

## COMMENTARY

## 437 LG keeps our planes flying

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AIRLIFT  
Dispatch

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437 AW commander



I began my orientation visit with the 437th Logistics Group this past week and had a terrific time meeting many of the highly motivated airmen that make up Team Charleston.

Master Sgt. Paul Childers, NCOIC of the Sheet Metal and Corrosion Element, at the 437th Equipment Maintenance Squadron gave me an interesting brief on some cutting edge composite repair that we do on the C-17. These airmen really lead the Air Force when it comes to knowing how to do composite repairs. Many Air Force bases are benchmarking off our folks.

I also enjoyed seeing the unique capabilities of the equipment that can literally create a metal sign with letters with a few strokes of a keyboard...a truly impressive display and a machine that they use routinely to create sheet metal parts for our aircraft. Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Houseman, a metals technology journeyman, gave me a great demo here.

Also at the 437 EMS, I had a chance to see the renovations to Bldg. 700 (Nancy Dock), the Fuels, Area Repair, Wheel and Tire and C-17 Home Station Check and C-141 Isochronal Inspections shops.

At the 437th Component Repair Squadron, I was really impressed with the Airlift Repair Enhancement Program where they repair items that would normally be thrown away. Last year, they saved the taxpayers about \$1 million. One example of that effort was their efforts to salvage the refrigerator in the C-17 and to get them repaired locally, saving the government thousands of dollars. Staff Sgt. Johnny Underwood Jr., AREP supply manager, filled me in on how we implement these cost-saving procedures.

Similarly, the Aerospace Ground Equipment flight enjoys the best in-commission rates for the equipment that they maintain in Air Mobility Command, having won top honors in the command for 1996 to 1999.

The Test, Measurement, and Diagnostic Equipment flight, more commonly known as the Precision Measurement Equipment Laboratory, was the only shop that I visited where you put your feet into a shoe cleaner and then must step into sticky "fly paper" to get into their shop. The laboratory is a sterile environment and just a few dust particles could impact their sophisticated measuring and calibration equipment.

I also enjoyed visiting the avionics/electronic warfare and the propulsion flights. Thanks for all your hard work!

The 437th Logistics Support Squadron was another highlight of my orientation visit where I met Master Sergeants Mark Treacy and Jake Jacobs, Quality Assurance professionals, who explained how they ensure maintenance procedures are sound and safe. I had a visit to the "Office of Very Cool Stuff" and met with Tech. Sgt. John Bauschatz who is working to bring informational tools to the workplace via the intranet. John Bouknight, Programs and Mobility, gave me a great tour explaining the group's budget, facilities and mobility programs.

It was great getting a chance to visit the 437th Contracting Squadron and meet with our newest lieutenant colonel at Charleston AFB, Paul Braunbeck. I was truly impressed with his squadron's efforts to go "paperless" as they can now process purchase orders, requests for proposals and contracts from their desktop computers. The 437 CONS was the second base in AMC to convert to this new system in December and it has proven to be a world class system.

I received a great tour of the supply warehouse, it's state of repair really caught my attention. I am glad it is in the Military Construction Program because world class professionals deserve to work in world class facilities—the supply warehouse needs this attention. I want to work that one hard and get that shored up in the future. While in base supply, I met a young Airmen 1st Class Robbie Montague, customer service, who gave me some great

feedback on some ideas to enhance what we do for the younger age group on base. Thanks for caring about Team Charleston!

You have already heard me say that we're the premier airlift wing on the face of this planet. Others agree as we recently received word from Maj. Gen. John Hopper Jr. that announced the 437th Airlift Wing as the recipient of the 1999 Lt. Gen. Malcolm B. Armstrong Trophy for the most outstanding active duty wing in 21st Air Force. This is a phenomenal accomplishment! You can all be justifiably proud of this coveted honor.

At staff meeting on Monday, it was my pleasure to present several awards to members of the 437th Aerial Port Squadron. Master Sgt. Tracy Brewster accepted the 21AF Best Terminal Unit of the Year honors. We have a world-class cargo and passenger operation that has achieved an impressive 99.9 percent on-time reliability rate while moving 96,591 passengers and 39,600 tons of cargo on 12,300 missions.

Capt. Patrick Blum accepted the outstanding 21 AF Passenger Service Operation of the Year award for processing and loading 32,498 passengers on 12,362 missions with a 100 percent on-time departure reliability rate.

Master Sgt. Mark Cordisco accepted the Outstanding 21 AF Aerial Port Mobility Flight of the Year award. His flight's sustained superior performance resulted in safely deploying 414 people for 10,282 man-days encompassing 156 taskings in 14 different countries. I found out that they recently won best in AMC honors also.

I was also pleased to recognize members from the 437th Component Repair Squadron TMDE flight (You remember, the folks I visited who really make you clean up before you enter their workplace) for achieving another successful certification. The Evaluation and Certification Program was conducted by Air Force Metrology and Calibration Program who assess the laboratory's capability to perform measurements that are accurate, uniform, reliable and traceable to the National Institute of Standards and Technology. I presented the Award of the Certificate of Compliance to Master Sgt. Will Seabreeze, Tech. Sgt. Jeff Coddington, and Airman 1st Class Chris Stiehl.

We are fortunate to have Maj. Gen. George Williams, AMC Director of Operations from Scott AFB, Ill., to meet with our folks and provide a special briefing on the Expeditionary Air Force today at 3 p.m. in the base theater. There should be some great information on the EAF presented by General Williams, and this is a good chance to ask questions to one of our senior leaders. The concept is really moving along and it holds great promise for adding more stability and predictability to your lives. We are starting to see that already.

Secretary of the Air Force F. Whitten Peters in an article recently summed up the need for the EAF as: "we're moving into the EAF for two reasons. First, to make sure the nation has the trained aerospace forces it needs. Second, to make sure our people have relief from operations tempo in a turbulent world."

Our Rodeo team is practicing hard and getting ready to go. We have 26 members of the Rodeo Team from MacDill AFB, Fla., our sister wing, training hard with our folks this week. They're providing KC-135 refueling training for our team. Next week, we have the KC-135 folks from my old wing at Grand Forks, N.D., to train with us. I'm really looking forward to our folks bringing back some of that silver.

It was great to help the 315th Airlift Wing host Lt. Gen. Lance Lord, Air University commander, Col. Tom Brown, 908th Airlift Wing commander, and a group of civic leaders from Montgomery, Ala., this past week. The relationship we enjoy with our Reserve Associate wing is definitely the model for others to follow and it was clearly evident as we hosted these great folks from Montgomery.

I can't wait for another week to get going. It's great to be a part of the premier airlift wing on the planet.