

Oct 4-8: During Large Package Week at Pope AFB, N.C., all 51 sorties launched on time. Only one was unable to drop because of maintenance.



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Charleston AFB, SC

Did you know?

When in uniform, beepers and cell phones are prohibited unless required by duty.

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437 AW aircrews support efforts in East Timor

By Lt. Col. Ed Memi
437 AW Public Affairs

Charleston AFB is once again playing a key role in airlifting peacekeeping forces and U.S. Army support units to Australia in response to the crisis in East Timor.

In addition, a Charleston based C-17 transported the first contingent of Thai troops to Australia that eventually deployed for peacekeeping duties in East Timor.

Charleston aircrews have already flown five missions, hauling Army civil affairs equipment and passengers, from a variety of stateside locations to Darwin, Australia. According to the Air Mobility Command Tanker Airlift Control Center officials at Scott AFB, Ill., Charleston aircrews will see more action in the upcoming weeks as the bulk of the international peacekeeping forces gets settled.

The airlift of the Thai troops to Australia is being done largely by C-141s and C-5s. The troops deployed Oct. 4 — Thailand's elite Rapid Deployment Force — was airlifted from Don Muang Air Force Base on an Air Force C-141 transport jet from McGuire AFB, N.J. It was followed by

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Courtesy photo

A C-17 aircraft from the 17th Airlift Squadron, arrives to Darwin Royal Australian Air Force Base to deliver troops and cargo in support of Operation Stabilize. The U.S. Air Force is providing logistics, communications, and planning support to International Forces East Timor. INTERFET is providing peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and force protection to East Timor.

Defense Authorization Act funds readiness

The Department of Defense will continue to be ready, in part because of the Defense Authorization Act, signed by President Bill Clinton at the Pentagon Oct. 5.

"We have invested in our warriors and in our weapons. We have reversed a 13-year decline in procurement, and we're increasing pay," said Defense Secretary William Cohen. "We can never pay you enough, but we can pay you more. And that is precisely what this bill is going to do."

Cohen said the authorization act puts DOD well on the way toward redressing readiness requirements.

"We're putting money into operations and maintenance," he said. "We're adding \$400 million for the integration of the active reserve forces. We are also renewing our commitment to modern-

ization. We are climbing up that scale now and buying the equipment those forces will need for future battles."

Clinton, too, stressed DOD modernization. He said U.S. service members must have the tools to do the jobs the country asks of them.

"This bill makes good on our pledge to keep the armed forces the best equipped and maintained fighting force on Earth," the president said. "It carries forward modernization programs: funding the F-22 stealth fighter, the V-22 Osprey, the Comanche helicopter, advanced destroyers, submarines and amphibious ships, command-and-control systems and a new generation of precision munitions."

Army Gen. Hugh Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reminded the mostly military audience that the world remains a dangerous and complex place. He said the challenges to U.S. inter-

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Large Package provides valuable training

By Lt. Col. Ed Memi
437 AW Public Affairs

About 100 Charleston aircrews, maintainers and support personnel got much needed recurring training when they participated in Large Package Week Oct. 4-8 at Pope Air Force, N.C.

Large Package Week is held about 10 times a year and provides Team Charleston members with training in large formation flying as well as a chance to hone their air drop skills of Army paratroopers and heavy equipment.

The exercise also gave several Army units at Fort Bragg, N.C., a chance to hone the skills of its "ready" brigade to respond on a moment's notice in the event of a real contingency as well as practice inserting a large number of troops.

Participating in Large Package Week were four C-17s and two C-141s from Charleston. Joining the exercise were three C-141s from McGuire AFB, N.J., one C-141 from McChord AFB, Wash., three C-130s from Little Rock AFB, Ark., and another C-130 from Dyess AFB, Texas.

Charleston was designated as lead wing and Col. Ron Richardson, 437th Operations Group commander, was the overall Air Mobility Command commander.

The Charleston contingent consisted of 45 maintainers, 6 aircrews, tactics, intelligence, weather, and other support staff.

"For the Army, the exercise gives them a chance to get a lot 'chutes' and serves as an excellent opportunity to prove their readiness. We dropped 2,500 soldiers plus another 700 at the post mission drops at Geronimo landing zone near Fort Polk, La.," said Lt. Col. Tracy Mead, 14th Airlift Squadron operations officer and C-17 deputy mission commander for Large Package Week.

Additional missions, as part of the Joint Readiness Training Exercise at Fort Polk, gave C-17 aircrews practice landing on an austere landing strip while the C-141s also dropped personnel.

On the first and last day of the drops on Oct. 4 and 7, C-17 aircrews dropped heavy equipment such as HUMVEEs, towed artillery and ammunition. C-141s immedi-

ately air-dropped soldiers to set up and use the heavy equipment following the C-17s.

Oct. 5-6, the scenario was exactly the same for both days as they put on a demonstration for the general officers attending the CAPSTONE orientation course, a six week course that introduces senior officers to the capabilities that each of the services possesses. The demonstration included two A-10 Thunderbolts that swept the area, followed by a C-17 that dropped a Container Delivery System pallets of supplies and three others that dropped heavy equipment items such as howitzers and vehicles. Lastly, the C-141s dropped the soldiers who then executed their mission of an airfield seizure. The C-130s airdropped and airlanded CAPSTONE participants.

"Within about a half an hour, the Army is required to set up and live fire their airdropped howitzers," said Capt. Charley Schlegel, one of two wing tacticians whom started planning the exercise about a month out. "One of the big goals of the exercise

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William Cohen