CONTENTS...

Association News

Chairman’s Comments .......................................................... 2
President’s Message ..................................................................... 3
Secretary’s Notes ......................................................................... 3
Association Round-Up .................................................................. 4

Cover Story

Rodeo 2005 ................................................................................. 6-17

McChord AFB, Washington, Hosts the Return of Air Mobility’s Premier International Competition.

Departments

Corporate Close-Up .................................................................. 18
Corporate Member Spotlight: ......................................................... 19
L-3 Communications, Integrated Systems
AMC Operational Test & Evaluation ................................................... 20
Mobility News & Views ................................................................. 25

Convention Info


2005 Convention & Symposium Registration Form ....................... 28

ON THE COVER: With majestic Mt. Rainer as a backdrop, an AETC C-130J from Little Rock AFB, Arkansas, rolls along the flightline at McChord AFB, Washington, during Air Mobility Rodeo 2005. (A/TA Photo by Collin Bakse)
Homeward Bound²...

The cover story for the last edition of A/TQ was about Operation Babylift, which, for the first time, related the story of the Babylift C-5A crash written by the mission's aircraft commander, retired Col. Dennis “Bud” Traynor. The story was well received, and both Bud and I received calls and e-mails from members saying how much they appreciated hearing the story “straight from the horse’s mouth.” The story ended with a description of a trip being planned by Association Corporate Member World Airways to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the operation.

The special flight, “Operation Babylift: Homeward Bound,” took place in June and is now a part of the long and storied history of the operation. On board a World Airways MD-11, sporting 1970s livery, were 21 “adoptees,” young men and women who had been airlifted out of South Vietnam as orphans on their way to new homes and families in America. They were joined by their invited guests, many World Airways employees, a lot of media and several A/TA members, including Association chairman Gen. Ron Fogleman and his wife Miss Jane, myself, Bud and Pam Traynor, and Phil Wise.

It was an honor to be invited, and a privilege to participate in the historic trip. It was, as predicted, “an emotional and fulfilling voyage,” and will be featured in next edition of the magazine.

So why is this column titled Homeward Bound²? Well, immediately following the trip to Vietnam, I was on my way up to McChord AFB, Washington, to attend a Pacific Northwest Chapter luncheon and attend an Association board meeting. And, although I now call Illinois home, I graduated from Lakes High School, just outside McChord AFB, and most of my family still lives in Washington, so the trip was another homecoming of sorts. It afforded me the opportunity for an extended stay with my Mom and a visit with one of my brothers and his family – all in conjunction with doing Association business.

As you will read in this edition’s cover story, the return of Rodeo was a huge success. Everyone and everything, including the weather, contributed to Rodeo 2005 living up to the event’s reputation of being the “air mobility community’s premier international competition.”

It’s not often that one gets to participate in two homecomings in a single trip, so I will never forget June 2005. I sincerely thank Gen. Fogleman for arranging my participation in “Homeward Bound,” AMC PA for supporting my participation in Rodeo and the A/TA membership for supporting my efforts as editor of A/TQ.

Thanks for the memories!
Collin R. Bakse, editor

On behalf of the entire membership and the Board of Directors of the Airlift/Tanker Association, I congratulate General Norty Schwartz and General Duncan McNabb on their promotion to four stars and their respective assignments as the Commander of the US Transportation Command and the Air Mobility Command. The decision to no longer dual hat these positions is indicative of the growing complexity and demands of both commands. As TRANSCOM takes on more responsibility for Department of Defense supply chain management and works to more fully integrate its components, it will be very difficult for one individual to execute these tasks and provide the proper oversight and leadership to AMC in the middle of a Global War on Terror. We look forward to hearing from both of these newly minted four stars at the convention in Nashville this October.

We also want to congratulate General Buzz Moseley on his selection to be the next Chief of Staff of the US Air Force. In his current position as the Vice Chief he has been at the center of the tough issues in Washington: Base Realignment and Closure, the Quadrennial Defense Review and the budget battles to support the troops engaged in the War on Terror. Prior to that he was the Air Component Commander in the CENTCOM theater of operations during Operation Enduring Freedom. In my conversations with him it is clear that he understands and respects the value of air mobility forces. He is scheduled to assume the CSAF position in early September. We have invited him to give the keynote address at the convention.

With that kind of presence from the new Air Force, TRANSCOM and AMC leadership, along with our tribute to the founding members of the Association, you will not want to miss this year’s gathering. Your Board will meet in early August to finalize the program and review the logistics details associated with providing a world class personal and professional experience for the membership in Nashville.

World class is a term I do not use often or lightly, but it aptly describes America’s air mobility forces. In June, members of the Board traveled to McChord AFB to observe some of the competition and take part in the “Rodeo” experience. The troops were magnificent, the planning and execution was superb, the facilities were excellent and the presence of mobility representatives from our Allies made it special. It was a reminder of how well our mobility forces are trained and motivated. As usual, the awards ceremony was the highlight of the event….at least for the older crowd. Based on the noise coming out of the tent city each night the younger crowd may have had a different set of highlights – as it should be when you are young, motivated and the “best of the best!”

Miss Jane and I look forward to seeing you in Nashville. In the meantime, thanks to all of you, the troops who have made, and continue to make, Air Mobility the ‘Lifeline of Freedom and Hope.’

Chairman’s Comments

….thanks to all of you, the troops who have made and continue to make Air Mobility the ‘Lifeline of Freedom and Hope.’”
Hooah air mobility warriors! Thanks for your continued dedication to our great nation.

One of the duties of the A/TA President is to manage the Enlisted Tuition Grant (ETG) program. I am proud to report the Airlift/Tanker Association has just awarded our 100th ETG. That’s $20,000 to deserving enlisted personnel in four years. The ETG program began in April 2001 under the direction of former A/TA President, CMSgt (Ret) Bill Cannon. Membership in the A/TA, coupled with individual professional development in an educational program, is the basis for an ETG award. I congratulate all Airlift/Tanker Association ETG recipients on your record of continued success in achieving your educational goals. We hope your membership with the A/TA will create an environment of career success, education, and friendship.

Enlisted Tuition Grants are available to Air Force, Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve members pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees. The national board recently expanded eligibility to include all enlisted grades. Please see our association website (http://www.atalink.org) for more details and forms. We hope to receive your application soon!

The national board recently held our quarterly board meeting in conjunction with the Air Mobility Rodeo. Air Mobility Rodeo 2005 (sponsored by AMC) is the Mobility Air Force’s readiness competition focusing on improving worldwide air mobility forces’ professional core abilities. Team McChord did a wonderful job allowing competitors to showcase their airdrop, air refueling, maintenance, engine running on/offload, and short field landing expertise as well as the related skills of special tactics, security forces, aeromedical evacuation, and aerial port operations.

It was amazing to witness the enthusiasm among competitors representing more than 40 teams from the active duty Air Force, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard units as well as our Allied Nations. RODEO 2005 definitely enhanced the esprit de corps and positive relationships among all participants and Tent City was filled with excitement, cold beverages, good food and music! I would like to extend my gratitude to 62nd Airlift Wing Command Chief Ron Hernandez for his gracious hospitality during our stay at McChord. Great show Ron-thanks!

During the RODEO at McChord, the Pacific Northwest Chapter hosted an A/TA luncheon with enough stars and stripes to assemble several American flags. Frankly, it looked like a mini-A/TA Convention! Thanks to Chapter President, LTC Chad Manske and his team for sponsoring this event. I was extremely proud to witness our Chairman, General (Ret) Ron Fogleman present Miss Jane with a cherished Loadmaster award. I’d be honored to fly with Miss Jane anytime!

There are many volunteers who step forward with their time, talents, and contributions for our great organization. I would like to recognize Colonel (Ret) Paul McVickar for his hard work and efforts while producing the air mobility video shown at the A/TA Convention last year. Paul spent many hours producing and coordinating this historical and exciting video within the air mobility family for the association. Thanks again Paul (and SAIC) for your dedication and contributions.

In closing, many air mobility forces remain deployed serving our country. Our prayers and support are with you always. God bless you all.

Cabin Report...Secure!
**Association Round-Up**

**Pacific Northwest Chapter**

Members of the Pacific Northwest Chapter hosted the A/TA National Board at a luncheon at McChord AFB, Washington, on 24 June, as part of the chapter's bimonthly meeting. The board was visiting McChord to attend Rodeo 2005 and hold a quarterly board meeting in downtown Tacoma.

