

17-year-old now famous

Medalist still rehearsing

WASHINGTON — Most people would think a 17-year-old high school drop-out had little future when she walked out the school doors for the last time.

But when you've just become the first American to win a gold medal at the Moscow International Ballet Competition, then the future is a little brighter.

Amanda McKerrow, who conquered Moscow with her partner Simon Dow, says, "Life is busier and there's an added something extra, but it really hasn't changed me as a person. I still have to practice and rehearse every day if I want to grow as a dancer."

She and 19 other dancers make up the Washington Ballet, created in 1976 by Mary Day, who wanted to form a company for graduates of the Washington School of Ballet.

Her life is dancing. She spends six hours a day practicing and keeping in shape and trying to adjust to the attention and fame that came with the gold medal.

"People stop me on the street now and say

"Aren't you Amanda McKerrow?" and my first reaction is to say, "Yes. How did you know?" It takes getting used to. But I still feel the same as I did two months ago."

Miss McKerrow left high school after the 10th grade and would have graduated this year. She is working on a correspondence course and will soon take an exam for a Government Equivalency Diploma.

She entered the world of ballet at the age of 10, partially because her older sister Melissa, now 21, was doing it. "But she quit before I even started," Miss McKerrow said.

"When I was young I used to tag after her like kids do. But then I realized that I loved watching dancers. She didn't like it, but I fell in love."

But after five years of serious training and competition, she knows it is not an easy profession and many dancers can't handle the pressures.

"It's a very hard career," Miss McKerrow said. "Dancing is emotionally difficult and physically draining. You need total support

from your family and friends or it makes it that much harder to handle the setbacks."

Miss McKerrow says she knew what she wanted by age 12 after two years of dance lessons. "I knew I wouldn't be happy doing anything else."

"I really love to swim, but I don't get much chance to," she said. "Plus dancers can't get too suntanned because the (stage) lighting will make you look green or something."

Miss McKerrow can't picture what she'll be doing five or 10 years from now, other than dancing. Choreography is pretty much ruled out, though she admits that she might want to try it sometime.

Beyond Moscow?

"I still have to work hard every day. I still have a lot further to go and farther to grow as a dancer."

She would like to do "Romeo and Juliet." "It's my favorite ballet all around. It's my favorite Shakespearean play and Prokofiev is my favorite composer. It would be a wonderful role to sink your teeth into."

the small society

by Brickman



Reagan delays release of planes destined for Israel

WASHINGTON — The on-again, off-again shipment of U.S. warplanes to Israel has again been embargoed by President Reagan, but an aide says he is likely to let the planes go soon.

The embargo, imposed Tuesday, swells to 16 the number of warplanes Reagan has denied Israel since June 10 in response to its bombing raids on an Iraqi nuclear reactor and on Palestine Liberation Organization targets in Lebanon.

The Foreign Ministry expresses its dismay at the continued delay in supply of plane deliveries to Israel, the Israeli government said in Jerusalem. "This is an unjust and damaging action and borders on breach of contract."

But White House aide said Reagan was expected to give the go-ahead next week for shipment to Israel of 14 F-16s and two F-15s. The president, he said, is "leaning toward letting them all go."

Reagan blocked deliveries of the first four F-16s to Israel June 10 pending a determination of whether the Israelis used F-15s and F-16s already in their arsenal for "legitimate self-defense" in their June 7 raid on the Iraqi reactor.

Congressional sources said Reagan had been prepared to lift the suspension on July 17. But Israeli

bombed PLO targets in the center of Beirut, reportedly killing more than 300 people and he immediately suspended delivery of six more F-16s July 20 because of the "escalating cycle of violence" in the Middle East.

State Department spokesman Alan Romberg said Tuesday's decision was consistent with the president's orders.

"Simply the same rationale applying to deliveries of the F16s applies now (to the F-15s) until the president makes his mind up, makes his decision," Romberg said. "So the same criterion of not putting highly visible aircraft into that situation still applies until that decision is made."

Officials said a major factor in Reagan's decision whether to resume aircraft deliveries to Israel was the unofficial cease-fire agreed to last month in Israel and elements of the PLO.

Even if Reagan does lift the embargo, deliveries of the F-16s could be further delayed by unresolvable problems.

The Air Force last Friday it grounded all its F-16s because of problems with their electrical and flight control systems. The order, which followed the crash of an F-16 in Utah, would apply also to planes destined for Israel until corrections are made.

F-16 planes ready after modification

WASHINGTON — F-16 fighters grounded last Friday because of problems with the flight control system, will begin

flying again next week after completion of modifications, the Air Force says.

In an announcement Tuesday, the Air Force said all 269 of the

\$14 million aircraft will be returned to duty within four or five weeks.

Technicians from the Air Force and the General Dynamics Corp. builder of the advanced single-engine plane, will begin work on repairs to the flight control systems on each of the planes at the bases, the Air Force announced Tuesday.

When the U.S. Air Force grounded its F-16s, the air forces of Israel, Norway, Denmark, Belgium and Holland followed suit with F-16s bought from the United States. Those countries were expected to carry out similar modifications to their planes, an Air Force spokesman said.

The spokesman said the problem with the flight control computer was caused by an overload of electrical energy that forced the system to shut down for its protection.

The Air Force ordered grounding two days after an F-16 crashed near Hill Air Force Base in Utah, killing the pilot. The cause of the crash was classified information.

Major accidents have happened to 14 F-16s, 10 of them crashed, the Air Force said.

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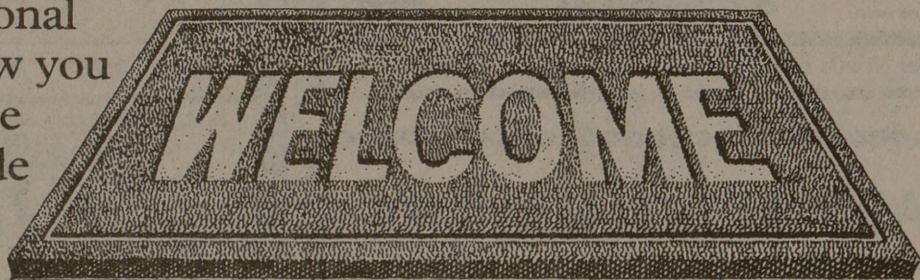
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