

# FEATURE

Exercise! Exercise! Exercise!

## Charleston memberstest response capabilities

**By Staff Sgt. Raymond Padgett**  
315 AW Public Affairs

Following a loud explosion, smoke slowly rose above Charleston AFB on a cool April morning. The crash phones began to ring all over base, changing lives forever.

That was the opening scenario for the Mass Accident Response Exercise here April 13.

"The purpose of the exercise was to test the Charleston response to a Class-A mishap," said Master Sgt. David Hunt, chief of readiness for the inspector general.

The MARE involved both the 437<sup>th</sup> and 315<sup>th</sup> airlift wings. Col. Ed Stickler, 315<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing commander, and Col. Jim Roberts, 315<sup>th</sup> Operations Group commander, worked hand-in-hand with members of the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing during the MARE exercise.

"It wasn't just the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, it was Team Charleston who participated," said Col. Rusty Findley, 437 AW commander.

The exercise scenario, which simulated a C-17 crashing on the Charleston AFB flightline during final approach, measured emergency response, command and control, movement of injured personnel and response to mass media coverage by both wings.

Maj. Jeanette Cramer of the 437<sup>th</sup> Medical Group dressed out 11 casualties with realistic-

looking injuries, using a mix of fake blood, wax, hamburger, chicken bones and lots of ingenuity.

"Moulage, if applied correctly, will give the effect of actual injuries," Cramer explained.

The casualties were then briefed on how to react to rescuers in light of their injuries and were placed at the crash site before emergency responders arrived.

The first to respond to the scene, regardless of who they are, should be able to apply basic first aid to the injured, Cramer said.

Following the "crash," media role players, armed with video cameras, notebooks and aggressive attitudes, tried to gain access to base for "scoop" foot-

age. They tested the response of security forces and public affairs members.

The media team consisted of Reserve public affairs officials, combat camera, and other base personnel with prior security forces experience, said Lt. Col. Chris King, 315 AW Public Affairs officer, who played the role of a reporter.

"All of us are well versed in dealing with media, and I think we gave an accurate portrayal," he said.

Findley said the exercise exceeded his expectations and was a great learning experience. "We ran it in enough detail and to the level of accomplishment that we got to work through our processes."

Hunt said the exercise was invaluable. "Lots of people performed outstandingly, and we identified areas for improvement."



photos by Staff Sgt. Andrew Rodier

Members of the Search and Recovery Team look for casualties and debris during the exercise.



(left) Second Lt. Maria Hatchell (foreground), SAR team leader, discovers a "casualty."

(Below) Documenting the location of casualties and debris.



Senior Master Sgt. Carl Hunsinger covers his face to protect himself from contaminants prior to going on a SAR mission.