Col. Chad Manske, commander 7th Airlift Squadron, and president of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the Airlift/Tanker Association, addresses the audience at a special Chapter luncheon held 24 June to host the Association National Board of Officers. (A/TA Photo by Collin Bakse)

A/TA Chairman, Gen. Ronald Fogleman, addressed the large number of chapter members and base personnel who turned out for the event. With Rodeo 2005 coming to an end later in the day, General Fogleman began his remarks by applauding military and civilian attendees for the competition’s success, by saying, “I’d like to congratulate the senior leadership of this organization and AMC for having the courage and fortitude to put on Rodeo with the high operations tempo of his base.” He also thanked community contributors for their support.

During his address, General Fogleman took the opportunity to discuss the A/TA upcoming 2005 plans and programs.

“...The Association is healthy and plans to get healthier,” he said. “Right now there is enough money in the bank to ensure the future of the Association and to further the nation’s understanding of air mobility and air mobility warriors.”

To highlight how the Association helps to raise awareness of the air mobility community, General Fogleman said the board is currently studying how to assist Maxwell AFB, Georgia, with its effort to acquire a C-130 Hercules aircraft.

He went on to explain that the Association is going to focus attention on the A/TA Hall of Fame and the Association’s Founding Members during 2005. The A/TA Hall of Fame identifies and recognizes outstanding airlift and tanker individuals or groups whose sustained legacy of achievement has distinguished them in outstanding performance to the air mobility mission. One such individual, Medal of Honor recipient Col. Joe Jackson, was in attendance at the luncheon. He was inducted into the A/TA Hall of Fame in 1997 for his heroic actions as a C-123 Provider pilot in South Vietnam in 1968. Following his introduction by General Fogleman, Col. Jackson received a much deserved standing ovation.

General Fogleman then spoke briefly about the Association’s upcoming A/TA Convention \& Symposium, often referred to as “the mobility community’s premier annual event.” The annual meeting brings together the Association membership and the aerospace industry community for the Association’s Annual Business Meeting, various social activities and a series of professional development seminars and briefings.

“The convention’s theme this year is ‘Air Mobility: Lifeline of Freedom and Hope,’ explained General Fogleman. “We will highlight what (the mobility community) has done over the past several years. We will also honor the Association’s founders – and all the living founders will be present…”

In closing, General Fogleman made the Convention theme personal to every Airman working in air mobility.

“You’re at the heart of what we do,” he said. You contribute to the freedom of the not only our country but other, including Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan. You also provide hope through humanitarian airlifts, providing aid to people after devastating earthquakes, hurricanes, famines and tsunamis.


Pacific Northwest Chapter president, Col. Chad Manske, presents Ge. Fogleman a model of a C-17 to commemorate the Board of Officers’ visit to the Chapter. (A/TA Photo by Collin Bakse)

“(The A/TA) exists for one reason and one reason only: to support the air mobility mission...to provide a lifetime of freedom and hope to the world. Today’s air mobility warriors are tomorrow’s hall of famers.”

Following General Fogleman’s remarks, Pacific Northwest Chapter president, Col. Chad Manske, commander 7th Airlift Squadron, presented him with a C-17 model to commemorate the event.

**Secretary’s Notes – Continued from Page 3**

that I’m amazed at the energy, attitude, and “smiles on faces” even as you continue to operate at 110%. A big “thank you” to LtCol Chad Manske and all of the Pacific Northwest Chapter. Great leadership and participation is “obvious to the most casual observer.” I think you will agree that the partnership of United States, Allied Teams and supporting industry was clearly demonstrated.

Congratulations to all the participants for well representing their units. I can speak for each of the Board members as we shared the pride when a unit that we were personally attached to was recognized (that includes you 47 Squadron, RAF Lyneham).

Your Board is hard at work making preparations for the Convention in Nashville — see you there!

Cheers,
Barry
Could $200 help you achieve your continuing education goals?

Airlift/Tanker Association Enlisted Tuition Grants are available to Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees. If you meet the criteria, apply today! The A/TA wants to help you continue your education so you too can soar like an eagle.

**ETG CRITERIA:**

- Current Membership in the Airlift/Tanker Association
- Enlisted Member in Grades of E-1 through E-9
- Commander’s Recommendation
- Assigned in an air mobility operational and/or support function (an augmentee on a mobility or maintenance support team, for example), OR, anyone directly or indirectly supporting the USAF Airlift or Air Refueling mission.
- Classes must be completed as an active member of A/TA during the same calendar year as the submitted application. Exception: January/February applications can include the previous quarter classes (Sep-Dec) of the immediate past year.
- Checks will be issued upon completion of a course with proof of a grade of C or better in an accredited degree program
- Individuals are limited to one ETG per 12-month period.
- Student financial need is not a principal criterion
- May not be used for a lower or lateral previously awarded degree
- Additional details and forms are available online at www.atalink.org

**The A/TA ETG Program.**

**Working to improve America’s Air Mobility Force.**
After nearly a year of planning everything, including the weather, was in place for a “picture perfect” opening day ceremony at Air Mobility Expeditionary Rodeo 2005, held at McChord AFB, Washington, on 19 June 2005. Due to the global war on terrorism and high operations tempo throughout AMC, the six day competition, held 19-24 June, was the first Rodeo competition since 2000, when it was held at Pope AFB, North Carolina. Nearly 1,000 competitors from 30 U.S. teams, 6 participating international teams and 9 international observer teams took part in what has been rightly described as the Air Mobility Community’s “Premier International Competition.” Amazingly, the good weather held out for the entire competition.

Air Mobility Rodeo 2005 provided an opportunity to “train for the fight” while strengthening bonds with America’s international partners. It provided critical war-fighter training and skills enhancement in all aspects of mobility operations, including: airdrop, air refueling, aerial port, aeromedical evacuation, security forces, aircraft maintenance, assault landings, combat offloads, short-field landings and more. The skills demonstrated and perfected during Rodeo are crucial to success in the ongoing war on terrorism, and key to Air Mobility forces’ ability to provide short-notice humanitarian relief anywhere around the world, as they did during tsunami relief effort earlier this year.

To afford the A/TA Board of Officers the opportunity to interface with the Pacific Northwest Chapter, participate in Rodeo awards presentations and meet with the “Best of the Best” in the Air Mobility community, the board scheduled an Association board meeting to immediately follow the Rodeo in downtown Tacoma, Washington. Meticulous attention to detail by the Rodeo planners, the Rodeo wranglers, Pacific Northwest Chapter officers and McChord AFB and Rodeo Public Affairs personnel insured that 19-24 June was a week to remember...

Major potions of this story were developed from articles courtesy of AMCNS.
Special thanks to: 2nd Lt. Katherine Kebisek, TSgt Mark Diamond, SrA Jonathan D. Simmons, A1C Ashley Difalco, A1C Angelique Smythe, and Joe B. Wiles from Rodeo Public Affairs; and to Lt. Col. Kathy Lowrey, 121st Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs, SrA Paul Haley, 446th Airlift Wing Public Affairs and the McChord Air Museum. I also thank Lt Col. Bryan Lewis, Media Relations, AMC Rodeo PA, for affording me many excellent photo opportunities, and Lt. Col. Kathryn Barnsley, USAFR, AMC PA, for ensuring that I was able to attend.

With majestic Mt. Rainer as a backdrop, an AETC C-130J from Little Rock AFB, Arkansas, rolls along the flightline at McChord AFB, Washington, during Rodeo 2005. (A/TA Photo by Collin Bakse)
The horses seemed a little skittish. Positioned in the grass just off the flightline tarmac, and out of sight of the audience, they pranced in place, shook their manes and flicked their tails. Their riders, each holding a flag from a different nation skillfully kept them under control as they waited to take their part in the unfolding events. They horses calmed a bit when the sound system came online, seeming to sense that they would soon be making their entrance.

Opening day ceremonies for Air Mobility Rodeo 2005, held at McChord AFB, Washington, on 19 June, started in dramatic fashion when an Army Stryker vehicle exited the cargo bay of a McChord C-17 aircraft carrying the ceremony’s official party, including: Gen. John W. Handy, commander of the Air Mobility Command; Brig. Gen. David S. “Scott” Gray, Rodeo 2005 commander; Col. Wayne Schatz, 62nd Airlift Wing commander; Col. Murry Peterman, vice commander of the 446th Airlift Wing; and, U.S. Army Col. Mike Hanson, deputy commander of I Corp at nearby Fort Lewis.

Upon exiting the Stryker, the official party walked briskly past the hundreds of observers filling the bleachers, standing alongside and scattered across the hillside overlooking the gathering. They then passed in review along the front of a formation of the 1,000+ Rodeo competitors and observers assembled on the flightline, stopping occasionally to exchange formalities and shake hands, and mounted the reviewing stand.

