



PATRIOT

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photo courtesy of Reuters

Great New England Air Show and Open House, Aug. 4-5

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FLYOVER FANFARE >> Turn to page 8 to read about the Patriot Wing's flyover at the American Football Conference play-off game in Foxboro, Mass., Jan. 22.



CONCRETE TRAINING >> Reservists with the 439th Civil Engineering Squadron work wet concrete for a patch in this simulated "bombed" runway. This was part of CE's Prime Beef training held at Tyndall AFB, Fla., in January. For the story and photo, visit Westover's web site at westover.afrc.af.mil. (photo by TSgt. Eric Tupaj)



By now you are aware that Air Force officials announced a proposal in February to cut eight aircraft from the 439th Airlift Wing's C-5 fleet in 2016. This is a

result of planned Pentagon budget cuts. The Air Force is refocusing and reducing the size of its forces to comply with the president's new defense strategy and the Budget Control Act's requirements to cut \$487 billion from the defense budget over the next 10 years.

I'd like to quell any rumors up front. First, the "proposal" is exactly that – a proposal, basically a request for Congress to consider. For the cuts to take effect, Congress would need to approve the proposal, and if the president agreed, he would have to sign the authorization before it became law.

So the proposal has been made, but we're still a long way from 2016, and a lot could happen between now and then.

This isn't the first time Westover has

weathered change. The base was an active duty asset from 1940-1974. It became the nation's first stand-alone air reserve base in April 1974. Since 1974 the 439th mission aircraft have changed from C-123s to C-130s, and finally to C-5s. During the last Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) in 2005 Westover's mission actually ex-

“First, the ‘proposal’ is exactly that – a proposal, basically a request for Congress to consider.”

panded. Joint partners from the Army, Navy and Marine Corps Reserves moved on base with the 439th AW as their host.

As of now, during this round of restructuring, we've received the "iron-only" notification. The proposal is to cut our fleet of 16 C-5s in half. But in the announcement, the Pentagon news release said explicitly that our unit "remains operational."

Other wings didn't fare as well. Under the proposal, Pittsburgh Air Reserve Station is due to close. Minneapolis-St. Paul ARS will be transferred from the Air Force Reserve to the Air National Guard. The 403rd Wing at Keesler Air Force Base will remain operational but will lose 10 C-130J aircraft to another location.

Air Force-wide, the proposal affects 60 installations in 33 states and about 227 aircraft.

If the proposal goes through, and that's a big "if," the Westover workforce will become smaller. No doubt, the proposed changes will have an impact on the base, but we will remain a viable part of the reserve, an essential East-Coast reserve mobility hub, and an indispensable part of the Western Massachusetts community.

We are and we will continue to be committed to fulfilling our global mobility mission, regardless of the outcome of this budget and restructuring proposal. We will continue to be the Patriot Wing, and we will continue to be "Leaders in Excellence."

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

BRIEFS |

Top 3, CGOC

Top 3 enlisted members recently teamed with Company Grade Officers Council members to visit the Soldiers Home in Holyoke, Mass., where nearly 20 Airmen handed out Valentine's Day cards to veterans.

CGOC and Top 3 members take part in other community projects similar to the Soldiers Home visit.

Top 3 contact: SMSgt. Anita Mancini at 557-3273; CGOC: Capt. Erin Palumbo, erin.palumbo.1@us.af.mil or Capt. Holly Childs, holly.childs.1@us.af.mil

CE, SF notch command awards

The 439th Civil Engineering Readiness and Emergency Management Flight recently earned the Col. Frederick J. Riemer Award, as best in Air Force Reserve Command. The award highlights the flight's preparing more than 100 deployers, playing an instrumental role in a successful 2011 ORI and extensive coordination with FEMA during Hurricane Irene.

Two members of the 439th Security Forces Squadron also earned command-level awards. SrA. Gordon Richards was 2011's AFRC Outstanding Security Forces Flight Level Airman.

SrA. Bryan Healy was the Outstanding Security Forces Air Reserve Component Airman. SrA. Healy was also the 439th AW Airman of the Year for 2011.

Enlisted workshop set for June

The 6th Annual Career Enlisted Workshop will be held from June 3-5. This year's theme is "I AM AN AIRMAN; I AM RESILIENT!"

Contacts: SMSgt. Shane Robitaille, 557-3430 or MSgt. Jen Griffin, 557-2771.

Wingman Day

Wingman Day and Commander's Call are scheduled for March 3 (Saturday of the March A UTA) at 8 a.m. in the Base Hangar.

Following the formation, Patriot Wing Airmen will return to their duty sections to participate in group discussions on how to be a good wingman.

Additionally, Airmen will review steps to take with suicide prevention.

For more information, visit the command web site at AFRC.WingmanToolkit.org.

DOD proposes 50 percent fewer Patriot Wing C-5s

Air Force officials announced a proposal Feb. 3 to cut half of the 439th Airlift Wing's C-5 fleet in 2016 as a result of Pentagon budget reductions.

While the host unit 439th AW flies 16 C-5B models, eight C-5s are slated to be transferred from Westover, officials said.

