post office and behind that, the towers. It was then that I saw smoke and papers and other stuff flying out from the tower. I walked down to the attorney general's building, but when I got there they were already evacuating the building. Again, I didn't think much of it considering accidents happen all the time, especially in New York," he said.

He and a few friends then decided to walk down to the Brooklyn Bridge to get a better view of what was going on.

"We were young, curious, and wanted to see what happened to the towers," SrA. Aponte said. From the bridge he could see all of the East River, Lower Manhattan, and the Twin Towers. "We weren't on the bridge for very long when I saw the second plane hit. I actually watched the plane come in and smash into the building. To me, the towers at that moment looked like two chimneys smoking. From anywhere in the city you could look up and see the trail of smoke from the tops of the towers."

SrA. Aponte's eyes shifted downward, his voice lowered; he and his friends were front-line witnesses to what would become our nation's largest tragedy to date.

They stood on the Brooklyn Bridge for awhile after the towers came down. "That image will never leave my memory; especially the huge cloud of smoke and debris that rushed out from everywhere, engulfing everything," he said. "It was literally like a tsunami of dust and dirt."

"It was literally like a tsunami of dust and dirt."

--SrA. Elias Aponte

SrA. Aponte and his friends walked up Franklin D. Roosevelt East River Drive. "There were so many people just walking up FDR, all I could see was a sea of people. The city was in a state of total gridlock, people were bumper to bumper. New York is a city that centers around the idea of 'anything to make a buck' and that rang true for the taxis. They were charging \$200 just to drive people around the city. I saw taxis with five, six, seven people in them. Some were sitting on the roof," he said.

"I made my way home safely. To be honest, the reality of what just occurred didn't set in until the next day when the World Trade Center, one of the most prominent symbols representing New York City, was no longer there. Instead of seeing those two towers, there was just a big gaping hole."



GATE GUARD SrA. Elias Aponte remembers seeing the drama of the 9/11 attacks happen right in front of his eyes. (photo by SrA. Kelly Galloway)

FACES OF WESTOVER |

PATRIOT PRAISES

Promotions

Chief Master Sgt.

Lee Hareld
Christopher Maille



Senior Master Sgt.

Jeffrey Sickler



Master Sergeant

John Lyons
Thomas Wilk



Technical Sergeant

Glenn McAvoy
Michael Stephens



Staff Sergeant

Lloyd Chadbourne
Robert Glass
Nichole Murphy
Michael Teixeira



Senior Airman

Alyssa Arriaga
Amanda Bonilla
Aaron Brassard
James Brown
Joshua Clark
Gabriel Cordeiro
Rozlyn Edwards
Michela Infantino
Steven Livingston
Henry Locke
Samantha Mills
Andrew Peters
James Ricco
Daniel Spangler
Nicklaus Tzimas
Raymond Rodriguez



Airman First Class

Fareed Johnson
Jessica Letourneau
Michael Neita
Anthony Rodrigue
Colby Tyler
Garyson Winn



Airman

Adam Saleh
Rudolph Thomas
Richard Myatt Jr.



Staff Sgt. Chris Boutin,
439th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
crew chief, enlisted in 1999.

“My father, who is now retired from active-duty Air Force, was a C-5 crew chief. The exposure to his career field influenced me to follow in his footsteps,” SSgt. Boutin said.

For three years, the sergeant was a “flying crew chief” and traveled worldwide. “My favorite three places were Elmendorf, Alaska, Ramstein, Germany and Anderson, Guam.”

He recently proposed to his girlfriend, Karyn Custis, and is now engaged. “I took her to Bear State Park in Massachusetts, where we hiked up to a secluded area with a beautiful view of the valley and mountains. There wasn’t another person for miles. My stomach was churning when I realized that the time was right, that this is the moment,” he recalled.



SSgt. Chris Boutin

Retirements |

Major

Christopher Lucia
John Mailo
Anthony Williams

Chief Master Sergeant

Joseph DiMartino

Senior Master Sergeant

Shauon Brothers
Daniel Jalbert
Eileen Moloney-Cook

Master Sergeant

Tyler Bergemann

Aaron Gates
Kim Stewart

Technical Sergeant

Barrington Dyer

SERVICES CALENDER |

BOWLING CENTER >> Fall league sign-up and meetings include free food and drink specials. League members and new members are invited. Any team that cannot make the meeting, please contact Michael Ferguson at the bowling center at 557-3990.

FITNESS CENTER >> Readiness Relay-Reloaded: Sept. 15 4-5:30 p.m., must have five team members; wiffle ball tournament Sept 19-23, must also have five team members. Cardio kickboxing class will start Sept. 7, and will be held Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:30 p.m.- 5:30 p.m. with instructor Clayton Arlene; party yourself into shape-zumba classes are coming soon with instructor Noe AhSha-McAlister. Cost is \$5 per class. For more information, call 557-3958.

OUTDOOR RECREATION >> Canopy tents, bounce houses, grills, campers, kayaks and much more are available for rent. For more information, call 557-2192.

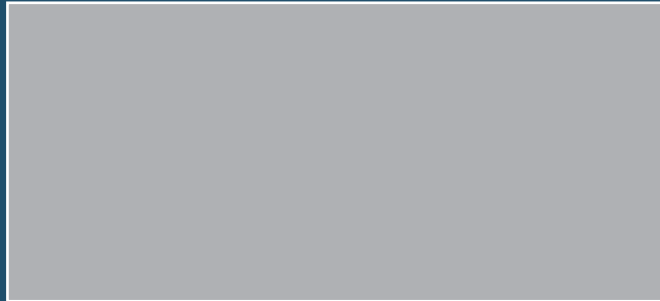
INFORMATION, TICKET, AND TOURS >> ITT has vacation planning information, military discounts, Six Flags tickets, and more. For more information, call 557-2108.



Published monthly for Patriots like SrA. Jennifer Michels, Teaneck, N.J., and the more than 3,600 reservists and civilians assigned to the 439th Airlift Wing.

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FLIGHT LINE SHOWER Col. Robert Swain Jr., gets the traditional hosing down following his Aug. 2 fini flight on a Westover C-5. Hosing the former wing commander down is the colonel's wife, Diane Swain. Col. Swain was the commander at Westover from June 2008 until Aug. 6. (photo by W.C. Pope)