

## IN THE NEWS

## New 315 AW commander a Charleston native

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

Brig. Gen. Gerald A. Black assumed command of the 315<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing from Col. Edward A. Stickler in a ceremony Sunday in the C-17 nose dock.

Brig. Gen. James E. Bankers, assistant vice commander, Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, and former 315 AW commander presided over the ceremony as more than 330 reservists participated in the formal change of command parade.

Before relinquishing command, Stickler received the Legion of Merit for his service as the commander of the 315 AW since March 1997. After 33 years of service, Stickler is retiring to the Atlanta area.

Bankers thanked Stickler for his dedicated service and also the men and women of the 315<sup>th</sup> for theirs.

"The United States has always relied on its citizens to step forward in its defense," said Bankers. "From the beginning of the nation through two world wars, Vietnam to Desert Storm, through today, you have been there."

Black's previous assignment was as the commander of the Air Force Reserve Command's 349<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing at Travis Air Force Base, Calif. Black is also a former member of the 315<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing where he served in various capacities from January 1978 to October 1985. He has piloted most of Air Mobility Command's cargo aircraft to include the C-5, C-141, C-130, and the KC-10 with more than 7,500 flying hours.

"It's great to be home," exclaimed Black, a Charleston native who graduated from St. Andrews High School in 1963 and the Citadel in 1967.

Black's decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Aerial Achievement Medal, Vietnam Service

Medal with one oak leaf cluster and the Kuwait Liberation Medal.

During the ceremony Black thanked his wife Judy, and children Katherine, Courtney, Jay and Kristan for all their support throughout the years.

"What an honor it is to stand before you today as the new commander of this great Air Force wing," Black said.

Stickler also thanked his family and Team Charleston for their support during the last 39 months. "The men and women of the 315<sup>th</sup> have lived up to every expectation, surpassed all of my goals, and done yourselves proud, again," Stickler said.

He also talked about the Serbian conflict where, in a mere four month period, the 315<sup>th</sup> flew more than 10,500 tons of cargo, more than 9,000 passengers and flew 4,000 hours in support of that effort. "Yes the 315<sup>th</sup> can fly, can fight, can win," he concluded.

## Bone marrow drive June 27

*Donating blood could  
bring new hope to others*

**By Lt. Col. Ed Memi**  
437 AW Public Affairs

The base will hold a bone marrow drive June 27 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Education Center. The goal of the drive is to have 500 blood donors.

Donors' information will be logged into a Department of Defense/national bone marrow registry.

Just a few minutes of a donor's time could make a big difference in the life of someone with a blood disease. One person on base who knows this is Tech Sgt. Sherley Jones, whose nine-year-old son, Dominic, lost his battle with leukemia in February because a second bone marrow match couldn't be found.

Dominic was diagnosed with leukemia in June of 1999.

"This was yet another trial of faith in our family's lives that we had to face and somehow overcome," Jones recalled. "Dominic had been a sick child for most of his life. He had to receive a liver transplant when he was eight months old because he was born with a liver disease called Tyrosinemia. Though he received constant medical care throughout his life, he remained very positive and was noted by nurses and doctors as being a wonderful patient."

In 1997, he contracted a blood disease called Hemophagocytic Syndrome, which required him to receive an extensive amount of chemotherapy treatments. After a couple of months of daily labs and testing, treatments of different types of chemotherapy were initiated.

"During this time, my family and I were tested to see if we were possible donor matches in case he needed a bone marrow transplant," Jones said. "We were told that neither my wife,

daughter or I would be suitable matches but that hopefully a possible donor from the bone marrow registry could be found. We prayed day in and night out the Lord would find us a bone marrow donor. Our prayers were finally answered in early December; he received his bone marrow transplant.

"My family and I have the deepest gratitude and greatest appreciation for the individual who donated his marrow. His selfless act of courage afforded our family one of the most precious gifts of life, time with our son in our lives for yet a little while longer. We are so thankful that someone had taken the time to register and become a bone marrow donor."

Unfortunately, Dominic passed away in February of this year because of other complications. "He has gone off to heaven now, but I hope our family's loss can be someone else's gain," Jones said. "I share this story with you hoping it will touch you and move you to want to be a bone marrow donor."

The donor process is quite simple. All it requires is filling out a questionnaire/consent form and two small tubes of blood being drawn.

"Your selfless act can give hope to someone who might not otherwise have that hope in beating a disease such as leukemia and other blood disorders," Jones said. "I'm making a special plea to everyone on Charleston Air Force Base and other local military members to come out and support this bone marrow drive. This increases the likelihood that patients from all racial and ethnic backgrounds will be identified with the closest matched potential donor.

"You never know if the person needing a bone marrow transplant could one day be one of your family members," Jones also said. **(Editor's note: Staff Sgt. Michael Duhe contributed to this article.)**

## Purple Dragon

continued from page 1

all occur simultaneously. Purple Dragon is an Army assault and forced insertion of an Army Strategic Brigade. Roving Sands is an air and missile defense exercise. Purple Caduceus is a medical exercise. Charleston AFB will participate primarily in the Purple Dragon exercise, which involves an emerging third world threat that results in a military coup.

The exercise is considered much larger than the Large Package Week training conducted monthly at Pope AFB. "All of the wings are using this exercise as partial Operational Readiness Inspection credit for airdrops and austere landings. The Air Mobility Command Inspector General will observe our performance. This marks the first validation of the IRC reinforcement of the Strategic Brigade Airdrop," said Lt. Col. John Zazworsky, C-17 mission commander at Pope and chief of wing safety. "We're bringing in more punch than usual and hauling in the heavy tank forces too."

"This is great training for our aircrews. It is not everyday that you get to practice medium to heavy weight landings at night on an austere runway with a steady stream of airplanes coming in and out. It is a good test of an aircrews proficiency," Zazworsky said.

All of the airdrops will occur at night, which allows the Army and Marines the cover of darkness to employ their ground forces. Charleston will only airdrop the Army forces. "This is why they want to employ their forces at night because it gives them a tactical advantage. Our first night of drops will be at Camp Lejeune with Marine aviation such as F/A-18s and AV-8Bs attacking. On the second

"It is not everyday that you get to practice medium to heavy weight landings at night on an austere runway with a steady stream of airplanes coming in and out."

Lt. Col. John Zazworsky

night, we drop more airborne forces at Fort Bragg with a full compliment of A-10s, F-16s and other attack helicopters clearing the way for heavy equipment drops, followed by the ground forces."

The sequence for the first night's mission is 17 C-130s and 6 C-17s dropping personnel, and the sequence for the second night's mission is 8 C-17s dropping heavy equipment, 17 C-130s and 6 C-17s dropping personnel, 14 C-17 assault landings, and 44 C-130 assault landings.

Lead planner for the exercise for the past nine months was Birge. He was responsible for coordinating all of the AMC agencies to pull off a successful exercise. "We've had to pull together the aircrew operations, TALCE, maintenance, aerial delivery and all the other support required to ensure that our people got valuable training from the exercise. It was very challenging because it incorporates every aspect of our tactical delivery mission. We will measure our success based on the quality of the realistic training that our aircrews and support elements got in this go-to-war mission for the Army and Marines."

Objectives for the exercise were 85 percent on time departure for all formations, all landings in the assault zone and off-load of cargo in 30 minutes or less, airdrop of 2,700 jumpers and 28 platforms within one minute of the time over the target and meet all refueling contact times for at least 10 minutes.