

COMMENTARY

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AIRLIFT
Dispatch

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Charleston maintainers to compete for Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award

By Col. Karl Young
437 AW vice commander

Special congratulations to the 437th Services Squadron who recently received the results of a customer satisfaction survey conducted last December.

Based on the results of that survey, our services squadron was ranked as the best in customer service in the Air Force. We expect to hear the official results later this month. As many of you already know, our Charleston Club was also rated as the best in the Air Force.

I was honored to present the August Diamond Sharp awards to our top enlisted performers who went above and beyond. Receiving top honors were: Staff Sgt.

David Underwood, 1st Combat Camera Squadron; Senior Airman Dontae Morton, 437th Security Forces Squadron; Senior Airman David Patterson, 437th Civil Engineer Squadron; and Senior Airman Diamond Cookson, 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron.

It may only be a distant memory for some, but the 437th Communications Squadron proved that the entire delivery system of base electronic mail could be changed and upgraded in only a 24-hour period instead of the planned 72-hour outage. It took a lot of hard work by network administrators and many of the folks in the communications squadron to get it back on-line with minimal disruptions to service. See the story on page 2 to read about those outstanding efforts.

A special thanks to the members of the 437th Information Systems Flight who played a key role in bringing the new network system online: Master Sgt. Doug Wagman, Master Sgt. Rich Lytton, Tech. Sgt. Russell Barnes, Staff Sgt. Sally Gibbs, Staff Sgt. Shawn Derrick, Staff Sgt. Will Brown, Staff Sgt. Matthew Bolton, Staff Sgt. Bryan Letterly, Staff Sgt. Joseph Potier, Staff Sgt.

Otis Fagins, Senior Airman Jason Abernathy, Senior Airman Nate Rainey, Senior Airman Wendy Grimsley, Senior Airman Patrick Bauer, Airman 1st Class Richard Sobolewski and Airman 1st Class Casey Crowe.

Parents of the local schools near Charleston AFB met last Tuesday to discuss a number of ways to better meet the educational needs of their children. We had an excellent turnout for the first meeting and hope to see even more at the next meeting, to be held monthly. The first committee meeting, chaired by Col. Dennis Kaan, 437th Support Group commander, determined the structure for future meetings and agreed to address broad-based issues and concerns. Please watch the *Airlift Dispatch* for a complete listing of the school officials who are participating in this unique initiative.

Closely related to this effort to enhance our dialogue with the local schools and educate them about the opportunities that the Air Force offers, we have designed a series of special two-hour tours geared to the interests of the principals and administrators from the Berkeley, Dorchester and Charleston county school districts. We plan to host a Berkley and Dorchester County Educator's Day Sept. 20.

The goal is to give our recruiters a chance to highlight the opportunities that exist in the Air Force and to encourage the schools to bring their students out to the base on future field trips.

The 437th Operations and 437th Logistics groups have been in a heavy surge mode since Aug. 13. We've been supporting a host of Air Expeditionary Force rotations and numerous Air Force requirements. We expect the surge to end around Thursday.

Our maintainers pulled some 12-hour shifts and pulled off some near miracles to get the tails flying, but it's all in a day's

work for the maintainers, vehicle ops folks, supply and contracting. Our aircrews have worked hard too, as they have been tasked to nearly 120 percent of our normal day-to-day commitment rate.

We have surged to as high as 140 to 160 percent of the normal aircraft tasking level by the Tanker Airlift Control Center at Scott AFB, Ill. I appreciate all the hard work everyone has been doing to meet our worldwide commitments.

As the fiscal year winds down, the 437th Contracting and 437th Comptroller squadrons are working hard to prepare to spend any fall-out funds that we may receive. There is a tremendous amount of work going on around the base to make sure the end of the year is a success.

We hosted members of the Logistics Management Institute, a non-profit "think tank" agency that focuses on logistics issues. The visitors are a virtual "who's, who" from the Department of Defense and civilian logistics community. We're fortunate that they chose Charleston AFB this year to host their trustees for their annual meeting. We gave them a flight on a C-17 Thursday as well as allowed them to tour a number of our facilities. A special thanks to the project officers: Lt. Col. Jerry Bateman, Lt. Col. Woody Woodson, Capt. John Lamontagne, Capt. Paul Ribeiro and 1st Lt. Chris Hobbs.

We'll have a team going to Washington, D.C. next week to compete in the Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award for their improvements to the maintenance debrief system. We are also slated to receive the 2000 Federal Acquisition Award Tuesday, which recognized the contracting squadron for its work as acquisition experts in government. The contracting squadron showed how performance-based service contracting, during the Hunley Park Military Family Housing renovation

project, can save significant amounts of time and money, even when the winner of the contract isn't the lowest bidder.

Col. Rusty Findley, 437th Airlift Wing commander, will attend those events and will bring back those awards for the wing. Of course, we'll be competing against 19 teams from all the Air Force major commands for the CSAF Team Excellence award, but I'm confident that after seeing the team briefing last week that we'll win once again.

Team excellence members include Senior Master Sgt. Timothy Stament (team leader), Maj. Mark Camerer, Capt. Jake Verhoef, 2nd Lt. Catherine Barker, Richard Hutchinson, Staff Sgt. Monica Herring, Staff Sgt. Jon Taylor, and Airman 1st Class Mike White. Thanks to all the team members for their hard work.

Today, we're hosting our honorary commanders for a day, to learn more about the support group. They will tour the base and many will also participate in a golf game this afternoon, jointly sponsored by the Airlift Tanker Association and the support group.

The Honorary Commander Program, established in February, is to foster a supportive relationship between the base and the community, increase military involvement in civic endeavors and organizations and make the members of our local communities part of our "Team Charleston" family. The program matches "honorary commanders (civic leaders)" with squadron and group commanders where they can participate in unit events, such as commander's calls, picnics, and so on.

I'll conclude my comments by thanking everyone for being safe during this past holiday weekend. Although 101 Critical Days has ended, please keep your guard up, as the potential for accidents is always present, especially when the weather is bad.