



News Release

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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Team Charleston's 16th Airlift Squadron Deploys

CHARLESTON AFB, S.C. – Members of the 16th Airlift Squadron deploys July 8 to Rhein Main Air Base, Germany for 90 days.

The 16 AS will replace personnel from the 8th Airlift Squadron, McChord AFB, Wash., who have been running the stage operations at Rhein Main AB since April 15. The last four months have been particularly busy for the 16 AS while numerous preparations for deployment were made.

“There are a bunch of things you have to do to stay current in the C-17 and we’ve had to get everyone’s training for the quarter done before heading overseas,” said Maj. James Shoemaker, assistant to the 16 AS commander.

Major Shoemaker said Boeing employees on base worked with the 16 AS to help crews finish simulators early for this quarter. Completing all of their training early was important for the crews because training equipment, such as simulators, are not available overseas.

“A lot of behind the scenes work also takes place in preparation for a deployment like this,” Lt. Col. Gary Goldstone, 16 AS commander, said. “The little things like office supplies and equipment that don’t seem essential have to be considered.”

Colonel Goldstone said 16 AS personnel will be doing any and every sort of job related to the C-17 mission while deployed in Germany.

“Our focus is on the mission,” Colonel Goldstone said. “Frankfurt is the center of gravity for anything that’s happening regarding C-17 airlift right now.”

Deployed members of Team Charleston will have plenty of work waiting for them in Germany and Colonel Goldstone says he does not see the operations tempo slowing down any time soon.

“We’re always busy and there’s never enough airlift,” Colonel Goldstone said.

While this is a planned, 90 day full-unit deployment, only a handful of the 16 AS will be deployed for the entire 90 days.

“My director of operations, my first sergeant and I will be there for the full 90 days,” Colonel Goldstone said. “Everyone else will rotate in and out on a 45 day schedule.”

As with all deployments, many families can find themselves separated for long periods of time.

These long periods of separation can be a difficult and stressful time for families. The Family Support Center offers many programs geared towards making deployments easier on families, including a support group, childcare, automobile services, e-mail and a video phone.

“Communication before, during and after a deployment is extremely important,” said Master Sgt. Ken Gilmore, family readiness NCO. “Sometimes just a two minute phone call can mean the world and set someone’s mind at ease.”

Colonel Goldstone urges families of the 16 AS to stay engaged with what their spouses are doing and also the programs offered by the Family Support Center.

Spouses and families should also stay connected with the squadron, Colonel Goldstone said.

Colonel Goldstone said the 16 AS has set up a “buddy” squadron relationship with the 17th Airlift Squadron.

“Two 16 AS personnel are staying behind with the 17 AS to take care of training, scheduling and family issues or anything else that might come up while we’re deployed,” Colonel Goldstone said.

The 16 AS is projected to return around October 15. Their replacements are not yet known.

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(Media interested in attending should plan to arrive at the Dorchester Gate Tuesday, June 17, at 9:25 a.m., for the ceremony. Media **MUST CONTACT 2nd Lt. Kristy Miller at 963-5537 or Staff Sgt. Melanie Streeter at 963-5589 to express intent to attend or for more information.)**