They added, the fleet is scheduled to be upgraded by 2016 to the re-engined M-models. In the plan, Westover would retain eight of the refurbished C-5Ms.

"The proposed changes will have an operational impact on the base, but Westover will remain a viable part of the Reserve. We are committed to fulfilling our global mobility mission," said Col. Steven Vautrain, 439th AW commander.

Faced with austere budgets, the Air Force is refocusing and reducing the size of its

forces to comply with the president's new defense strategy and the Budget Control Act's requirements to cut \$487 billion from the defense budget over the next 10 years.

"We're going to do everything we can to take care of our people as these changes

occur," said Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner Jr., chief of Air Force Reserve at the Pentagon. "We're putting together programs to retain as many of our reservists as possible." The Air Force is scheduled to announce manpower changes caused by this force restructuring in early March.

In order for the planned reductions to take effect, they must be approved by Congress and signed into law by the president.

"We worked closely with our Regular Air Force and Air Guard partners to rebalance our Total Force team," said Lt. Gen. Stenner. "In order to make our Air Force smaller, all three components had to find efficiencies and reductions – to get smaller together." (439th AW/PA and AFRC News Service)



Air Force announces force structure overview for FY 13 and beyond

by Ann Stefanek
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

Air Force officials announced proposed force structure changes which support the new DOD strategic guidance retiring 286 aircraft over the next five years, including 227 in fiscal year 13.

According to Secretary of the Air Force, Michael Donley, the Air Force is shaping itself for future challenges by realigning Air Force assets with the Defense Department's new strategic guidance.

The new strategic guidance requires the joint force to be capable of fighting one large scale, combined arms campaign with sufficient combat power to also deny a second adversary, and de-emphasized large-scale, prolonged stability operations. The Air Force's approach to this new strategy is to retire fighter, mobility, and ISR that are beyond those needed to meet the capacity requirements of the new defense strategic guidance.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz explained the need for reductions in the Reserve Component.

"Two decades of military end strength and force structure reductions in our active duty component has changed the

mix of active duty to Reserve Component forces," Schwartz said. "We've carefully considered the mix and what the appropriate balance should be between the active and reserve components. The Reserve Component is a critical and essential part of our Total Force, but must be balanced and matched appropriately within a constrained fiscal environment."

The Air Force is going to get smaller, and all of the components--active, guard and reserve-- are going to get smaller together, Gen. Schwartz said.

The announcement specifies the force structure changes experienced by the Total Force: Air Force Active Duty, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve and will save the Air Force \$8.7 billion over the next five years.

For fiscal years 2014-2017 the Air Force plans to reduce 50-plus aircraft from its inventory, continue to reshape the missions between the Total Force, and increase Reserve Component participation in the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance as well as cyber missions.

Implementation of these actions will occur only after completion of appropriate environmental analyses. The Air Force is scheduled to announce related force structure manpower changes in March.

Reserve command may retire 82 aircraft in 14 states

by Col. Bob Thompson
Air Force Reserve Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – The Air Force announced the possible retirement of 82 Air Force Reserve aircraft and other changes in 14 states – Alabama, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Texas – in the next few years according to Pentagon officials on Feb. 3.

Called the “Air Force Strategy and Force Structure Overview,” the Air Force plans to rebalance its overall ratio of Regular, Reserve and National Guard forces at about 60 installations in 33 states and retire 227 aircraft to support a new defense strategy and the President’s Budget proposal for fiscal year 2013.

“We’re going to do everything we can to take care of our people as these changes occur,” said Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner Jr., chief of Air Force Reserve at the Pentagon. “We’re putting together programs to retain as many of our reservists as possible.”

One of the biggest changes for the Air Force Reserve is the planned closure of the 911th Airlift Wing, Pittsburgh Air Reserve Station, Penn. If the 911th AW is deactivated, the Pittsburgh Air Reserve Station is expected to close. However, the Pittsburgh Air National Guard Base is planned to remain operational.

Faced with austere budget times, the Air Force is refocusing and reducing the size of its forces to comply with the President’s new defense strategy and the Budget Control Act’s requirements to cut \$487 billion from the defense budget over the next 10 years.

The Air Force’s share is about \$54 billion – and those cuts may grow, Pentagon officials said.

“The President and the Department of Defense have directed our new Defense Strategy Guidance,” said Stenner. “Now our Air Force has to set priorities and make some tough choices to rebalance our forces and realign with the new strategy.”

State-by-state proposed changes to AFRC

by Col. Bob Thompson
Air Force Reserve Public Affairs

The Air Force is planning significant organizational changes. The Air Force Reserve’s portion of the cuts includes reducing its inventory by 61 airlift and aerial-refueling aircraft, as well as, 21 fighter jets.

This will retire the Air Force’s oldest aircraft, make room for newer models, and consolidate similar types of aircraft at common locations as much as possible. The Air Force Reserve’s changes include:

- **Barksdale AFB, La.** – End the Air Force Reserve Active Associate unit that hosts Regular Air Force Airmen and flies A-10 aircraft. Drawdown one squadron by retiring 18 A-10 aircraft as part of the FY13 President’s Budget. Also, retire three other A-10s in FY13 that were previously slated for retirement and awaiting to be transferred. Transfer three remaining A-10s to Whiteman AFB, Mo. The Air Force Reserve unit that flies B-52 aircraft remains operational at Barksdale.

