AIRLIFT
Dispatch

Vol. 43, No. 2 | 437th Airlift Wing, Charleston AFB, SC | Friday, January 16, 2004

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MISSION POSSIBLE!

Charleston departures	535
Maintenance reliability	90.1%
Cargo moved	2,410 t
Personnel deployed	700
Reservists activated	848

(Jan. 1,2004 - Jan. 14, 2004)

Photo by Senior Airman Tyrona Pearsall

Gone with the C-17

Capt. Brian Heriford, 17th Airlift Squadron pilot, and his 3-year-old son, Austin, spend a few moments together before they say goodbye when the 17 AS deployed to Germany Jan. 8. For the full story, see Page 6.

***Team Charleston:** One family, one mission, one fight!*

Commander's Comments

Col. Wayne Schatz
437 AW Vice Commander

Special thanks to the 250 of you who turned out for last week's New Year's Resolution Run. The **437th Comptroller Squadron** finished strong, picking up the Spirit Trophy in the process.

This week kicked off with a change of command for the 14th Airlift Squadron. We wish outgoing commander, **Lt. Col. Steve Groenheim**, and his family the best of luck as they head to Scott AFB, Ill. At the same time, we welcome **Lt. Col. A.J. McMillan** as Team Charleston's newest squadron commander. As the former chief of wing safety, he and his family are no strangers to our mission and will provide strong leadership for this outstanding squadron.

Also this week, we welcomed **Lt. Gen. William Welser**, 18th Air Force commander, and **Chief Master Sgt. Ken McQuiston**, 18 AF command chief, and showed them the best of Team Charleston. Thank you to our project officers, **Lt. Col. Chuck Ciuzio**, **Maj. Tim Tenne**, **Maj. Julie Boit**, and the entire protocol office for leading the way in making this visit seamless and productive. Read next week's *Airlift Dispatch* for the general's thoughts during his visit.

Today we formally say farewell to **Col. Karl Young**, former 437th Airlift Wing vice commander, as he retires in an 11 a.m. ceremony at the Charleston Club. All the best, Colonel Young, in your future endeavors, and thank you for your selfless service.

As we say goodbye to former leaders, we congratulate some of Air Mobility Command's brightest rising stars. AMC's Military Deception NCO of the Year is **Tech. Sgt. Terry Topouzoglou**, 437th Operations Support Squadron. **1st Lt. Jennifer Andrews** is AMC's Outstanding Public Affairs Company Grade Officer for 2003.

In addition, our **Public Affairs** office received the Public Affairs Director's Special Achievement Award for a Crisis Situation for their work along with the 315th Airlift Wing Public Affairs office, in the repatriation of families from Turkey prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Finally, the **Special Operations Division of the 437th Operations Group** took honors in the small unit category of the 2003 Communications-Electronics Maintenance Effectiveness Awards. Congratulations all around!

Monday we celebrate the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday with a commemorative unity walk and worship service. We all share in Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream for a society in which people are treated equally. I encourage one and all to come celebrate his legacy. The march begins at 10 a.m. at the Charleston Club and proceeds to the base chapel where a special service is planned.

Going into a holiday weekend is also the perfect time for us to re-emphasize our safety practices at work and home. Today is a designated safety day; each of your units should be devoting half a day to discuss and act on safety issues. To underline the importance of this safety day, and to afford ample opportunity for flightline units to meet to discuss safety, we will not fly local missions today and tomorrow.

Photo by 2nd Lt. Bryan Lewis

Col. Wayne Schatz, 437th Airlift Wing vice commander, presents the Spirit Trophy to the 437th Comptroller Squadron at the Fun Run Jan. 9.

Continue to focus on the basics of doing a job, and practice good Operational Risk Management. Keep your mind clear and your eyes open on the job; follow proper procedures and use proper checklists and safety equipment. No matter how much pressure you're under to get the job done, don't rush yourself to the point you take shortcuts or miss things that cause people to get hurt or equipment to be damaged.

Nothing we're doing now, even with the Global War on Terrorism, is so important that we should sacrifice safety. During the Vietnam War and in Operation Enduring Freedom, we lost more mobility aircraft to safety mishaps than we did to hostile action. Our most important resource is our people, and by staying focused on safety we protect our people. No mission in peacetime is worth sacrificing your life for your country. I'd much rather take a departure delay with people doing things by the book than have people hurt themselves by cutting corners on safety.

Safety concerns affect our private lives, too, and principles of ORM apply. Before you go on that cross-country trip, get plenty of rest. Plan your route to avoid dangerous weather. Use your seatbelts when in a vehicle, and helmet and safety equipment if you ride a motorcycle. Make smart choices for your and your family in your off-duty time as well.

Enjoy your long weekend, and think safety!

The Commander's Action Line is your direct link to me. It's your opportunity to make Charleston AFB a better place to live, work and play.

First, give the appropriate base agency a chance to solve the problem, but if you don't get a satisfactory answer, call me at ***963-5581***, or send an e-mail to ***action@charleston.af.mil***.

To ensure you receive a response to your concerns, please leave your name and the information needed to contact you.

Col. Wayne Schatz
437 AW/CV

AIRLIFT Dispatch

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'Fit to fight' or fighting fitness?

By Lt. Col. Steve Groenheim
AMC deputy director of staff

Fit to fight? The Air Force chief of staff's warning order, published July 30, identified the need for the Air Force to focus more time and energy on individual and unit fitness.

So, did you get the memo? If you missed it, the running crew has left the building and it's pulling away from those who may be late. If you did get the memo and have seen the exciting outcome by the majority of Air Force members, you know the wave of enthusiasm that's moved through the units. In my opinion, this is likely the most profound and far-reaching culture change in the Air Force in the last decade.

