

## COMMENTARY

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AIRLIFT  
Dispatch

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## Lots of visitors to see the premier airlift wing

By Col. Rusty Findley  
437 AW commander

This was an extremely busy week for us as we had a number of senior military officers visit us. The many visits went extremely well. This is a reflection of the careful planning by our project officers and top-notch Protocol staff. Thanks for the great effort.

Lt. Gen. (select) and Mrs. John Hopper Jr. were very pleased with their base visit on Sunday and Monday. They were very impressed with the pride, professionalism and passion of the folks who they had contact with. Hopper commented to me about how great it was to get a chance to talk with the airmen at the First Term Airmen's Center and the Airman Leadership School. Thanks for being professionals at what you do—you clearly impressed the 21st Air Force commander! It was clear that everyone's passion about their jobs was abundant for all to see firsthand.

We were fortunate to have the Air Force and Air Mobility Command's top civil engineers: Maj. Gen. Earnest Robbins and Brig. Gen. Dean Fox visit us Tuesday and Wednesday. General Robbins was the guest speaker at the Charleston chapter of the American Society of Military Engineers.

The civil engineer commander visits are very important because we're talking to them about our vision for not just tomorrow, but for the long term when it comes to facility and infrastructure improvements for Charleston Air Force Base. Our base comprehensive plan outlines our plan for developing the base. Our community planner, Bill Werrell and engineering flight chief Jay Hundley, have really thought this through. We're ready to make it happen as we get the funding in the upcoming years.

Also visiting Wednesday through Saturday is Lt. Gen. William Begert, assistant vice chief of staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, and defense

attache's from 19 countries. The group is touring the base, to include viewing a cargo loading demonstration and a C-17 simulator ride. This is another great chance to show our allies the premier airlift wing on the face of the planet.

Division Gen. Mircea Chelaru, chief of the Romanian Defense General Staff, and members of his staff visited us for a few hours on Thursday. They visited the Airman Leadership School, the 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron enlisted dormitory, Hunley Park housing area and our Family Support Center. They left the base impressed!

Thanks to Karen Harrell at the Wrenwoods Golf Course for organizing an outstanding 32nd Annual Invitational Golf Tournament Sept. 22 through Sunday. I didn't get a chance to play, but would have liked to. I talked to a number of folks who did play, and even though Saturday's play was washed out because of heavy rains, it still came together marvelously. A lot of participants commented they had a great time. The money raised as part of this event will benefit the youth center.

I had a great chance to thank a segment of our retirees as a guest speaker for the The Retired Officers Association general membership meeting last week. It was a great chance to sit down and chat with them about our Air Force and Team Charleston. I received two compliments from them about the professional job that our folks are doing in the passenger services terminal to handle space available travel requests from our retirees. Keep up the good work!

On Tuesday, we launched an 11-ship formation of C-17s that practiced aerial refueling and then each aircraft airdropped 100 paratroopers from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division at a drop zone at Fort Bragg, N.C. after on-loading them at Pope AFB, N.C. It was a

huge team effort to launch 11 aircraft with no tail swaps and that is a great testament to the hard work by our maintainers. The 11-ship flew across our airfield as a salute to our maintainers who rose to the challenge once again.

On the 437th Operations Group side, Col. Bob Allardice was the mission commander for the 11-ship. This training is part of a larger effort to put a greater "tactical" focus on our wing training as they had a chance to practice multi-element formation and a low-level flight route, avoiding simulated enemy threats. There will be many more of these large formations in the future.

Our partners in the 315th Airlift Wing supplied a number of aircrews and worked side by side with our maintenance folks. A special thanks to the deputy mission commander Lt. Col. Mike Thayne, 14th Airlift Squadron, and the flight leader Maj. Jeff Myers for all their hard work. All of the advanced planning was done by our current operations staff, led by Bill Caldwell. A special kudos to the behind-the-scenes tactics planners Maj. Scott Tabor and Staff Sgt. Dean Irwin for another excellent training mission.

Kudos to Rose Alexander, public affairs, for her efforts to bring out high school principals and guidance counselors from Berkeley, Dorchester and Charleston counties for two separate tours of the base. The feedback from our recruiters is this program has opened some doors at several high schools that had not been previously opened to recruiters. A special thanks to the airmen in the Test, Measurement and Diagnostics Equipment flight in the 437th Maintenance Squadron, the aircrews at the C-17 static displays, the airmen in the Network Control Center and Diana Roebuck from the Education Office for their out-

standing support of this important initiative. We'll continue to keep bringing these groups out to the base to help our local recruiters as well as educate school leaders about our mission.

The chief's group will host a fish fry with all the fixings today from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the base picnic grounds. It is open to anyone and tickets are only \$5. You can get your ticket from any chief master sergeant on the base. The proceeds will pay for many of the awards presented to our outstanding enlisted members. Hope to see you there.

I am going to head out on the road on Sunday night and fly on a European Strategic Intra-theater Deployment C-17 mission to Ramstein AB, Germany, for a quick trip. I'll be back on Tuesday night, but it will give me a chance to learn more about our folks in action overseas.

The monthly enlisted promotion ceremony under Chief Master Harvey Hampton leadership has been a great way to recognize our people at the wing level. It is a great forum to bring everyone together and congratulate them on their big day. If you were not at the ceremony today, then please take a moment to congratulate our new promotees!

Come out and watch the colonels play the enlisted Top 3 at softball on Wednesday. Also, that afternoon we'll have a general Airlift Tanker Association membership meeting to talk about the upcoming convention.

The Combined Federal Campaign kicks off Monday. Let's work together so that we have a successful campaign like last year. Capt. Chuck Neseimer is our CFC project officer for the base and he's got our key workers charged up and ready to go. They will be contacting everyone shortly. See the article on page 3 for more details.

Once again, it's a great feeling being a part of a team that can truly call itself "the premier airlift wing on the face of the planet."