Following official party introductions, the emcee welcomed the international participants by announcing that the flag of each participating country would arrive in true Rodeo style – on horseback – carried by the women riders of the Tacoma Lariettes Drill Team.

It was time and the horses seemed to know it. Stepping high and proud, they gracefully carried their riders, women from the Tacoma Lariettes Drill Team, across the tarmac – each rider carrying the national flag of one of the counties participating in the event. They passed in front of the spectators and the 1,000+ competitors, and took their places in a split formation on each side of the reviewing stand. First came the flags of the six International Competitors: Brazil, France, Germany, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. Then came the flags of the nine International Observers: Algeria, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman and Switzerland. Then came the flag of the host country, The United States of America, which arrived on the scene in true Air Mobility fashion – from above.

The crowd looked up, many cupping their hands above their eyes, searching for the first glimpse of Capt. Michael Jensen, a McChord AFB special tactics officer, gracefully descending through the air – with “Old Glory” waving in the wind. Capt. Jensen had parachuted from 10,000 feet to deliver the U.S. flag to the last waiting horse-mounted flag bearer.

As it stepped onto the tarmac, its long white tail flowing in the breeze, the all white steed seemed to understand that there was something special about carrying the American flag. Stepping a little higher and moving at a more determined gate than the other horses had, it didn’t flinch when the audience stood and the formation snapped to attention and rendered a salute. Horse and rider stood straight and still for the National Anthem. Following the arrival of the flags and the National Anthem, official party dignitaries addressed the audience –

General Handy’s Opening Remarks

“Rodeo is back!” announced General John W. Handy, commander U.S. Transportation Command and commander Air Mobility Command, looking out across the formation of Rodeo 2005.

“Keeping with the great tradition that began at Pope AFB, N.C., in 1962, teams from around the globe once again will compete to see who the “best of the best” is and to learn from the best.

“We are resuming Rodeo after a five-year hiatus. The Global War on Terrorism was, and continues to be, an incredibly demanding time for our people and on air mobility assets. During this time, you have been tested hard, but you have passed every challenge brilliantly. What you have accomplished is unequalled in the history of airpower.

“So, now is the time for our Total Force members and our international partners to showcase and share the skills and capabilities you have developed. Maintaining a strict adherence to safety further buttresses your professional talents as skilled aviators and combat support members. Your execution of safe practices and procedures will ensure Rodeo’s complete success. In addition to its operational focus, Rodeo is about you as competitors and your incredible talents. In the spirit of competition, Rodeo not only allows you to test your abilities against your peers, but to share that knowledge with one another and build bonds that will make us even stronger in our joint commitment for peace and security across the international landscape.

“I expect the competition to be intense, the requirements demanding, and the rewards great. In the words of General Douglas MacArthur, “On the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that, on other fields and other days, will bear the fruits of victory.”

“I look forward to another safe and outstanding Rodeo!”

Brid. Gen. Gray’s Opening Remarks


“It is a privilege to be among so many air mobility professionals gathered in the pursuit of excellence.

“Our international teams and observers come from around the globe. Our American forces come from Air Mobility Command, the Air National Guard, the Air Force Reserve, Air Education and Training Command, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Pacific Air Forces, and the Marine Corps. I am also excited to announce that for the first time in Rodeo history we are showcasing AMC’s vital Operation Support Airlift/VIP Special Air Mission.

“Rodeo is a warfighters’ competition; it is not just for show! All these teams will be competing to see who is “best of the best” in critical warfighting skills such as airdrop, air refueling, aerial port, aeromedical evacuation, security forces, aircraft maintenance and others.
The will to win drives them to excellence. It is this excellence that must continue to be honed.

“Air mobility has been the great enabler for the Global War on Terrorism and it will be even more so for the next conflict. There is no supply chain without airlift. There is no close air support without air refueling. Wounded soldiers do not return to their families without aeromedical evacuation. The success of air mobility since the September 11th attacks was not just “instant-on”; it was built on years of training and competition.

“Despite the ongoing demands of the Global War on Terrorism, we must provide continued, realistic and demanding training opportunities to all our mobility forces. Rodeo is absolutely critical to this effort. In the spirit of competition, Rodeo not only allows the men and women of air mobility to test their abilities against their peers, but to share that knowledge with one another and build the joint and international bonds that will make us even stronger.

“I look forward to commanding an outstanding Rodeo. Be safe. Be competitive. Have fun.”

Following the ceremony’s opening remarks the crowd was treated to a three-ship C-17 fly-by. Then came the announcement that everyone had been waiting to hear:

“Ladies and gentlemen, let the fight begin – Rodeo’s On!”

With those words, delivered with just the right amount of western-style bravado mixed with genuine enthusiasm, Rodeo commander Brig. Gen. David S. “Scott” Gray had kicked off the competition. As commander of the Air Mobility Warfare Center at Fort Dix, New Jersey, he had travelled a long way to oversee a competition designed to hone critical war-fighting skills and strengthen bonds with America’s international partners – a competition almost a year in the planning to ensure that the 2005 event would live up to event’s proud 40+ year history.

Over Four Decades of Spirited, Useful Competition

During its more than four decade long history Air Mobility Expeditionary Rodeo has been known by many names: Combat Airlift Competition; Volant Rodeo; Tactical Rodeo; Airlift Rodeo; but the purpose behind these competitions – Air Mobility readiness – hasn’t changed. The competition focuses on improving the core values of American and allied air mobility forces.

Rodeo, by any name, showcases airdrop, air refueling, aeromedical evacuation, security forces competition, short field landings and related ground operations, and provides an opportunity for the world’s best aerial refuelers and airlifters to demonstrate capabilities, improve procedures, compare notes, and enhance standardization for worldwide operations. It generates enthusiasm among team members representing the active duty Air Force, Air Force Reserve Command, and Air National Guard units as well as Allied Nations. Rodeo enhances esprit de corps and positive relations among the participants.

The first command-wide airdrop competition was held at Scott AFB, Illinois, in April 1962 as a combat skills competition designed to develop and improve techniques/procedures while enhancing air mobility operations, and promoting esprit de corps. The annual events were cancelled in the mid to late 1960s due to operational commitments in Southeast Asia and again in the 1970s because of declining budgets and decreased emphasis on airdrop capabilities. In 1979, Rodeo was reinstated and in 1980 expanded to include international air mobility Teams. Rodeo tests the flight and ground skills of aircrews as well as the related skills of special tactics, security forces, aerial port operations, aeromedical evacuation, and maintenance team members. It also provides valuable joint and combined training for all participants.

An important long-term benefit is increased cooperation between air mobility forces from several nations. Collectively, the ultimate goal of the competition is to develop and improve techniques and procedures that enhance air mobility operations. Spirited competition furthers that aim, while strengthening the mutual goals and bonds of friendship developed between competing teams.

Previous competitions have attracted up to 2,500 competitors. Although not designed as spectator events, Rodeo attracts commanders, distinguished visitors, and civic leaders from around the world to support their teams. In addition, several countries send crews to observe, but not compete in the events.

In 1994 McChord AFB, Washington, was selected as the new home for the Rodeo and hosted the event in 1994, 1996, and 1998. The 2000 Air Mobility Rodeo was held at Pope AFB, North Carolina, during the 62d AW conversion to the C-17. AMC support for the war on terrorism resulted in a significant increase in the operations tempo, making it impractical to convene Rodeo in 2002 and 2004 as originally planned.

In July of 2004, Gen. John W. Handy, commander of AMC and U.S. Transportation Command, determined it was time to resume the competition which had been on a three-year hiatus following the September 11, 2001, attacks, saying, “Our overall operations tempo remains high, but we can’t afford to wait any longer to resume this important competition. After all, it is this spirit of competition that builds strong bonds within AMC and lasting relationships between our AMC professionals and our international partners. I look forward to another outstanding Rodeo experience!”

General Handy named Maj. Gen. Christopher Kelly, then commander of the Air Mobility Warfare Center, Fort Dix, New Jersey, as the Rodeo 2005 commander, who responded to his selection by saying, “Planning is already under way for this great air mobility display. We’re putting together a world-class competition for our global mobility warriors. Air mobility has come into its own as a key component of all military operations. Rodeo not only recognizes the best of the best, but allows our Airmen as well as many of our international partners to learn and share new and better techniques in responding to international crises.”

When Brig. Gen. Gray took over command of the Warfare Center he was asked to take over the reins for the Rodeo.