"The amount of energy we devote to our fitness programs is not consistent with the growing demands of our warrior culture," said Gen. John Jumper, Air Force chief of staff. "It's time to change that."

Some of you might recall a series of movies in the mid- to late 1980s depicting Air Force officers and enlisted as overweight and untidy. I resented that stigma, and was embarrassed for any impression they collectively conveyed to others. I know it's just Hollywood, but the excuses started.

Regardless of the false portrayal, the damage was done. Or was it false? Did you know that today 54 percent of the active duty Air Force population is classified as overweight, and that weight-related medical costs equal to $24 million per year? Did you know $4.2 million a year is spent on lost duty days?

The Weight Management and Body Fat Program is the No. 1 disciplinary problem for most unit commanders. The Air Force discharged 473 overweight members in 2001, suffering a $3.6 million loss for severance pay. The total Air Force loss, including training costs, tallies an astonishing $60,000 for each person discharged.

Why are we overweight? See if any of these reasons ring a bell: sedentary lifestyles, busy work schedules, deployments and TDYs, long hours, easy access to high calorie foods, increasing food portion sizes and a "quick fix" mentality.

The road to fitness is through sound weight loss principles; by eating fewer calories than you expend, exercising regularly, controlling portions, eating a variety of foods from all food groups, and avoiding extreme restrictions of whole food groups, according to the Health and Wellness Center. These are generally lifestyle changes which are essential for long-term success. As the chief says, it's time to change that. It's time to review realistic and relevant personal fitness goals, and make them powerful.

worth repeating

"It's time to review realistic and relevant personal fitness goals, and make them powerful."

Lt. Col. Steve Groenheim
AMC deputy director of staff

If you are out of shape, fix it. And people all over base are fixing it. Fitness centers and running tracks are busting at the seams. It's a good problem.

I would add to the chief's comment, "If you are in shape, fix others – by example." Lack of discipline and consistency plague our fitness culture. You see it in the newspapers in early January with the ads for equipment and club memberships trying to "hook 'em" with a commitment. There's no hook in "Fit to Fight." It's truly a culture change. People are quietly praising "Fit to Fight," in my opinion the best thing that has happened to the Air Force since "integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do." Supervisors are effectively mentoring their people when they exercise together, especially focusing on that subordinate who needs the guidance and support. This is synergy – unmatched in improving unit cohesion, individual and collective mission effectiveness, quality of life and job satisfaction.

The chief said it best, "direct, immediate and overwhelming feedback from the field said airmen are taking the new fitness challenge seriously."

Fitness is a positive lifestyle change. Embrace what you're doing for a lifetime, and the results could very well be priceless. "Fit to Fight" is right. I'll see you at the fitness center.

Change of Command

Lt. Col. A.J. McMillan assumed command of the 14th Airlift Squadron in a ceremony here Monday.

Colonel McMillan replaced Lt. Col. Steve Groenheim, who moved to Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, Ill., as the deputy director of staff.

Most recently, Colonel McMillan served as the 437th Airlift Wing chief of safety.

Colonel McMillan has a computer systems engineering degree and gained his commission through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps where he earned distinguished graduate honors. He also holds a master's degree in aeronautical science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and another master's in airpower arts and science from the school of Advanced Airpower Studies at Maxwell AFB, Ala.

Colonel McMillan is a distinguished graduate from Squadron Officer's School at Maxwell AFB and a graduate from the Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

After pilot training at Reese AFB, Texas, Colonel McMillan was assigned to McGuire AFB, N.J., and was a C-141B lead airdrop and air refueling instructor pilot. He then went to Williams AFB, Ariz., where he was a T-38 instructor pilot and flight commander. He was then selected as an initial cadre C-17 pilot, a C-17 operational test and evaluation pilot, C-17 standardization and evaluator pilot and was dual qualified as a T-38 safety and chase pilot at Edwards AFB, Calif. Following that, he was the chief of C-17 Follow-on Operational Test and Evaluation at Headquarters Air Mobility Command where he managed over 85 tests for the C-17 Globemaster III.

After graduating from the Army Command and General Staff College and School of Advanced Airpower Studies, Colonel McMillan was then stationed at McChord AFB, Wash., where he was a C-17 airdrop aircraft commander, acting operations officer, assistant director of operations and also facilitator of the first West Coast C-17 squadron.

Lt. Col. A. J. McMillan

After McChord AFB, he went on to Norfolk, Va., where he was a special assistant to the commander in chief, U.S. Joint Forces Command, where he did strategic analysis, speech writing, congressional testimony and advised the commander on joint experimentation activities.

He is a command pilot with over 4,000 flying hours.

His military decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal and Meritorious Service Medal with three oak-leaf clusters, Aerial Achievement Medal with two oak-leaf clusters, and an Air Force Commendation Medal.

■ ***How do you fill about reassignment to 14 AS commander?*** "Command is truly an honor and highest privilege. My wife, Linda, a retired major, and I are extremely fortunate to get a phenomenal squadron with such outstanding people, and we're excited to be part of such an elite team. Charleston AFB has an awesome mission with unparalleled active duty, reservist and civilian teamwork."

■ ***Favorite quote***: "'Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.' Sir Winston Churchill was commenting on airmen's defense of Britain from German air attacks during World War II."

■ ***Why did you join the Air Force?*** "To become part of the most respected military in the world. Getting to fly jets and see the world sure helped."

■ ***How would you describe your leadership style?*** Flexible, firm, focused and fair.

17 AS deploys to Germany for the second time

By Airman 1st Class Stephanie Hammer
437 AW Pubic Affairs

More than 65 members of the 17th Airlift Squadron deployed from Charleston AFB to Rhein Main AB, Germany, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom Jan. 8.

This is the second time the squadron has rotated into Germany, where they will maintain ground crew operations from Rhein Main AB to Iraq and Afghanistan for the next 90 days.

