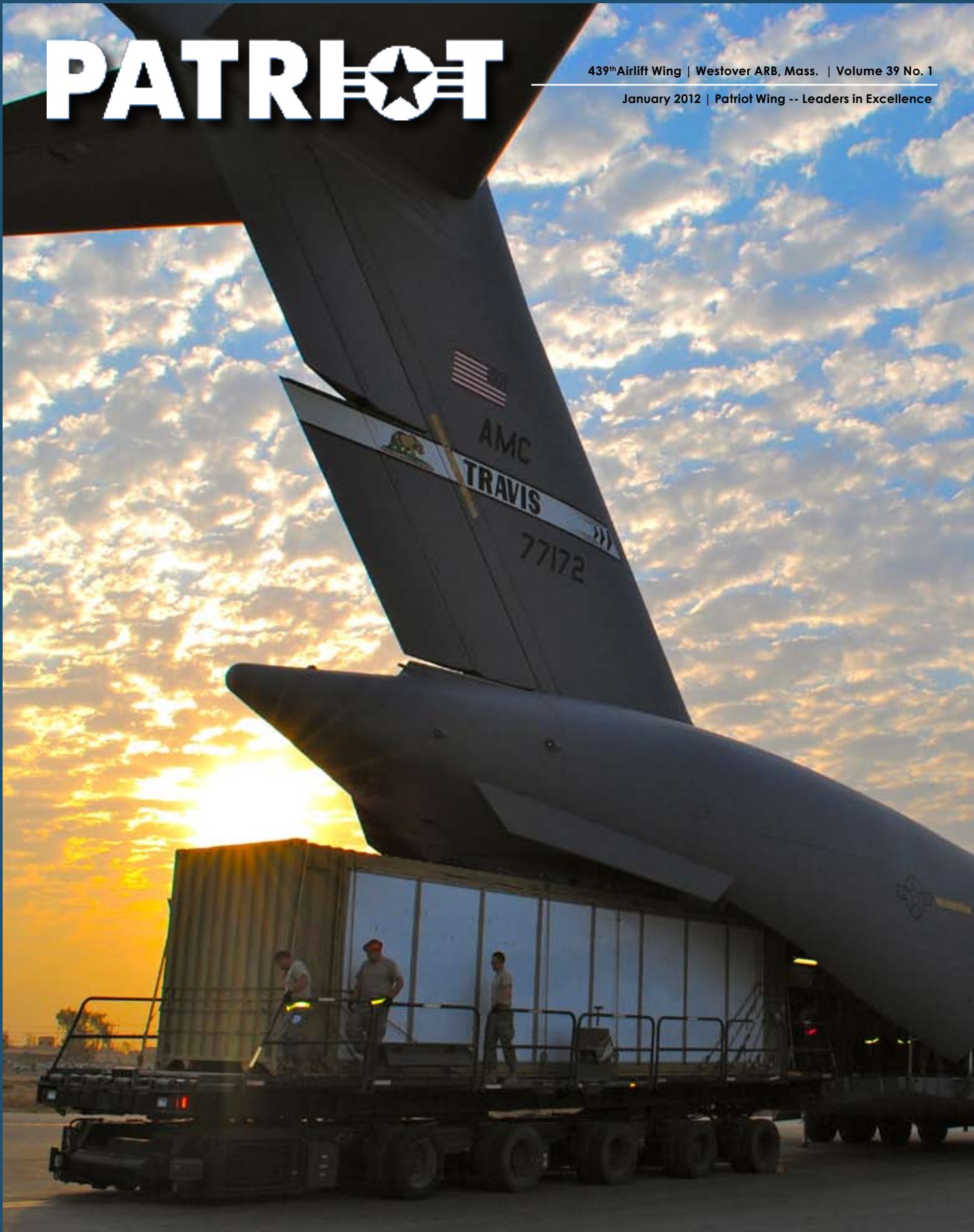


PATRIOT

439th Airlift Wing | Westover ARB, Mass. | Volume 39 No. 1

January 2012 | Patriot Wing -- Leaders in Excellence



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COVER PHOTO >> Deployed reservists from Westover's 42nd Aerial Port Squadron load a C-17 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. For more on the aerial porters' deployment, turn to pages 8 and 9.



THIS IS ONLY A TEST Karl Lindberg, bioenvironmental engineering, and Karen Watts, (right), emergency management, evaluate simulated radiation levels during a disaster scenario in November. The exercise, held at the fire training facility near the North Ramp, also tested the response procedures of Westover emergency crews. (photo by W.C. Pope)

Happy New Year!

Two-thousand twelve is upon us. I hope you have taken the opportunity to spend



quality time with friends and family over the holiday season.

Since becoming the command chief last spring, one thing that has amazed me is the quality of the Airmen we have in our wing. You're motivated, and possess the self-initiative to achieve great success.

No matter the circumstances, you lean forward and give your best. I've been asked repeatedly by Airmen and NCOs, how do I get promoted? After asking if they have finished their PME and skill-level training, my next question is what separates you from your peers? Have you completed your CCAF degree? Have you asked your supervisor how you can pull ahead of your peers?

Mentoring is a key to success. That's what supervisors should be doing continuously, more than once every two years. Your leadership should be putting you on track for success. Look for avenues that will bring out your leadership qualities such as joining the Rising Six, Top Three, and HRDC. Look to get involved in your community.

You're all ambassadors of the Air Force Reserve. When you do something special, make sure your supervisors are aware of it. Your supervisor may see you two days a month. Make sure they note what you do the other 28 days. Now, you're saying to yourself, "I'm in a line position with no upward mobility," or "I have a full-time job, spouse and children, I don't have the time to volunteer."

