

FEATURE

Charleston team prepares for Top Dollar



Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith

2nd Lt. Andy Grab (foreground) and his teammates do one of the 160 push up required during their regular work out in preparation for the Top Dollar competition in Alpena, Mich., June 24-29.

By Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith 437 AW Public Affairs

Five members of the 437th Comptroller Squadron and two from the 437th Contracting Squadron are ready to prove their ability to function in an austere environment as they prepare for the Air Mobility Command Top Dollar competition in Alpena, Mich., June 24-29.

"The competition is geared toward real world scenarios like situations encountered during Desert Storm/Shield, Kosovo, Haiti, Mogadishu and numerous natural disasters that have occurred during the past several years throughout the world," said Tech. Sgt. Scott Hollabaugh, 437 CONS and team NCOIC.

Participants of the competition will be evaluated on how well they can set up in deployed locations and how well they can function with the minimum necessities.

"The contingency contracting officer's primary responsibility is to provide acquisition support to the deployed site commander to ensure that deployed personnel are provided the essential needs while at a deployed location," Hollabaugh. We are tasked with ensuring that all purchases conform to the Federal Acquisition Regulations while working hand in

hand with our Finance counterparts."

Master Sgt. Matt Harless, 437 CPTS and team coach said, "When deploying to a contingency location we are limited in the amount of supplies we can take with us. Often one of the first tasks is to obtain materials and labor in and around the local area to enable us to sustain military operations"

The team will deploy with a pallet of basic necessities to include forms, computers and money to support initial base set up and prepare for day to day operations.

Once a deployed location is ready, troops will arrive and normal operations will begin.

"We need to be able to keep a base running," Harless said. "Deployed people will still have financial concerns and we need to prove that we can assist

them."

The training for this event goes beyond financial knowledge though. Team members will be evaluated on other military aspects like self-aid and buddy care, information security and small arms.

"It's all about training," Harless said, "and we've been preparing since mid-March."

The team has been routinely doing physical training at the base gym and obstacle course.

"Our work out is harder than what the Marines and Army do," said Harless. "Being physically fit

goes beyond being ready for the obstacle course. The competition is very tough and being conditioned should help handle the stress of the long hours and mental exhaustion."

Team participants are also receiving extra training in their

primary jobs.

"The participants have to know every aspect of their job, not just their home-base specialty," said Harless. "When they're deployed they have to be prepared to handle any and every situation they may encounter and there won't always be someone there to offer assistance."

Staff Sgt. Julie Buie, a team member, said the training has helped her.

"It's been an awesome opportunity," she said. "I've become well rounded and better at my job as a whole."

Participants will also be evaluated on their ability to perform together.

"This competition builds teamwork," Buie said. "If you don't have a good team, you're not going to make it."

2nd Lt. Andy Grab said he feels the team will benefit from the competition and has every confidence that his team will come out on top.

"This year we are going to win Top Dollar! We've got the tools, the talent and the training to finish first," he said. "But more importantly, the Top Dollar Competition will provide us with the necessary experience to better support a deployment or contingency mission globally."

Top Dollar team members

Primary

2nd Lt. Andy Grab (Team leader)
Tech. Sgt. Scott Hollabaugh (Team NCOIC)
Staff Sgt. Frank Alfaro
Staff Sgt. Julie Buie
Senior Airman Jackie Dent
Senior Airman Robert Florio
Senior Airman Robert Simpson

Alternate

1st Lt. Delfrieda Hudson
Staff Sgt. Carlyn Brandt
Staff Sgt. Antwan Carlisle
Senior Airman Jeannine McGuire
Senior Airman Karen Myers