Communications Airmen Piece Together Rodeo ‘Puzzle’

Months of preparation allowed McChord AFB officials to assemble the puzzle pieces necessary to run Rodeo 2005. Perhaps one of the most essential, and busiest, pieces of the puzzle was the 62nd Communications Squadron.

With more than 1,000 people coming to McChord for the one-week air mobility event, computers, internet connections, cell phones, radios and other communication services were needed to keep the competition running smoothly.

Initial planning for Rodeo communications began in July 2004. The 200 people in the squadron worked constantly since then to meet the competition’s needs.

“Everyone in our squadron has done something to support Rodeo because of all the infrastructure we’ve been (developing) over the
past year,” said 2nd Lt. Heather Lamb, project officer for Rodeo communications. The squadron had several augmentees from across the country working during the event.

One of the squadron’s first projects was upgrading communications within the lodging facilities. They ran new fiber and copper lines throughout the buildings and provided high-speed Internet access in distinguished visitor rooms. Another large project was setting up a new wireless internet network in the hangars and at Rodeo’s tent city. Besides the big projects, the Squadron also set up phones and computers, issued equipment and set up a network to transfer satellite imagery.

As people picked up their equipment, communications Airmen remained available to help with problems and requirements.

“We’re really ramped up in terms of the hours that we’re working,” Lieutenant Lamb said. “To support Rodeo, we’ve had to move our footprint forward so that we’re out where the Rodeo staff is.”

To meet the amount of communication support needed, there were three help desks for the competition.

“The main thing (we are) looking for is having a really quick support time,” Lieutenant Lamb said. “When things are happening, if communications go down, they need to get right back up.” The skilled airmen of the 62nd Communications Squadron made sure that everything stayed connected.

Phone lines and internet connections aren’t the only kind of communication challenges that present themselves during an international event like Rodeo – there are language barriers, cultural differences, and social situations that must be addressed. These challenges were met by employing two extremely different, but equally effective methods. Method 1: Provide highly competent, professional support; and, Method 2: Put everyone together in a big tent-city and let them work things out for themselves – building personal relationships and unit esprit de corps in the process.

446th AW Reservists – The “Good Hands” People

When international teams aircraft began arriving at McChord on 14 June, Reservists from the 446th Airlift Wing were standing by, ready to serve as interpreters, maintenance liaisons and sponsoring squadrons. Their services would help the international teams get the most out of their Rodeo experience.

Eighteen of the 27 Rodeo Interpreters were from McChord’s Reserve wing.

Liaisons from the 446th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and 446th Maintenance Squadron ensured the C-130 and C-160 crews had access to all they needed for the competition.

Three to five people were needed to support each international team, said Senior Master Sgt. Liz Milligan, superintendent, 446th Operations Support Flight and member of the Rodeo 2005 International Teams Committee.

In past competitions at McChord AFB – in 1994, 1996 and 1998 – interpreters from off-base were hired when military linguists were not available.

Finding all the necessary translators on McChord saved $7,000 from the Rodeo budget originally earmarked for contracted linguists, said Sergeant Milligan.

In addition to language skills, some of the translators brought valuable expertise in other areas. “Many of the interpreters come from a maintenance background and are pulling double duty as maintenance liaisons as well,” Sergeant Milligan said.

While several of the maintainers speak the language of the countries they’re hosting, technical terms aren’t used in normal speech and can be difficult to translate, said Tech. Sgt. Leonard Bernsdorf, a liaison for the team from Germany.

“We get the point across,” said Sergeant Bernsdorf, 446th MXS. “Sometimes it’s difficult, but there are ways around technical language. We may just end up pointing at something and saying what it’s called.”

The liaisons provided help with maintenance and assistance in locating equipment, supplies and parts for the maintenance crews of the competitors, said Tech. Sgt. Rafael Berman, 446th MXS, a liaison for the Brazilian team. “Things are going well. We’ve got plenty of people and we’re getting all the support we need from the units,” he said.

Tech. Sgt. Cameron Ames, 446th AMXS, is a maintenance liaison for the Saudi Arabia team. When they needed 40 specialized nuts for their C-130, Sergeant Ames was able to procure them locally.

“Since they aren’t used on C-17s, none of our guys had them in bench stock, so I had to go to the back shops to find them,” he said. The back shops can repair or fabricate many parts that aren’t immediately available.

In addition to providing help with maintenance needs, the liaisons helped members with personal issues.

“There’s the maintenance side of what we’ve been doing for them, and then there’s the expeditor side we’ve been doing too,” Sergeant Ames said.

The Saudi Arabia team didn’t have enough hotel rooms, cell phones or rental cars when they arrived, he said, so he helped the team find more.

In addition to the translators and maintenance liaisons, host units provided representatives to ensure international teams had everything they needed in areas other than maintenance. For example, the units coordinated time for the foreign pilots to fly with an instructor pilot to learn local flying procedures, said Linda Myers, a retired Reservist and International Teams Committee chairperson who had worked on four previous Rodeo competitions.

Four additional Reserve units from the 446th AW hosted international teams during Rodeo. The 97th Airlift Squadron hosted the French competitive team. The 86th Aerial Port Squadron hosted a Danish observer. The 446th Logistics Readiness Flight hosted a Columbian observer, and the 446th Maintenance Operations Flight hosted a Swiss observer.

Senior Master Sgt. David Goff, superintendent of load planning for the 86th APS, assisted 1st Lt. Ulrik Mikkelsen from the Danish Air Force.

“He’s here to observe the competition and report to his command on what it’s like and whether they should field a team for the next Rodeo,” said Sergeant Goff. “My job is to get him everything he needs and make sure he has access to all the events so he can accurately report on the competition. It’s been unbelievably easy to get him around and we’ve been getting exceptional service everywhere we go.”

The International Teams Committee connected all of the different programs geared toward the international teams. The committee acted as a liaison between the host units and helped with anything the units couldn’t handle themselves, said Master Sgt. LaDonna Couthran, 446th MXS, and a volunteer for the Rodeo International Teams Committee.

“Our job is to make the experience positive for everyone involved; to make sure Rodeo starts out on the right foot,” she said.

The international competitors got started on the right foot because they were in good hands, starting from moment they touched down.

Rainier Ranch: Culture + Entertainment = Friendship

Rodeo 2005’s tent city, Rainer Ranch, located just beyond the beautifully restored C-124C Globemaster and C-141B StarLifter on display on McChord’s Heritage Hill, provided Rodeo participants a great place for R&R between events. The air was alive with the smell of warm cheese, the rhythm of energetic music and flying volleyballs. Each tent at the “Ranch” featured a little bit of “home.”

A very social 40-man Royal Saudi Air Force team flew in on two C-130 aircraft, bringing with them various items that embody their culture. Central to the Saudi’s participation in Rodeo was “friendship building,” said Saudi Col. Ali Al-Amri, mission commander. To help achieve that goal they brought copious amounts of dates, tea, coffee and other dishes to share. When you stepped into their ornately decorated Rainier Ranch tent a sense of Saudi culture flowed from their dishes, rugs and pillows.
Former McChord Aircrew Members Earn the Distinguished Flying Cross

A major highlight for the A/TA Board members and staff visiting McChord AFB, Washington, for Air Mobility Expeditionary Rodeo 2005, was attending the Distinguished Flying Cross presentation ceremony for a five-member C-17 aircrew, who as part of a 15-ship C-17 armada airdropped supplies and 1,000 parachute troops into northern Iraq during the opening days of Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was an honor to witness the awards presentation – and to shake the hands of some of America’s finest.

By David Kellogg, 62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

For their extraordinary achievement in helping launch the 2003 invasion into northern Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, a former 62nd Airlift Wing aircrew received Distinguished Flying Crosses during a ceremony held 24 June at McChord AFB, Washington.


“This award is a small recognition for what these great Airmen have done,” said General Handy to the audience that packed the McChord base theatre. “You richly deserve it,” he said to the crew.

When Operation Iraqi Freedom started, the general explained that the U.S. Central Command was desperate to find a way into northern Iraq. The success of the invasion, already under way in southern Iraq, depended on getting a foothold in the north.

The U.S. Central Command realized the answer was to airlift the 173rd Army Airborne Brigade so it could overtake Bashur Air Base, Iraq, said General Handy. With an Iraqi airbase under U.S. control, a full invasion from the north could begin.

Under the cover of darkness on the morning of March 26, 2003, an armada of 15 C-17s were tasked to airdrop supplies and 1,000 sky soldiers into Iraq. The five Distinguished Flying Cross recipients led the formation.

As they prepared to depart, Master Sergeants Brumfield and Dockery discovered the platform of Javelin missiles needed for the invasion was rigged with an insufficient parachute. This presented a problem because if the missiles couldn’t be airdropped, the soldiers would have no heavy weaponry to fight the Iraqis, said Colonel Hershman.