There's the old saying, "If there's a will, there's a way." First, you never know when opportunity is going to happen. Remember, your career is a marathon. Your leadership should be looking at the totality of your career, not the past two years when you tried to sprint over the finish line because a master sergeant position opened up.

Two quotes that are "red flags" for me

when promotions become available:

"He/she is a great person."

"He/she has been here a long time."

A promotion is not a lifetime achievement award. It is a culmination of your successes as an Airman, and how well you have trained your subordinates in becoming future leaders in this wing. It is an opportunity for you to bring your squadron and this wing to the next level of success.

Don't rest on your laurels when talking about the "good old days" when you were awarded a Cold War certificate from Secretary of Defense (William) Cohen that hangs in your cubicle. Self-improve, and look to improve your Airmen around you.

We soon enter the next deployment tempo band. Please ensure you have your personal and professional affairs in order. Don't hesitate to visit the Airmen and Family Readiness Center staff; they are there to support you -- and your families.

Thank you for your service.

**by 439th AW Command
CMSgt. Michael Thorpe**

BRIEFS |

No winter tours

Due to winter weather conditions on the flight line, C-5 tours for the public are curtailed until April 1.

For more information, call public affairs at 557-2020.

Billeting changes

Renovations are under way at the Flyers Inn. The main office in Bldg. 2201 is closed until June. The temporary office is in trailers adjacent to the main office.

Crews are renovating Bldgs. 5101 and 5105 with new carpet and furniture. For more information, call billeting at 557-2700.

New commander leads 439th OG

The 439th Operations Group assumption of command will be held Jan. 7 at 1 p.m. in the Westover Conference Center.

Lt. Col. Michael Miller will assume command of the group.

His previous assignments include operations officer with the reserve's 326th Airlift Squadron at Dover Air Force Base, Del., weapons officer instructor, special operations UH-1N gunship pilot, MH-53J Pave Low evaluator pilot, and a C-17 Globemaster III flight-lead evaluator pilot. He is a command pilot with nearly 7,800 flying hours.

Lt. Col. Miller was commissioned in August 1985 as a ROTC graduate at Bloomburg University, Pa. He earned a master's in aerospace science at Embry-Riddle University, Fla., in 1996. He also earned a master's in science in 2011 from the U.S. Army War College (in residence), and is a 2008 Air War College graduate.

New MEO Hours

The military equal opportunity office, at Ext. 3225, is open on both A and B UTAs from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Wednesdays from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. MEO office is located in Bldg. 1850.

Annual winners

Westover's annual award winners are: Airman, SrA. Bryan Healy, 439th SFS; NCO, TSgt. Donald Boulette, 439th SFS; SNCO, CMSgt. Christopher Kellam, 439th SFS; Company Grade Officer, 2nd Lt. Alan Fairey, 58th APS; Civilian, Robert Durand, 439th SFS; Civilian Supervisor, Robert Rodrigue, 439th MOS.

Base web site

Visit Westover's web site to read the latest Westover and Air Force news and information on the base.

The link is westover.afrc.af.mil.

Joint-service air show/open house set for Aug. 4-5



LINING UP Thousands of people gather on the Westover flight line during the September 2008 Great New England Air Show and Open House. This year's show, while not featuring a major demonstration team, will highlight the joint-service operation that Westover has evolved into during the 21st century. (File photo)

by MSgt. Andrew Biscoe

Although a demonstration team won't attend this summer, organizers with the 2012 Great New England Air Show and Open House are seizing the opportunity to put Westover's joint-service mission on display.

Despite the absence of the Thunderbirds, there will still be plenty of aircraft and ground demonstrations for the thousands of spectators expected at the air show, said Col. Steven Vautrain, 439th Airlift Wing commander. The show is scheduled for Aug. 4-5.

So far, aerial performers include a U.S. Navy F-18 Hornet demonstration team and a Marine CV-22 Osprey flight demonstration.

"Having so many joint-service tenants on the base gives us a lot of viability," said Col. Vautrain. "We may not have a premiere demo team this time around, but we have the opportunity to show the public our joint-service mission."

Westover has been home to the Air Force Reserve's 439th AW for nearly 40 years, but the base's joint-service role is well established. More than 2,100 Army, Navy, and Marine re-

servists have joined the 2,500-acre Westover landscape in the past decade.

This year's air show director is Lt. Col. David Heroux, who is working with the Galaxy Community Council, a non-profit organization that assists the base with sponsors, coordinating civilian and military acts, and working with services to bring in vendors for the show.

The March issue of the *Patriot* (both print and online) will feature a comprehensive list of the military and civilian performers. The GCC also has information available at greatnewenglandairshow.com.

DoD cuts already impact demo teams' schedules

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va.-- Air Combat Command faces significant fiscal constraints and is making tough decisions about the best ways to continue providing combat airpower to warfighting commanders, which is what ACC does as the Air Force's primary force provider.

One decision ACC officials made is to sponsor one single-ship demonstration team for the 2012 air show season, scaling back from the six teams ACC historically sponsored – A-10 East & West, F-16 East & West, F-15E and F-22.

For the 2012 season, ACC is sponsoring our F-22 demonstration team to perform at up to 20 shows. In addition to the F-22 demonstration team, the Thunderbirds are set to complete a full season next year.

Reducing the number of single-ship demonstration teams will allow ACC to reallocate more than 900 sorties to our wings so they can maximize their flying hours for combat readiness training, offsetting some of the reduction we've seen in flying hours.