- **Dobbins ARB, Ga.** – Retire seven C-130H2 aircraft and add 10 C-130J aircraft during FY14.

- **Keesler AFB, Miss.** – Transfer 10 C-130J aircraft to new location in FY14. Although the Active Associate unit ends as part of the FY13 President’s Budget, the Air Force Reserve unit remains operational.

- **Lackland AFB, Texas** – Retire 16 C-5A aircraft from FY13 through FY16. Close the C-5A training school. Add eight C-5M aircraft in FY15.

- **Little Rock AFB, Ark.** – Retire two C-130H2 aircraft in FY17. Unit remains operational.

- **March ARB, Calif.** – Retire one KC-135 aircraft in FY13. Unit remains operational.

- **Maxwell AFB, Ala.** – Draw down one squadron by retiring seven C-130H2 aircraft in FY14. Unit remains operational.

- **Minneapolis-St. Paul ARS, Minn.** – Drawdown one squadron by transferring

eight C-130H3 aircraft in FY 13. The Air Force Reserve unit remains operational even though the Air Reserve Station is transferred from the Air Force Reserve to the Air National Guard.

- **Niagara Falls ARS, N.Y.** – The Air Reserve Component Associate unit – composed of Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard – ends as part of the FY13 President’s Budget. The Air Force Reserve retires three C-130H2 aircraft in FY13 and eight more in FY17. However, eight C-130H3 aircraft are planned to be added to the Air Force Reserve unit during FY13.

- **Pittsburgh ARS, Pa.** – Drawdown one squadron by retiring six C-130H2 aircraft and transferring one C-130H2 in FY13. Air Force Reserve operations end and the Pittsburgh Air Reserve Station closes. However, Pittsburgh Air National Guard Base remains open.

- **Pope AFB, N.C.** – Retire one C-130H2 aircraft and add one C-130H2 in FY13.

- **Tinker AFB, Okla.** – Retire four KC-135 aircraft in FY13; however, unit remains operational.

- **Westover ARB** – Transfer eight C5-Ms in FY16. Unit remains operational.

- **Youngstown-Warren ARS, Ohio** – Retire six C-130H2 aircraft and add four C-130H2.5 aircraft.

“Our future plans must ensure the Total Force can fulfill the nation’s need for daily operations and a surge force in the new said Stenner. “DOD’s goal is to balance force structure reductions with our ability to project power globally and to maintain our force readiness.”

The Air Force is scheduled to announce manpower changes caused by these structure changes in March. In order for the planned reductions to take effect, they must be approved by Congress and signed into law by the president.

“We worked closely with our Regular Air Force and Air Guard partners to rebalance our Total Force team,” said Stenner. “In order to make our Air Force smaller, all three components had to find efficiencies and reductions – to get smaller together.”

Winning hearts and minds one cartoon at a time: "Pope's Puns"

turns
20

by TSgt. Timm Huffman



For most in the military, putting a smile on someone's face is not in the job description. For retired MSgt. William Pope, it's the goal.

After 20 years as the official Air Force Reserve cartoonist, he's gotten good at it.

W.C. Pope is the author of "Pope's Puns," a comical chronicle of military life that has appeared regularly in *Citizen Airman*, *Leatherneck* and

other military publications since 1992.

Pope says his interest in cartooning started when he was four or five.

"One of my uncles had these Beetle Bailey books... that's when I started seeing cartoons and then copying them - actually drawing Beetle Bailey. That got me started into drawing and at the same time got me interested in the military. So the two have gone together since the very beginning," he said.

He continued to draw and imitate what he saw in cartoons

and comics and realized what he was best at was stylizing the human form and delivering a pithy punch line. He earned his associate's degree in commercial art from Mohawk Valley Community College, Utica, N.Y., before enlisting in the Air Force in 1981.