Colonel Hershman had to decide whether to leave the missiles behind or to fix the problem and risk a late takeoff. With time running out, he extended the time the Army could fix the parachute.

Finally, just minutes before the scheduled takeoff, a replacement parachute arrived.

Sergeants Dockery and Brumfield directed each detail of the parachute swap and rushed the Army riggers off the aircraft just prior to the taxi time. The missiles were now ready for the airdrop.

According to a post-mission brief, “The decision to swap the chutes at the last minute was absolutely paramount to the overall success of the soldiers.”

“The Javelin missiles were just the tip of the iceberg,” said Colonel Hershman.

The sortie took off on schedule, but a massive sandstorm caused all air and land operations in Iraq to grind to a halt. The mission had many problems to include limited fuel, communication issues and bad weather, said Colonel Hershman. However, the colonel and his crew pushed on, hoping for a positive forecast for their mission.

Meanwhile, the loadmasters double-checked the rigging. As they crossed into Iraq, the weather showed no improvement. The crews needed to use night vision goggles to spot the drop zone, but bad weather made that impossible.

As they crossed into Iraq, the weather cleared. The C-17 formation rapidly descended to airdropping altitude.

“It was a little scary,” said Major Colvin. They had no fighter escort, and the crew could have been attacked. Captain Clausen, then a 1st Lieutenant, used an airborne battlefield intelligence program to avoid enemy fire.

As they made the final run toward the drop zone, Colonel Hershman and Major Colvin saw with their NVGs that the drop-zone markings were in a different location than what the pre-flight brief had shown.

Colonel Hershman immediately ordered a manual drop before it was too late.

Seconds later, the loadmasters manually released the load: three humvees and the missiles slipped out the back and into the night. Behind them, the other 14 jets dropped their supplies and troops. The drops were a success, and the jumpers quickly recovered their supplies. The second front in Iraq was open.

“We knew we could do it,” said Colonel Hershman.

“It’s kind of cliché, but we were just doing our job,” said Sergeant Brumfield.

All the members emphasized that they were just one crew of 15 that successfully completed the mission.
“We like to bring a piece of our heritage with us wherever we go – to show people our home,” said Colonel Al-Amri.

The Saudi air force won best international team at 1998’s Rodeo and the team this year hoped to repeat that victory. “We will win” was a common refrain in the Saudi camp.

Thirty-one Brazilians arrived on one C-130, with teams to compete in engine-running off loads, the combat endurance course, and maintenance and joint airdrop inspections. Their tent was recognizable by the lively music that came from within. The team generously provided visitors a lemon-flavored liquid delicacy called Caipirinha.

The team, sponsored by the 463rd Airlift Squadron at McChord, has been participating in Rodeo since 1985 and is strong in the air events, said Brazilian Maj. Marco Aurelio, chief of the 21st Troop Transportation Group. “We like to help people,” said Major Aurelio. “It is very important to enjoy life and we want to build a future of good relationships with everybody.”

The 26-member French team arrived in unusual style – aboard a C-130 Transal, which looks like a two-engine version of the more familiar C-130. The team included pilots, combat camera, technical maintenance and paratroopers.

“We want to showcase our flying experience gained in the last four years,” said French Warrant Officer Stephane Froideure, a public affairs specialist. “We’ve learned a lot about fighting (combat flying) in Afghanistan and humanitarian missions in Ivory Coast, Indonesia and Congo.”

The French tent was a self-contained Paris square-style bistro complete with red wine and cheese.

Twenty Pakistani airmen traveled to Washington State on a C-130E. Their team included pilots, navigators, engineers and maintenance technicians. The team expected to do well in the paratrooping, spot landing and short-field landing events. “We want to maximize the number of trophies and be the best international team,” said Pakistani Wing Commander Akbar Shaobi, team leader.

Their Rainier Ranch tent was stocked with rich Pakistani tea, which is similar in taste to cappuccino, and special beef and grain combination dishes.

“Enlightened moderation is our roadmap for Pakistan,” said Commander Shaobi, who explained that Pakistan is a country with diverse climate and elevation, and proud people. The Crescent moon on their national flag symbolizes prosperity and the star, new horizons. A new horizon of friendship was what they hoped to discover at Rodeo.

About 50 Royal Air Force airmen from the United Kingdom marshaled into McChord on a C-130 Mark III, a stretch version of the standard C-130. The crews expected to excel in the flying events. Their hopes included making friends and cementing the room where scores were recorded and winners were identified for the fifth Rodeo I’ve worked and it’s the most exciting,” he said. “The biggest difference is the security precautions taken, and the number of aircraft participating. The Rodeo is a great opportunity to see all the international teams come through and have been working as security – I look forward to the rest of the competition.”

The Wranglers were stationed at three main posts; the flightline, Rainier Ranch, and Hanger 3. They could be identified by staff t-shirts and ball caps. A select few of the greeters were in western shirts and hats during ceremonies.

Just like real-life horse wranglers, the Rodeo Wranglers were equipped to handle any task. So, as Rodeo participants bunked up for the night, the Wranglers corralled and coordinated everything for the next day’s events...the work of a Wrangler is never done.

Any Good Competition Needs Umpires

There was a room in a hangar here where only a select few were admitted, but every competitor at Rodeo 2005 wanted access. It was the room where scores were recorded and winners were identified for every event.

Providing the raw data for the score keepers in that room were 250 umpires – men and women who are exceptionally skilled at the events they were judging, said Royal Air Force Wing Commander Martin Walsh, the chief umpire for the competition.

“The umpires will be looking for checklist compliance,” he said. “In the cockpit, there may be one umpire, but for each ground event, there will be more looking at the activities from different angles.”

Event winners were calculated each night, but ongoing scores were
not revealed.

"...we’re not publicly revealing the ongoing scores," Commander Walsh said. “The clever ones would start adding up the scores and have a good idea of where the teams stand. We want some surprises.”

Maj. Scott Saunders, Air Mobility Command staff coordinator for Rodeo 2005, said the scoring would be conducted covertly, and only revealed at the Rodeo’s closing ceremonies.

Scores were tracked behind locked doors. Airmen of the studies and analysis division in AMC’s plans and programs directorate crunched the numbers.

Competitors were cautioned to not argue directly with the umpires. If a competitor disagreed with an umpire’s score, it could be appealed to the senior umpire for that event. What could not be resolved at that level was to be decided by the chief umpire – the final authority.

“Both sides will have different perspectives. That’s why we will need the impartial senior umpire to adjudicate,” Commander Walsh said.

“By virtue of being an expert in their Air Force specialty, our competitors will have strong opinions,” Major Saunders said. “We expect to hear some spirited discussions around tent city in the evenings.”

Many of the people selected to be umpires came from standardization and evaluation jobs. And that very fact would be their greatest challenge. “These guys are evaluators,” Wing Commander Walsh said. “They are used to jumping in when they need to. However, during Rodeo competition, they must sit there and observe.”

The only time an umpire could interfere was when safety could be compromised. Umpires could stop the event if they believed it necessary.

“Other than that, we expect the umpires to have no interaction with the competitors so as not to influence competitor actions and adversely (affect) their score,” Commander Walsh said.

That may be impossible, he said. “An umpire can inadvertently influence a crew by the simple act of writing something down,” Commander Walsh said. His advice to the competitors was to take no notice. “The umpire may just be writing down a lunch appointment.”

Guard and Reserve Teams Eager to Compete

Both the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve sent teams to Rodeo 2005.

A 19-person team from the 121st Air Refueling Wing in Columbus, Ohio, was the only Air National Guard unit competing in Rodeo 2005.

“It is our honor to be here and further the tradition of the citizen-Soldier,” said Maj. Dave Johnson, 121st ARW team commander. “We are proud to go shoulder to shoulder against the ‘best of the best’ in air mobility and showcase our strong commitment to the total force and Ohio.”

The 121st ARW was recognized as the best ANG wing in Ohio in 2004, as well as receiving the 2004 ground safety award for Ohio. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, wing Airmen performed 27 percent of refueling missions while flying 3,788 hours and 797 sorties.

The 121st ARW, which has 18 aircraft and about 1,400 people, is stationed at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base, the second largest Air National Guard unit in the United States, and has been described as a joint model installation by Dr. Mario Fiori, assistant secretary of the Army for installations and environment.

The wing’s Rodeo maintenance crew has nearly 160 years of combined military maintenance experience gained from worldwide deployments.

