

PATRIOT

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COVER PHOTO >> Westover hosted fifty-five terminally ill children Jan. 6 during the Kids of Courage tour. For more photos and story, turn to pages 6, 7 and 8.



MID-WINTER BARBECUE January's unseasonable warmth helped allow the opening of a new gazebo next to the Airmen and Family Readiness Center Jan. 7. The gazebo, which seats up to eight tables and about 50 people, is available for public use. For more information, turn to page 5. (photo by SrA. Alexander Brown)



Greetings, Patriot Wing!

We're in the depths of winter, preparing for our 2012 Winter Wingman Day. You may be asking, "Why do we call it Wingman

day? Isn't that more of a fighter thing?" The term *wingman* can refer to any Airman. A wingman has specific duties. The perspective of the wingman is clearly different. As in flight, no one person can be aware of all the obstacles and dangers in the environment. It takes a crew, or a team, to maintain complete situational awareness.

Any Airman who has embraced the Air Force Core Values -- integrity first, service before self, excellence in all we do -- knows the benefits of total commitment to being a good wingman. These values are at the very core of our identity, shaping what we view to be of greatest importance in our lives. These values are lived out through our many roles in life, such as in the role

of being a good friend or an excellent leader.

Integrity encompasses the responsibility to assist others in times of need and conveys to every Airman the fact that others are interested in their well being; it can be as simple as talking to someone or giving him or her list of community resources. A person of integrity possesses courage and does what is right even though the personal cost might be high. Courage

"Guiding someone to help can make a positive difference..."

instills confidence in making good decisions, such as encouraging someone to seek help.

Service before self means respect for others and acknowledging the impact of

our actions on their lives. Principles of this core value of being a good wingman include deference to others' needs, respect for others and a spirit of camaraderie; in essence, working together to help others.

A commitment to personal excellence requires learning about resources where others can receive assistance. Guiding someone to help can make a positive difference in that person's life, perhaps even saving that life. Finally, all this guides us along the path to community excellence, where all members gain by our individual actions of excellence.

As we think of the core values relating to being good wingmen, and the value inherent in helping others, each one of us is reminded of the opportunities that exist on a day-to-day basis to extend a helping hand and perhaps even save a life. Take the opportunity to reflect on your total commitment and remember every day that "You are an Airman, and that means you are a wingman."

by Col. Steven Vautrain
439th Airlift Wing commander

BRIEFS |

Rising 6 officers

Rising 6 officers elected on the January A UTA are SrA. Rachael McDonald, president; TSgt. Chris Eldridge; vice president; SSgt. Shawn Chouinard, treasurer; and TSgt. Cheryl McLaughlin, treasurer.

The Rising 6 meets at 8:30 a.m. each Sunday of the A UTAs in the wing commander's conference room, in Bldg. 1850.

Rising 6 members are helping wing senior leadership determine the need for day care on the base during UTAs.

For more information, contact SrA. Julia Guerra (julia.guerra.1@us.af.mil).

Combined civilian/ART CC call

A combined Commander's Call for 439th Airlift Wing civilians and air reserve technicians will be held at 9 a.m. Feb. 7 in the Westover Conference Center.

Guest speaker will be Maj. Gen. Mark Kyle, 4th Air Force commander, visiting from March Air Reserve Base, Calif., will tour areas of the base that week.

New commanders join leadership

Two Patriot Wing squadrons changed leadership hands on the January B UTA.

Lt. Col. Karen Gardner took command of the 439th Aeromedical Staging Squadron at the Westover Conference Center, Jan. 21. Col. Robert Sousa, who served at Westover for more than 30 years, is headed to Robins Air Force Base, Ga., to be the AFRC Deputy Surgeon.

Lt. Col. Qais Ajalat took command of the 42nd Aerial Port Squadron from Lt. Col. Edward Miller, Jan. 22 in Hangar 3.

For more on these changes of command, visit Westover's web site: westover.afrc.af.mil

Annual workshop

The 6th Career Enlisted Annual Workshop will be held from June 3-5. Reservists are encouraged to save two days of annual tour for this event. This year's theme is "I AM AN AIRMAN; I AM RESILIENT!"

