

Did you know?

Air Expo is the Low Country's top annual attraction in terms of single-day attendance, drawing more than 60,000 people.

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Charleston AFB, SC

Charleston facts

The 637th Aircraft Generation Squadron was activated on April 7, 1995, and was deactivated today, when it was merged with the 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron.

Air Expo amazes audience

More than 60,000 people turned out for Air Expo '99 last weekend. The Expo featured a variety of military and civilian static aircraft displays, as well as a number of aerial demonstrations.

Headlining this year's line up was the USAF Thunderbirds, who amazed the crowd with high-speed precision maneuvers. Other demonstrations included the MiG-17 and Swiss Venom aircraft, an aerial duel between a P-51 Mustang and a replica of a Japanese Zero, a B-2 Stealth bomber fly-by, an F-18 demo, Wings of Blue (the Air Force Academy's parachute team) and a C-17 showing its capabilities.

Increasing cloudiness caused the Air Expo schedule to be shuffled, but most events went on. The Thunderbirds' performance was moved to an hour earlier than scheduled.

See more Air Expo '99 photos on page 3.



Staff Sgt. Andrew Rodier



Staff Sgt. Rich Kaminsky

Base comptrollers make it easy for evacuees

by Senior Airman Michael Duhe
437th AW Public Affairs

Although Hurricane Floyd was miserable for many on base who evacuated, being compensated for the experience turned out to be stress-free, thanks to the efforts of the 437th Comptroller Squadron.

Those authorized to be reimbursed were active duty members and their dependents, appropriated fund civilian employees and their dependents, reservists on duty, and some non-appropriated fund employees.

As of Monday, approximately 3,250 payments have been made, compensating more than 5,300 people for their evacuation efforts. According to Master Sgt. Matt Harless, chief of customer service for 437th CPTS, about 9,600 people are eligible to be reimbursed. More claims are expected to be filed – some military members who evacuated are TDY and many people are still unaware that they are entitled to compensation for the evacuation.

To date, claims have totaled over \$1.5 million, Harless said. Cash payments were nearly \$750,000.

"We anticipate the total to increase even more," Harless commented. "We're looking at capping out at \$1.8 to \$2 million."

"All in all, things went smoothly at the theater. The customers' attitude was terrific."

Master Sgt. Matt Harless

While the decision was being made to evacuate, comptroller personnel were on the scene to brief senior leadership on the plan to compensate evacuees. After discussing a plan with finance personnel at headquarters Air Mobility Command, nine comptroller augmentees were sent from Scott AFB, Ill., McConnell AFB, Kan., and Grand Forks AFB, N.D. Together with Charleston AFB finance personnel, they set up a payment processing line in the base theater. Each unit on base was given a specific time for their members to come in and file a claim. Reimbursements were given in cash or through electronic funds transfer. Evacuees were reimbursed for mileage (31 cents per mile), a per diem rate based on their destination during the evacuation, lodging expenses, and ATM service fees for those using government travel credit cards.

"Those were the fundamental claims that were eligible for reimbursement," Harless said. "That makes computations fairly simple." What wasn't so simple was determining who could

actually be claimed and how the claims would affect other duty or leave status'.

Harless said a typical day for the travel claim team at the base theater ranged from 12-16 hours. Meanwhile, it was business as usual at the customer service section in the finance building. Every-day service was provided even though manning suffered because of the evacuation efforts and end-of-fiscal-year closeout.

Because of the large amount of cash on hand at the theater, the 437th Security Forces Squadron provided security. The 437th Communications Squadron also provided audio and visual support at the theater. Customers were processed until about 5 p.m., and computations continued for another four to five hours at night.

"All in all, things went smoothly at the theater," Harless commented. "The customers' attitudes at the theater was terrific. Everyone was polite and courteous, and our augmentees from the other bases were amazed at the camaraderie and good attitudes of those we were serving. We told them it was because we have courteous people here at Charleston and we try to take care of them as best as we can."

"I thought they had things very organized," said Amn. Michael Reynolds, one of many customers who filed a claim at

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