

## COMMENTARY

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AIRLIFT  
Dispatch

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## Tuskegee, VFW ceremonies pay tribute to armed forces

By Col. Rusty Findley  
437th Airlift Wing Commander

This past Memorial Day weekend gave me an opportunity to speak with several groups. I spoke with about 50 veterans, mostly members of the various Veterans' of Foreign War posts throughout the Lowcountry, at a veteran's cemetery just outside the city limits of Goose Creek. During this time, a state VFW honor guard stood silently at attention at a mausoleum, our base honor guard was also present, and for everyone who attended, it was one very hot day. But I could tell most did not mind the inconvenience and discomfort of the weather, and it was apparent that this day was a special day. I could sense the great pride in our country and for those who have served and are serving today. I felt honored to stand among them, on this solemn day, to pay tribute to our fallen heroes and their families.

I also had an opportunity to speak at the Memorial Day activities at Walterboro, S.C. that were arranged by the Hiram E. Mann Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen Inc. The Tuskegee Airman organization was formed in 1972, 27 years after World War II ended. There are currently about 2,500 active members in 44 chapters throughout the country. The Tuskegee Airman Inc. are looking for active duty members to join and gave me an honorary membership with their now familiar "red coat." It is a very worthy organization to get involved in.

I was truly honored to meet retired Air Force Lt. Col.

Hiram E. Mann and many of the Tuskegee airmen who bravely escorted bombers in the European-African Theater during World War II. The Walterboro airport is where many Tuskegee airmen trained prior to entering battle in WW II. This great group of Americans went on to achieve the distinction of never losing a bomber to enemy aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen chapter dedicated a memorial on the grounds of the airport. I was privileged to see them dedicate a landing beacon, manufactured in 1933 by Westinghouse, that was used at Walterboro to guide and train pilots to safely land during the 1940s. What a great legacy they gave to all of us to emulate. As I mentioned in my remarks, Proverbs 27:17 is very true: As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another—the Tuskegee airmen and all our great veterans from WWII set the example that we follow so excellently today.

Attending the ceremony were a number of dignitaries to include: WW II ace retired Capt. John Truluck, Mayor of Walterboro Harry Cone, Chairman of County Council Steven Murdaugh, State Senator McKinley Washington, and U.S. Representative James E. Clyburn. The event also included members of our honor guard and a flyover of a C-17.

Earlier last week, I had the opportunity to finish touring areas of the 437th Aerial Port Squadron. I started with the passenger terminal, where I was briefed on the commercial side by Master Sgt. Maurice Melton and the military processing side of the

terminal by Capt. Patrick Blume. I got an excellent briefing by Senior Airman Keith Miley who has responsibility for maintaining our 37 comfort pallets, designed to fit inside our aircraft to provide additional kitchen and restroom facilities. These special pallets provide additional comfort for large movements of aircrews and passengers. At the Traffic Management Office, Larry Meisler, showed how they handle all the freight destined for the base, to include personal household goods shipments. I also toured the Air Terminal Operations Center, or ATOC for short, which serves as the "brain" or command post for the APS. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Chris Miller, chief of the ATOC, provided a superb briefing.

I also toured the Air Education and Training Command Field Training Detachment and had the privilege of presenting diplomas to 113-level certified crew chiefs, following seven weeks of training. I had an excellent tour of the various training devices in this truly unique facility and got to see students being trained on the landing gear. Capt. Jeff Searcy, Master Sgt. Lee Woody and Master Sgt. Kevin Mrozinski who did a superb job of explaining their mission of providing C-17 aircraft training provided my tour. The FTD conducts about 25,000 hours of instruction per year and trains about 1,000 students annually.

My last official orientation was with the men and women of the 437th Logistics Support Squadron when I toured

several of their areas last Friday. I toured the process improvement section of Quality Assurance, which has responsibility for maintaining quality operations across the entire spectrum in the 437th Logistics Group. Richard "Hutch" Hutchinson showed me around the section, where I met the NCOIC of Phoenix Star, Tech Sgt. Levi Bennett. Phoenix Star is a product improvement program to increase aircraft equipment service life through supportability, technology, availability and reliability concepts.

I then toured the "cold fusion section," which has the distinction of having one of the coolest names: the Office of Very Cool Stuff. Tech. Sgt. John Bauschatz and Staff Sgt. Danny Campbell, who definitely enjoy what they do, briefed me. Their job is to bring together information from diverse sources and then make it easily available to everyone via the Intranet.

At the Plans and Scheduling section, Master Sgt. Peggy Miller and Nate Haile who assign aircraft to specific missions briefed me.

At the Analysis section, Master Sgt. Steve Dent briefed me on their data tracking procedures and also showed me the GO81 (maintenance tracking software) and the 437 LG local area network. At the Training flight, Tech. Sgt. Brendon Ryan briefed me about the C-17 maintenance instruction that they provide for the Air Force. It is clear to me that members of the 437th LSS do many things behind the scenes that keeps the LG running smoothly. I appreciate all their hard work!

## Action Line

The Commander's Action line is your direct link to me. It's your opportunity to make Charleston Air Force Base a better place to live, work and play.

First give the appropriate base agency a chance to solve the problem, but if you don't get a satisfactory answer, call me at 963-5581 or send an e-mail to [action@charleston.af.mil](mailto:action@charleston.af.mil)

To ensure you receive a response to your concerns, please leave your name and information needed to contact you.



## Commonly used numbers:

Security Forces.....963-3611  
Base Exchange.....552-5000  
Commissary.....963-5695  
Housing Office.....963-3859  
Medical Group Info..963-6700

## Branch out

**I work in Bldg. 246 and when I look out at the trees being planted, I wonder if fruit trees couldn't be planted just as well. Assuming no families wanted the fruit, it seems that people requiring disciplinary action or some other group could be tasked to pick the fruit and deliver it to the dining hall for the benefit of their clients. Not being a farmer, I don't know what grows well in South Carolina, but some surely must go with the climate. Is this a possibility for the future?**

Thanks for your inquiry. The civil engineers checked

with the Clemson University Extension Service master gardener and he informed us that fruit trees do not grow well in this area. The master gardener further explained that fruit trees require a lot of maintenance and when the fruit drops to the ground it will draw many unwanted vermin; consequently, having fruit trees on Charleston AFB is not a wise decision.

## Skeet sponsors

Recently the CAFB Skeet Range was told it could not provide shooting club cards to

see Lines, page 9