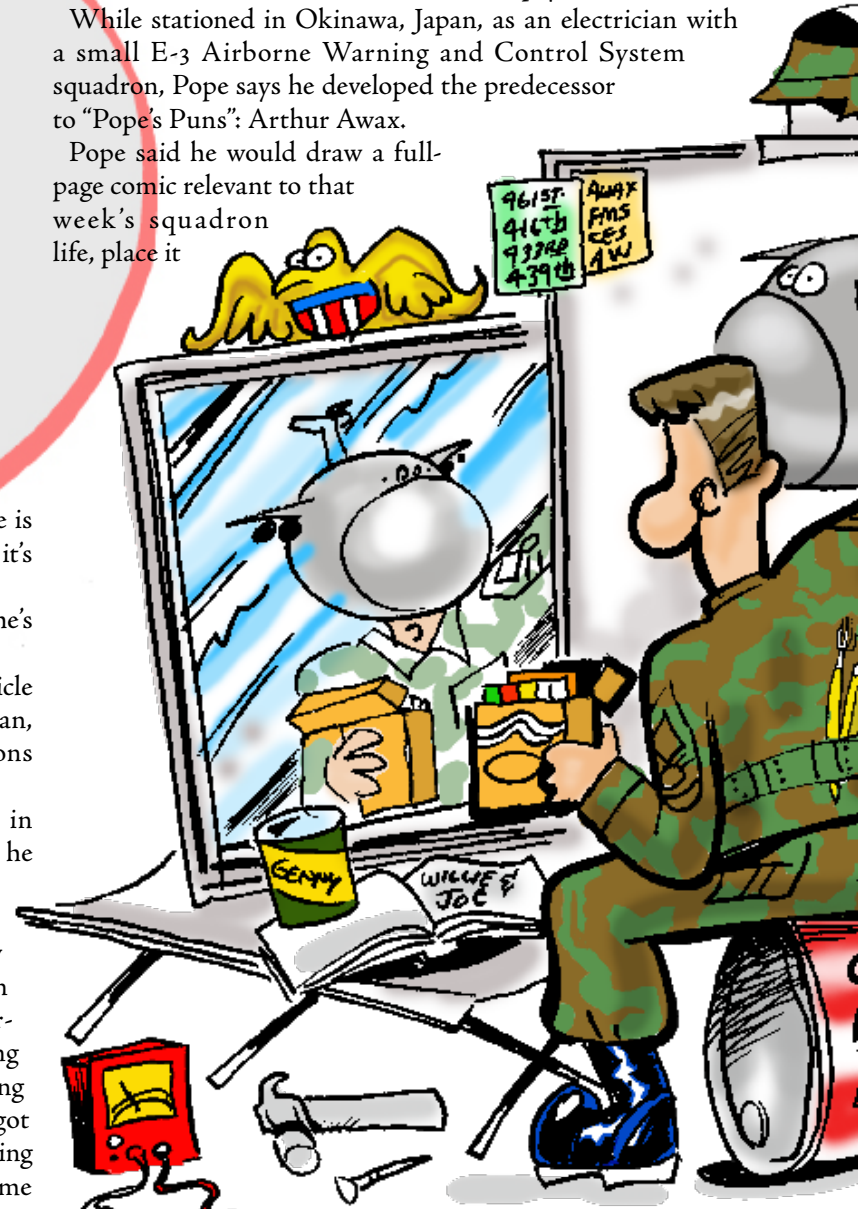
"When I joined the Air Force, I joined a collection of military quirks, bureaucratic snafus and old military traditions, which all lend themselves to great cartoons," said Pope.

A classic example of this appears in a cartoon he drew during an operational readiness inspection. The cartoon depicts an Airman in four inspection phases: simulated sand bags, simulated bomb

crater, simulated black out and simulated pay check.

While stationed in Okinawa, Japan, as an electrician with a small E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System squadron, Pope says he developed the predecessor to "Pope's Puns": Arthur Awax.

Pope said he would draw a full-page comic relevant to that week's squadron life, place it



under a glass-topped counter in his support section and watch his fellow Airmen

come and go.

"It was really fun to see their reaction. ... if they liked it, if they didn't like it," he said. "It honed the skills of what people saw as funny."

Pope moved on from AWACS to become a reservist in a civil engineering squadron at the now-deactivated Griffiss Air Force Base, near Rome, N.Y. While there, he had the additional duty of putting together a monthly newsletter. To liven up an otherwise dry publication, he began putting in his cartoons. He called the cartoon "Weekend Warrior."

After about two years, *Citizen Airman* wanted to pick up the cartoon, but the name "Weekend Warrior" was seen as demeaning to reservists, so the magazine dubbed it



“Pope’s Puns.”

“I really didn’t have a lot to do with that, unfortunately, because I never would have called it ‘Pope’s Puns,’” he said. “It really doesn’t tell what it is... I think out of 800-some cartoons, maybe 20 are puns.

“Pope’s Puns” made its debut in the June 1992 edition of *Citizen Airman* and evolved from there. Bo Joyner, *Citizen Airman* assistant editor, praised Pope’s comic chops and his ability to connect with readers:

“I’ve been a part of *Citizen Airman* magazine since 1994 and W.C. Pope’s cartoons have been an integral part of our magazine since I first arrived. He has a unique perspective on the Air Force Reserve experience and has a tremendous talent for sharing that perspective with others through his cartoons.”

When the cartoon first appeared in the magazine, Pope was stationed at Griffiss AFB. When that base closed, instead of getting out, he transferred to Westover, where he joined the public affairs team.

Pope’s cartoons appeared monthly in the *Patriot* magazine

as well as *Citizen Airman* during his 15 years at the *Patriot* Wing. He’s kept the ideas fresh.

One cartoon, for example, shows C-130s mounted to the wings of a C-5. The caption reads “The first re-engined C-5 makes its long awaited rollout.”

Another cartoon depicts two Airmen eating MREs. The caption reads “Attention-kids! We are trained professionals, don’t try this at home!”

To keep his cartoons relevant, Pope says he keeps the writing and humor engaging by tuning into new issues that come along. He also said allowing the drawing to evolve has given “Pope’s

Puns” a natural progression.

