

# Dispatch



AIRLIFT

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437th Airlift Wing, Charleston AFB, SC

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Staff Sgt. Corey Clements

Members of the 437<sup>th</sup> Aircraft Generation Squadron prepare one of the last Charleston-based C-141s for a final local flight.

## Charleston bids farewell to C-141s

### Aircrew members share memories

By Lt. Col. Ed Memi  
437 AW Public Affairs

Former and current aircrew members will fondly remember the C-141 as its 35-year presence at Charleston draws to a close when the 16<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron deactivates Saturday.

The last Charleston-based C-141 mission ended last week and the remaining six aircraft will be gone by the end of July. Two aircraft will be retired to Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., two will be sent to McGuire AFB, N.J., one to Altus AFB, Okla., and another one to McChord AFB, Wash.

Frank Metzger, 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Plans and a former C-141 navigator, remembers the Aug. 14, 1965 arrival of the bright, shiny C-141. He was one of the first people to train aircrew members on the new airlifter.

The C-141A, built between 1963 and 1967, was the first jet aircraft designed to meet military standards as a troop and cargo carrier. It had a changeable cargo compartment, that could transition from rollers on the floor for palletized cargo to a smooth floor for wheeled vehicles to aft facing seats or sidewall can-

vas seats for passengers, quickly and easily, to handle more than 30 different missions

"We used to fly them around the world in four and a half days on the Embassy Flight," said Metzger. On the first day they would leave Charleston to Torrejon, Spain, then the next day head to New Delhi, India, then to Clark AB in the Phil-

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### Maintainers recall missions

By Lt. Col. Ed Memi  
437 AW Public Affairs

If you asked around the local community or some of the old-timers at Charleston AFB, chances are someone has a good story to tell about their experience with the C-141.

As the C-141's 35-year presence comes to an end and as base members prepare for the 16<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron inactivation ceremony Saturday, more and more people are talking about the venerable "workhorse" of Air Mobility Command. The aircraft has been literally worn out from so much use, forcing the Air Force to retire the fleet instead of funding another costly service life extension program.

Keeping such an old aircraft going was no easy feat, but maintainers are proud of the aircraft and what it has accomplished over the years. Charleston based C-141s have been involved in virtually every major military contingency, to include Desert Shield and Storm, where C-141s moved the majority of the cargo for our forces and was the first airlifter on the ground.

Charleston C-141s saw action during the Vietnam War, the Israeli and Egyptian conflict in 1967 and 1973, the U.S. intervention in Grenada, and the crisis in Kosovo.

Senior Master Sgt. Frank Waddell, an air reserve technician superintendent for the 315<sup>th</sup> Aircraft Generation Squadron, remembers the

see **Maintainers**, page 9

### Charleston C-141 Milestones

#### Airdrop

- Highest (rations): 31,000 ft.
- Highest (personnel): 35,000 ft.
- Heaviest Drop (low altitude): 69,000+lbs

#### SOLLII

- 1st dedicated SOLLII squadron
- J-Alert '87-99
- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week 100% reliability rate

#### Operation Highlights

- Vietnam
- Desert One (Iranian hostage rescue)

- Urgent Fury (Grenada)
- Just Cause (Panama)
- Desert Shield/Storm (Iraq)
- Provide Comfort (Iraq)
- Provide Promise (Bosnia)
- Restore Hope (Somalia)
- Support Hope (Rwanda)
- Joint Guardian (Kosovo)

#### Safety

- 919,000 Mishap free hours

#### Charleston C-141 Firsts

- First into China
- First into Hanoi
- First into Finland
- First into South America