Most importantly, reallocating those sorties will provide an increase in more than 25 combat-ready fighter pilots – that's a very good thing for our nation and wise stewardship of our limited resources.

The opportunity to showcase ACC aircrew at air shows around the country is important – and the Thunderbirds, F-22 demonstration team and Air Force Heritage Flight Foundation will continue highlighting the extraordinary work of all our Airmen. (From ACC Public Affairs)

Wing HoHoHoHoliday Party



A WESTOVER CHRISTMAS Clockwise: The base fire department brings Santa and Mrs. Claus to the Base Hangar; MSgt. Kevin Godbout holds his daughter Piper, while waiting in line for Santa; SSgt. Jessica Nieves and her daughter, Jalani, meet St. Nick; more than 200 people gathered for the Airmen and Family Readiness staff's annual Children's Christmas party, held Dec. 3. (photos by MSgt. Andrew Biscoe)



Year in Review

2011

by MSgt. Andrew Biscoe

Multiple weather disasters and a June Operational Readiness Inspection topped the news for Westover last year.

The June ORI capped years of training, checklists, exercises, drills, and *Airman's Manual* memorization as more than 450 Airmen headed to Alpena, Mich., for the Air Force's flagship readiness exercise. Air Mobility Command inspectors gave the wing an overall strong satisfactory rating, while noting superior performers who highlighted the Patriot Wing's hard work during the inspection.

An unprecedented string of extreme weather affected the scope of Westover's operations through 2011 – and in one such case, drove most personnel off base for several days.

The most serious weather by far, however, occurred on June 1, when two tornadoes sliced through Springfield, West Springfield, Westfield, and Monson, Mass. Chicopee and Westover did not end up in the path of the tornadoes, which toppled trees and flipped houses like toys.

A microburst thunderstorm struck the base in July, destroying the C-5 model near the front gate, while the real aircraft on the flight line emerged unscathed.

In the midst of the weather events, the 439th Airlift Wing's senior leadership changed hands. Col. Steven Vautrain took command of the Patriot Wing on the August A UTA from Col. Robert Swain Jr., who had been commander since June 2008.

Two weeks later, flight and mainte-



nance crews evacuated all but two of the fleet of C-5s at Westover in late August, anticipating Hurricane Irene. Although the storm's eye hovered directly over western Massachusetts, the base escaped serious damage.

A freak Nor'easter Oct. 29 dumped

nearly a foot of snow on the entire region. Heavy snow coated leaves still on trees, causing catastrophic damage in communities surrounding the base. Trees collapsed under the weight of the snow, leaving millions in the Northeast without power.

>>>

C-5 flyover wows 250,000 at major New England Thanksgiving parade



PLYMOUTH PRESENT Inset, a Patriot Wing C-5B flies over the Plymouth, Mass., Thanksgiving Parade, Nov. 19. More than 250,000 people saw the event, as part of the state's largest Thanksgiving parades. (photo by Lt. Col. James Bishop)

by Lt. Col. James Bishop

More than a quarter of a million people saw a Westover C-5B perform a flyover at a large parade, Nov. 19.

The aircraft was on a training mission, flying up the Plymouth, Mass., coastline to the delight of a crowd that topped 250,000 during America's Hometown Thanksgiving Parade.

The annual event is billed as the second largest Thanksgiving Day Parade in the country, according to event organizers.

While an Army National Guard unit shot large-caliber blanks next to Plymouth Rock and in sight of the Mayflower replica, Mayflower II, the C-5 banked and headed west out of sight.

"This was a highlight of the parade," said event coordinator John Cochran. "We hope the partnership with Westover will continue in the coming years as we move forward toward the 400th anniversary of the landing at Plymouth."

As the Navy band Sea Chanters performed "God Bless America," the C-5 banked and headed north along the Plymouth Harbor coastline.

On the ground, spotter and Westover flight engineer, MSgt. Eric McGlynn, attempted cockpit-to-ground communication. They made radio contact with pilot Capt. Matt Podkowka, who spoke from the cockpit to wish the crowd a happy Thanksgiving on behalf of the men and women of the 439th Airlift Wing.

>>>

The massive storm's wake brought in power crews from all over the United States, some of which were billeted on base. Power was out for several hours, unlike nearby towns, which were in the dark for over a week.

And in July, during a routine afternoon

workday, offices and buildings shook as an earthquake centered in West Virginia jarred the eastern seaboard. No damage resulted from the tremor, but the event rounded out a year that many will remember will remember with one word: "extreme."

Wing tallies more awards for 2011

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Patriot Wing earned a plethora of command-level awards in 2011.

Chief of Staff Excellence Group

CMSgt Kathy Wood
 SMSgt. Robert Hanson
 SMSgt. Todd Ramsey
 SMSgt. Tim Day
 MSgt. Wayne Howe
 MSgt. Jeff Schillawski
 MSgt. Kelly Wentworth
 TSgt. Kameron Kirk
 TSgt. Frank Manegio
 TSgt. Jason Reynolds
 SSgt. Erin Skura

Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron Best AES Patient Safety Program

Lt. Col. Marie Dufault
 Lt. Col. Michael Nicholson

Outstanding Medical Quality Initiative

Lt. Col. Michelle Rowe
 Lt. Col. Michael Nicholson
 Maj. Christine Sullivan-Leary
 MSgt. Alicia Smith

AES Flight Nurse of the Year

Capt. Susan McCormick

Outstanding NCO AE Unit

TSgt. Kevin Preston

Outstanding AES Technician 2010

SrA. Jonathan Ritter

CCAF Certificate of Recognition

SMSgt. Anthony Basile
 MSgt. Dawn Scaff
 MSgt. John Tinnemeyer
 TSgt. Cheryl McLaughlin

First Sergeant of the Year

SMSgt. Stacey Gilman, 439th CES

Rising 6 Wingman

TSgt. Myles Mueller, 439th AMXS

With the United States military officially handing over the keys of Joint Base Balad to the Iraqi government, two of Westover's own recount their deployment and final days at the base.