Things like adding color or finding new ways to draw hands keeps the cartoons visually appealing. Pope says hands are as important as facial expressions when it comes to getting emotions or ideas across, so it’s a subtle way to keep his cartoons compelling.

The writing has evolved as well and is similar to drawing the cartoon, Pope said. You stylize the humor down to its simplest elements. A snappy sentence. Short. So it has punch.

Pope says the hardest part is coming up with the idea.

When the ideas don’t come, he starts sketching and drawing things that don’t usually go together, like a C-5 with a mouth on it. But once he has the idea, it doesn’t take long before his cartoon is finished. About an hour is all it takes, he said.

Pope says he’s drawn over 800 “Pope’s Puns,” not including the ones he’s done different variations on. The commonality of the military experience gives the cartoons a broader appeal, he said. “I’ll redraw the characters in a Marine uniform, for instance, and it will appear in *Leatherneck*.”

One example of this depicts a troop reclining in the desert with a camel chomping on his hair. The caption reads “desert haircut.”

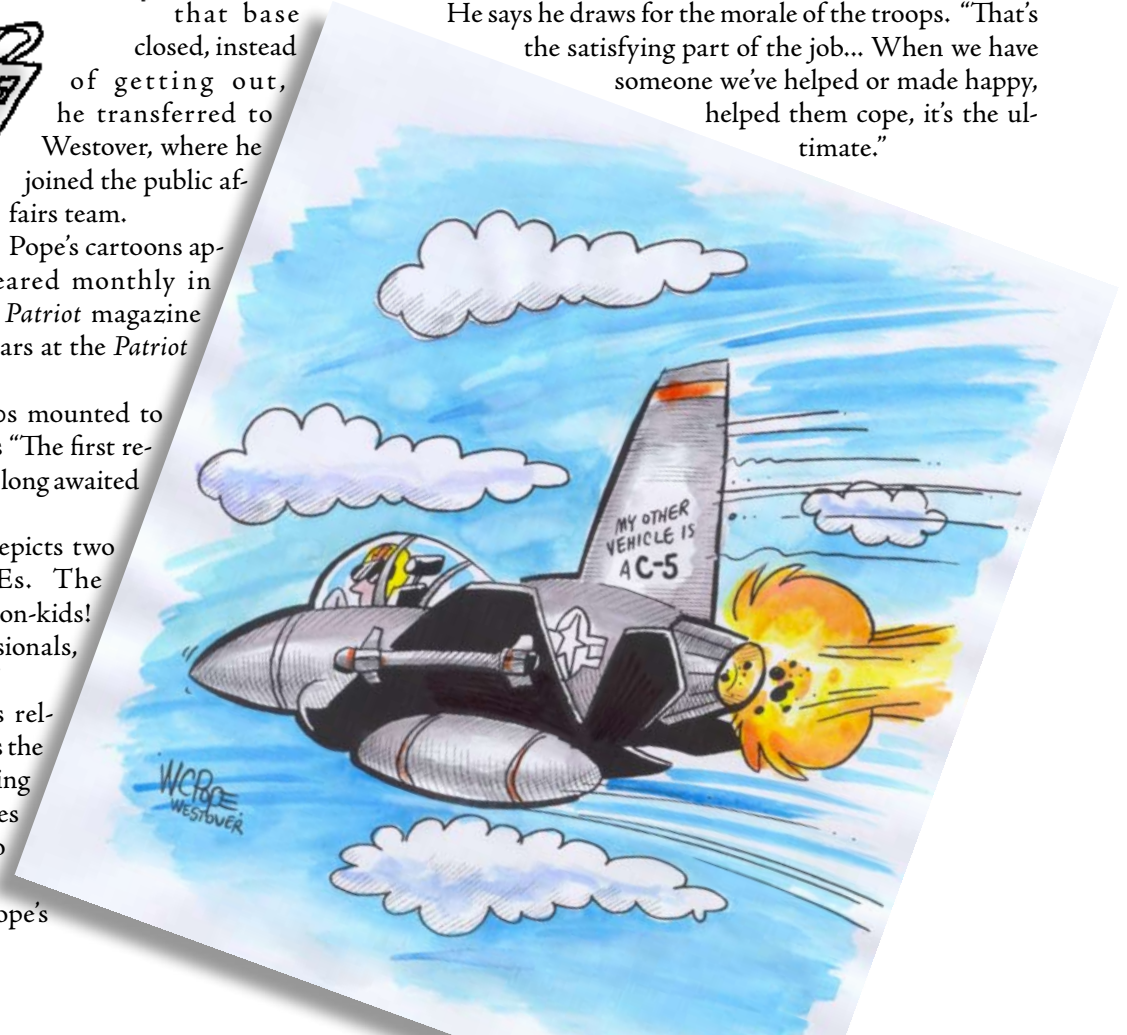
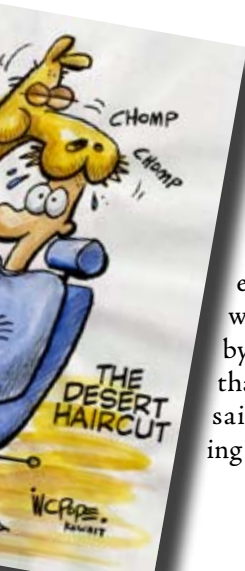
“Pope’s Puns” disappeared from the pages of Westover’s *Patriot* magazine when he retired in 2009, though he continued cartooning for *Citizen Airman*. His retirement from the Air Force didn’t last long. In 2011, his comics once again graced the pages of the Westover website and magazine when he returned to the base as a civilian public affairs specialist.