“We have never been more prepared to make Ohio and the Guard proud,” said Master Sgt. Kevin Cameron, maintenance team chief.

The 916th Air Refueling Wing at Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina, proudly carried the torch for the Air Force Reserve as the only Reserve refueling wing competing in Rodeo 2005. The wing flies the KC-135 Stratotanker.

“This is an opportunity to show our abilities to everyone else and to carry the torch of the Reserve command,” said Capt. Drew McDanold, 916th ARW maintenance team chief.

Captain McDannold said maintenance Airmen prepared for Rodeo by holding practice inspections and cleaning and maintaining the aircraft while still flying missions.

The wing’s Airmen have supported operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom along with other air and space expeditionary force deployments.

For many of the Airmen on Captain McDannold’s 10-person team, KC-135 maintenance is a full-time commitment, not just a weekend job.

Though 2005 was the first Rodeo for most of the team, Captain McDannold said he believed their operational experience would take them far in the competition, and the competition would help enhance their operational ability.

Competition From the Ground Up

Don’t let the “Air” in Air Expeditionary Mobility Rodeo fool you. And pay close attention the “Expeditionary” part. Most of the competitive events at Rodeo take place on the ground, even those involving aircraft, and all are designed to test and strengthen the skills needed by an expeditionary force. Maintenance competitions, aircraft on-load and off-load competitions, Security Forces tactics and endurance competitions, aerial port competitions and aeromedical contingency competitions to name a few – and for the first at Rodeo the Fit-to-Fight Competition.

Fit-to-Fight, worth a possible 300 points, stemmed from the desire of Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Force chief of staff, to include a competition focusing on fitness.

Before arriving at Rodeo 2005, teams were required to submit a roster from which Airmen were randomly chosen to participate in the fitness competition.

“[Air Mobility Command] wanted to do it that way to make it as fair as possible,” said Patrick Conway, McChord Air Force Base fitness program manager. Teams were informed which Airmen would be required to participate when they arrived on 19 June.

The event, which consisted of push-ups, sit-ups and a 1.5-mile run, was scored on a similar standard as the official Air Force fitness test. The difference being that rather than varying points for different age groups, there was one Rodeo standard to which all were held.

Team members who did not participate in the competition cheered on their teammates during the push-up and sit-up portion, as well as at the run’s finish line at tent city.

“Everyone’s very enthusiastic,” said Capt. Deborah Jones, event umpire. “The enthusiasm sets the pace for the entire week.”

The 715th Air Mobility Operations Group team from Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, finished first in the competition with a score of 297 points.

Another event that shows just how close to ground the competitions could be was held at nearby Fort Lewis. To win the Aeromedical Evacuation Endurance Course, and the 800 possible points, the five competing teams had to carry a 150-pound litter through eight obstacles – not including the 13 umpires, two visiting generals and one hundred million ants.

The fastest team to cross the finish line during the 20 June event
was the 86th Airlift Wing from Ramstein Air Base, Germany, with a time of 6 minutes, 22 seconds.

A quick finish and a solid performance was exactly what the Ramstein team trained for.

“We have been practicing almost every day,” said Staff Sgt. William Kellagher. “We were even practicing this week in the parking lot without a litter. We wanted to make sure we had the calls down and were prepared for today.”

Teams started off the competition with an untimed eight-minute warm-up hike. The clocks were turned on, however, when they reached the starting point. Carrying a 150-pound “sandbag man” in a litter, they soon encountered an uphill climb, a low-crawl portion, short and high walls to scale, rough terrain and a long trench to contend with.

“The trench was the hardest part for us,” said Staff Sgt. David Denton from the 18th Air Wing at Kadena Air Base, Japan.

Teams were scored on how fast they completed the course, followed commands, cleared an obstacle and handled the patient.

The ground events which involved aircraft tested ground personnel’s skills in handling passengers and cargo and their ability to ensure that the planes too were fit to fight.

A good case in point were the teams tackling the maintenance on the gigantic C-5s. There were a few things at Rodeo 2005 larger than the C-5 Galaxy. One was Mount Rainier. Another was the motivation and dedication of C-5 the maintenance crews.

One of those crews, the 10-person team from the 60th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., eagerly takes on the challenge of C-5 maintenance.

“It’s a challenge,” said Staff Sgt. Joel Pelletier, 60th AMXS, after the team’s first pre-flight inspection competition. “We work hard and accomplish more than crews with smaller aircraft.”

The Travis C-5B has the capacity to transport seven UH-1 Huey helicopters. However, for Rodeo that space was used to bring the Air Force Band of the Golden West to McChord.

With a wingspan of 222 feet and length of 248 feet, the C-5 is wider and longer than the C-17, the next largest airlifter competing at Rodeo.

The C-5’s aged airframe is unique and notoriously high-maintenance. “It’s a harder challenge than newer, smaller aircraft,” said Tech. Sgt. Rick Seegrist, 60th AMXS, “but it comes with a great reward.”

Travis has participated in every Rodeo since 1962.

The Travis maintenance Airmen have supported missions to Iraq; Kuwait; and numerous training missions.

The team members were selected by their supervisors as the best of the best, said Sergeant Pelletier. They began specifically preparing for Rodeo in March.

The team expected the competition inspections to be tougher than usual, but said their strength is in their camaraderie and their ability to work together to “get’er done” said Senior Airman Nicholas Eubanks.

Three C-5 teams competed in Rodeo 2005. In addition to Travis, the 97th Air Mobility Wing from Altus AFB, Oklahoma, and the 436th Airlift Wing from Dover AFB, Delaware, also competed.

Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch

In between competitions, and each evening, the participants headed to Rainier Ranch. Evenings at the Ranch were especially festive. The place was a beehive of activity. Event winners were announced and trophies were presented as the smell of barbeque and sounds of laugh-ters and music filled the air. Many A/TA officers and members were on hand to help present trophies. A/TA president Mark Smith presented a trophy for a C-130 event on behalf of SAIC, the company he works for; A/TA Hall of Famer, Col. Joe Jackson, presented a trophy proudly wearing his Medal of Honor; A/TA Hall of Fame Nominee for 2005, General James “Bagger” Baginski, presented a trophy; and long-time A/TA member and supporter Jim Bomberger presented a trophy on behalf of AAR. Lively music was a part of each evening’s events.

They’ve played for small towns, they’ve played for presidents; and they played for Rodeo 2005 attendees. The U.S. Air Force Band of the Golden West performed at the Rodeo’s opening and closing ceremonies, and they kicked-off festivities each night at Rainier Ranch.

“All night’s going to be something different. The 30 musicians are going to provide just about every kind of music that you can imagine,” said Senior Master Sgt. Sharon Johnson, command band manager.

Throughout the week, the band showcased their diverse talents, playing jazz, ceremonial music, country-western, classic rock, pop and even a bit of salsa.

2005 was the first Rodeo for the Band of the Golden West, stationed at Travis Air Force Base, California, but it won’t be the last. Rodeo commander, General “Scott” Gray, liked them so much he proclaimed them the “Rodeo Band.” Traditionally, the U.S. Air Force Band of Mid-America from Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, had gotten the job.

 “[McChord Air Force Base] is in the Band of the Golden West’s area of responsibility and they’re very excited and looking forward to being a part of Rodeo,” said Sergeant Johnson.

The Competition Takes to the Air

The airdrop and air refueling event at Rodeo 2005 included 33 international and U.S. aircraft on a mission to become the best of the best.

“These crewmembers were sent by their wings and their nations to represent them, having gone through intense training to hone their skills to be the best warfighters there are,” said Royal Air Force Wing Commander Martin Walsh, Rodeo 2005 chief umpire.

Competing aircraft included the C-5 Galaxy, C-17 Globemaster III, C-130 Hercules, KC-10 Extender, KC-135 Stratotanker and a French C-160 Transall.

The airdrop competitors were tested on their ability to deliver people or equipment on time and on target, to land smoothly and precisely during an assault landing, and to quickly and safely back into a small-scale ramp and unload combat equipment.

“The airdrop aircraft move simulated cargo and personnel between locations,” Wing Commander Walsh said. “Their mission represents a wartime mission. They have to make specific times when dropping paratroopers or a load on the ground. The air refuelers simulate their basic missions, which is to provide fuel on time at the right place to identified aircraft.”

Air refuelers were scored on being at the right place at the right time. If the receiving aircraft was in the same place at the same time, they received maximum points.

During these missions, umpires determined if they met criteria such as crossing over a designated point at the right time and following safety procedures.