Although the Iraqi army now operates Balad, two aerial porters from Westover who left Balad behind, still have it in the front of their minds.

SrA. Peter Alicea-Correa and SrA. Heather Goodyear, both with the 42nd Aerial Port Squadron, left Westover May 5, 2011, and arrived at Balad May 9.

"On a normal day, the workload wasn't really too bad," said SrA. Goodyear. "I worked in ATOC (air terminal operation center); we made sure we were getting in the things we were supposed to be getting and the right things were going out on

the right planes."

SrA. Goodyear's main duty was sending and receiving, whether it was people or cargo. SrA. Alicea-Correa was on the opposite end of the spectrum.

"We worked 12-hour shifts", said SrA. Alicea-Correa. "I was uploading and downloading cargo, passengers, baggage pallets, and vehicles. You name it, we moved it."

Both SrA. Goodyear and SrA. Alicea-Correa agreed that the living conditions were good.



photos by SrA. Bartleomiej Orzol



by SrA. Charles Hutchinson IV



“We had running water all the way through the end of the deployment, air conditioning too. It was a great living experience,” said SrA. Alicea-Correa.

Air conditioning was a luxury the men and women were happy to have.

“It was blazing hot in the summer,” said SrA. Alicea-Correa. “It was anywhere between 120-140 degrees on the flight line.”

All members of the 42nd who deployed were volunteers. When asked if they would deploy again, both Airmen without hesitation said yes.

“I was hoping to go to Afghanistan next year,” said SrA. Goodyear.

“I want to deploy again next year if I can. It’s a great experience,” said SrA. Alicea-Correa. “It was one of the best experiences of my life; I’d do it again in a heartbeat.”

Transferring Joint Base Balad to the government of Iraq was part of the largest military transition since World War II, according to Pentagon officials.

“I’d say that was the most interesting thing about the deployment. How you go from a fully operational base to just handing over the keys to somebody else to take over,” said SrA. Alicea-Correa. “Seeing all those units go into a base in May with all types of personnel and equipment, and by the time you leave it looks like a ghost town.”

the Road



Turn and Burn/The Things I Saw at War

by SSgt. George Cloutier

The following is a snapshot from my experience while deployed to Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan.

“So this is just a turn-and-burn right?” I ask the Marine. We’re standing on the side of the main road of Camp Phoenix, across from the building we both work at, in front of a row of black SUVs. It’s late afternoon on a mid-spring day in northern Afghanistan, which means that the temperature is just about perfect for all the body armor and gear we’re wearing.

“Just to KAIA and back. We’re picking up some new guys,” the Marine says with his deep southern drawl as he fishes the dip out of his pocket. He gestures the can to me and I shake my head.

“You wanna drive?” I ask. I know this guy likes to drive. It’s just a little scary to drive with him sometimes, but I’m used to it.

“Sure,” he says.

“Guess I’m TCing this one huh?”

“Go for it.”

We both start getting the vehicle prepped for the trip. Paperwork, electronic counter-measure systems and navigation systems need to get fired up and we have to make sure the vehicle is mechanically serviceable. These vehicles get run into the ground.

We pick up one more body before heading out, leaving two empty seats for our new arrivals and a little breathing room for the three of us making this journey. Equipment whirs from under a pile of personal bags and emergency supplies stuffed into the back of the truck. Bulky bodies padded with thick, uncompromising armor shift around in their seats, adjusting the straps and belts that seem to be everywhere. It’s comfortable, for now. On the way back weapons will have to get stuffed between legs and in the cracks of seats. Personal items will get stuffed into corners and down by feet and thrown in the back to get mixed up with all the other junk. There will be no good place to put anything. Even the cup holders will be full.

There’s a moment of silence as we get ready to roll out. The other vehicles in our



convoy start pulling out. Everyone comes to terms with the situation in their own way. Some people fidget with their equipment compulsively. Others stare out windows. Tight armor coupled with the smell of diesel fuel and burning plastic makes it hard to breathe at times.

Kabul International Airport, or KAIA (pronounced kai-ya), is the biggest airport in this part of Afghanistan. It’s second only to Bagram in size, which is only a very short ride in a helo or fixed wing from Kabul but takes about an hour to get to by ground over bumpy terrain. That’s why most everyone in Kabul comes and goes out of KAIA. It’s a big strip of tarmac, fully equipped with its own base and a slew of restaurants and shops that are frequented by many of the civilians and military making their way in, out and around the country.

Looking out the thick, dusty window, most everything on base blurs together in a mish-mash of earth tone clothing and crumbling tan buildings as we roll down the road to the main gate at a snail’s pace. A few things stick out. A woman in her mid twenties dressed like a JC Penny ad walks by, her inappropriate shoes clack against the pavement and equally inappropriate clothing and long dark hair blow in the cold dusty breeze. She’s some kind of embassy type by the looks of her. A gaggle of dark-skinned soldiers in what looks like purple cammo trudge slowly down the road behind her. A couple of Special Forces guys guiding a tactical truck pass by us going the other direction. They look like

they’re coming back from the provinces; hats on backwards, body armor over their T shirts, expensive brand name sun glasses on their faces and hardly a stitch of uniform on them.