Questions may be directed to SMSgt. Shane Robitaille, 557-3430 or MSgt. Jen Griffin, 557-2771.

Racquetball

February's Commander's Cup event will feature racquetball. Potential participants should contact their unit physical training monitors or call 557-3958.

OG welcomes new commander



NEW OPS BOSS Lt. Col. Michael Miller addresses the audience Jan. 7 at the Westover Conference Center during his assumption of command. Lt. Col. Miller has served in the Air Force for more than 25 years. (photo by TSgt. Brian Boynton)

by SrA. Charles Hutchinson IV

Lt. Col. Michael G. Miller assumed command of the 439th Operations Group, Jan. 7, in a standing-room-only ceremony at the Westover Conference Center.

As the operations group commander, Lt. Col. Miller is responsible for aircrew training, standardization, and operational command and control of 16 C-5B Galaxy aircraft, an operational support squadron, an operational aero medi-

cal evacuation squadron, and an airlift control flight.

"It's my job to make sure you have what you need to accomplish your mission," said Lt. Col. Miller.

Lt. Col. Miller arrived at Westover in November from Dover Air Force Base, Del., where he was the 326th Airlift Squadron operations officer.

He assumed command vacated by Col. Samuel Mahaney, who left the position last October to become commander of the 459th Air Refueling Wing, Joint Base Andrews, Md.

"My goal is to get to know you better so I can better serve your needs," said Lt. Col. Miller.

Lt. Col. Miller was commissioned in August 1985 as a ROTC graduate at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, and in December 2011 was selected to be promoted to colonel. He is slated to pin on his new rank in April.

Chief Buckner is AFRC's new command chief



CMSgt. Kathleen Buckner was selected for the Air Force Reserve Command's top enlisted position. Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner, Jr., chief of the Air Force Reserve and AFRC commander, made the selection Dec. 23, 2011.

Before being selected, CMSgt. Buckner served as the command chief master sergeant for the 349th Air Mobility Wing, Travis AFB, Calif. She replaces CMSgt. Dwight Badgett, who was recently selected as the senior enlisted advisor for Joint Task Force North, Fort Bliss, Texas. (AFRC News Service)

DoD spares Westover in latest round of civilian cuts

by Lt. Col. James Bishop

The base will see no gain or loss in the latest round of restructuring, which reduces the Air Force civilian workforce by 7,600 positions worldwide.

During the November civilian restructuring announcement, Westover gained one position.

The 439th Airlift Wing at Westover is operated by a full-time civilian workforce of about 900, along with some 2,600 reservists, for a combined economic impact in Fiscal Year 2011 of about \$238 million.

"The fact that Westover saw a net gain at a time when many Air Force bases took a hit speaks highly of the vital, cost-effective role we play in national security," said Col. Steven Vautrain, 439th AW commander.

Air Force News Service reported today that 4,500 additional positions will be slated for elimination as a continuation of its FY 2012 Civilian Workforce Restructure. This reduction builds on the realignments announced in November, including the elimination of 9,000 positions and the addition of 5,900 positions against the Air Force's top priorities.

These reductions respond to the Secretary of Defense's direction to target civilian funding at FY 2010 levels.

"The Air Force Reserve Command essentially 'paid our bill' up front by making adjustments beginning in 2009 to our manning structure, so we will see no impact from this round II of the Civilian Force Restructuring," said an AFRC spokesperson.

This announcement marks the end of civilian reductions associated with the Air Force's FY 2012 civilian workforce restructure.

Deployer goes full circle with Iraq deployment

by MSgt. Andrew Biscoe

BRADLEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, Conn. -- Through a persistent rain, thick clouds, flight delay and three-day odyssey covering thousands of miles, SMSgt. Michael Barna knew he was finally home.

"This feels fantastic," SMSgt. Barna said, as family and a gaggle of 439th Logistics Readiness Squadron Airmen swarmed him here Dec. 21. A large red, white, and blue banner that read "WELCOME HOME TROOPS" hung inside the airline terminal that bustled with holiday travelers and many other arriving service members.