“(The umpires) are not interfering in any way,” Wing Commander Walsh said. “If they see something that is dangerous, or potentially dangerous, they have to jump in and put a stop to it.”
Competitors received points for punctuality. They faced challenges such as taking off on time, weather or finding navigational points. “Because these are the best of the best, the biggest challenges are the unpredictable – the weather or the environment,” Wing Commander Walsh said.

Maj. Blaine Rochlitz, an umpire, flew on a C-130 with the 43rd Airlift Wing from Pope Air Force Base, N.C.

“They did a really good job,” he said. “We took off on time and pressed down to the route on time. They were doing good things. “I gave the crew the location of a simulated threat which they successfully avoided. They had to readjust in the air and fly a different course, which affected their time control. But they met that, and they did well.

“Some of the turn points that were picked for the competition are very difficult,” Major Rochlitz said. “I noticed the C-17 in front of us had dropped (its load) about 10 feet from the target. That’s really awesome.”

A drop within 100 yards of the target is considered good. A drop within 300 yards is acceptable, officials said.

“The C-130 crew (arrived over the target) eight seconds early, which is good. Normal tolerance is plus or minus 60 seconds,” he said.

“A lot of this stuff (the competitors) know how to do really well,” Major Rochlitz said. “It’s a competition between teams which are very good.”

The teams were scored on their ability to do an assault landing in the center of a 500-foot landing zone.

“They started at 9,500 feet and had to descend to about 8,000 feet,” Major Rochlitz said. “It was a challenging profile, but it’s also good to practice because that’s what we do in war to keep people on the ground from shooting at us.”

The team did assault landings at McChord and at Moses Lake (approximately 200 miles east of McChord). “(Pope) had good scores,” Major Rochlitz said. “It was a really strong ride overall, and the crew worked very well together. You could tell this was a crew who had a lot of experience. They didn’t get flustered, and they worked through everything.”

Another umpire, Maj. Richard Rachal Jr., flew with the French team in their C-160. They performed a nighttime low-level route between 2,900 to 3,400 feet. The crew flew without night-vision goggles. However, the umpires, Major Rachal and Royal Air Force Flight Sgt. Mark Pummerly, wore them.

“The French team didn’t fly with NVGs because in their country that’s not what they normally do,” Major Rachal said.

One of the crewmembers, French Capt. Paul Villemin, said the flight was quite interesting. “We chose not to fly with the night-vision goggles, but the umpires wore them. They saw what we couldn’t see with our simple eyes, so it was a little difficult, but the weather was fine and we were quite on target.

“The most difficult thing for us was to drop by night on the drop zone,” he added. “We didn’t prepare with any training for this type of flight so it was the most difficult thing.”

Major Rachal said the team identified all turning points. Four of their paratroopers had a drop score within 300 yards. Then they returned here to perform an assault landing.

“It was an interesting flight,” Major Rachal said. “It was my first time flying on a C-160, and it’s always interesting to fly with our allies and see how they do things. Their procedures are a little different than ours, but it’s always good to learn. That’s one of the good things about Rodeo – we get a chance to interact and learn from each other.”

An air refueling crew flew through a greater challenge on 20 June. Turbulence interfered with the 22nd Air Refueling Wing KC-135 flight and score.

“The scoreboard may not reflect how well we did,” said Maj. Timothy Vituszynski, a 22nd ARW pilot. “We lost some points from things that were pretty much beyond our control. We had some turbulence that hit us at a bad time. We walked away from it thinking that there were about 20 points we could have possibly saved, but the rest was up to nature and God.”

Umpires Lt. Col. Joseph Smarsh and Master Sgt. Jeff Whitteid the crew was well prepared, had great communication with each other and did a great job even during the turbulence.

“Their time over target was really good,” Colonel Smarsh said. “The only problem occurred when they joined with the (receiving aircraft). They had some bad luck running into turbulence, but overall, they handled it well. They have a good attitude, and they’ll do great during their next flight.”

Moderate turbulence began shortly after the KC-135 established contact with the C-17.

“I had to pull the boom off because they shot to the left...at a very rapid pace,” said Staff Sgt. Matthew Calisi, a 22nd ARW boom operator. “If I hadn’t disconnected and taken the 50-point deduction, I would have taken a safety-of-flight violation. Plus, we probably wouldn’t have been able to fly again because we would have ripped the nozzle right off the end of the boom.”

The umpires agreed that the 50-point deduction was better than a large safety deduction for not getting disconnected. A safety violation would have taken half of their points from the entire event.

And the Winner Is–

The 6th Air Mobility Wing at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, was named Best Air Mobility Wing on 24 June at the closing ceremony for following Rodeo 2005. But the real winners were freedom loving people around the world, because the Air Mobility Command’s international competition had focused on improving the skills of air mobility professionals, sharpening their airdrop, air refueling, aeromedical evacuation, security forces procedures, short-field landings and related ground operations skills – skills necessary for the successful prosecution of the Global War on Terrorism. By participating in Rodeo, aerial refuelers and airlifters demonstrated capabilities, improved procedures, compared notes and enhanced standardization for worldwide operations, all of which will ultimately make the world a safer place.

“I had very good discussions with (Gen. John W. Handy, AMC commander) about the success stories that have come out of this competition,” said Brig. Gen. David S. “Scott” Gray, Rodeo 2005 commander. “Events throughout the week...emphasized how correct his decision was to hold Rodeo 2005.”

Besides tipping his hat to McChord for the “over-the-top” support the base provided during the eight-day mobility competition, General Gray said the spirit, esprit de corps and morale of the international competitors was amazing.

Col. Margaret H. Woodward, 6th Air Mobility Wing commander, helps raise the Best Air Mobility Wing trophy high as the Wing team members celebrate their victory. A/TA Chairman Ron Fogleman (R) presented the trophy on behalf of the Association. (A/TA Photo by Collin Bakse)
“The international teams were great,” he said. “Their desire to roll up their sleeves and get involved with us is what Rodeo is all about.” General Gray also pointed to the lack of accidents and injuries during this year’s event.

“It has been an incredible week,” he said. “We’ve been absolutely lucky as can be with the lack of accidents and injuries. But you make your own luck. I think everybody has been vigilant and aware. They have had tremendous wingman considerations. We’ve had some great saves and some smart decisions.”

“I was really impressed by the spirit of competition and all the challenging tasks (the teams) have performed,” added Lt. Col. Steve Panger, Rodeo chief of safety. “They have a phenomenal safety record coming out of here. I’m very impressed by everybody’s attitude toward safety and how they always focused on the safety aspect of the competition events.”

The loud and raucous closing ceremony, which was broadcast live via satellite for the first time, was an inspiring and dazzling extravaganza, with flashing lights, amazing graphics and thunderous applause and cheers each time an overall event winner was announced.

A/TA Chairman, General Ron Fogleman, took part in the ceremony, presenting the A/TA General William G. Moore, Jr. Trophy for Combat Tactics Excellence to the 6th Air Mobility Wing for being named the Best Air Mobility wing.

Besides the award for Best Air Mobility Wing, more than 60 awards were presented throughout the mobility competition. Other award winners were:

- Best intransit Visibility Team: 62nd AW at McChord AFB, WA
- Best KC-135 Stratotanker Preflight Team: 19th Air Refueling Group at Ramstein Air Base, Germany
- Best Intransit Visibility Team: 62nd AW at McChord AFB, WA
- Best KC-10 Extender Preflight Team: 60th AMW
- Best KC-135 Shortfield Landing Crew: 97th AMW
- Best KC-10 Air Refueling Crew: 60th AMW
- Best C-130 Airdrop Crew: 314th AW
- Best C-17 Shortfield Landing Crew: 97th AMW
- Best C-10 Airdrop Crew: 446th AW
- Best C-5 Air Refueling Crew: 97th AMW
- Best C-130 Aircrew: 97th AMW
- Best C-17 Aircrew: 446th AW
- Best C-5 Aircrew: 60th AMW
- Best C-5 Air Refueling Crew: 60th AMW
- Best C-17 Airdrop Crew: 446th AW
- Best C-130 Airdrop Crew: 314th AW
- Best C-17 Aircrew: 97th AMW
- Best C-5 Aircrew: 60th AMW
- Best C-17 Aircrew: 446th AW
- Best C-5 Aircrew: 97th AMW
- Best C-17 Aircrew: 446th AW
- Best C-5 Aircrew: 60th AMW
- Best C-17 Aircrew: 446th AW
- Best C-5 Aircrew: 97th AMW
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- Best C-17 Aircrew: 60th AMW
- Best C-5 Aircrew: 97th AMW
- Best C-17 Aircrew: 97th AMW
- Best C-130 Airlift Crew: 43rd AW
- Best C-17 Airlift Crew: 43rd AW
- Best C-5 Airlift Crew: 43rd AW
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One Last Overlooked “Best of the Best”

A/TA President Mark Smith and I have decided to make an unoffi-
cial Rodeo 2005 award of our own – the “Best Tent Hospitality Award.” While all the tents we visited (and one or the both of us visited most if not all of them), each was unique and friendly. However, our favorite, far and away, was Altus AFB, Oklahoma’s 97th Air Mobility Wing tent. They hosted us, and all the A/TA members with us, in true Association style – they provided us with plenty of adult beverages, treated Medal of Honor recipient Col. Joe Jackson like the hero he is, clamoring to get their pictures taken with him, and generally treated us like part of the Altus family. And, last but by no means least, they rounded up a couple of gals (a loadmaster and a speech therapist) to ride the mechanical bull. Now, that’s hospitality!

