

Team Charleston sets standard again, succeeds in first AF 11-ship launch

If you were lucky enough to be looking skyward Sept. 26, you would have seen a first for Team Charleston and the Air Force; Eleven C-17s taking off in rapid succession, and all on time.

**Commentary by
Capt. Todd Cook**
437 AGS maintenance officer

Team Charleston experienced a local "surge" flying that had a large impact on day-to-day business. This surge is an increase in the number of aircraft flown each day. It doesn't sound like much, but it creates a great amount of other work that Charleston AFB's civilian friends outside the gate probably wouldn't notice other than a few extra launches each day. Right in the middle of this surge, CAFB showed true mettle and met the challenge.

It started with the 437th Operations Group. First, the 437th Operations Support Squadron gave the flying squadrons the workload and the squadrons did their best to spread the flying out over the course of the week. Both active duty and 315th Airlift Wing schedulers scoured their crew rosters for available pilots and loadmasters to fly the enhanced schedule. At that point, maintenance joined them at the table.

"Current operations assigns all the missions to the flying squadrons and notifies

maintenance of the missions," said Bill Caldwell, 437 OSS air operations specialist.

While the crews are getting their mandatory rest (as a safety precaution, aircrews are directed by regulation to get 12 hours of "crew rest" prior to any flying. If duty violates that time, the crewmember may not fly), maintainers are busy preparing each aircraft. This requires refueling, servicing the liquid oxygen systems, checking the tires for wear, inspecting every square inch of the skin for loose panels and configuring the cargo area, depending upon what kind of flying is scheduled. This could also mean aerial port may have to come out to load equipment or pallets onto the jet. Or, it could mean Electronic Countermeasures technicians have to bring flares out to be loaded.

Now, please keep in mind all of this assumes a problem-free launch sequence. If something should actually "break," it may stop most other maintenance or preparations until the problem is fixed. If that's the case, main-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Reed, 1 CTCS
Members of the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C., jump from a C-17 as Staff Sgt. David Becker, 14th Airlift Squadron loadmaster, monitors the jump during the 11 ship.

tenance usually puts its problem in the hands of the 437th Supply Squadron to get the parts to repair the aircraft. They have vast databases to search in order to find it. If not, they begin a DoD-wide search to see if anyone else has the right part. Needless to say, its not an easy process, and sometimes they have less than 20 minutes to get the part to the jet to make an on-time launch.

"We have been averaging eight minutes to get the parts to the customer," said Master Sgt. Phillip Presley, 437 SUPS, mission support flight NCOIC. "That includes pulling it off the shelf and issuing it to the customer."

During normal flying, a day with 10 launches would have

five in the morning and five in the afternoon, with about four hours in the middle. Each launch would be spaced 20 or 30 minutes apart so that a launch crew (two or three maintainers) could marshal out a jet, and then have time to move to another jet for a later launch. On Sept. 26, 11 aircraft were scheduled to launch at 10 a.m. All 11 aircrews were scheduled to arrive simultaneously, creating a bit of a crunch for the 437th Transportation Squadron to get them all there at once. All 11 aircraft had to be prepped the night before (after flying that day), and some of them did develop problems that had to be worked out.

Despite all the challenges

everyone faced, Team Charleston professionals did what has been done time and time again; Attack the challenge passionately, and meet it successfully.

Tech. Sgt. Rick Bolick, 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron, C-17 maintenance special operations NCOIC, said it best: "It generated pride seeing all 11 planes take off together, on time. If you've never seen it, 11 C-17s lined up on the taxiway nose-to-tail are quite a sight to see! A lot of hard work went into Tuesday's success, and the number one ingredient was teamwork - each segment of that team coming together to overcome what many believed couldn't be done."

Oktoberfest coming soon

By Tech. Sgt. Dan Murphy
437 AW Public Affairs

Oktoberfest, the Annual Junior Enlisted Block Party, will be held Oct. 20, 11:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. between the dormitories near Arthur Drive.

Food, drink and entertainment will be provided free of charge for attendees E-6 and below. All others will be charged \$5.

Food will consist of sauerkraut, bratwurst, sausages and potato chips. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks will be available.



The band, Big Black Building, who has performed at the Charleston Club, will perform live. Local radio stations, WSSX and the Wave, 96.1, will provide music in between the band sets.

There will be doorprizes and ongoing volleyball and basketball games.

All junior enlisted personnel are invited and will be excused from duty at 11 a.m. to attend the festivities. The Oktoberfest will be an alternate duty area. Personnel not attending need to remain in their duty area.

Parking on grass areas or in the turnarounds is not authorized. Use of the lodging, kennels and carwash parking areas is encouraged.

For more information, call Master Sgt. Matt Harless at 963-8004.

CAFB October promotions

To chief master sergeant:
Williams, Mary

To master sergeant:

Ford, Carlos; Harmon, Joseph, Jr.; Hughes, Terry; Moses, Carnel; Perry, Troy; Smart, Brian

To technical sergeant:

Downs, Anthony; Fox, Fredrick; Gibbs, Sally; Herzog, Theresa; Hiestand, Chad; Hohorst, Michael; Johnson, Phillip; Kuntz, Robert

To staff sergeant:

Chapman, Kristen; Collins,

Patterson; Colon, Daniel; Cook, Timothy; Dyess, Amy; Emmrich, Michael; Gilmore, Kellie; Gray, Jason; Harris, Aaron, Jr.; Hess, Robert, III; Hines, Deidre; Holtkamp, Clausell; Knappenberger, Eric; Larue, James; Lowery, Kenneth; Mack, Jerome; Mccloud, Keya; Medley, Murl, Jr.; Morley, Derrick; Odum, Theodore, II; Ricard, Kevin; Seymore, Amos, Jr.; Shaffer, Thomas; Stevens, Cheryl; Thompson, Brandon

To senior airman:

Conde, Peter; Edwards, Bryan; Norton, Jamin; Schneider, Keith; Tymes, Damien