"As we deploy, our focus and our mission as a squadron changes," said Lt. Col. Don Shaffer, 17 AS commander. "At home, our mission is to provide trained, combat-ready aircrews to execute the global airlift operations. Our focus (in Germany) will change to facilitate the execution of global airlift, contingency and combat airlift operations."

Upon arrival in Germany, the 17 AS took the reins from the 7th Airlift Squadron from McChord AFB, Wash., in leading the 817th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron. The McChord AFB squadron replaced the 16th Airlift Squadron in October.

"It's a great opportunity to practice everything we know," said 1st Lt. Justin Ginther, 17 AS pilot, who is deploying for the first time.

This deployment marks the seventh time a Charleston AFB commander was placed in charge of the 817 EAS since the 17 AS stood it up in January 2002.

"We know it will be busy," said Colonel Shaffer, who previously commanded the 817 EAS from June to October 2002. "If we're not working hard, then we're missing something."

Staff Sgt. Heather Reid, 17 AS administration specialist, is leaving her two children in the care of her husband, Staff Sgt. Jeff Reid, 373rd Training Squadron C-17 instructor.

"Leaving them is the hardest thing I've ever done," she said. "It's taken me about a year to mentally prepare myself. The toughest part is preparing my husband to play 'Mr. Mom.'"

Colonel Shaffer said the group deploying is made up of dedicated Air Force professionals, and he has no doubts they will handle anything asked of them while on this deployment.

"I have never been more proud of a team than I am of each and every (member of the 17 AS)," he said. "I am truly humbled and grateful to be given the opportunity to lead (them) on this endeavor. I look forward to the challenges we will face and have no fear we will overcome each and every one with a level of dedication, professionalism and pride no one else comes close to."

An additional 15 members of the 17 AS left for Germany Saturday.

(Staff Sgt. Jason Smith, 437 AW Public Affairs, also contributed to this article.)

DOD resumes anthrax shots

Charleston AFB members resumed anthrax immunizations after a federal judge ruled Jan. 7 that the Defense Department could again legally administer the shots to servicemembers.

"Charleston members will see no change in the current program," said Maj. David Newman, 437th Medical Group public health officer in charge.

"The immunizations will pick up where you left off, even if you were due for your next one while the program was suspended," added Major Newman.

Military commanders "should immediately resume the anthrax vaccination program," wrote Dr. David Chu, DOD personnel chief, in a department-wide memorandum.

The department's anthrax vaccine immunization program had been suspended since Dec. 23, after an injunction granted the previous day by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia caused DOD to suspend the program.

"The primary thing to remember is the program was temporarily stopped not due to vaccine safety, but because the judge made his decision based on concerns about the completeness of the Food and Drug Administration's process to approve the vaccine for use against inhalation anthrax," said Major Newman. For years, the FDA stated the anthrax vaccine prevents anthrax regardless of the route of exposure. The FDA shifted this position Dec. 30 in a 'Final Rule and Order' that was published in the Federal Register. The DOD shares the repeated findings of the FDA, the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine and numerous other authoritative experts that the anthrax vaccine is safe and effective against inhalation anthrax."

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Air Force Gen. Richard Myers maintain the anthrax vaccine is a safe and necessary prophylactic for U.S. servicemembers deployed in the war against terrorism where enemies may employ biological, chemical or nuclear weapons of mass destruction.

The base immunizations clinic is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. Members should bring their shot records and ID cards.

For more information, call the CAFB public health office at 963-6962, Immunizations Clinic at 963-6714, or go to www.anthrax.mil. ***(American Forces Press Service and Airman 1st Class Amy Perry contributed to this article)***

Base focuses on safety

By Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith
437 AW Public Affairs

437th Airlift Wing members focus attention on safety today during individual unit and group briefings, as the base prepares for an increase in its operations tempo.

Safety briefings are being done in every section on base to emphasized the importance of working and living safety, after a commander directed safety day was declared.

"We're getting ready to kick up our ops tempo through June due to the swap out of 130,000 troops in Iraq," said Lt. Col. Steve Dye, 437 AW chief of safety. "So it makes sense to take some time out away from daily operations so a majority of the base can focus on safety."

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld set a goal to decrease mishaps by 50 percent by fiscal 2005, Colonel Dye said.

"At the Air-Force level, groups were looking into how this could be done, but below the Air Force level, there isn't much guidance or direction," Colonel Dye said. "So Col. (Brooks) Bash and Col. (Wayne) Schatz stood up a Tiger Team to see what we could do to meet the 50 percent goal."

Lt. Col. Dave Peaire, 437 AW director of staff, is the chair of a Tiger Team consisting of the deputy group commanders and unit safety representatives.

"Our charter is to reduce mishaps by 50 percent by the end of fiscal 05," Colonel Dye said. "To meet this goal, we must change the way do business. Risks we thought were acceptable in the past will not be acceptable in the future."

worth repeating

"Our job is to push the mission, but we'll never compromise safety to make an on-time takeoff time."

Lt. Col. Steve Dye
437th Airlift Wing chief of safety

CAFB has seen a rise in flight mishaps since fiscal 2003. In the first quarter of fiscal 2004, there were 13 flight mishaps, said Colonel Dye, compared to three in the first quarter of fiscal 2003. Most of them were material problems, and not directly attributed to people.

Colonel Dye said the number one wing goal is safety. "Our job is to push the mission, but we'll never compromise safety to make an on-time takeoff time."

He said another top priority is to ensure personnel are following technical orders without cutting corners.

Colonel Dye said it's important for base personnel to know the wing leadership cares about them and their well-being.

"We will have failed if, for mishap reasons, someone doesn't make it home to their family at the end of the day. Be safe," he said.

Information, free tax preparation available

By Capt. John Pak
437 AW Legal

Looking for free tax assistance from individuals trained by the Internal Revenue Service? Then contact the Charleston AFB Tax Center.