Pope, who prefers to stay behind the scenes, says it’s all about the cartoons. That’s what should be out in front.

He says he draws for the morale of the troops. “That’s the satisfying part of the job... When we have someone we’ve helped or made happy, helped them cope, it’s the ultimate.”



W.C. Pope 2012



Westover C-5 swoops over NFL playoff game

by MSgt. Andrew Blscoe

A Patriot Wing aircrew helped the New England Patriots get off to a roaring start as a capacity crowd of 68,756 watched a C-5 perform a flyby Jan. 22 over Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Mass.

Millions more people who tuned in to watch the American Football Conference playoff game between the Patriots and the Baltimore Ravens saw the massive airlifter approach the stadium, then bank slowly as it departed the area.

Just after Aerosmith's Steven Tyler sang the final notes of the National Anthem, the C-5 flew over the cheering crowd, and elicited glances skyward from Tyler, Patriot quarterback Tom Brady and tight end Rob Gronkowski, all on national television.

"I've always wanted to do this," said Lt. Col. Gary Cooke,

a C-5 pilot with 7,500 hours of flying experience. "I knew this went well as we flew by. The timing was really cool...it was an adrenaline rush."

Lt. Col. Cooke and Lt. Col. Michael Davis, aircraft commander, circled over nearby Walpole, Mass., minutes before the game began. The flyby comprised part of a local training mission that took the crew over Vermont and New Hampshire first. Capt. Matthew Podkowka was the third pilot on board.

"We came in at 242 knots and at 1,058 feet," Lt. Col. Cooke said, adding the landmark stadium's huge jumbotron TV screen helped guide them to their flyover centerpoint. "We could see the jumbotron as (Aerosmith lead singer) Steven Tyler was singing the National Anthem."

Meanwhile, MSgt. Eric McGlynn, 337th Airlift Squadron flight engineer,

was on the ground as a spotter -- inside Gillette Stadium. He was positioned on the south side of the stadium by one of the towering jumbotrons.

"Eric had a radio so we could hear Tyler singing," Lt. Col. Cooke said. When the singer got started about 15 seconds later than expected, the crew had to react quickly - in the name of timing.

"We had to do a 360 and come around again," Lt. Col. Davis said. Then, as videos and photos have shown since, the curtain went up for Westover's Patriot Wing, as the jumbo airlifter filled the entire giant screen of the jumbotron. The bewildered but thrilled crowd, shouting exclamations, cheered loudly and nearly drowned out Tyler's last words of the anthem.

"Look at this thing!" a man shouted. "C-5 Galaxy! The U.S. military's biggest plane!" another shouted, as the the

surging sound of thousands of people cheering drowned out any remaining audible words.

Much like when hometown crowds cheer so loud in trying to confuse the visiting team, the Gillette crowd's volume nearly eclipsed the spooling TF-39 engines of the C-5 as it passed overhead from north to south.

"We had max power on the engines," Lt. Col. Cooke said, adding he and Lt. Col. Davis banked the aircraft to exit the air traffic area, often busy with airliners going in and out of Logan Airport. There was talk long after the flyover that no one would forget this any time soon.

"This flight becomes more special as time goes on," Lt. Col. Davis said. "I won't forget it and would stand in front of a 100 cameras to do it again."

To view this story in its entirety, visit Westover's web site at westover.afrc.af.mil.

TROOP TALK | What do you do to relieve stress?

"By always keeping a positive outlook on things, keeping myself loose and having a good sense of humor."
-- A1C Chad Thompson
58th Aerial Port Squadron



"I talk it out with my family and friends."
--SrA. Mike Thompson
439th Aeromedical Staging Squadron

"I go to comedy clubs. I laugh so hard and so much that I feel refreshed for days!"
--SSgt. Marina Buie
439th Airlift Wing administration



photos by SrA. Kelly Galloway

GOBBLING UP THE MISSION Crews load an Army helicopter into a Westover C-5B at an overseas deployed location. Patriot Wing crews have recently been involved with the drawdowns of equipment in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These missions, which included staging from an island in the Indian Ocean, highlight the exclusive outsize airlift capability of the Galaxy, which is the Air Force's largest aircraft.

(photo by TSgt. Raymond Larose)



EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: DISPELLING THE MYTH

by Maj. Diane Burch

Many myths have arisen that fuel confusion regarding what Equal Employment Opportunity is about.

The most egregious myth is that the EEO system only applies to women and minorities. In reality, the EEO complaint program covers all appropriated and non-appropriated fund employees - supervisory and non-supervisory, male and female, minority and non-minority.

