

IN THE NEWS

Rodeo

continued from page 1

Field, Fla., and a member of the Air Force's new STARS (Special Tactics and Rescue Specialists) Parachute Demonstration Team, jumped from a C-130 Hercules with the American flag flying. An aerial formation followed with 175 82nd Airborne paratroopers jumping from aircraft. Eight AF Special Operations Command members parachuted from a C-130.

Rodeo competition comprises a variety of events. Maintainers will be judged on their ability to perform thorough preflight and post flight/home inspections; security forces troops will be evaluated on their tactical ability to maneuver and operate in a potentially hostile area; aeromedical evacuation members will be judged on how they handle medical emergencies; aerial porters will be judged on how well they can perform an engine-running onload and offload; and aircrews will be judged on their shortfield landings and air refuel-



Senior Airman Sonny Cohrs

A Charleston AFB C-17 taxis to the runway as a Chinook helicopter flies nearby. A return celebration for AFB's Rodeo teams is Saturday at 2:45 p.m. in the nosedock. All members of the base are invited.

Charleston Rodeo 2000 team chief proud of its members

By Maj. Matt Heuer
437AW Rodeo Team Chief

Over the past several weeks, many of you may have noticed a flurry of activity on our little air patch. This is over and above the "normal" flurry of activity we see here at Charleston

AFB, such as contingency and presidential support, cargo traffic, daily missions, and training.

What I'm referring to are the men and women of the 437Airlift Wing preparing for Rodeo 2000, now being held at Pope AFB, N.C.

I've had the rare privilege and plea-

sure of being the team chief for our Rodeo crew this year and it's been an outstanding experience working with such a professional group of people. For more than two months, 50 highly motivated troops have been working some very long hours getting ready to not just compete in Rodeo 2000, but win!

Being with the team, I've seen this effort and training pay off. Our C-17 aircrew can take a 350,000-pound aircraft and perform an assault landing within inches of the intended touchdown point.

The C-141 maintainers got a 35-year old aircraft up to competition standards in three weeks, when other wings have been at it for two months. Our two aerial port teams on and off load cargo so fast, local TV news cameras almost missed the action!

And our other teams -- security forces, C-17 maintenance, Joint Air-drop Inspection and C-141 aircrew -- have performed equally as brilliant.

Two weeks ago, I went with our security forces and aerial port teams to Ft. Jackson, S.C., to run a confidence course similar to one they're tackling at Rodeo. They ran me ragged and I'm still bruised and sore, but I

can tell you our guys are in great shape.

Most of you have probably seen the excellent series of articles in the Airlift Dispatch over the past few weeks on the team and the competition events they're facing. We know what we're up against and the team is ready. I can't say enough about how proud I am of the effort they've put forth.

I am equally proud and thankful of the effort and support our Rodeo crew has received from all of you. The 50-person team may be the visible part of the 437AW at Rodeo this year, but they never could get there without the rest of Team Charleston's help. From senior leadership support, the work done in back offices and shops, and all the agencies and organizations on base that helped us get to this point, the team and I thank you.

To those who provided money and support for our fund-raising efforts, the team and I thank you. And to all the families of those putting in long hours getting ready for Rodeo 2000, the team and I thank you.

We hope to see you at the return celebration Saturday.



Staff Sergeant Lisa M. Zunzanyika

Senior Airman John Taylor of the 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron lowers a maintenance platform in preparation of a pre-flight inspection.

Reserve 707th Airlift Squadron hosts "The Last Bag Drag"

Staff Sgt. Raymond Padgett
315 AW Public Affairs

More than 200 707th Airlift Squadron members and alumni crowded the C-17 nose dock May 7, to commemorate the deactivation of the last Air Force Reserve Command C-141 Starlifter squadron at Charleston Air Force Base.

"The official deactivation date is July 1, but we wanted to have a ceremony before too many of the unit members left for other assignments," said Master Sgt. Lucia Greer, a flight engineer with the 707th and the event coordinator.

The Squadron was activated on Oct. 1, 1972, as part of the expansion of the Associate Reserve Program. During its 28-year history, the 707th AS

has been tasked to support critical airlift operations to all areas of the world.

"They've had great people that have done an outstanding job through the years," said retired Chief Master Sgt. Richard Fuller, former flight engineer superintendent for the 707th. "The sendoff was a great tribute to a great squadron."

The squadron has been awarded two Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards, the Grover Loening Trophy Award, and the Air Force Association Outstanding Aircrew Award.

They currently holds the best safety record for squadron units currently flying the C141 in terms of years -28 and number of mishap free flying hours - 110,000.

Operations supported by 707th Reservists

started with Operation Nickel Grass in support of the 1973 Israeli War all the way through March of this year when they flew an Operation Joint Guardian mission to Skopje in support of the crisis in Kosovo while simultaneously supporting Operation Southern Watch.

The last bag drag weekend began with a golf tournament followed by dinner May 5, and included a gala at the Charleston Club on May 6, before ending with the deactivation ceremony May 7.

"It's a sad day, but at the same time the 707th can be proud of the tremendous legacy that they leave behind," said retired Maj. General Robert Stevens, former commander of the 707th and 315th Airlift Wing.

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