The Center open Jan. 26 and will remain open until April 18.

This year, as in years past, the tax center will be located on the first floor of Bldg. 246 in Room 110. The hours of operation will be from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays though Fridays. The tax center will be closed on all federal holidays. Services are free and will be provided by appointment only. Individuals can call 963-1040 to schedule appointments beginning on Jan. 20.

The staff at the Charleston AFB Tax Center will be made up of personnel from the 437th Airlift Wing Legal office as well as volunteer income tax assistance representatives trained by the IRS. These volunteers provide an invaluable service during tax season and come from various units of the 437 AW.

The tax center offers a variety of free tax services, including electronic filing for active duty members, retirees, reservists on active duty and family members. However, please be aware appointments from Jan. 26 to 30 will be limited to 1040EZ filers only.

To receive assistance from the tax center, customers will be asked to provide some, or all, of the following documents:

- Military Identification Card
- Dependent Identification Card(s)
- W-2 forms
- All 1099 INT and DIV forms (if applicable)
- Form 1098 (home mortgage interest) (if applicable)
- Individual Retirement Arrangement contribution information (if applicable)
- Educational expense information (if applicable)
- Childcare expense information (if applicable)
- Proof of a bank account if direct deposit is requested
- Power of attorney if necessary
- Receipts for deductible expenses if itemizing deductions
- Social security numbers of dependents
- Any other tax-related documents

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact the Charleston AFB Tax Center at 963-1040.

Tax representatives

1st Combat Camera Squadron: Vanessa Foreman

437th Airlift Wing staff: Capt. John Pak, Staff Sgt. Jessica Moore, Margo Kucsera and Deirdre Abernathy

437th Maintenance Group: Master Sgt. Charles Stamm, Tech. Sgt. Robert Schaffer, Staff Sgt. Michael Balarillo, Staff Sgt. Matthew Carman, Staff Sgt. Christopher Salazar, Senior Airman Justin Allgood, Senior Airman Tabitha Stewart, Airman 1st Class Steven Dietz and Airman 1st Class Erich Tolman

437th Medical Group: Master Sgt. Sheila Musser and Tech. Sgt. Julie Rice

437th Mission Support Group: Capt. Mark Dellinger, 2nd Lt. Tara Bullard, Master Sgt. Philip Borneman, Master Sgt. Hector Mojica, Tech. Sgt. David Buettner, Tech. Sgt. James Bieber, Staff Sgt. Angela Kelley, Staff Sgt. Mary Roach, Senior Airman Jessica Healy and Airman 1st Class Brandon Times

437th Operations Group: Capt. Michael Dinwiddie, Capt. Megan White, Master Sgt. Damian Fox, Senior Airman Janet Kornegay and Lorretta Stephens

Air Force Climatology Center: Tech. Sgt. Terry Avery and Staff Sgt. Bryan Stopp

Photo by Airman 1st Class Darnell Cannady

ATSO inspection

437th Logistics Readiness Squadron members gather materials for the Ability To Survive and Operate briefing Sunday. Members of the 437th and 315th Airlift Wings spent Sunday preparing for Thursday's ATSO Evaluation by the Air Mobility Command Inspector General.

82nd Airborne Division deploys through CAFB

By Staff Sgt. Jason Smith
437 AW Public Affairs

Elements of the Army's 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C., are deploying through Charleston AFB during the next few weeks in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Charleston AFB C-17 Globemaster III aircraft and crews are picking up more than 2,000 members of the 82 AD at Pope AFB N.C., and flying them here where they have a layover before catching flights to their deployment location.

The extra uniformed personnel passing through Charleston AFB are giving base agencies another chance to support the mission in Iraq.

"Our lodging and fitness center folks are working around the clock to make sure our Army brethren have a warm and comfortable place to sleep while they're waiting for transportation," said Lt. Col. Tracy O'Grady, 437th Services Squadron commander. "They're all being fed at the dining facility here, and we've extended our hours to make sure everyone gets a hot meal."

Colonel O'Grady said more than 250 cots were erected at the fitness center. Video games, ping pong tables and other forms of entertainment are also in place to give the deploying soldiers something to do during their brief stay.

The layover times vary depending on the availability of flights leaving Charleston AFB. Tracking flights and the personnel who get on them is the job of the 437th Aerial Port Squadron Traffic Management Flight.

"This is just normal operations for us," said Maj. John Pepin, 437 APS operations officer. "We're seeing some extra passengers, but it's nothing too huge."

Major Pepin said coordination between base agencies is the key to success when handling extra passengers.

Army officials said the deployment through Charleston AFB, which started Jan. 7, should last about a month. Once complete, the 82 AD will have more than 12,000 soldiers on the ground in Iraq.

Voluntary NCO retraining begins

WASHINGTON — The Air Force needs 1,100 noncommissioned officers in surplus career fields to voluntarily retrain into shortage career fields to balance the enlisted force in 2004.

The voluntary phase of the fiscal 2004 NCO Retraining Program began Jan. 5 and ends Feb. 23.

If needed, personnel officials will resort to an involuntary retraining phase March 8 through April 26.

A Web page shows NCOs how vulnerable they are and where they stand on a list of their peers by Air Force Specialty Code and grade. The Web page is available at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/enlskills/retraining/retraining/htm. Users must log onto their virtual MPF account to view the data.

The voluntary phase is not limited to individuals identified on the list. Anyone matching the specialty code and grade, who is otherwise eligible, can apply for retraining during the voluntary phase.

A complete list of retraining-in opportunities is available on the retraining advisory at the military personnel flight. ***(Air Force Print News)***

Saddam is a POW, but status could change

WASHINGTON – The United States now considers former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein to be a prisoner of war under the Geneva Conventions, a senior U.S. official said in Baghdad.

