

IN THE NEWS

Logistics troops deploy in support of AEF 'air bridge'

**Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Michael Duhe
437 AW Public Affairs**

Approximately two dozen members of the 437th Logistics Group recently deployed to Moron, Spain, in support of upcoming Air Expeditionary Force rotations. In addition, three others have deployed to support upcoming missions to Africa.

The logistics airmen will play a key role in forming an "air bridge" that will airlift troops and equipment into overseas deployment locations. The C-17 will play a major role in the rotation. The airmen include crew chiefs and specialists from the 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron, aerospace ground

equipment technicians from the 437th Maintenance Squadron and specialists from the 437th Supply Squadron.

For the Africa deployment, two members of 437 AGS and one member of 437 MXS deployed to Nigeria to support C-17 operations and 16 437 AGS personnel deployed to Ascension Island. If necessary, the airmen deployed in Moron could travel "down range" to support the Africa deployment, according to 1st Lt. Laura Goodman, maintenance squadron officer-in-charge.

Many of the logistics members went through a mobility processing line Friday at the former site of the base chapel. The mobility line included a

check-in table, a briefing area and a medical station that offered any necessary vaccinations. Other stations in the line included base legal, finance, mission support squadron, Family Support Center and chaplain's office.

While it was "hurry up and wait" for the troops lined up outside the building, most took the wait in stride.

"At least it's not raining," said Airman 1st Class Adam Shillingburg, 437 MXS.

"We're getting to go someplace cooler," added Staff Sgt. Johnathon Sackett, 437 MXS.

The airmen will be deployed at Moron for approximately a month, when the next rotation will airlift troops out of deployment locations.



Staff Sgt. Tracy Herzog (left), 437th Mission Support Squadron, processes Senior Airman Carlton Coley, 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron, before deploying.

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dent Office is responsible for the in-processing, student administration and overall welfare of all foreign students who undergo training here.

"Our goal in the IMSO is to provide a seamless training experience for foreign students," said 1st Lt. Chris Hobbs, IMSO officer. "We want this to be a world-class program. The support from Charleston's leadership has been tremendous, backing us 100 percent throughout our preparations."

The foreign liaison officer, also known as the FLO, will be Warrant Officer Ian McKay of the RAF. He should arrive the first week of September. He'll work side-by-side with Hobbs to ensure a smooth transition for the students. The IMSO will be similar to an Air Force first sergeant and will serve as the liaison with other participating Air Force agencies and the civilian contractor.

"Having Warrant Officer McKay at Charleston will greatly enhance the program's effectiveness," Hobbs said. "Even though there are very few cultural differences between U.S. and U.K. airmen, his presence will reassure students who are far away from their homes."

In an effort to make the students feel even more at home, a sponsorship program will match them with local airmen. The idea behind the program is to let the students learn about American culture while offering an escape from the rigorous training program, according to Hobbs. Anyone interested in participating in the program should call the IMSO at 963-5476.

A trilateral Integrated Production Team made of members of the U.S. Air Force, Boeing and the Royal Air Force has been working to ensure the success of the lease program and the Air Force's training and logistical support,

according to a Pentagon official.

"This has been an unprecedented effort between the U.S. Air Force, industry and a foreign government," said Maj. Kenneth Hubbard, United Kingdom Country director with the Air Force's International Affairs office in the Pentagon. "The hands-on opportunity for on-the-job training with the Air Force is a tremendous asset to the U.K. They'll get a chance to work hands on with the people who stood up the C-17 and who know more about the C-17 than anyone else in the world."

Hubbard said the RAF members will get the opportunity to not only fly and employ the C-17, but will also learn how the Air Force runs its air operations, schedules training for aircrews and conducts maintenance operations involved with the C-17.

Using Charleston's established training infrastructure will provide cost savings for both the Air Force and the RAF because another "end user" of the C-17, RAF Brize Norton, will join Charleston AFB, McChord AFB and Altus AFB, according to Hubbard.

"This is a huge step forward for further cooperation between the USAF and the RAF," Hubbard commented. "We'll establish a virtual worldwide fleet of C-17s. They'll be another C-17 end user. The program will enhance the interoperability and commonality of our weapons system."

More end users of the C-17 will also allow the Air Force to better respond to war fighting requirements, contingencies and humanitarian relief operations.

Hubbard also commended the support provided by Charleston AFB.

"I can't say enough about the tremendous support the Air Force has received from Charleston leadership for the lease program," he said. "They've been more than hospitable."

CAFB hosts sister wing visit

**By 2nd Lt. Richard Komurek
6th ARW Public Affairs**

As part of a "sister wing" visit, Charleston AFB recently hosted 22 members of the 6th Air Refueling Wing and a KC-135 assigned to the MacDill AFB, Fla., unit.

During the three-day visit, the MacDill airmen attended briefings about the 437th Airlift Wing's mission, toured base facilities, received a C-17 orientation flight and were treated to a tour of historic downtown Charleston.

The visit also provided an opportunity for people to visit their job specialty counterparts and for MacDill and Charleston flight crews to perform a refueling mission. MacDill also hosted eight of Charleston's top performers on the KC-135 flight that refueled Charleston C-17s Aug. 9.

The visit was a milestone in the special relationship between the wings that helped MacDill members learn about Charleston's airlift mission, according to Col. Alfred Stewart, 6th Operations Group commander, who led the visiting group.

"If we understand each other better, we work better as a team," Stewart said. "Charleston's C-17s are our customers and the better we understand their mission the better we can serve them."

In addition to greater mission awareness, Stewart also found the visit uplifting.

"Watching the C-17 mission was motivational and exciting," he said. "It makes you proud to be in uniform and reminds people that what we do is special."

One major theme of the visit was the capabilities and strengths of Charleston's C-17s, the Air Force's

newest airlifter. Team MacDill members experienced firsthand the air-drop of a 9,800-pound howitzer, combat offloading and an assault landing.

"The visit was really great," said Staff Sgt. Janel Schleich, assistant to the command chief. "The parachute drop was neat and it was fun to fly in a C-17. I understand their mission more now. It's pretty intense and this is a really busy base."

Another purpose of the visit is to reduce the separation between refueling and airlift crews and foster a greater sense of teamwork between mobility wings.

"The sister wing program allows a mutual sharing of ideas to accomplish the air mobility mission," said Capt. Dan Daniels, 437 AW executive officer and sister wing project officer. "We're all air mobility folks and it's important to remember that."

The sister wing visit offered something for everyone, regardless of job or level of experience. For many, the chance to meet counterparts in their fields was just as important as mission briefs and orientation flights.

"The trip was a great success, everyone really seemed to enjoy it," said Lt. Col. Julie Keck, director of operations for the 6th Operations Support Squadron and MacDill trip coordinator.

The sister wing program, designed to increase awareness and understanding among wings about each other's mission and capabilities, has been in place between Charleston and MacDill for about eight months. Future cooperation between the wings is planned for airlift needs, airshow appearances and to place C-17 crews on tanker flights so they can see how air refueling crews work first hand, said Daniels.