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the theater. "Everything went great. I was in and out of there in 10 minutes."

Harless said more claims are expected to be filed. Although there is no deadline, those wanting to file a claim should do so at the base finance office's customer service section.

Exact statistics on the number of evacuees are expected to be available next week, Harless said. Documentation of claims will be provided to each squadron commander. This will help the comptroller squadron determine exact evacuation numbers for members and family members and help squadron commanders take action against possible fraudulent claims.

The evacuation for Hurricane Floyd was the largest peacetime CONUS evacuation in history. The effort to compensate military members who evacuated was a milestone in itself for the Air Force and Comptrollers as well. The timing of the event was particularly difficult, as fiscal year end closeout approached.

"You have to realize, this is the first time ever that this has ever happened," Harless said. "All of the feedback, the statistics and numbers we generate from this, will be the benchmark for future evacuations, particularly in the CONUS."

An after-action report will document the effort and will eventually be provided to the Air Staff.

"The eyes of the Air Force world are focused on Charleston and how we dealt with this," Harless pointed out.

Amn. Michael Reynolds (right) receives a cash reimbursement from Senior Airman Nicole Osborne of the 437th CPTS.



Staff Sgt. Andrew Rodier

Laser eye protection tested for C-17 aircrew use

by Tech Sgt. Daniel Murphy
437th AW Public Affairs

Most people depend on their eyesight in their daily lives to do their jobs. It is no different for an Air Force aircrew member.

Some may argue that it is even more important because of the difficulty associated with military missions. Mission success depends on the crewmembers' ability to read all the charts, gauges and instruments to bring the jet home safely from a hostile environment.

Air Force Material Command is helping ensure crews have adequate protection and that their mission is a success. AFMC, under direction of the Air Force, has sent a team of Air Force Research Laboratory contractors here to test laser eye protection spectacles for aircrews while flying the C-17 Globemaster III.

"With the advancement of technology on the battlefield, it has become apparent that a need is there for protection from lasers," said Alex M. Archibald, Jr. a retired USAF pilot and operational requirements specialist for the Litton-TASC company based at the Air Force

Research Laboratory, Brooks Air Force Base, Texas. "Our goal is to protect the aircrew from unseen hazards, primarily infrared lasers."

The laser eye protection, or LEP, consists of a normal looking pair of glasses. "What makes them special is the lenses in the glasses," said Archibald. "There are two types currently being tested on aircrews flying at night, reflective and dye based."

"The reflective spectacles reflect laser light much like a mirror would," said Bill R. Ercoline, who is also a retired USAF pilot and lead human factors scientist for the Litton-TASC LEP field evaluation team. "The dye spectacles absorb the laser light like a sponge."

To ensure the LEP does not affect crewmembers performing normal tasks in operating a plane, testing occurs in a four-step process.

"The first step is to wear the LEP spectacles during ground and taxi operations," said Archibald. "We want to ensure crews can read their charts and perform normally."

Next is to test the effects of wearing the LEP while wearing Night Vision Goggles and reading instruments and displays. "This is to

ensure we have no problems with or without the NVGs," said Joe Riegler, a human factors engineer assigned with the NVG training team for Boeing. He is also a contractor working for the AFRL division based in Mesa, Ariz.

The testing for the second step was done in the C-17 nosedock in the dark. An aircrew member wore both the LEP and NVGs and was tested on his ability to read charts and cockpit instruments and displays.

"The crews filled out a questionnaire to ensure they were comfortable with wearing of the spectacles," said Ercoline. "We need to know if there is a potential problem before the crews fly with the spectacles."

The third step in the process was to convene a safe-to-fly board. The data from the first two steps was used to determine if actual flights were to be made. The board was made up of personnel from the operations group, logistics group, flying squadrons, medical clinic, contractors and the aircrew participants. The go ahead was given to proceed with night flights

The last step was to actually fly with the LEPs on during a night mission. Crews were

asked to wear them throughout most of the flight. The crews were made up of personnel from the 17th, 317th and 701th airlift squadrons. "We used both active and reserve crews and Capt. (Dr.) Rawson Wood of the 437th ADOS here at Charleston AFB, flew as an evaluator on one of the flights," said Lt. Col. Jerry L. Bateman Jr., deputy director for C-17 integration and the Charleston AFB point of contact for laser eye protection.

The AFRL LEP Field Evaluation Team has previously tested the spectacles on F-117, F-15E, C-130 and C-21 aircrews. "Once all the testing is over, and if all the results are favorable, the AFMC Life Support SPO will determine how the lenses can be adapted into visors and glasses to be worn in all USAF aircraft," said Ercoline

Now that testing is over for the C-17, the field evaluation team must complete their assessments by looking at a few other USAF aircraft and then report its findings back to the AFRL. The future of technology appears to be here already. The support provided by Team Charleston is making it happen and the results may save lives and aircraft in the future.

Charleston AFB maintenance squadrons merge into one

By Lt. Col. Ed Memi
437th Aw Public Affairs

The 637th Aircraft Generation Squadron will cease to exist today when a ceremony is held at 3 p.m. in Building 519, Nosedock One, marking the transition of its assets and people to the 437th AGS.

All base personnel are invited to the ceremony, where the 637th AGS guidon will be encased and then stored. The squadron was established as a temporary squadron in April 7, 1995 after the first C-17s arrived at the base in June 1993 and was expected to remain until the retirement of C-141s fleet drew nearer.

The deactivation of the 637th AGS will only cause a name change for most people and will not change the way the fleet of 40 C-17 Globemaster IIIs are maintained. Eventually, C-141 maintenance members will either cross-train into the C-17 or be reassigned to other bases as part of the normal permanent

change-of-station cycle when the last C-141s leaves here September 2000.

The biggest change from combining the two squadrons will be the consolidation of manpower and supply accounts, with the loss of some duplication between the two squadrons. The squadron will consist of four maintenance flights called Panther (C-141), Shark, Gator, and Barracuda and one support flight called Viper. With the exception of some changes in leadership, the rest of the former 637 AGS will remain as it were before the merger. The merger eliminates duplication and results in a single, more efficient maintenance organization as the C-141 draws down.

"Since the last C-141B aircraft will depart in less than a year, the merging of the 437 AGS and the 637 AGS will facilitate the opportunity for the C-141B maintainer to transition to the C-17 weapon system," said Lt. Col. Paul Bartlett, commander of the 437th AGS. "We will have a tremendous training backlog as we approach the departure date for the last C-141, but by merging under one squadron, we will be able to prioritize flightline

requirements to allow as many maintainers as possible to attend transition courses."

The professionalism of personnel from both squadrons will ensure the timely departure of the last C-141B aircraft and the blending to one AGS are accomplished seamlessly, he added. "This is the moment our maintainers stationed at Charleston who are working on one of the oldest aircraft in the Air Force inventory will be able to maintain AMC's newest airlifter."

"Although the 637 AGS really preferred to keep its own identity and proud individual history of accomplishment, based on manning imbalances between the 437 AGS and the 637 AGS, a decision was made to accelerate a merger," said Maj. Dennis Daley, the last commander of the 637th AGS.

He added that combining the staffs of both squadrons and additional mid-level 437th manning, the 637th would be able to once again fulfill its mission without overtasking its enlisted ranks.

Daley had nothing but praise for the accomplishments of the

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