

IN THE NEWS

Charleston CGOs attend base orientation course

By Capt. Tracy Velino
437 AW Public Affairs

Nine lieutenants and two captains from the 437th Airlift Wing participated in the five-day Company Grade Officer Orientation Course here, which ends today.

The CGO orientation is a quarterly course designed to give recently assigned junior officers a look at the wing mission and day-to-day operations of squadrons throughout the base, said 2nd Lt. Dawn Welborn, program coordinator.

"It's been an eye-opening experience, seeing all the different things

that some of the other squadrons on base do that I wasn't aware of," said 2nd Lt. Laura Bentley, an attendee from the 437th Supply Squadron.

Since the wing first offered the orientation four years ago, more than 150 officers have benefited from it, Welborn said.

Attendees are selected by the four group commanders and the director of wing staff. The selected officers have been at Charleston AFB an average of six months to two years.

"I think the greatest benefit (of the course) is meeting other CGOs and networking with them to help get things done for their people or vice

versa," Welborn said. "And seeing that there are things on the base outside of what they do."

The course kicked off Monday morning with a welcome from Col. Karl Young, 437 AW vice commander, followed by briefings from wing staff including public affairs and the staff judge advocate.

Young encouraged the CGOs to take advantage of the course.

"Learn all you can. Keep in mind the wing's mission; that's launching airplanes," he said. "Take a look at each organization that you go to and see where their focus contributes to the wing mission. Learn how to be a part of the Air Force family because we all need each other, and we have to rely on each other to get the mission done."

Day one continued with a tour of the medical group, including a behind-the-scenes look at the pharmacy and laboratory, a chance to try out bioenvironmental testing equipment, and a visit to the relaxation room and the rest of the Health and Wellness Center.

Tuesday, the CGOs toured a variety of support group agencies, from the military personnel flight, to the outdoor recreation center and the fire station. The day also included a tour of combat camera.

2nd Lt. Catherine Barker, a manpower officer, was particularly impressed by the combat camera squadron orientation.

"Going there, seeing the equipment they use and the training they get just blew my mind," she said.

Security forces familiarized the CGOs with their mission Wednesday morning. Students saw a working dog demonstration and tried their hands at the firearms training simulator and entry control operations.

"I think I was probably the most excited to be (working) the entry control gate," said 1st Lt. Rich Carter, a C-17 pilot from the 17th Airlift Squadron. "I've always wanted to work out my own hand-style of vectoring in the traffic."

After tours of the family support and education centers, the CGOs spent Wednesday afternoon learning logistics group missions, from transportation to maintenance.

A highlight of the week was a C-17 orientation flight Thursday.

"It's so easy just to focus on putting out our own little fires ever day," said 2nd Lt. Celeste Rodriguez, 437th Communications Squadron information systems flight. "I think this orientation flight will remind me of who our ultimate customer is and motivate me to always provide the best support I can."

Today the GCOs will complete the course with a tour of the logistics group and contracting and join Young and the group commanders for a closing lunch.

Welborn, a personnel officer in the 437th Mission Support Squadron, began coordinating the orientation courses in July 1999.

"The best part of leading the tours has been watching a group of strangers come together as a group of friends," she said.



Senior Airman Corey Clements

First Lt. Rich Carter, 17th Airlift Squadron, helps with gate guard duties during the Company Grade Officer Orientation Course Wednesday.

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Card

continued from page 1

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The hunt

Savannah Moltzen, 2, gathers eggs during an Easter Egg Hunt held at the base chapel Saturday. She is the daughter of Jacy Campbell.

Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith