

## Colonel Brooks Bash-Patriots Point Speech

- Good evening ladies and gentlemen
- Mayor Hallman
- Distinguished guests,
- Fellow members of the Armed Services, and all those serving our country and protecting our freedom.

The President of the United States and Congress have designated Sept 11 as Patriots Day. It is appropriate that we come together today, commemorating Patriots Day at historical Patriots Point, and other venues around our great Nation to remember the attacks that changed our world, one year ago today. We remember innocent lives lost. We also remember the valiant efforts of heroes both during and after these horrible acts of terror.

Today, we honor their memory, and rededicate ourselves to the cause of freedom and justice for which so many have sacrificed so much. Our world has changed forever. And as we commemorate this historic day, we are starkly reminded of how much our world has changed as we read about new threats to our Nation.

**Remembering that morning:** At 0846, Sept 11, 2001, terrorists attacked the United States forever changing our lives. The media coverage forever burned in our memory.

In the chaotic moments following the attacks, Air Force jets streaked toward NYC and Washington, DC, prepared to do the unthinkable--shoot down a civilian airliner, if necessary.

The carnage might have been even worse, if not for the courageous acts of passengers aboard Flight 93. Todd Beamer and his fellow passengers summoned the courage to challenge the terrorists who'd commandeered their plane. Their final words before they took on the terrorists have become a rallying cry for all of us: "Let's roll!" Today, we have a C-17 here at Charleston AFB which has been dedicated to their memory with the "Let's Roll" moniker.

Flight 93 slammed into a Pennsylvania field instead of the terrorists' intended target. That target, we now believe, was the White House.

**Col Bash's Account:** This was my location on Sept 11, in the White House situation room working in the National Security Council. Indeed, I was with Dr Condoleezza Rice at the moments she was notified of each of World Trade center attacks...here I viewed firsthand our Nation's response...witnessed the awesome capabilities of our Armed Forces and especially Charleston C-17s...

**The Aftermath:** In a speech to the nation just after the attacks, President Bush said, "Adversity introduces us to ourselves. This is true of a nation as well."

Over the past 12 months, the world was introduced to an American resolve that is stronger than any physical structure. This resolve has risen from the ashes of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon making Americans more determined than ever to wipe terrorism from the face of the earth.

This determination is why terrorism will never succeed. American determination and resolve are seen everywhere. From stirring renditions of "God Bless America" to flags displayed on cars, on homes and in yards, Americans are proudly professing their support of the war effort at home and abroad.

There is a newfound respect for true heroism -- the kind shown by the police and firefighters who risk their lives to save others, and the kind shown by the men and women of our armed forces who go in harm's way to defend our freedoms.

Like the stars and stripes waving overhead, America's patriotism and pride is flying high. Nowhere was this more evident than here at Charleston, as the community rallied behind the military men and women. All at once, the entire country transitioned from peacetime advocates of democracy to wartime defenders of freedom.

**Charleston's Role/Response then:** The events of Sept. 11 transformed the Air Force as well. In fact, the men and women of Charleston AFB were immediately called to action with several C-17s

diverting to New York City with relief supplies. Shortly thereafter, our crews began pre-positioning the greatest war machine on earth. Our air bridge transported troops, supplies, and weapons to overseas locations.

As much of our Military continued preparations for war, Charleston crews and support personnel forward deployed for one of the most visible displays of humanitarian relief ever seen. While coalition bombers and fighters readied themselves to attack terrorist strongholds, C-17s were lifting off from Ramstein Air Base, Germany filled with Humanitarian Daily Rations, food, to feed starving Afghani refugees. The mission, the first of its kind, delivered thousands of lifesaving meals with the crew flying almost 22 hours non-stop, the longest flight in C-17 history. All told, Charleston crews flew hundreds of humanitarian missions, delivering some 2.5 million humanitarian daily rations to the starving people of Afghanistan.

In addition to these missions, Charleston airmen began airland operations into Afghanistan. C-17s flew deep into Afghanistan landing at night, on Night Vision Goggles, on a patch of dirt in the middle of the desert. This airstrip, dubbed Rhino Assault Landing Zone, was once only accessible by the smallest airlift aircraft. Charleston crews proved no obstacle was too high in successfully completing the deepest insertion of Marine forces in combat history, to Rhino field.

This conflict has ushered in an entire new era of warfare. Exclusive night operations including strategic and tactical airlift to semi-prepared short field airstrips, hi-altitude airdrops, and combat Night Vision Goggle landings to hostile airfields. Proud Charleston aircrews pioneered and developed safe operating procedures for these dangerous operations. They are nothing short of the best combat airlifters in the world today.

Many of you have seen countless C-17s flying around Charleston and around the globe. These airplanes only get airborne because of the tireless efforts of many unsung heroes. We salute these patriots, doing important work behind the scenes: maintenance crews, refuelers; civil engineers, communications; cooks and medical people--doing incredible work in some dusty, dirty and isolated

locations. They made it look easy, but in reality, it's a tough, dangerous business.

Members of the Guard and Reserve are also playing an extraordinary part. When the attacks occurred, many members of Guard and Reserve didn't wait to be called up. They just showed up, ready to work and fight. Thousands of guardsmen and reservists have left their homes, families, and jobs to answer their country's call. Our Guard and Reserve members were ready to sacrifice by leaving their families to travel to Charleston and other military bases around the world. So too, did the civilian business community sacrifice as their Guard and reserve employees reported to serve our Nation.

**Charleston's and the AF's Role/Response now:** And let us not forget the dangers involved in serving our nation. The military has lost 38 individuals since the beginning of this campaign. They have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom, and we mourn their loss, just as we mourn those lost in the attacks of Sept. 11. Shortly after the attacks, President Bush said, "In our grief and in our sadness, I see an opportunity to make the world a better place for generations to come. And we will seize the opportunity."

**Victory over terrorism:** We must never lose sight of the fact that victory over terrorism will take time. Terrorism knows no boundaries. We must continue pursuing terrorist to the ends of the earth, so they can never again threaten the American way of life. The proud men and women of Charleston will continue to valiantly serve to that extent.

**Conclusion:** We will never forget the heroes of Sept. 11. We can only hope our actions will be worthy of their sacrifices. Our armed forces have the heartfelt support of all Americans, and that represents a potent force in our arsenal. President Bush's vow is worth repeating: "We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail." I will ensure Charleston AFB will uphold these words until the battle is won. Thank you, and God Bless America.