

Enlisted Dining Out celebrates 'GI Person of the Century'

By Tech. Sgt. Murphy
437 AW Public Affairs

With the rap of the gavel, the 437th Airlift Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant and president of the mess Harvey Hampton brought the mess to order at the annual Enlisted Dining Out celebrating the "GI Person of the Century" at the Charleston Club Saturday.

A crowd of more than 360 witnessed a flag ceremony by the Charleston First Six and Base Honor Guard, a grog ceremony that may end up as one of the best ever at Charleston AFB and inspiring words from the guest speaker for the night, Chief Master Sgt. Samuel Whalum, Jr., commandant of the Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy at Gunter Annex, Ala.

The festivities kicked off with a solemn ceremony highlighting the eight previous flags that have flown over the United States. Each one entered the room, carried by an airman from a different base organization, with a brief history of the flag being read by Staff Sgt. Daniel Torgerson, loadmaster, 15th Airlift Squadron and Staff Sgt. Nancy Deacon, NCOIC flight records,

437th Operation Support Squadron. This took place while patriotic music played softly in the background.

"I thought it was awesome," said Deacon. "I was very impressed with the professionalism of the airmen."

The flags Air Force members know today, the stars and stripes and the Air Force Flag, were carried into the room by the Base Honor Guard as everyone came to their feet. After a history and a rendition of the National Anthem by Lee's Charleston Stars Quartet, the flags were put in their place of honor.

The ceremonial sheathing of the sword was accomplished by the president and the sergeant at arms, Master Sgt. Dave Corrigan, 437th Aerial Port Squadron, signifying time to pause and enjoy the fellowship of the evening. Following the sword was the ceremonial toasts to all the military service leaders.

The lights were dimmed and Senior Airman Ashok Kori, honor guard member, marched quietly to the POW/MIA table at the front of the stoic crowd. A display was set up to pay tribute to all service members whose sacrifices over the years allowed the freedom we know to continue.

Kori's crisp movements and obvious feeling for the ceremony gave the sense that those lost were there watching with approval.

"I thought it had a tremendous tone of tradition and patriotism," said Master Sgt. Tracy Brewster, of the Enlisted Dining Out Committee. "Everyone involved provided awesome support."

With the seriousness of the night over, the fun began. The president working with Mister Vice, Senior Master Sgt. Michael Michaud, 437th Aerial Port Squadron and Madam Vice, Staff Sgt. Stacey Brown, 437 AW staff, the rules of the mess and the grog were told to all.

The grog bowl ceremony was in keeping with the celebration of the "GI Person of the Century." Every member adding their special touch to the grog wore uniforms dating from World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm.

Mister and Madam Vice were directed by the president to show the mess the proper grog bowl procedures, to the delight of the crowd. The President, Chief Master Sgt. Jim Minor, 315 AW, Command Chief Master Sergeant and the oldest and youngest

members of the mess, followed close behind.

The evening continued with many points of order and toasts that were either allowed or the person themselves were sent to the grog bowl by the president.

All the fun and merriment led right into the dinner hour. A buffet was served by the club staff to those tables lucky enough to be chosen by table bingo or making the most noise. Those doing neither had to wait until the others had gone.

After returning, the mess was entertained by the guest speaker for the evening, Whalum. He spoke of the importance of the family in the life of the military mem-

ber and the strength of the United States Air Force in the world. He finished it off speaking about our nation, the greatest on the face of the planet and how "if we build it strong, it will last."

Col. Rusty Findley, 437 AW commander, was called to the microphone and gave the mess some fitting words from General Colin Powell.

He also passed on to the mess the importance the enlisted person to the Air Force. Col. Mike Stampley, 315 AW vice commander, agreed with Findley and thanked everyone for a great evening.

With a rap of the gavel twice on the podium, the president closed the mess.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Corey Clements

Chief Master Sgt. Samuel Whalum, Jr., guest speaker, accepts a check for the Enlisted Heritage Hall.