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512th Airlift Wing, Dover Air Force Base, Del.

Reserve crew hauls T-Bird team to international air shows

Senior Airman Joseph Yanik
512th AW Public Affairs

A C-17 aircrew from the 326th Airlift Squadron transported the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds' 42-person support team and their equipment from Dover Air Force Base, Del., to two international air shows July 3-7.

The Thunderbirds are based at Nellis AFB, Nev., and they tour the United States and much of the world, performing aerobatic formation and solo flying in specially-marked F-16 aircraft. According to their website, the pilots perform approximately 40 maneuvers in a demonstration. The entire show, including ground and air, runs about an hour.

The F-16s followed closely behind the C-17 to the air show at Royal Air Force Waddington Air Base, Lincolnshire, England, then to the air show at Koksijde AB, Belgium, where the C-17 and Thunderbird jets were among the first international aircraft to arrive. Maj. Jay Miller, aircraft commander for the mission, said a throng of plane spotters and news cameras were waiting there to greet them. Miller demonstrated one of the Globemaster III's maneuvering capabilities.

"The Belgian ground crews were amazed by the turning radius of the C-17," said Miller. "After trying to find a place to park, [we] assisted their ground parking plan by performing a maximum effort 180-degree turn to park exactly in place."

Miller and crew member Capt. Joseph Kodnovich agreed on two memorable aspects of the air shows. The first highlight was the aerial demonstration of the Vulcan Bomber, a British aircraft known for its bombing missions of the Falkland Islands in the 1980s. The second was the opportunity for the Thunderbirds' maintenance crew to assist in servicing Belgian Michel 'Mitch' Beulen's F-16. Mitch is a well-acclaimed demonstration pilot in the military aviation community.

Even though the C-17 wasn't exactly the star of the show, Tech Sgt. James Grove, 326th AS loadmaster, said he was still glad to be part of the mission.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Larry E. Reid Jr.

The U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron "Thunderbirds" fly the Delta formation July 6, 2011, during the Koksijde International Air Show in Belgium. A Reserve C-17 aircrew from the 326th Airlift Squadron hauled the Thunderbird team and their equipment making it possible for them to participate in this air show and another in England that same week.

"The Thunderbirds were really the tip of the spear," Grove said. "And, it was pretty cool to support them; they were really appreciative."

Both crews from the 326th AS and Thunderbirds Squadron worked well together, he added.

In all, the 326th AS flew 47 hours that week including an additional mission to Afghanistan, where they transported the remains of five Marines to a U.S. base in Germany.

From hauling personnel, equipment and supplies to transporting America's fallen heroes, the 326th AS plays a pivotal role in the air mobility mission.

AF officials release new dress, appearance AFI

Air Force Instruction 36-2903, Dress and Appearance of Air Force Personnel, has been updated and is available through Air Force e-Publishing at <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/shared/media/epubs/AFI36-2903.pdf>.

Notable aspects of the AFI, dated July 18, 2011, include:

- integrated public display of affection language,
- elimination of Friday morale t-shirts for flight suit wearers,
- added "dental ornamentation" as a prohibited item,
- exclusion of the Command Insignia

from the count of maximum badges authorized,

- added authorizations for cosmetic tattoos for medical reasons for both men and women,
- allows cosmetic tattoos for non-medical conditions such as eyebrows and eye liner for women (in line with other Services),
- tables now integrated into text and each uniform has its own section in the AFI, and
- photos of uniform combinations, drawings depicting hair standards, measurement tools for Airmen and Commanders to determine if tattoos meet standards.

OPM director addresses civilian hiring process

The Air Force is competing with Fortune 500 companies to attract the best and brightest people, so Air Force personnel practices must be fast, efficient and technology smart or those talented people will go elsewhere. That was the message when Office of Personnel Management director John Berry spoke at a town-hall meeting July 1, 2011, at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

The federal 80-day hiring model is getting closer to reality for most agencies, partly because of recent process changes, the director explained.

To read the full story, visit <http://www.afpc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123262453>.