The LRS senior NCO was one of hundreds of Airmen, Sailors, Marines, and soldiers who not only returned home safely for the holidays, but also were part of 21st century history.

SMSgt. Barna assisted in closing down American military operations at Baghdad International Airport Iraq. He reflected on how it felt for American forces winding operations down in

Iraq.

"It felt special to be part of that closing ceremony," he said, adding he had Christmas shopping still on list of to-do items. "First, I need to get out of these," he said, gesturing to his airman's battle uniform.



INTERNATIONAL WELCOME SMSgt. Michael Barna, returning from his deployment to Iraq, shakes hands with his commander, Lt. Col. Michael Buoniconti, Dec. 21 at Bradley International Airport, Conn. Airmen with the 439th Logistics Readiness Squadron joined Lt. Col. Buoniconti and SMSgt. Barna's family to welcome him home. (photo by MSgt. Andrew Biscoe)

Home from his second deployment, SMSgt. Barna paused for time with his family first before greeting his squadron-mates, led by LRS commander Lt. Col. Michael Buoniconti.

"This really is full circle for Westover," Lt. Col. Buoniconti said. He was part of Westover's 439th Airlift Control Flight -- making history as the first airlift control element that set up American operations at the Baghdad airport in April 2003. "But today is about Mike (Barna) as he comes home, having been part of closing down operations there."

SMSgt. Barna has served in the Air Force Reserve for 28

years. This was his second deployment. Even with the drawdown in Iraq, Airmen are continuing to deploy as 2012 unfolds.

Those units scheduled to support overseas contingency operations include security forces, and Westover's aerial port squadrons.

January burger burn warms up new gazebo opening

by SSgt. Katie Kiley

Westover experienced a rare day of January sunshine during the unveiling of a new gazebo outside the Airman & Family Readiness Center.

Temperatures rose to near 60 degrees during the Saturday UTA, and a crowd gathered to enjoy the new picnic area and a barbecue put on by the USO.

The summertime menu of hamburgers, potato salad,

baked beans and pickles was dished up by members of the Airmen and Family Readiness Center and the USO. Cake was served by Katie Vautrain (wife of Col. Steven Vautrain, wing commander) and Westover's Key Spouse of the Year, Stephanie Smith.

"It might be the first time I've seen both cold beverages and apple cider next to a grill," said Smith.

Shanna King, newly appointed center director, was

happy to see the gazebo put to good use this time of year; there wasn't an open seat to be found once lunch started coming off the grill. She said it was brought in to foster community and to provide a comfortable place to gather during favorable weather.

Every Monday night the staff at family readiness prepares a home-cooked dinner for those staying on base. King is confident the new picnic space will encourage

people to come together to enjoy the meal and each other's company.

The spacious gazebo holds up to eight picnic tables and seats about 50 people. The gazebo and adjoining picnic area are open for public use.

Anyone who wishes to reserve it for a private event should contact the staff at 557-3024. The center is located in Bldg. 1100 off the Base Ellipse.

Kids of Courage 2012





The base Top 3 Council coordinated a massive tour for 55 terminally ill children Jan. 6. The Kids of Courage group was treated to a mini air show including a Blackhawk helicopter, a C-5, and a Massachusetts Air National Guard F-15 fly-by. (photos by 439th Airlift Wing Public Affairs staff)

Patriot Wing thrills Kids of Courage with mini-air show

by Lt. Col. James Bishop

On Jan. 6, 55 terminally and seriously ill children and young adults visited Westover as part of a winter adventure. This was the second year the New York-based non-profit organization Kids of Courage toured the base. The group works to improve the lives of children and young adults with serious medical diagnoses.

A team of more than 200 volunteer physicians, paramedics, nurses, physical therapists, trained lay staff and families accompanied the children.

"These are tough kids," said Dr. Stuart Ditchek, attending physician for the trip. "About 80 percent of them are already at or above their life expectancy."

The group quickly assembled on the flightline side of the Base Hangar to watch four "loud" passes by an F-15 from Barnes Air National Guard Base. Then the group split into a dozen activities that amounted to a mini-airshow.