However, Coalition Provisional Authority spokesman Dan Senor told reporters Mr. Hussein's POW status may change, depending on any evidence that may be uncovered pertaining to his alleged crimes against humanity.

Mr. Hussein "is now technically an enemy prisoner of war, but that status, his ultimate designation, is neither affected nor determined by that (POW) designation," Mr. Senor explained, noting "until further information comes forward, that is his status."

The vast majority of Iraqis today identify Mr. Hussein's outlawed Baath Party with "torture chambers, rape rooms, mass graves, chemical attacks," Senor pointed out.

The U.S. official said it's important "for the Iraqi people to know that Saddam Hussein and his evil regime and the Baath Party are gone and they are not coming back." ***(American Forces Press Service)***

Full-time ART leave no longer authorized

ROBINS AFB, Ga. – Volunteerism by Air Force Reserve Command's full-time military technicians may drop as result of a new interpretation of law.

Air reserve technicians can no longer use 44 days of military leave while serving on active duty outside the continental United States, said officials in the office of the secretary of defense for Reserve affairs.

While in the 44-day leave status, the technicians are covered by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. They are eligible for compensation because of injury under line-of-duty procedures, and they are reimbursed for travel, per diem and lodging on the same basis as their military entitlements. ***(Air Force Reserve Command News Service)***

AFRL computer experts guide Mars rovers

KIRTLAND AFB, N.M. — Radiation-resistant computers Air Force Research Laboratory experts here developed helped steer one of NASA's Mars exploration rovers to a safe landing on the red planet Jan. 4.

The AFRL's Rad6000 32-bit microprocessors, manufactured for the Air Force by BAE systems, controlled the spacecraft during its flight from Earth, said Creigh Gordon, an AFRL space vehicles directorate engineer.

The tiny microchips also direct the rovers, named Spirit and Opportunity, as they move about the planet searching for signs that water might once have existed there.

More than 60 Air Force, Defense Department, NASA and commercial space systems are now using this technology, and more than 90 percent of satellites launched today rely on radiation-hardened processors developed here. ***(Air Force Materiel Command News Service)***

Medical priority for disabled vets

WASHINGTON — Veterans Affairs officials want to send veterans with service-connected medical problems to the front of the line when it comes to receiving medical treatment at VA facilities.

Anthony Principi, VA secretary, issued a new directive to all VA medical facilities requiring "priority access" be given to qualifying veterans seeking appointments for treatment.

Priority access means that when qualifying veterans come to a VA treatment facility for inpatient or outpatient care, they will receive an appointment within 30 days, Mr. Principi said.

If a VA facility is unable to schedule an appointment within the 30-day time limit, an appointment must be arranged for care at another VA facility or at a facility under contract in the private sector. ***(American Forces Press Services)***

Airmen In Action!

Photo by Staff Sgt. Verlin Levi Collins

Can you hear me now?

Senior Airman Trent Lundell listens for a satellite signal Jan. 4 at Baghdad International Airport, Iraq. Airman Lundell is a satellite communications technician assigned to the 447th Expeditionary Communications Squadron.

Spotlight

Military appreciation: The Charleston Lowgators are having a military appreciation night tonight at 7:30 p.m. at the North Charleston Coliseum. Tickets are $7.50 with military I.D. at the coliseum box office. The first 1,000 kids will receive Read to Achieve materials. For more information, call 460-1009

Speeder's alert: The "Fit to Fight" testing loop located on East Jackson, James Loop and Chance Loop behind the fitness center has a new speed limit of 5 mph. This is effective immediately and the new speed limit will be enforced.

Retirement: The 1st Combat Camera Squadron is hosting a retirement ceremony for Mrs. Joyce Taylor at 10 a.m. Jan. 30 at the Charleston Club. For more information, call Mr. Angelo Costanzo at 963-3465.

Around the base

Commander's channel: The commander's access channel is available to all base residents on channel 2. The channel contains information and updates on base events, organizations, and force protection levels. For more information, call the 437 AW Public Affairs office at 963-5608.

Awards banquet: The 437th Airlift Wing Quarterly Awards Banquet is set for 3 p.m. Monday at the Charleston Club. The cost is $17.50 for club members and $19.50 for non-members. For more information or tickets, call a squadron first sergeant by Tuesday.

Promotion ceremony: The 437th Airlift Wing promotion ceremony is set for 3 p.m. Thursday at the Charleston Club. For more information, call Tech Sgt. Bridget Everett at 963-6774.

Charleston Warrior of the Week

Photo by 1st Lt. Shaloma McGovern

Staff Sgt. Michelle Belles
437th Airlift Wing

Staff Sgt. Michelle Belles is a senior command post controller in the 437th Airlift Wing command post. The command post is the communication center from headquarters to commanders. They work with Air Mobility Command crews arriving or departing from Charleston AFB, and make sure the pilots know where they are going and have everything they need to leave.

Sergeant Belles said she enjoys being the at the center point of the base.

The North Canton, Ohio, native has been in the Air Force for more than five years and said she joined to travel and for the educational benefits. She plans to get a college degree and retire from the Air Force.

Although she deployed to Prince Sultan AB, Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, twice, while she was here she made time for the Big Sister program and the 437 AW booster club.

On the Thanksgiving week, one of Sergeant Belles' deployed airmen found out there was a fire in her on-base residence, said Senior Master Sgt. Charlotte Branum, 437th Mission Support Squadron first sergeant. The airman was worried if she came back from her deployment temporarily, she wouldn't get sent back, and would go right back into the station to deploy.

"Sergeant Belles told her not to worry about it and took care of everything," said Sergeant Branum. "She cleaned the house, found places that do fire restoration of furniture and did dozens of loads of laundry so the fire smell would not stay in the clothes.

