



# News Release

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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### **CHARLESTON AFB'S 14<sup>TH</sup> AIRLIFT SQUADRON BEST IN COMMAND**

**CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C.** – The 14<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron here won Air Mobility Command's General Joseph Smith Trophy for best airlift squadron for the second time in a row.

"Simply the day-in, day-out, getting the mission done is what won this award," said Lt. Col. William Changose, 14 AS commander.

Although named the best in AMC, Changose is quick to recognize the other squadrons on base.

"All three of the flying squadrons are really outstanding," said Changose. "But the 14 AS was given the opportunity to do a few special things that any of the sister squadrons could have done."

According to the package, the 14 AS was a vital participant in Operations Infinite Justice, Enduring Freedom, Northern and Southern Watch, Shula Pen, Valiant Return, Night Hawk, Ulchi Focus Lens, Joint Forge and others.

Changose said they participated in several big missions such as when they landed the Marines on the Rhino landing zone in Afghanistan on a tiny dirt runway.

"We also delivered more than 42-million pounds of cargo to theatre commander-in-chiefs," Changose said.

Some 14 AS members credit the squadron's team concept as a key player in winning the award.

"We don't have 10 percent of the people doing 90 percent of the work," said Lt. Col. Steve Groenheim, 14 AS director of operations. "Everyone is giving their very best. You can't win the award without that.

"We have our share of individual winners, and we're proud of that," he continued. "But this one is particularly sweet because we're not recognizing the most valuable player, everyone is the valuable player. We can't have mission success if you don't have that."

Master Sgt. Jim Mueller, 14 AS chief loadmaster, echoed Groenheim's sentiment.

"The troops give 110 percent every time," Mueller said. "That's how we get the mission done."

To continue the idea of the team spirit as the promoting factor in this award, one pilot shared his views.

"Our squadron really works together," said Capt. Aaron Pultz, 14 AS executive officer. "Everyone tries to go above and beyond with every mission. A lot of our personnel have been really motivated since 9/11."

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Mission success is critical in winning this award. The 14 AS, according to the award package, has unparalleled mission involvement and achievements.

“We have a good balance of mission execution, cohesion as a squadron, care for the troops and family, and strong tactical mindset,” Groenheim said. “We take all that, and we blend it and assess some risk management to that. That’s how we ensure mission success.”

According to the package, the 14 AS morale and esprit de corps continues to soar through its quarterly award program, weekly fitness program and family retention program. The squadron’s re-enlistment rate is at 95 percent, and the only enlisted member to separate is now in the Reserve Officer Training Corps to be a future Air Force leader.

“Since 9/11, it’s been a very ‘go attitude,’ very positive,” said Staff Sgt. Skip Hurley, 14 AS loadmaster. “Everyone does their job in a positive, safe and fast manner.”

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