Another myth is that the EEO counselor determines whether a contested action constitutes discrimination. The truth is the EEO counselor's role is to attempt to resolve complaints on a "win-win" basis at the lowest possible level. In fact, case law specifically prohibits the counselor from determining the merits of complaints.

In addition to these and many other misconceptions, there is also a general lack of understanding as to what EEO is really about. Let's set the record straight:

The EEO complaint process is statu-

torily based by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963.

These laws prohibit employers from making employment decisions based on stereotypical ideas of race, color, religion, age (40 years or older), gender, national origin or disability. These laws also require that sincerely-held religious beliefs, as well as disabling conditions of employees, be reasonably accommodated. These laws further prohibit reprisal or retaliation against employees who have participated in the EEO process, or those who may oppose any unlawful employment practice covered by them.

EEO is the law. Therefore, discrimination on any of these areas is illegal.

Employees who feel they have been discriminated on any of the above bases have a statutory right to file a complaint without fear of reprisal, retaliation, interference, coercion, harassment or other negative consequences. Such employees

must make contact with an EEO counselor within 45 days of the discriminating action. At the pre-complaint (informal) stage of the EEO process, every attempt is made to resolve the complaint at the lowest level. Alternative dispute resolution is highly recommended by the Air Force because it has been found to be a very successful means of resolving a wide range of conflicts.

The formal complaint process can be time-consuming, morale-eroding, and quite costly to everyone involved. So it bears noting that resolving complaints as early as possible is in everyone's best interest. However, if complaints are not resolved, you have the right to file a formal complaint. This involves an investigation by the Investigation and Resolution Division, a Department of Defense agency. You also have the option of appealing as the process progresses.

For more information about the EEO process, call 557-3225.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Maj. Burch is the director of equal opportunity.

Col. Sousa checks out for AFRC

by 2nd Lt. Andre Bowser

After more than three decades as a Patriot Wing member, Col. Robert Sousa told his audience of family and Airmen that the key to lasting success was simple:

“You need to be passionate!”

His farewell speech, given Jan. 21 at the base conference center, capped his command tenure at Westover with the 439th Aeromedical Staging Squadron.

“Passion is what makes you want to give every ounce of your being during your waking hours -- and some of your sleeping ones also -- to accomplish your mission,” he said.

Col. Sousa spoke from experience.

After all, he first arrived at Westover as an enlisted Reservist nearly 40 years ago.

The years that followed 1974 would yield a high-speed Airman and non-commissioned officer who wore the stripes proudly on his sleeves, and later as an award-winning officer in the medical service corps.

Perhaps his achievements are most notable given his next assignment: “Deputy Command Surgeon for the Air Force Reserve Command,” the highest post in Col. Sousa’s career field, located at Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

The move to his new assignment was a surprise. He had been eyeing retirement. “I was so close to retirement, even though in the medical field you can go until 62 years old without a waiver,” said Col. Sousa, who is 60. After a lengthy selection and hiring process, he was offered and accepted the position, but not before one final — important step.

“I said: ‘I have to ask my wife.’”

While his family, including wife Lydia Todd and five children, will remain in the northeast, Col. Sousa will live in Georgia. His wife said there would be lots of trips up and down the coast between the Bay State and the Peach State, “but we’re a tough, military family,” Todd said.

Col. Sousa will work as the chief of staff for the headquarters AFRC surgeon general directorate, which includes serving as career manager for the medical service corps, among other responsibilities.

He started the position while still commanding the 439th ASTS because of the need for immediate attention in the job that guides the careers of officers in the expansive medical service corps.

Col. Sousa said he wears so many hats that in his first few days on the job his head was spinning.

“It takes some getting used to,” he said.

He has a history of going beyond mission completion, and of pushing the limits of his own capabilities.

In 1987, he was selected as the 439th MAW Junior Officer of the Year; in 1994, AFRES recognized him as the Outstanding Reserve Officer Assigned to a Medical Squadron; in 2000, he was the AFRC Outstanding Reserve Officer Assigned to a Medical Squadron; and in 2001, he received the Brig. Gen. Donald B. Wagner Administrative Excellence Award, just to list a few of his accomplishments.

In 2004, Col. Sousa assumed command of the 439th ASTS. AFRC officials selected Col. Sousa as the command’s deputy



Col. Robert Sousa says goodbye after almost 40 years at Westover.

command surgeon in late 2011.

At his change of command ceremony on Jan. 21, Col. Sousa relinquished command to Lt. Col. Karen Gardner, after what he described as a very long grooming process, which began years before either of them knew their fates.

“We sat down a long time ago and discussed her future long before this day,” Col. Sousa told the audience. “I love it when a plan comes together.”

Loadmaster lands on American Idol



by SrA. Kelly Galloway

TSgt. Blaire Sieber impressed American Idol judges Jennifer Lopez, Steven Tyler, and Randy Jackson enough to earn a trip to Hollywood and a spot on national TV.

The 337th Airlift Squadron loadmaster was one of only 330 American Idol hopefuls recently sent to Hollywood week.

Originally from Lake Havasu, Ariz.,

TSgt. Sieber lives in Boston and is a traditional reservist at Westover.

