

FEATURE

Air Freight Flight moves more cargo by 10 a.m. than...



The elevated transfer vehicle at the Air Freight Terminal makes moving cargo easier.

Story and photos by
Senior Airman Melanie
Streeter
437 LSS

When asked to describe the mission of his flight, Capt. Larry Earick, 437th Aerial Port Squadron Air Freight Flight commander said, "Like UPS, Emery or FedEx

we move cargo virtually anywhere in the world."

According to Earick, as part of the second largest aerial port on the east coast, the air freight flight moves 2,500 tons of cargo a month to locations in South America, the Caribbean and Africa, supplying embassies, commissaries and other constitu-

ents of the Department of Defense and the State Department in 30 different countries. There are currently 93 active duty and civilian members assigned to the flight. Operations continue around the clock, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"When a lot of the folks around base have a down day, we're still here working because mission requirements still need to be met," Earick said.

At present, the flight has worked 510 days without causing an aircraft delay. The flight also supports the Aerospace Expeditionary Force. Four members are currently deployed.

"All of our transporters are set against AEFs," said Earick, "Because all aerial porters have the same Air Force Specialty Code, the squadron can send personnel from all of the flights, so individual areas don't get hit as hard as they do in squadrons whose members have multiple AFSCs."

The key functions of the flight are packing, palletizing, loading and shipping different types of cargo from mail and munitions to household goods and hold baggage. The flight also ships cargo to provide the comforts of home to remotely located personnel.

"The BX and commissaries are our major customers," said Earick.

In August, members of the flight, in conjunction with the chaplain's office, public health and the legal office, turned a negative event into a positive humanitarian gesture.

When the Tanker Airlift Control Center cancelled an Aug. 23 C-5 mission carrying rations from Charleston to the commissary and dining facility at Soto Cano, Honduras, members of the flight realized some of the rations would spoil before the next available airlift.

Earick, 2nd Lt. Thomas Lessmann Master Sergeants Kenneth Glover and Frank Moore, Tech. Sgt. James Pride, Senior Airmen Andrew Harkleroad and Scott Wallis, Airman 1st Class Robert Wright and Joe Mosier from the APS, Chaplain (Capt.) Phillip Guin, 437th Airlift Wing senior protestant chaplain, Capt. Robert

Sonnenberg, 437 AW claims officer, and Staff Sgt. Albert Rhodes, Jr., 437th Medical Group public health inspector, inspected and repacked 15 large boxes of refrigerated rations.

Rhodes identified 3,200 pounds of milk, yogurt and kiwi fruit that would not stay fresh long enough for the next mission. The Chaplain's office contacted the local Food Bank who took possession of the food.

A spokesman for the Food Bank said, "Local organizations were already standing by and took delivery of the food to move it to the needy." For their efforts, Col. Robert Allardice, 437th Operations Group commander, recognized the air freight flight as the Operations Group Team of the Month.

The Aerial Freight Flight also serves as a Denton Program cargo center. The Denton Amendment, named in honor of retired admiral and former U.S. Senator to Alabama Jeremiah Denton, was established in 1985 as an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

The amendment allows donors to use space available on U.S. military cargo aircraft to transport humanitarian goods and equipment free of charge. The Denton Program Office was moved from Pope AFB, N.C. to Charleston in November 1999. Joint Relief International, the organization contracted by the U.S. Transportation Command, manages the Denton program.

Ken Hundemer of the Denton Program Office said, "Air Freight does a great job." Charleston's APS has moved 639,000 pounds of cargo so far this year, which is equivalent to 221 pallets and also includes vehicles.



Fred Gregston, 437th Aerial Port Squadron, guides a "tunner" into position to onload a C-17.



Staff Sgt. Randolph Scott, 437th Aerial Port Squadron, moves cargo from a truck to a pallet with a forklift.