

DISPATCH



AIRLIFT

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Vol. 39, No. 41

437th Airlift Wing, Charleston AFB, SC

Friday, October 20, 2000



Photos by Senior Airman Jason Smith

(Above) A simulated ground target explodes during the A-10 demonstration of the airfield seizure. The A-10s were from the 23rd Fighter Squadron, Pope AFB, N.C.

(Right) A UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter departs after picking up a 105 mm Howitzer from members of the Army's "Bravo" Battery, 1st Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C., during Air Expo 2000.



Air Expo 2000 takes over CAFB flightline

Capt. Tracy Velino
437 AW Public Affairs

The hard work of hundreds of Team Charleston members and supporters resulted in a successful Air Expo 2000 on the flightline Saturday.

An estimated 60,000 to 70,000 spectators from across South Carolina and as far away as North Carolina, Georgia, Florida and Tennessee watched aircraft demonstrations, static displays and the highlight, an airfield seizure demonstration.

Some visitors said they come every year, but many said they were here for the first time.

"I really liked it. I haven't been here in four years, but I'll definitely try to come again next year," said Mark Hughes, an airshow attendee from Summerville, S.C.

Air expo director and 15th Airlift Squadron aircraft commander, Maj. Petra Sharrett, congratulated the expo committee for what she called an awesome airshow.

"The show itself was phenomenal, including all the new things this year such as the C-17 seven-ship formation, airfield seizure, pyrotechnics, family area with Step-ning Stones to Aviation, aircraft simulators,

Andy the Robot, mascots, info booths, mentor booth and so on. What a great job!"

The featured event of the show was the airfield seizure demonstration, in which Army and Air Force units showed how the military trains to seize an enemy airfield in a combat situation.

Capt. Steve Erickson, 437th Airlift Wing plans officer, air expo drop zone control officer and airfield seizure planner, said he spoke afterward with artillery personnel from the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C., who rode in on

the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters delivering 105 mm Howitzers. "They said it was amazing to see how the crowd surged forward when they arrived, to see what was going on." Erickson said he also saw the crowd surge from his vantage point at the drop zone in the middle of the airfield.

For one young visitor, one of the more memorable events took place inside the C-17 static display. To surprise Steve Hayward, Jr., from Mount Pleasant, S.C., for his 13th birthday, his parents made arrangements to have a cake waiting for him inside the cargo hold of a C-17.

"I was very surprised," said Hayward. "I came on the plane, and everyone yelled 'surprise,' and I started looking around to see what was going on."

Also surprised at the airshow was Daniel Milligan, 11, from Mount Pleasant. When pyrotechnics exploded for the first time at the airshow, Milligan jumped. "That scared me," he said.

The next air expo is tentatively scheduled to feature the Navy's Blue Angels demonstration team in May. The final date and featured performers will be announced in December.



A Charleston C-17 lands and prepares to offload equipment during the airfield seizure portion of Air Expo 2000.