When asked what makes her the next American Idol she responded, “I’m the next American Idol because I’ve worked hard for it and I think I can connect with a lot of people (pause) – I know I can connect with a lot of people.”

American Idol contestants endure three sets of cuts. The number of people auditioning can exceed 10,000 people in each city, but only a few hundred in each city make it past the preliminary auditions. Those who are chosen sing in front of producers. After another cut, contestants audition in front of the judges, which is the only audition phase shown on the show. Those selected are sent to Hollywood. Between 10 and 60 people in each city make it to Hollywood.

The 11th season aired Feb. 8.

EDITOR’S NOTE: As of press time, TSgt. Sieber was still in the running. Visit westover.afrc.af.mil for the latest updates.

FACES OF WESTOVER

PATRIOT PRAISES Promotions

Master Sergeant

Juan Ayala
 Donal Boulette
 Michael Cormier
 Bryan Creamer
 Dana Dupuis
 Keith Feist
 Christopher Houde
 Kevin Kennedy
 Cynthia Lapriore
 Brian Naylor
 Michael Ventura



Technical Sergeant

Brian Buecher
 Sheila Colon-Santos
 Timothy Girouard
 Kayla Grenier
 Kristopher Grimshaw
 Austin Harding
 Walter Lahair
 Myles Mueller
 Matthew Myers
 Leigh Olson
 Paul Torres



Staff Sergeant

Robert Beauregard
 Albry Crowley
 Christian Delacruz
 Cameron Schwind
 Eric Stager



Senior Airman

Raul Agustin-Salinas
 Erik Cables
 Brenden Cassada
 Patrick Fugler
 Joanna Levesque
 Jason Quigley
 Kayla Rice
 Najjah Scott
 Amy Young



Airman First Class

Richard Myatt
 Adam Saleh
 Rudolph Thomas



Airman

Erica Canty-Wilson
 Amber Fink
 Kyle Raymond
 Christopher Sayre



SrA. Kelly O'Connor
 439th Aeromedical Staging Squadron

SrA. Kelly O'Connor enlisted at 20 years old as a medical technician. She is the primary administrator for the EMT section and gathers information for monthly training summaries.

"I would be one of the people who stabilize wounded troops before their flight home. We transport patients, monitor wounds and bandages, cut casts before flight, among many other tasks," she said.

"I chose the medical field because I knew how beneficial my training would be. I moved from Springfield to Pennsylvania and got a job with a hospital -- thanks to my extensive military training.

"I work in an orthopedic surgical and trauma unit doing the same type of work I would do in my military career: post-operation stabilization and care."

-- by SrA. Kelly Galloway



SrA. Kelly O'Connor

Retirements |

Lieutenant Colonel

Charles Kerr

Master Sergeant

Kevin Blake
 William Hicks
 Steven Waite

Technical Sergeant

James Fitzell

SERVICES CALENDER |

Submitted by Mollie Anello, services marketing assistant

CLUB: NAF Sale, March 3-4, 8 a.m-5 p.m. Plates, pans, glasses, chairs, champagne fountain, and much more. St. Patrick's Day Spread, March 17, 5-7 p.m., Irish-themed buffet served in the ballroom, and drink specials in the lounge, free for members, \$10.95 for non-members.

BOWLING CENTER: St. Patty's Weekend: March 16-17, wear Green and bowl for \$1/game. Uniforms count! Commander's Cup Base Bowling Championship, March 3 and 17, 4 p.m., three games for \$6 per person, top two squadrons will compete for the trophy in April; Celebrate the first day of spring, March 20; lunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free bowling at lunch.

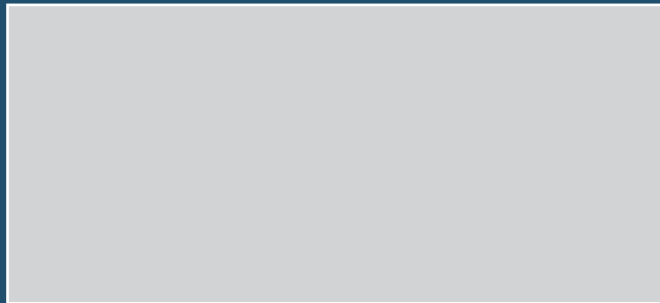
OUTDOOR REC: Chippers, overseeders, aerators, and much more are in stock. Information, 557-2192.

FITNESS: St. Patrick's Day Run starting at 8 a.m., sign-ups start March 1- 12 (first 25 people sign-up get a prize), must be present and run to received prize, first three to cross the finish line will receive an additional prize. Information, 557-3958.



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Published monthly for Patriots like SSgt. Steven Spano, Chicopee, Mass., and the more than 3,400 reservists and civilians assigned to the 439th Airlift Wing.



NOSE-BLEED SECTION A Westover C-5 performed a flyover for the Jan. 22 New England Patriots game in Foxboro, Mass. to a cheering crowd of more than 68,700. "It was a chance of a lifetime," said Lt. Col. Gary Cooke, one of the pilots. Turn to page 8 for the flyover story. (photo by SrA. Kelly Galloway)