Ten minutes later and only a quarter mile down the road, the SUV slows to a crawl and eventually

stops by the weapons loading area where the road takes a 90-degree turn and transforms from the main drag into the gateway in and out of Camp Phoenix. I flip open my cell phone and thumb the number for the joint operations center clumsily through my gloves. The Blue Force Tracker finally comes up. After some trouble-shooting, our electronic counter measures are giving me the good-to-go. Our ground guide opens the door and jumps in the back seat, slamming the heavy armored door.

“Did you call the JOC?” he asks.

“Yeah we’re good,” I say, hanging up my cell phone.

“Did they say anything?”

“Yeah. Watch out for a white Toyota Corolla.” That gets a few chuckles. Every other car in Afghanistan is a white Corolla.

From December 2010 to June 2011, I worked at Combined Joint Interagency Task Force-435 (CJIATF 435), with headquarters at Camp Phoenix in Kabul. The unit includes U.S. service members from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force, as well as coalition partners and civilian members from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, International Security Assistance Force Joint Command, the U.S. Marshals Service and the Combined Security Transition

Command-Afghanistan. I lived and worked with them all. They were good people who brought unique perspectives to the mission. Nobody was exempt from anything. Uniforms didn't matter. Eventually we just stopped seeing them.

CJIATF 435, in partnership with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and U.S. interagency and international partners, conducts operations in detention, corrections, judicial and biometrics in order to transition detention operations to Afghan control and promote rule of law.

The other vehicles in our small convoy begin creeping forward again as the last of the ground guides gets in their vehicle. People start strapping on their helmets as we get closer to the gate. Rambo, one of the Afghan guards, salutes a car coming in from the inbound lane. A clutch of the huge pigeons that Rambo keeps in an old shed by the guard shack fly over our SUV as we rock up and down the first hump.

Rambo isn't in the Afghan National Army or the Afghan National Police. His family was killed by Taliban years ago. He lives here with us now. Someone gave him some uniforms and a set of body armor, which is heavily adorned with various medals and pins that he wears proudly. All those medals are probably personal medals given to him by servicemen and women that have worked with him. It's hard to tell how old Rambo is through the dark glasses and deeply tanned face, but he's not young. An old wooden baseball bat or length of metal pipe is his weapon of choice. Everyone salutes Rambo when they come onto base. We come and go. Rambo stays.

"Are we jamming?" our driver asks.

"We're jamming," I say, flipping the jammer switch, the soft whirring of the jammer becoming a much louder, higher pitched shrieking.

We cross the second hump, now outside the wall. The bullet holes on the Texas barriers that divide the outgoing and incoming lanes are a reminder of our most recent attack. None of ours died. Plenty

of theirs did. Most of the bullet holes we can see from this side are actually from the 240 Bravo in the tower that overlooks the gate. From the incoming lane you can see the holes from the AK-47 fire and the blown up chunk of road where one of the insurgents detonated a suicide vest after being shot.

The outgoing lane gate guard is giving us the hand gesture to hurry up and go so he can raise the gate. The first vehicle in the convoy is already through. I hate that job and I feel for the guy. The guard waves on the way out, we wave back and we hit the ground rolling, pulling out in front of a taxi who knows enough to slow down for scary looking black SUVs. Our driver, the Marine, floors the pedal and the big vehicle's eight cylinders start roaring. We're not watching our MPGs.

The road looks good, not locked up like it usually is this time of day. That's a scary feeling, being stuck in traffic, civilians just walking around your vehicle, unable to



move or go anywhere. Visibility is good today too. The dust is visible but not bad. Sometimes it gets so heavy you can only see about 50 meters. Night is worse. The dust catches the headlights. It's like driving in a snowstorm.

For this time of day, there aren't many cars on the road. The Marine swerves our SUV narrowly around a rickshaw. The cart is full of long, heavily scratched and scarred metal bottles of what looks like flammable gas. The donkey pulling the cart trots down the road at a good pace, like he couldn't be more at ease pulling a chopped

off truck bed full of flammable gas down one of the most dangerous roads in Kabul. The kid driving the rickshaw waves from on top of the bottles of gas and we wave back. Picking up more speed, we pass a faded burgundy jingled out minivan with the side doors open and some guy hanging halfway out, his shalwar flapping in the wind. (Some people call the shalwar "man-jammies". It's the traditional Afghan clothing, made up of a full-sleeve, loose-fitting shirt that droops down to about the knees and a matching pair of loose, baggy pants tied with a simple chord around the waist and sometimes around the ankle.)

The scenery of the industrial district starts to fly by as I play with the optic on my rifle to calm my nerves. Nothing separates anything from anything else. Old men and children tending garden plots on the side of the road. Guards sitting in flimsy towers, loosely gripping their AKs. Iron gates and huge industrial machinery. Dimly lit shops with golden brown slabs of bread in the windows. Red and white chunks of raw meat hanging on hooks. A boy walking a herd of goats through the alleyways. A mechanical garage with various parts for sale and a couple old cars. Kids and stray dogs sifting through heaps of trash. A man washing the dirt off a cart of vegetables with a rag. Piles of rough-hewn poles and firewood. A huge faded sign advertising cell phones. Another for some kind of drink.

Our driver turns off the main road right before a covered pedestrian bridge that spans the highway. Few people use it. Most just walk through the cars. Turning off the main road, school must be getting out. Kids of all ages swarm over the street. Women in blue burkas sort through the sea of kids, trying to pick out their own. Two older boys start to fight by the burning pile of trash. Nobody seems to notice as one of the kids hits the other square in the face with his bare fist. He topples back on his back pack.