Participants, aged 13-24, toured a C-5B, a Blackhawk helicopter, and the F-15, which landed following the fly-by. They also visited stations positioned around the hangar to sit in a fire truck, watch a demonstration from a Chicopee police K-9 unit, handle an array of heavy firearms, ride in Marine Corps Humvees, and even get carried up and down in a K-loader outside the Base Hangar.

Members of the 42nd Aerial Port Squadron rigged a high-lift next to the C-5, giving 20 wheelchair-bound kids the rare chance to explore the flight deck of the largest aircraft in the U.S. military.

Participants included "Coach K," Itzy Kagan, who, at 24 years old, is the longest-living quadriplegic on a ventilator in the world, said Dr. Ditchek. "He was hit by a car when he was 2½ and dragged two blocks. He wasn't expected to live."

Yet Coach K was on the north taxiway on the warm January day, cheering with the group of 269 when the F-15 performed multiple passes.

Rivky Deren, who has Bloom's Syndrome, was on last year's tour and hoped to return this year. However, Rivky had to remain at Duke University Hospital in Durham, N.C., after a double lung transplant last summer, said Dr. Ditchek.

At the Blackhawk static display, the most-frequently asked question was, "Can you take me for a ride?"

"These kids aren't shy," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Alex Engelson, Blackhawk aircraft commander, smiling.

Dr. Ditchek said he used the trip as incentive to convince some of the sickest kids to do everything they could to get better.

"One 16-year-old with a serious tumor completed chemotherapy two days before the trip," he said.

Three TV stations attended the event and conducted multiple interviews with kids and organizers. The cameras turned on Hudi Arieih, born without arms, who plans to attend law school next fall. As Hudi's interview was ending, the next interviewee, wheelchair-bound Jake Hytken, joked with her, "You'd better not get more air time than me just because you don't have arms."

Being up front about disabilities is the healthiest attitude for everyone to take, Dr. Ditchek said.

Watching the kids in the Base Hangar, Sara Kaplan said, "I love my job, but nothing I do in my office compares with this." Kaplan is a senior staff nurse at Beth Israel Medical Center.

These "kids of courage" left an impression on the three dozen volunteers. SMSgt. Tim Day, who led the base-wide, Top 3-sponsored effort, said, "If it was a thrill for the kids, it was at least as big a thrill for us."

TROOP TALK | What are you doing this winter to break up the cabin fever?

"Snow drifting."
-- SrA. Ryan Bator
439th Logistics Readiness Squadron



"Reading, exercising, and staying ready to go."
-- SrA. Erika Chaney
58th Aerial Port Squadron

"Rollerderby."
-- SSgt. Rachelle Butts
439th Force Support Squadron



photos by TSgt. Stephen Winn and SSgt. George Cloutier

CHIEF'S DAUGHTER LAUDS TEEN SUMMIT

by SrA. Kelly Galloway

A Westover family member recently discussed the highlights of a popular summer camp for teen-agers of military members.

Gianna Duncan, daughter of CMSgt. Earl Duncan, 439th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron first sergeant, is an Air Force Teen Council member and participant and advocate for Teen Summit, a unique program for teens.

Teen Summit provides teenagers who have parents in the Air Force Reserve or Air Force National Guard with leadership skills training, introduces military courtesies and customs, long lasting friendships and a momentous amount of memories.

Gianna flew to Dahlonge, Ga., for her first summit in 2009.

"I was with other Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard teens from all across the country, and we quickly became friends," she said. "I was given so many opportunities...I went zip-lining, rock-climbing, and white water rafting. It was an amazing five days with a huge, enthusiastic group of teens."

At the close of each summit, each participant receives a coin presented by a general during a dinner ceremony. "I've already had the opportunity to meet



Above, Gianna Duncan, pictured to the left wearing a striped shirt, is seen here with Maj. Gen. Martin Mazick, former AFRC vice commander, and fellow summit campers. Below left, campers prepare to put their canoes in the water during an Air Force Reserve Teen Summit Camp. (Courtesy photo)

Maj. Gen.(Martin) Mazick and Lt. Gen. (Charles) Stenner," she said.

