



# News Release

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

**437th AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**  
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**Release No. 09-02**

**August 11, 2001**

### **CANDY BOMBER TO VISIT CAFB FOR BIRTHDAY BALL**

**CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C.** – Retired Col. Gail Halvorsen, the famed “Candy Bomber,” will visit Charleston AFB Sept. 14. During his visit he will speak to students at Hunley Park Elementary School, take a tour of the base and will be the guest speaker at the Air Force Birthday Ball.

In July 1948, Halvorsen volunteered for Operation Vittles, more commonly known as the Berlin Airlift. During that operation, he flew C-54 aircraft, delivering essential food, coal and other supplies to the Soviet blockaded city of Berlin, Germany.

Halvorsen, then a lieutenant, became affectionately known as the “Candy Bomber, Chocolate Pilot, Raisin Bomber, Schokoladen Flieger, Uncle Wackelfluger and Uncle Wiggle Wings,” after he started dropping small, candy-laden parachutes to the children of Berlin. This self-initiated act of kindness, on behalf of the starving children, blossomed into a unique activity within the “Big Lift” and was called Operation Little Vittles.

After a trip back to the United States on behalf of Operation Little Vittles, the operation became a national crusade supported by several towns and cities and by the U.S. candy companies. By January 1949, Halvorsen had air dropped more than 250,000 parachutes loaded with candy on the city of Berlin, bringing a little joy to nearly 100,000 children.

Since retiring from the Air Force in August 1974, with more than 8,000 flying hours and 31 years of service, Halvorsen has since returned to Berlin and Germany multiple times as a Goodwill Ambassador and to participate in ceremonies commemorating both the Berlin Airlift and his comrades who gave their lives so Berlin would remain free.

**(Media interested in meeting with Col. Halvorsen, or seeing him speak with students at Hunley Park Elementary School should contact Capt. Beth Szucs at 963-5537 or Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith at 963-5589 no later than Thursday, 12:00 p.m.)**