Preoccupied with avoiding Afghan school kids, our driver must not have seen the bump in the road. Hitting a speed bump

TURN & BURN continued to page 13

Deployment tempo band requirements made simple

EDITOR'S NOTE: SSgt. George Cloutier interviewed SMSgt. Theresa Robert, 439th Logistics Readiness Squadron, for this article.

Q: I'm in tempo band "A" and my AEF just came up. Does this mean I should expect to deploy?

A: Being in your tempo band window does not automatically mean you will deploy. When your tempo band is approaching (six-months out) you will be told to complete your Tier 2A training. When you are in your tempo band you are vulnerable for deployment. The only way to make you deploy is to involuntarily mobilize you. Mobilizations are usually worked six to 12 months out, so for tempo band deployments, you will know you are being mobilized. It should not be a "Surprise! You're going next week!" scenario, unless something big happens.

Q: Are tempo bands like the Aerospace Expeditionary Force?

A: Tempo bands are similar to the AEF construct. Tempo bands align UTCs (unit technical codes) to certain deployment vulnerability timeframes, whereas AEF aligns wings to certain deployment vulnerability timeframes.

Q: If I don't know what tempo band I'm in, who should I talk to, and is it important

that I know?

A: When you are in-processing to your squadron, you should have signed an appointment to a mobility position letter which identifies the UTC you are filling, what the posturing code of that UTC is and to which tempo band you are assigned. This letter is located in your standard deployment folder which you should be reviewing annually.

Q: I was put into tempo band "A." Does this mean I won't have to deploy?

A: No. It's important to remember you are in the military and are always vulnerable to being involuntarily mobilized. Tempo bands are a tool to spread certain capabilities out over a period of time to ensure that combatant commanders can meet their mission requirements. As long as enough individuals volunteer each tempo band, involuntary mobilization will not be required.

Telling individuals which tempo band they are assigned to is supposed to enable you to plan your life around known and predictable deployment vulnerability windows. It is also supposed to prevent you from being involuntarily deployed over and over again with no break.

Q: If I'm put into tempo band "M" or "N," does this mean I should expect to deploy

soon?

A: Each tempo band has cycles and is expressed as an alphanumeric designation. Bands are B, C, D, E, M or N and the cycles are 1-10. For the most part, cycles are 4-6 months. The band represents the ratio of mobilization (deployment) to dwell (time at home) or frequency of your deployment's vulnerability.

Q: Is it possible for me to get put into a different tempo band than the rest of the people in my shop?

A: Yes. Airmen with the same skill set are spread out as evenly as possible across the entire tempo band to ensure the capability is there for each cycle.

Q: Regardless of what band I'm in, what do I need to do to stay ready to deploy?

A: As a member of the military you are charged with ensuring you are trained, physically fit, and ready to deploy. Keep your family member data in DEERS, SGLI, vRED, dog tags, CAC, wills, powers of attorney and Family Care Plans current. Maintain all PPE, cold weather and other uniform items serviceable with correct rank, name, size, etc. Your supervisor and unit deployment manager must be kept informed of your maintenance of these items.

Make sure to ask questions.

TROOP TALK | What book do you plan to read in the new year?

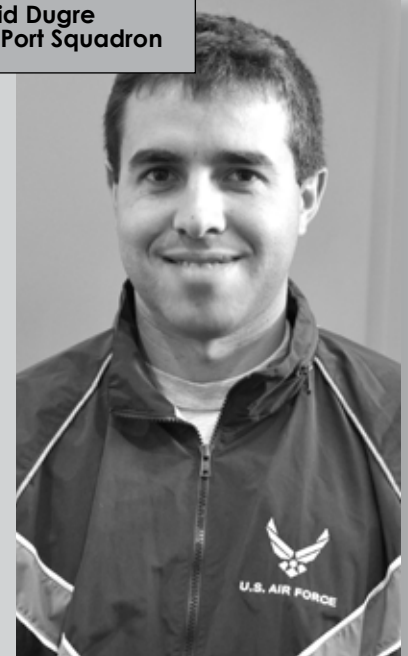
"The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo"
-- SrA. Emily Houck
439th Force Support Squadron



"Into Thin Air"
-- SrA. David Dugre
58th Aerial Port Squadron



"Intro to Contemporary Physics"
-- SrA. Steven Hernandez
439th Communications Squadron



photos by SrA. Alexander Brown

TURN & BURN *continued from page 11*

at about 30 mph sends all the people and equipment in the back of the SUV flying up toward the ceiling and crashing back down. The metallic thud of the jack is discernable above all the other noise. It's the kind of sound that makes your head hurt. The jammer changes pitch for a second and then picks back up to its normal whine.

"Sorry ya'll," he says.

"Sorry jammer," I say.

The bump served its purpose. The driver slows down as we wind through the little village. The houses and shacks collect along each side of the road, spilling their contents into the street. Blankets hang in some of the entrances. Others are just wide open. Villagers step in and out as if every building is communal property. Two men sit outside playing chess on a rug while waiting for their lunch, which is steaming in a large polished pot over a wood fire burning in a little portable stove. A family of wild dogs lay sleeping on the side of the road. They're beautiful dogs, that husky looking breed of white dog with the curled tail that's all over the country. A little girl with short dark hair, dirty and dressed in rags, stands by a couple huge sacks of grain and a vegetable cart and stares at us blankly as we pass by. I'm not sure whether I should feel sorry for her or not. We probably gave each other the same look.