After attending the Adventure Summit Camp in Estes Park, Colo., last summer, she applied for the Air Force Reserve Teen Leadership Council, a group of motivated teens from across the country who provide a youth perspective on the preparation and execution of Air Force Reserve youth programs.

"I applied and was selected to serve with 15 other teens. We attended the Air Force Reserve Teen Leadership Conference in 2010 to learn about outside resources for military families, public speaking skills, and programs we could participate in to help Air Force Reserve families," she said.

Every TLC member is required to attend at least two Yellow Ribbon events each year. Those events help families through pre- and post-deployment issues while offering child and teen workshops to the youth.

"We assist those workshops, participate in scheduled conference calls, lead or implement youth programs, complete a goal or project to strengthen AFR Youth Programs, represent AFR youth at special events, and serve as a resource for AFR families and teens within our communities," she said.

Gianna likes participating in Teen Council because of the opportunities for growth. "The program enables me to help out with kids and allows me to give back to the Air Force what the Air Force has given to me – the opportunity to travel to places like Georgia, Colorado and Washington, D.C.," she said. Her participation with the Air Force Teen Summits and the Air Force Teen Council gave her the opportunity to meet state representatives and Air Force Generals and do activities such as white water rafting, horseback riding and canoeing," she said.

Teen Leadership Summits are free to participants. The Air Force pays for air fare, lodging and food for the five days. Parents and persons who wish to participate who are above 18 years of age may volunteer and be "adult leaders" in charge of 8 to 10 teens. Eligible teens can access the application at georgia4h.org/afrafrangteensummit.

To apply for Teen Leadership Council, visit afyouthprograms.com/teen-leadershipcamp.htm.



New director leads Airmen and Family Readiness Center

by SrA. Alexander Brown

Westover's Airman and Family Readiness center is now under new command.

Shanna King moved into the director's position in November 2011. She came from Tampa, Fla., to fill the position that had been open since May.

Her experience with military life comes from her years in England at Royal Air Force Lakenheath as the community readiness consultant with her husband who was active-duty Air Force.

As the wife of an active-duty Airman, King knows the in's and out's of military life. With that knowledge she plans on continuing excellent service for Westover service members.

King said she is adjusting well to the job and the new pace that is the Air Force Reserve.

"I'm still trying to get my feet wet and sort everything out," said Shanna King. "I'm looking forward to meeting people."

King is concerned that some reservists

still don't know where the center is located. "That's a shame because our staff can do a lot for reservists and their families," she added.

One of the center's most important roles is assisting service members and their families during deployments and when stationed at home, including:

- Air Force Aid Society financial assistance
- Bundles for babies
- Resume assistance
- Job listings for surrounding states
- Setting up budgets or spending plans
- Computer lab with 20 network computers and six non-network computers
- Redeployment meetings
- Family assistance while service member is deployed

King says she wants people to come see her before any situation they are in, financial or otherwise, puts them into a hole.

For more information on services provided by the Airman and Family Readiness center visit 100 Walker Avenue, next to the USO,



Shanna King

call King at (413) 557-3027, visit online at www.westoverafrc.com, or email King at shanna.king.1@us.af.mil.

Wing honors Key Spouse of Year

by SSgt. Katie Kiley

Stephanie Smith earned the 2011 Key Spouse of the Year award. Smith, wife of Lt. Col. Raymond Smith, 337th Airlift Squadron, co-chairs the Key Spouse program Katie Vautrain, wife of Col. Steven Vautrain, 439th Airlift Wing commander.

Smith is credited for revitalizing the Key Spouse program and continues to recruit and train new members; the group is now 29 strong.

She is also the community chair for The Western Massachusetts Reserve Officer Association League. During Westover's mobilization phase in 2010, Smith worked to obtain 100 percent contact



with families of over 1,000 deployed and mobilized reservists. She volunteers at base events and is known for tirelessly donating her time to charitable community events and causes.

Smith will compete for the same award at the Air Force Reserve Command level.

Comm honors civilian for decades of service

by 2nd Lt. Andre Bowser

After nearly 60 years of civilian service, Helen Lemiech retired from her latest post on base with the 439th Communications Squadron.

