

Westover - History and Overview

Westover ARB has been in operation since 1940 and served as a bomber training base and port of embarkation/ debarkation during World War II. Following the war, the base was a staging point for the Berlin Airlift, a headquarters of the Military Air Transport Service system until April 1955. From that time until 1974, the base was a major Strategic Air Command installation.

Since May 19, 1974 Westover has been an Air Force Reserve Command base. From that time until October, 1987 the 439th Tactical Airlift Wing operated C-130 Hercules and C-123 Provider aircraft. The wing converted to C-5As in 1987 and the unit eventually became designated as the 439th Airlift Wing.

The 439th Airlift Wing is the nation's largest Air Force Reserve installation. The base is the closest fully operational military installation to Europe, giving it a strategic advantage in military operations. Currently, 2,500 reservists are assigned to the wing at Westover. They train one weekend each month and also serve a 15-day annual tour of duty each year. The 337th Airlift Squadron is the wing's flying unit at Westover.

Westover is operated on a day-to-day basis by a workforce of about 1,000 civilians, including 488 air reserve technicians.

The Mission. The 439th Airlift Wing is capable of providing worldwide air movement of troops, supplies, and equipment. Airlift also involves airdrop and combat off-load operations. Support units satisfy communications, engineering, logistical, medical and security requirements.

The peacetime mission includes recruiting, training and supervision of personnel to assure mission readiness. The 439 AW is also responsible for the management of aircraft maintenance and all assigned Air Force combat support real property, equipment and supplies.

Joint Land Use Study Program

Military installations generate considerable economic activity that attracts people and businesses in order to take advantage of job opportunities and to provide goods and services needed to support the installation. But they also create noise and can present potential for accidents on and off-base, most often associated with aircraft landing and take-off. For this reason, the Department of Defense (DoD) established the Air Installation Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) Program in an effort to coordinate the requirements of military missions with the development occurring in the surrounding civilian communities.

AICUZ reports describe three basic types of constraints that affect, or result from, flight operations. The first constraint involves areas that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and DoD have identified for height limitations. The second constraint involves noise zones plotted in increments from 65 decibels (dB) to over 80 dB. Over 65 dB exposure is considered to be significant and use of land normally should be limited to industrial, manufacturing and transportation and resource production. Detailed information for Westover Air Reserve Base (WARB) is available under separate cover. The noise exposure area over 65 dB coincides roughly with that covered by the third constraint, which involves accident potential zones based on statistical analysis of past DoD aircraft accidents.

The Air Force completed a study of Air Force accidents that occurred between 1968 and 1995 within 10 nautical miles of airfields. The study considered 838 accidents and revealed that 68 % occurred on or adjacent to the runway in a corridor 3,000 feet wide. Based on this type of accident data, the Air Force identified three accident potential zones; the Clear Zone (CZ), Accident Potential Zone I (APZ-I), and Accident Potential Zone II (APZ-II). The CZ is at either end of a

runway and measures 3,000 feet by 3,000 feet in area. Within the CZ, the potential for accidents is the greatest (27.4%). Within the CZ area there should be no above-ground structures of any kind, and land-use activity should be severely limited only to agriculture (except livestock).

APZ-I is a rectangle 5,000 feet long by 3,000 feet wide, where the study found that 10.1% of aircraft accidents occurred. Within the APZ-I, suggested land uses are limited to manufacturing, transportation and communications, trade, automotive sales, services and agriculture. Lower densities of permitted activities are also suggested. Residential land uses of any type are not recommended, nor are places of assembly, schools, hospitals, child or adult care facilities, and so forth.

APZ-II is the farthest accident potential zone from the end of the runway and is also 7,000 feet long by 3,000 feet wide. The study found that only 5.6% of accidents occurred in this zone. Recommended land uses and densities are less stringent than the previous zones. Severely limited residential uses are recommended at maximum densities of one to two units per acre. Multifamily, townhouse or apartment dwellings are not considered compatible in APZ-II. Neither are hospitals, nursing homes, educational services, or eating and drinking establishments.