At a fork in the road, we bear right for the military side of Kabul International Airport. The Belgians are out again. You might mistake them for Americans if it wasn't for the Fabrique Nationale assault rifles. From a distance they look like an M-16 but have a very distinct swinging stock. Weaving around the barriers, we hold up our IDs. A large Belgian soldier, his face hidden under a mask, gives us the thumbs up.

After we pass, he rejoins his buddy next to the barrel in which they've built a fire from scrap wood. The cold starts to set in if you stay outside too long. At the second check point another team of Belgians sweeps our vehicles, first with the mirror then with the dog. One comes up to the

window and makes the hand motion that looks like racking back the slide on a pistol that tells us they want us to clear our weapons. They drop the spikes and we head off into the interior of KAIA, which today smells strongly of human waste.

The Germans have taken over the parking lot outside the incoming terminal again. For some reason they like to park their

"Time gets away from you in the AOR, I like to think in a good way."

entire convoy in the middle of the parking area instead of parking in designated spots like everyone else. We manage to squeeze our SUVs around their trucks and into a couple spots. Then the waiting game starts.

"Did you call the JOC?" our driver asks. "What did they say?"

"They said they're on time. Should be here any minute."

"So we're going to be stuck here for three hours again?"

"Yup."

After about fifteen minutes a C-130 hits the runway. Even though it looks like every other C-130, somehow this one looks like ours to our Marine.

"That's probably them," he says. He has an unusual sense about these things. About 20 minutes later, our new guys are dragging their bags down the sidewalk and loading them into the back of Big Sexy, our big silver Dodge 3500 pickup truck. After making sure we've got everyone we're supposed to get, handing out some ammo, picking up a few extras who need a lift and giving the "so this is your first ride through Kabul" briefing, we're back on the road.

We get our people and get back without a hitch. It's the familiar excitement of a new place, new faces and new job. The new guys

go in the building to meet their coworkers and leave their stuff in a pile on the side of the road. It'll get picked up later when someone from their offices shows them to their room and gives them the short tour: the barracks, the chow hall, the office, the gym and the BX. Grabbing the last of the gear out of the truck, it looks like things are winding down for the night. Operations run 24/7 across base, but most people try to keep some semblance of a regular schedule. The nights aren't so cold now. Tonight will be a good night for a run around the perimeter road, or the track, which is really the helipad. It's peaceful out there at night. An occasional gunshot will ring off in the distance, followed by some barking dogs and yells from the kids who live on the other side of the wall.

Out of nowhere a helo will fall out of the night sky, blessing us with its presence, dropping off weary and hungry travelers before kicking up prop wash and floating back up into the night sky and disappearing into the darkness. Back at the barracks, the buzz from a hot shower after a hard work out is the closest thing you're going to get to a beer. It has a way of stopping time for a few minutes—watching the soapy water and a day's worth of grime and sweat go down the drain.

Time gets away from you in the AOR, I like to think in a good way. The days of the week become inconsequential. Time starts getting measured in tubes of toothpaste, bottles of body wash, the number of weights on the bar, the rotation of the food at the chow hall and eventually seasons. But that's the way I like it. Some guys religiously count the number of days until they get to leave, compulsively, as if by doing so they will get to leave sooner. I personally don't think this is the way to spend a deployment, waiting for it to be over. Even if it's not fun all the time, or even most of the time, take it for what it is. Appreciate those moments while they happen. You only get to be here once. Even if you come back, it will be somewhere different, in a different time.

Not here. Not now.

Patriot Wing women attend museum event



FEMALES IN FLIGHT These Patriot Wing members attended the Women Take Flight event at the Bradley Air Museum, in Windsor Locks, Conn., in November 2011. Standing with Civil Air Patrol representatives are Capt. Susan McSpadden, far left, SSgt. Page Policastro, third from left; and MSgt. Dana Seddon, fourth from left. (Courtesy photo)

Then and Now



Air controller John Vacon is shown on-the-job during two different times in his life at Westover. Above right, he's handling air traffic at today's Westover Air Reserve Base. In the larger photo, A1C John Vacon is doing the same job -- some 40 years ago. He's directing air traffic as part of the 1917th Communications Squadron at Westover Air Force Base, circa 1970. Today, Vacon is a Department of Defense controller. The 1917th CS was responsible for the huge air traffic flow of B-52 bombers, KC-135 tankers, and Air Force Reserve C-124 transports taking off and landing at Westover daily. (Inset photo by MSgt. Andrew Biscoe)

Q&A with the Patriot Wing's Airman of the Year

by SSgt. Katie Kiley

Q: Where are you from?

A: Originally from Cohasset, Mass., but I'm currently living in Boston.

Q: What do you do in the civilian world?

A: I was recently hired by the Mashpee Police Department, but I really like to hunt and fish when I'm not working.

Q: What's your idea of a successful UTA weekend?

A: I just try to always stay busy and take advantage of as much training as possible.

Q: Do you do anything you consider above and beyond?

A: I volunteered for the Hispanic Youth Leadership Symposium (held at Westover) twice. It was a great event and I'm looking forward to doing it again.

Q: Would you call yourself a risk-taker?

A: Definitely more of a planner.

Q: Do you have any Christmas traditions you're looking forward to?

A: I was deployed to Afghanistan last Christmas, so I'm mostly just glad to spend it at home with my family and friends this year.