"We always say we are a 'family,' and we tell our folks 'the Air Force will take care of you,'" continued Sergeant Branum. "Sergeant Belles really made this all true by taking care of her troop the way she did."

Awards banquet: The 437th Airlift Wing Annual Awards Banquet is set for 6 p.m. Feb. 3 at the Charleston Club. The cost is $17.50 for club members and $19.50 for non-members. For more information or tickets, call a squadron first sergeant by Tuesday.

Induction: The Chiefs' Induction Ceremony is set for 6 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Charleston Club. For more information, call Chief Master Sgt. Lawrence Strother at 963-4591. Tickets are $20 for club members, and $23 for non-members. For tickets, call 963-5497 by Jan. 23.

Scholarships: In 2003, the Air Force Aid Society awarded $5.25 million in college education grants to Air Force dependents, $31,500 of which went to Charleston AFB dependents. Sons, daughters or spouses could be eligible candidates. Visit the Air Force Aid Society Web site at www.afas.org for information on how to apply for the General Henry H. Arnold Education Grant Program.

Pioneer Bible Club: The Protestant Base Chapel is starting a Pioneer Bible Club for children aged 3-10. To volunteer or sign-up children, call the base chapel at 963-2536.

N.Y National Guard: The 109th Airlift Wing, Scotia, N.Y., home of the C-130 ski-birds, has traditional guard vacancies in the following career fields: 1A2X1, 1C3X1, 1N0X1, 2A5X1, 2A5X3, 2A6X1, 2A6X2, 2A6X4, 2A6X5, 2A6X6, 2A7X1, 2A7X3, 2E1X3, 2F0X1, 2S0X1, 2T0X1, 3C1X1, 3C3X1, 3M0X1, 3P0X1, 4A0X1, 4A1X1, 4A2X1, 4D0X1, 4N0X1, 4P0X1, 4T0X1, and 6C0X1. For more information, contact Master Sgt. Wesley Ryerson, 109 AW/DPR, Wesley.Ryerson@nyscot.ang.af.mil.; DSN 344-2456; or 1-800-524-5070.

To submit information considered for News Briefs, send an e-mail to ***dispatch@charleston.af.mil*** with subject: **NEWS BRIEFS**; or send a fax to ***963-5604***, ATTN: **NEWS BRIEFS**. Submissions must be received no later than close of business Friday the week before publication.

Dental techs to become licensed dental hygienists

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Amy Perry
437 AW Public Affairs

The Air Force has teamed up with Trident Technical College in Charleston to send dental technicians to an Air Force-sponsored Dental Hygiene Training Scholarship Program.

Two Air Force members, Tech. Sgt. Alycia Miller from Sheppard AFB, Texas, and Staff Sgt. Noreena Svoboda from McChord AFB, Wash., are the first airmen to take part in the American Dental Association-accredited program at TTC and will earn associate degrees at the end of the 14-month course.

The Air Force is seeking four to five dental technicians a year to attend TTC. Six other Air Force members are in a program at St. Petersburg College, Fla., this cycle.

Charleston AFB is hosting the two sergeants to ensure there is military oversight and support, said Master Sgt. Tony Mikell, 437th Aeromedical Dental Squadron Dental Flight NCOIC.

"Dental technicians will be able to provide a level of care for our military beneficiaries equal to that of civilian dental facilities," said Sergeant Mikell. "Providing this level of care normally given by dentists will allow extra time for the dentists to provide other comprehensive dental treatment."

The program is an important step in furthering the dental technicians education.

"This is a professional milestone for our enlisted members and a long overdue capability for the dental service," said Chief Master Sgt. Terry Harford, Office of the Surgeon General dental policy and operations superintendent. "Getting to this point and being accepted at a top dental hygiene training institution is indicative of the caliber of our enlisted force."

Attendees were selected through a competitive board process, and attendees are considered some of the very best dental technicians in the Air Force, said Chief Harford.

Tech. Sgt. Alycia Miller, a dental technician from Sheppard AFB, Texas, uses an explorer in a patient's mouth. Sergeant Miller was one of two airmen selected to attend a 14-month dental program at Trident Technical College.

Staff Sgt. Noreena Svoboda, a dental technician from McChord AFB, Wash., cleans a patient's teeth. Sergeant Svoboda is enrolled in an Air Force-sponsored Dental Hygiene Training Scholarship Program at Trident Technical College.

The sergeants set to attend Trident were amazed they had finally made it.

"It's an incredible opportunity," said Sergeant Svoboda. "You can't ask for anything better than being sent to school for something you were going to go to anyway."

"It's amazing and a tremendous opportunity," said Sergeant Miller. "There are no words to describe this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Sergeant Miller said being a dental hygienist would help her back at her clinic.

"The main reason I wanted to do this program is because although I already went to the advanced cleaning program, there were too many limitations, such as numbing a patient for the procedure," said Sergeant Miller. "I love what I do for the Air Force, I just want to do it without so many limitations."

The program curriculum includes both general education and professional dental hygiene courses. Personnel are trained as primary health care professionals, oral health educators and clinicians who, as co-therapists with the dentists, provide preventative, educational and therapeutic services supporting total heath for control of oral disease and the promotion of oral health.

Graduates from the DHTSP are eligible to take the Dental Hygiene National Board Exam, regional and individual state board examinations for licensure.

"Upon graduation and successful completion of the national exam, members will be assigned to various Air Force locations based on Air Force and patient population needs," said Chief Harford. "Having military dental hygienists in our inventory will be a force multiplier in terms of enhanced patient care and improved worldwide readiness." ***(437th Aeromedical Dental Squadron Dental Flight also contributed to this article.)***

Command Performance

AF logo authorized on blues jacket

WASHINGTON — Air Force Uniform Board members have introduced a new addition to the lightweight blue jacket.

