

COMMENTARY

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AIRLIFT
Dispatch

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The deadline for submitting stories for space-available publication is noon Friday, preceding the desired publication date. The *Airlift Dispatch* reserves the right to edit all copy submitted for publication.

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Address/Numbers

Editorial content is prepared by the 437th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 1600, Rm. 223.

Phone: (843) 963-5608

Fax: (843) 963-5604.

Mail to: 437 AW PAI
102 East Hill Blvd.
Charleston AFB, SC 29404-5154
or send to:
dispatch@charleston.af.mil

Editorial Staff

437 AW Commander
Col. Vern M. "Rusty"
Findley II

Chief, Public Affairs
Lt. Col. Edmund Memi

Editor
Senior Airman Jason Smith

Associate editor
Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith

Photo Support
Base Visual Information Center

Airlift/Tanker Association convention offers great insight into mobility

By Col. Rusty Findley
437 AW commander

I want to add my thanks to the 437th Support Group and everyone on base who pitched in to make Charleston look great for the Base Appearance Inspection team. The pride, professionalism and passion that people have here is legendary! Among all the many wings in the command, we finished fourth in the competition and received \$50,000 to put back into the base. We'll roll that money into making some great improvements that will benefit all of our great professionals here at Charleston AFB.

Last week's Phoenix Rally (the Air Mobility Command conference for commanders) was a good three-day discussion to update AMC wing commanders on what is going on in the command. Without getting into a lot of detail, our leadership is very engaged in those issues that concern you. They are working hard to take great care of our folks while making sure the mission gets done. Gen. Charles "Tony" Robertson, commander of U.S. Transportation Command and Air Mobility Command, highlighted the command's key themes: readiness, modernization and people. He also discussed four additional topics. Those areas were safety, departure reliability, force protection, and recruiting and retention. Zeroing in on those topics, he talked about how we are doing in the command and some ways that we could do better. He mentioned a number of things he was going to do to help us out.

It was a busy week with visitors. It is obvious, what we do at Charleston has got the attention of the senior Air Force leadership. Gen. John

Handy, Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force and Air Chief Marshal Anthony Bagnall, Commander-in-Chief Strike Command for the United Kingdom Royal Air Force and about 10 others visited us Tuesday and Wednesday to learn more about the C-17 and the current arrangements we have to train RAF C-17 aircrew and maintenance members.

As part of the DoD Maintenance Symposium held in Charleston, we had a unique opportunity to have about 100 key folks tour our facilities and learn more about Team Charleston on Wednesday. We also had base visits this week from Mr. Jimmy Dishner, deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for Installations, and Peter Steffes and Mary Ellen Fraser, both key staffers with the House Armed Services Committee.

I love telling people about this airplane and the people that are a part of this outstanding team. It is so easy to brag about all of you. You would think that it can be a little energy zapping to do this all the time, but I can always get my energy up when I get a chance to talk about our folks, this base and the mission that we have.

The 32nd annual Airlift/Tanker Association convention and symposium in Anaheim, Calif., Thursday through Sunday, will offer a great opportunity for those who get to go. The A/TA organization has really grown over the years. I am very proud of the way they conduct their convention, because the seminars, briefings and the level of visitors that attend are all top-notch and truly first class. This year we will have three key leaders making presentations: Gen. Eric Shinseki, Army Chief of Staff; Gen. Ralph Eberhart, com-

mander of U.S. Space Command; and Gen. Robertson.

The convention offers an outstanding opportunity to receive some good insight on a number of key issues and programs, everything from the Mobility Requirements Study to a rescue of a cancer patient in Antarctica. The seminars during the day present a wealth of knowledge. The education that goes on is truly phenomenal. I am glad we get to take a good sampling of our folks to the convention. I'm sure they will have a lot of good things to say about the convention. I know I will.

Brig. Gen. Jerry Black, 315th Airlift Wing commander, and Col. Karl Young, 437th Airlift Wing vice commander, will represent us in the annual Veterans Day parade on Sunday, 2 p.m., in downtown Charleston. The 315 AW will have a large formation march in the parade as well as a float. Col. Young will be riding in a HUMVEE, courtesy of the 437th Security Forces Squadron. The base honor guard and 1st Combat Camera Squadron will also participate.

The monthly enlisted promotion ceremony on Tuesday in the club was a great thrill for me. I always enjoy the opportunity to congratulate our superb airmen for their significant accomplishments. We rotate the responsibility for organizing the ceremony with each of the groups. For this month's ceremony, we thank Master Sgt. Crystal King, 437th Contracting Squadron first sergeant, for organizing a truly memorable ceremony. Thanks to our two emcees: Senior Master Sgt. Bruce Blodgett and Tech. Sgt. Brenden Ryan.

The Hispanic Heritage Fiesta will be held this evening in the Charleston Club. Everyone is invited to attend. There will be a wide variety of entertainment followed by a dance afterward. It is a chance to finish out our month-long celebration of Hispanic heritage. Unfortunately, I won't be able to attend because of the A/TA convention, but I'll be with them in spirit.

Team Charleston continues to lead the way in the Combined Federal Campaign. We are getting very close to achieving our goal. Overall, the base has contributed more than \$205,000 to this year's CFC, which is approximately \$13,000 ahead of what we received last year after week 4. Thus far, we are the leading contributing organization in the campaign and we have one more week to lead the way for the Charleston community.

As the campaign winds down, now is the time to keep the momentum going so that we can make our final goal. Let's make sure everyone has an opportunity to contribute. CFC is your chance to make a difference. CFC is also a great opportunity for us to give something back to those in need. If you haven't done so already, please do what you can to support this year's campaign. For those squadrons struggling to meet their goal, I encourage them to consider holding a fundraising event to put them over the top.

I would like to pass along my thanks to several CFC key workers and project officers who have already distinguished themselves in the campaign so far. A special thanks to Tech. Sgt. Marty Baugher, 437th Medical Group, and Capt. Joy Baity, 437th Logistics Group, for doing such a fantastic job coordinating the CFC effort in their respective organizations. The 437 MDG achieved 110 percent of its goal halfway through the campaign, and our largest group, the 437 LG, has already achieved 99 percent of their goal after week 4. I'd also like to thank our leading squadron and agency achievers for doing such a tremendous job in exceeding their assigned campaign goals so energetically. Please keep up the good work in this campaign.

I look forward to recognizing the wing's best of the best at the Quarterly Awards breakfast at the Charleston Club on Nov. 8 at 7:30 a.m. Hope to see you there as we honor our top folks in the premier airlift wing on the face of the planet!

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