SrA. Bryan Healy
439th Security Forces Squadron

FACES OF WESTOVER

PATRIOT PRAISES Promotions

Colonel

Mark Fitzgerald
 Jeffrey Hancock
 Kenneth Lute
 Edward Miller
 Michael Miller
 Mark Wilson



Master Sergeant

Anthony Branco
 Ronald Phelps
 Marc Ruel



Technical Sergeant

Teresa Bakeropland
 Griffin Barbra
 Arthur Brown
 Christopher Cooper
 Shawn Davis
 John Ferrara
 Richard Hernandez
 Heather Libiszewski
 Brian Little
 Cheryl McLaughlin
 Manuel Reyes
 Erin Skura



Staff Sergeant

Daniel Guerriero
 Janai Lee
 Steven Light
 Jorge Maldonado



Senior Airman

Joe Alfonso
 Edwin Aquino
 Heather Berenyi
 Dominic Dinobite
 Mark Jolin
 Troy Knight
 Samuel Laurin
 Tyler Lesniak
 Anthony Montrond
 Michael Nagle
 Timothy Pecia
 Eddy Ramirez
 Jacqueline Rivera



Airman First Class

Anthony Del
 Viscovo
 Kelly Hoadley



Airman

Corey Butler
 Dylan Collins
 Rudi Fregin
 Amanda Gordan
 Brenda McCarthy
 Matthew Paneuf
 Ashlie Vasquez



SrA. Michael Sacristan
 439th Maintenance Squadron

SrA. Michael Sacristan, 439th Maintenance Squadron, avionics flight, aircraft communication and navigation, works on radio and navigational equipment in the C-5.

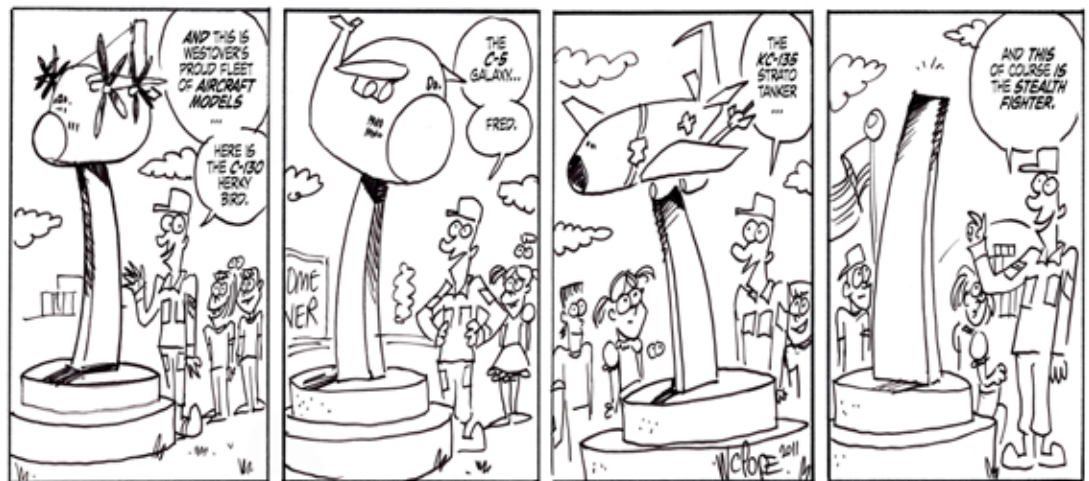
"I inspect and test radio systems in order to locate any problems and also replace any faulty wiring, transmission lines, and multi-conductor cables along with any other communications issues," he said.

SrA. Sacristan enlisted at age 20 and served four years on active duty with the Marines. "After my four-year contract was up, the driving force of my decision to enlist with the Air Force was to be closer to my wife, who is from the Chicopee area," he said. "My true goal is to become an air reserve technician on this base and really work on making the military a career."

-- by SrA. Kelly Galloway



SrA. Michael Sacristan



SERVICES CALENDER

Submitted by Mollie Anello, services marketing assistant

CLUB >> There are all new menus! Come check out the delicious additions to the breakfast, lunch, and lounge menus today!

BOWL >> The Bowling Center now has a Pro Shop with ball drilling and resurfacing. Check out the selection of bowling balls, shoes and Bags.

OUTDOORS >> Outdoor Recreation has ski and snowboard rentals, and snow blowers. Call to rent yours today! Information: 557-2192

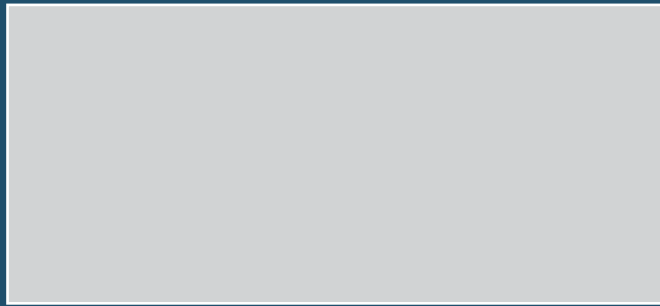
FITNESS >> New Spin Club- M-W-F 1230-130pm (spin bikes can be used any time). Mondays are also instruction/proper use of bikes class.

ITT >> Be sure to check out the Armed Forces Vacation Club at www.afvclub.com when planning your next great escape. Use Westover's Code (339) when making your reservation. Your dream vacation is closer than you think!



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Published monthly for Patriots like MSgt. Myra Heins, Boston, Mass., and the more than 3,400 reservists and civilians assigned to the 439th Airlift Wing.



SUNRISE SILHOUETTE Unseasonably warm weather provides a backdrop Dec. 2 on Westover's flightline. Turn to pages 6 and 7 for a look back at some of the extreme weather events of 2011. (photo by MSgt. Andrew Biscoe)