"The Air Force chief of staff approved adding the Air Force logo to the existing lightweight blue jacket," said Senior Master Sgt. Jacqueline Dean of the Air Force Uniform Board.

All told, 300 jackets will be distributed Air Force-wide for wear testing, Sergeant Dean said. Board members are targeting Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., as a distribution point because of its high number of temporary duty officers and enlisted airmen.

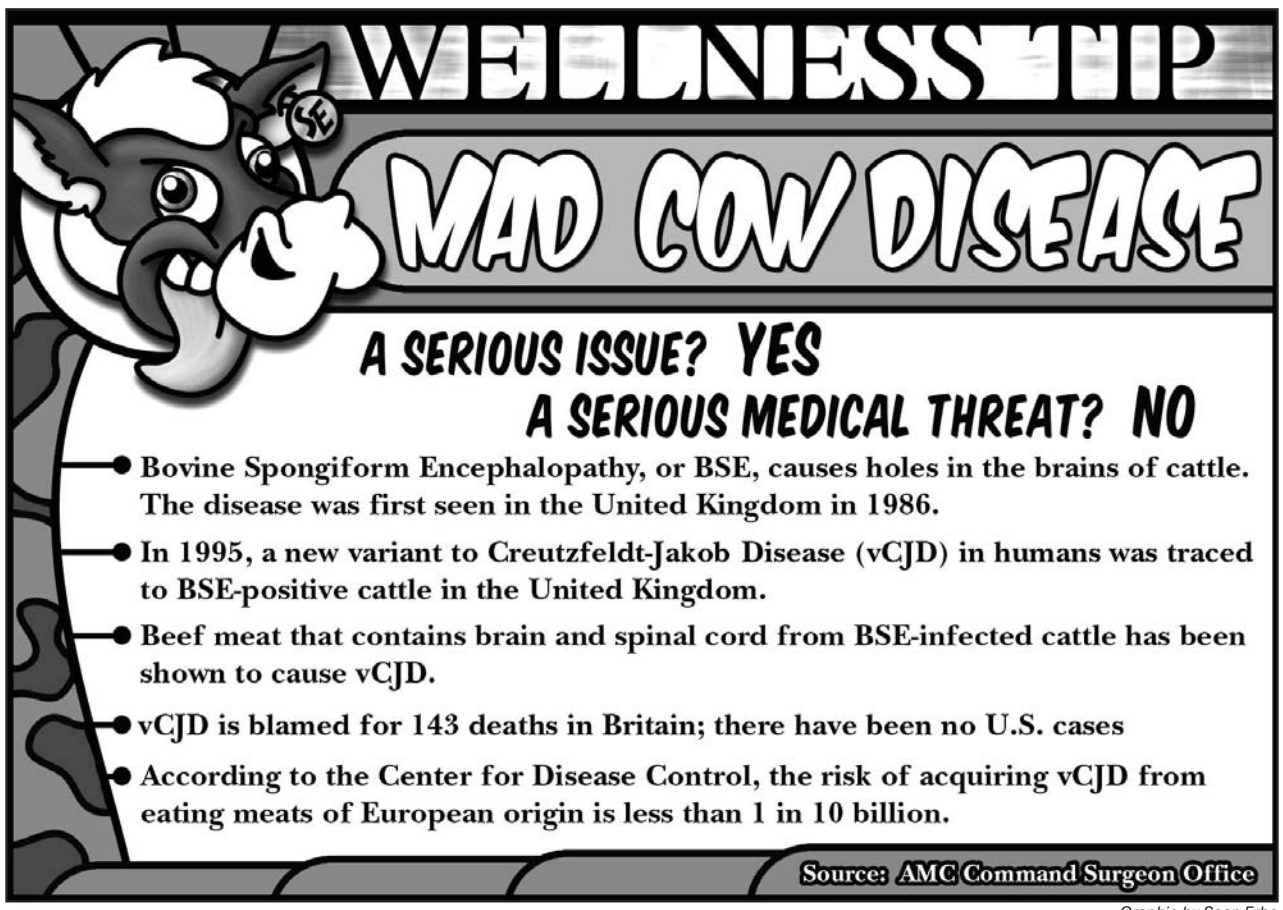
Airmen receiving the jackets will wear test them and give feedback to the uniform board about fraying or other problems with the embroidery, Sergeant Dean said.

The Air Force logo is to be embroidered in a polyester white meridian thread with a stiff tear-off backing, according to information provided by Libby Glade, Air Force clothing office chief.

The symbol is to fit within a 2-inch square. There is a .25 inch space between the symbol's lowest point and the "U.S. AIR FORCE" type.

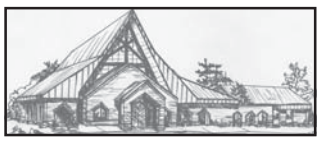
The "U.S. AIR FORCE" type is to be one-fourth of an inch high, 3.5 inches long, in all capital Arial font, 24 point.

The symbol is to be embroidered on the upper left chest. The dot in the center of the symbol is centered vertically between the shoulder seam and where the underarm side seam joins the armhole sleeve, and centered horizontally between the zipper and the sleeve armhole seam. ***(Air Force Print News)***



Graphic by Sean Erbe

Chapel schedule



107 Arthur Drive
Office: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Phone: 963-2536.

After duty hours, call the command post at 963-2531 for emergencies only.

Catholic Services: *Saturday* - 4:15 p.m. Reconciliation, 5 p.m. Mass. *Sunday* - 9:30 a.m. Mass, 9:30 a.m. Children's Church. Sacrament of Baptism pre-baptismal classes are held the first Sunday of each month at 11 a.m. in the Chapel Annex. Daily Mass is canceled until April 2004.

Protestant Services: *Sunday* - 9:30 a.m. Sunday School, Bldg. 245, 11 a.m. Traditional Worship Service and 11 a.m. Children's Church. *Sunday* - 5 p.m. Contemporary Worship Service. *Wednesday* - noon Protestant Bible Study.