In 1985, DoD initiated a new program to help community leaders better understand and incorporate the AICUZ technical information into local community plans and zoning ordinances. Congress authorizes DoD to make grants to State or local governments for adjustment planning required by the encroachment of a civilian community on a military installation. The DoD Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) manages the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) Program, which is a cooperative land-use planning effort between affected local government and the military installation. This

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Joint Land Use Study, continued from other side

brochure is funded by the JLUS Program. The recommendations developed during this study will help to support adoption and implementation of compatible development that safeguards the military mission and protects the health, safety and welfare of the public.

These recommendations include:

- Massachusetts legislative initiative to designate the CZs, APZ-Is, and APZ-IIIs as “Areas of Critical State Concern”, requiring state approval for major development projects that could have statewide impacts.
- MA legislative initiative to rescind the exemption in state zoning for educational institutions or churches, thus allowing for their prohibition in the CZs and APZs.
- Real estate disclosure in the APZs for each community in the CZs and APZs (Chicopee, Granby, Ludlow, South Hadley and Springfield).
- Zoning overlay districts in each community having CZs and APZs, prohibiting schools, churches, nursing homes, hospitals and day care.
- Zoning overlay districts in each community having CZs and APZs, prohibiting all development in CZs, and residential development and manufacturing that causes dust or other sight reductions in APZ-Is
- A Memorandum of Agreement between all municipalities in the CZs and APZs to protect land from incompatible development.
- Good and reliable communication about land development and redevelopment between Westover Air Reserve Base and Westover Metropolitan Airport officials and community officials and representatives.

Base has significant Impact on Area Economy

Westover’s 2,500 acres make it the largest Air Force Reserve base in the country. Westover is home not only

to the 439th Airlift Wing, but 17 tenant units as well.

This base added more than \$183 million to the economy of western Massachusetts during the fiscal year 2002-2003. During the timeframe from October 1, 2002 to September 30, 2003, the base’s fiscal impact on communities located within a 50-mile radius totalled \$183,542,883.

The base’s total salary for the year was \$103,204,849 with military pay making up the largest portion, \$67,146,416. Much of this came from more than 1,000 reservists who were activated during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Civilian salaries stood at \$33,953,294, while civilian contractors and non-appropriated fund workers—employed in such places as the base exchange, shoppette-gas station, bowling alley, gymnasium, Westover Club and billeting office—took home another \$2,105,139.

The number of people employed by the Air Force on the base, totals 3,607, including 2,567 active-duty and reserve military personnel. There are also 770 appropriated fund federal employees and 270 contract and non-appropriated funds workers.

Construction projects contributed \$5,400,253 to the total while service contracts added \$19,566,210. Other expenditures, which include materials, equipment and supplies capped out at \$20,520,859. As a result of the base population, the Air Force calculated that an estimated 988 jobs were created in the local area resulting in an annual payroll of \$34,850,712.

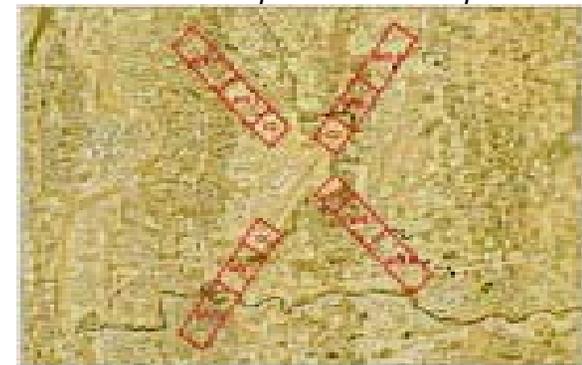
In addition, the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) moved from downtown Springfield, MA and opened on base in September 2003.

“I am pleased that Westover is able to play such an integral role in the economic well-being of the Pioneer Valley,” said Col. Wade Farris, 439th AW commander. “Our relationship with the surrounding communities has never been better and I want to offer my thanks for all of their support during the past couple of years.”

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