Surrounded by friends and co-workers during a surprise get together in late December, Lemiech enjoyed a cake in her honor and received a clock with the following inscription: "Congratulations on your retirement (Feb 1952 - Dec 2011)."

Lemiech said when she joined the Westover team in the mid-20th century there were more than 10,000 people here.

"Westover was a metropolis and things were booming in those days," she said. At the time of her arrival, Westover was a Military Air Transport Service base.

The base opened in the fall of 1940 and was a major hub for the 1948 Berlin Airlift. Westover grew even more in 1955, when Strategic Air Command took over operations. Westover partially closed in 1974 with the departure of SAC. The Air Force Reserve took ownership of the remainder of the base that same year.

Lemiech said in her retirement she would care for her one surviving family member, her brother, Walter Lemiech.

FACES OF WESTOVER |

PATRIOT PRAISES Promotions

Chief Master Sgt.
Michael Gendron



Senior Master Sgt.
Mary Grasso
Daniel Witt



Master Sergeant
Eric Dibrindisi
James Lowe



Technical Sergeant
Joseph Ackley
Deanna Acquafresca
Timothy Allen
Richard Bradley
Anna Hedderich
Robert Langevin Jr.
Michael Powell
Sean Robbins



Staff Sergeant
Liliane Elawar
Keith Herrick
Crystal Shea
Eric Shehu
Joshua Shipman



Senior Airman
John Alexander
Ryan Bator
Chad Ceccarini
Sabrina Huggins
Charles
Jonathan Correia
George Cunningham
Kiernan Daly
Andrew Dunn
Matthew Eagan
George Haines
James Miller
Katrina O'Donnell
Robert Rabassa
Timothy Sheehan
Ariel Soto



Airman First Class
Stephanie Badale
William Schiavi
Casimere Soto



Airman
Simon Kordek
Graig Sion



TSgt. Cheryl McLaughlin
439th Force Support Squadron

TSgt. McLaughlin works full-time in the base education and training office. "I'm in charge of Community College of the Air Force counseling, education benefits counseling, Student Loan Repayment Program and ensuring the Seasoning Training Program runs smoothly. A lot of people need help paying for school and just don't know where to start, because it seems like such a daunting process. I help demystify that process."

"I first enlisted in 1999 and served 3 years as an active duty intel analyst. I re-enlisted into the reserve in 2008 because I missed the military community, the camaraderie, dependability, and unspoken truth of how the military brings us together to serve something bigger."

TSgt. McLaughlin has been nominated to be the secretary for the Rising 6 Council and recently earned the AFRC Civilian Technician of the Year.

-- by SrA. Kelly Galloway



TSgt. Cheryl McLaughlin

Retirements |

Lieutenant Colonel
Diana Cooper

Senior Master Sergeant
Daniel Berry
Vincent Bovino
David Page

Master Sergeant
Mary Bihlmeyer
Kathleen Busch
Paul Czupkiewicz
George Dietzler
Joseph Lemoine
Christopher Palmer
Sharon Riley
Michael Walbridge
Moises Zanazanian

Technical Sergeant
David Kelley
Andrew Tynik
Charles Woodward

SERVICES CALENDER |

Submitted by Mollie Anello, services marketing assistant

BOWL: Valentine's Weekend Scotch Doubles, Feb. 10-11. You bowl first ball and your partner picks up the spare; Hook-Up 2 Bowling: Eight hours of bowling instruction, receive a ball, bag, and towel. Kids: \$99; adults: \$119.

CLUB: Super Bowl Party Sunday, Feb. 5; Valentine's Day Dinner -- call for reservations and more information: (413) 593-5531.

OUTDOOR REC: Outdoor recreation has ski and snowboard rentals, and snow blowers, 557-2192.

FITNESS: Zumba and spinning classes, boxing, and much more! Visit the fitness center to keep yourself in shape during the winter months! Call 557-3958.