For information on other faith groups, call the Base Chapel at 963-2536.

Movie schedule

Admission: 99 cents for adults and children.

Any person under 17 years of age requires a parent or adult guardian (a minimum of 21 years old) to purchase an admission ticket for the minor to view R-rated movies. The ticket office opens 30 minutes prior to the start of the movie, unless otherwise noted.

Movie schedules are provided by AAFES.

Patrons should call 963-3333 to verify movie titles, running times and start times, which are subject to change.

Today, 7:30 p.m.
"Honey" – Jessica Alba

Honey Daniels is an up-and-coming choreographer who finds her career in jeopardy after she refuses to reciprocate the sexual advances of a music-industry bigwig. Determined to pick herself back up, Honey goes back to the inner-city of her youth with plans of starting a dance school. **(PG-13) 94 minutes**

Saturday, 7:30
"The Haunted Mansion" – Eddie Murphy

Real estate agent Jim and his family visit an old mansion, thinking they're just stopping by to check out the property. But soon the crew is stranded there, along with 99 creepy ghosts. Jim discovers the only way to escape from the spooky house is to find a key. **(PG) 100 minutes**

Jan. 23, 7:30 p.m.
"Stuck On You" – Matt Damon

Walt and Bob are conjoined twins, one of whom has dreams of making it big in Hollywood. When they arrive in town, they're cast on a television show staring Cher. She's bummed about being relegated to television until her show becomes a hit. **(PG-13) 119 minutes**

A group of unit physical training leaders run the 1.5 mile portion of the new fitness test Jan. 8 at "Fit to Fight" Loop. The PTLs were the first at Charleston AFB to take the test.

New year brings new fitness test

Story and photo by 1st Lt. Shaloma McGovern
437 AW Public Affairs

Charleston AFB members began taking the new fitness test Jan. 8 on the "Fit to Fight" loop behind the Sports and Fitness Center.

The unit physical training leaders were the first group at Charleston tested on push-ups, sit-ups, the 1.5 mile run and abdominal circumference.

"This test examines the entire individual to include strength, endurance, obesity probability and cardiovascular health," said Jason Ham, Health and Wellness Center program fitness manager. "It is not designed as a pass or fail, but a holistic view of the member."

The "Fit to Fight" loop is the sole track designated for Team Charleston members to take the new Air Force fitness test. Three and three-fourths times around the loop is 1.5 miles.

Each individual will be scored a possible 100 points on the four-event fitness test. There are 50 possible points for cardiovascular, 30 points for body composition, 10 points for push-ups, and 10 points for crunches. The endurance test allows each member to rest a minimum of three minutes between each event.

The assessments will be categorized based on the number of points individuals earn. Individuals scoring greater than 90 will be categorized as in excellent physical shape, 75 to 89.9 is the good category, 70 to 74.9 is the marginal category, and a score of 0 to 69.9 puts individuals in the poor category.

People scoring between 70 and 75 will need to attend a healthy living workshop offered by the HAWC and retest within 180 days.

Those scoring below 70 will need to attend a healthy living workshop, fitness improvement program and body composition improvement program. These individuals will re-test within 90 days of scoring in the poor category, according to Air Force Instruction 10-248.

"I look forward to some impressive results from Team Charleston," said Col. Wayne Schatz, 437th Airlift Wing vice commander. "The dedication and teamwork units have shown in their fitness programs is truly impressive. Being fit to fight is part of being an Air Force professional, and I urge everyone to continue incorporating fitness into their routines."

Charleston AFB sets squadron testing dates

Charleston AFB squadrons are preparing to begin the 2004 physical fitness tests. Squadrons are due to test during the following dates:

- 1st Combat Camera Squadron: Feb. 20 and 22-24, Nov. 10 and 11;
- 14th Airlift Squadron: Feb. 2-4, Sept. 13 and 14;
- 15th Airlift Squadron: Feb. 5-6 and 16, Sept. 15 and 16;
- 16th Airlift Squadron: Feb. 17-19, Sept. 17 and 27;
- 17th Airlift Squadron: May 17-19 and Sept. 28-29;
- 373rd Training Squadron, Det. 5: Aug. 12-13 and Dec. 28;
- 437th Aeromedical Dental Squadron: March 29-30 and Oct. 15;
- 437th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron: April 13-16 and Oct. 27-29;
- 437th Aerial Port Squadron: May 31, June 1-3 and Nov. 22-23;
- 437th Airlift Wing: June 14-16 and Nov. 24;
- 437th Civil Engineer Squadron: May 3-7 and Nov. 8-9;
- 437th Contracting Squadron: March 18-19 and Oct. 14;
- 437th Comptroller Squadron: May 20-21 and Nov. 12;
- 437th Communications Squadron: Aug. 9-11 and Dec. 27;
- 437th Logistics Readiness Squadron: July 19-23 and Dec. 8-10;
- 437th Medical Operations Squadron: March 31, April 1 and Oct. 25;
- 437th Medical Support Squadron: April 2 and 5, and Oct. 26;
- 437th Maintenance Operations Squadron: June 17-18 and Nov. 25;
- 437th Mission Support Group: June 29 and Nov. 26;
- 437th Mission Support Squadron: June 30, July 1 and Nov. 26;
- 437th Maintenance Group: June 28 and Dec. 6;
- 437th Maintenance Squadron: Aug. 23-27 and Dec. 28-31;
- 437th Operations Group: March 4-5 and Oct. 11;
- 437th Operations Support Squadron: March 1-3, Sept. 30 and Oct. 1;
- 437th Security Forces Squadron: March 15-17 and Oct. 12-13;
- 437th Services Squadron: July 2 and 6, and Dec. 7.