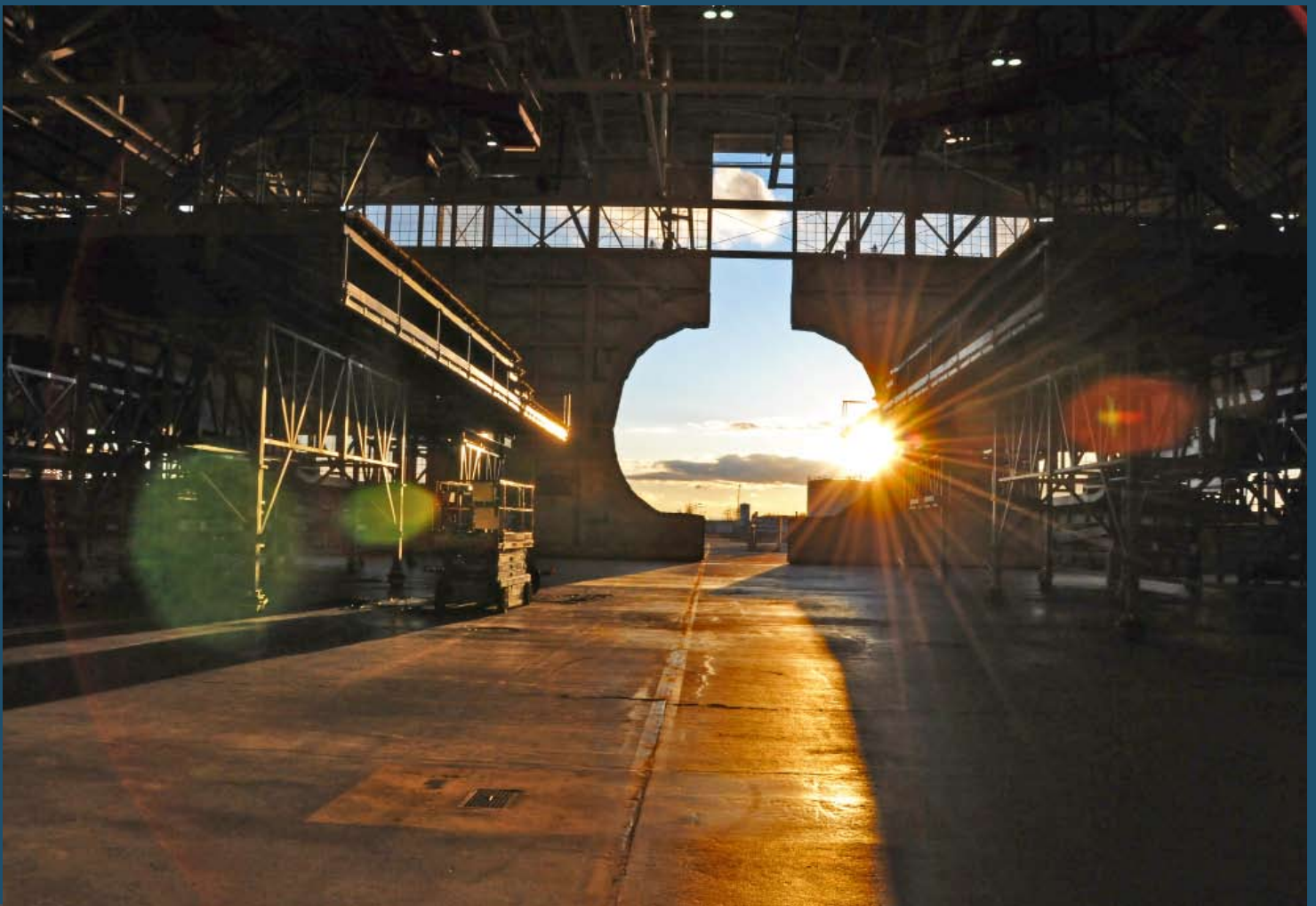


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FIRST CLASS
US POSTAGE
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Published monthly for Patriots like TSgt. Cynthia Lapriore, East Brookfield, Mass. and the more than 3,400 reservists and civilians assigned to the 439th Airlift Wing.



SUNSET SHIFT A sunset backdrops the isochronal inspection dock as a day winds down at Westover. The new year brings operational, fiscal, and other challenges as Westover begins its 38th year as an Air Force Reserve installation. (photo by MSgt. Andrew Biscoe)