Work hard, practice hard, volunteer …
Get to the next Rodeo any way you can!

A/TA • Airlift/Tanker Quarterly • Summer 2005 17
Based on the demand for exhibit space, we are going to have another great exhibition hall at our convention in Nashville. We will have 70,000 square feet of exhibition space available (our largest exhibit area to date) and it is filling up quickly. Many of our loyal exhibitors have requested additional booth space and I would interpret that to mean that A/TA is still considered a good value by our exhibitors. We greatly appreciate our industry partners and we want to do everything we can to meet their needs and expectations.

My goal is to provide exhibit hall space to all interested parties on an equitable, but prioritized basis:

1. Corporate Members (a key benefit of corporate membership)
2. Non-corporate exhibitors from our last convention
3. New exhibitors
4. Government exhibitors (Pro Bono) on a space available basis

Almost all of our corporate sponsors have been assigned exhibit spaces and I will next assign the non-corporate members. We will have adequate space for everyone wanting to purchase a space and we should also be able to accommodate most, if not all, of the government agencies that have made Pro Bono requests.

I recently sent corporate membership invoices out by email. These dues notices should have been sent out much earlier, but I have been focused primarily on management of the exhibit hall. In the future, most of the corporate membership management process will be done by Bud and Pam Traynor. We are developing a Corporate Member Data Base that should make it much easier to update and track the information that is currently gathered on the Corporate Member Application Form (such as points of contact, product/service information, corporate logo and corporate-sponsored individual membership, etc.). The more we manage the information electronically, the easier it will be for everyone.

Also new this year, we will host an exhibitor’s meeting at the convention to discuss how A/TA can better support our industry partners in the future (time and place of the meeting will be published on the program). The Chairman, General Fogleman, will also attend to personally thank all of you for your loyal support of A/TA. I am looking forward to another great convention – see you in Nashville.

Regards,
Bob
What do the C-82 Packet, C-54 Skymaster, C-46 Commando, C-47 Skytrain, C-57 Lodestar, C-121 Constellation, C-97 Stratofreighter, KC-97 Stratotanker, C-130 Hercules, E-4A Flying Command Post, VC-135 Stratolifter VIP Transport, C-141 Starlifter, C-5 Galaxy and the KC-135 Stratotanker have in common? Well, there’s the air mobility connection, and then there is the L3 Communications Integrated Systems connection. Amazingly, these are only a few of the aircraft touched by a series of companies that, through change and merger, has grown into one of the world’s most dependable aircraft modernization and mission systems integration companies.

A division of New York-based L-3 Communications, L-3 Communications, Integrated Systems (L-3/IS) is headquartered in Greenville, Texas, and major operations are maintained in Waco, Texas; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Avalon, Australia.

L-3 Communications is a leading merchant supplier of ISR systems and products, secure communications systems and products, avionics and ocean products, training devices and services, microwave components and telemetry, instrumentation, space and navigation products. Its customers include the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, selected U.S. government intelligence agencies, aerospace prime contractors and commercial telecommunications and wireless customers.

L-3/IS is recognized internationally as a systems integration organization specializing in the study, design, development, and integration of mission systems, and the modernization and maintenance of aircraft.

The company has modified more than 15,000 aircraft of more than 125 types, including many in the air mobility community.

Their expertise spans the design, development, and integration of advanced avionics, special purpose airborne systems and aircraft modifications for government and commercial customers worldwide. Their core business includes the modernization of cockpit avionics, integration of special mission electronic warfare and intelligence gathering systems, infrared detection systems, depot-level overhaul, prototype design, crash damage repair, installation of interiors and avionics systems and certification for the complete VIP and head-of-state aircraft.

L-3/IS has more than 6,000 employees organized into five major business units: Tactical Reconnaissance Systems, Surveillance Systems, Navy Programs, Special Programs & Services and Joint Operations Group.

Supporting Air Mobility

The company traces its roots back to the post-WWII era, when in 1951, as TEMCO Aircraft Corporation, it received its first contract and began a long history of supporting America’s air mobility mission. That first contract was for the overhaul of 100 C-54 Loadmaster aircraft used in the Berlin Airlift.

Over the next half-century the company experienced a series of name changes – Ling-TEMCO-Vought (LTV), Electrospace, Inc., (ESI), E-Systems, Chrysler Technology Airborne Services (CTAS), Raytheon E-Systems – emerging as L-3 Communication, Integrated Services in 2002.

Throughout its history the company has continued to support the air mobility mission – incorporating new technologies and services along the way – helping to improve and up-grade airlift and refueling aircraft used in every major conflict and operation since WWII: Korea, Vietnam, Just Cause, Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, Noble Eagle and Iraqi Freedom.

State-of-the-Art Facilities and Services

L-3/IS’s stateside facilities have grown precipitously since its beginnings as TEMCO at Majors Field in Greenville, Texas.

L-3/IS’s aircraft maintenance and modification centers at Greenville and Waco, Texas, are fully equipped to offer comprehensive engineering, modification, and maintenance services for any size aircraft, from business aircraft to the largest civilian or military aircraft.

The full service capability at both sites and their close proximity gives L-3 customers unusual program flexibility and decreased risk.

The facilities are each fully equipped to provide a full range of technical services, from engineering complex structural modifications to large, multi-engine aircraft, mission system design and integration, and installation and test, to routine maintenance and contractor logistics support.

In addition to its Texas facilities, the Joint Operations Group of Aircraft Integration Systems is the contractor-operator of the Government-owned Special Operations Forces Support Activity (SOFSA) headquartered at Bluegrass Station in Lexington, Kentucky. The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida administers the contract. Aircraft Integration Systems is responsible for providing comprehensive logistics support operations and maintenance located at three principal sites in Lexington and Richmond, Kentucky, with 25 additional locations in 12 other states and four OCONUS sites.

Supporting the A/TA

Every iteration of L-3/IS after TEMCO has supported the Association. Thanks!
Growth in air traffic has historically challenged air traffic service providers, air carriers, and the military. The air traffic control system requires significant upgrades to increase system capacity and flight efficiency while continuing to meet flight safety standards. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and other Civil Aviation Authorities (CAA) are implementing a new air traffic management architecture to meet this need. The many functions packaged together in the CNS/ATM concept seem best suited to provide the answer.

The KC-135 Global Air Traffic Management (GATM) program was the first military implementation of CNS/ATM. GATM is providing the KC-135 fleet with an integrated CNS system to comply with evolving concepts in commercial air traffic management, meeting new requirements for operation in national and international airspace. The most critical technological elements of the new CNS/ATM environment are satellite-based navigation, increased use of datalinks for pilot/controller communication, and improved surveillance to enhance both ground and cockpit situational awareness.

Silence is golden...This is especially true if the alternative is the “static-crackle-pop” of the HighFrequency (HF) radio heard en route during an oceanic leg while waiting for a foreign controller to relay clearance instructions. Silence however is just one of the many rewards afforded crews who fly using Controller Pilot Datalink, or CPDLC. This technology, coupled with many others, comprises the proposed architecture of Communication, Navigation, and Surveillance for Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM).

The AMC Test and Evaluation Squadron (AMC TES) conducted an operational test (OT) of the KC-135 GATM Block 40.2 aircraft configuration in January 2005 to support Operational Approval of the system by AMC. During the OT, test crews evaluated the system by employing it in air traffic environments throughout the world. Using operational crews from the 92 ARW, the test team set out on a 19-day journey from Fairchild AFB, WA, to put
the system through its paces and determine its value to the AMC community.

After picking up four new F-16D fighters from the Lockheed Martin production facility in Texas, the formation set out to deliver them to their new home overseas in the Pacific. The AMC TES chose to observe test activities on this mission due to the variety of airspace accessed and the timeline proposed for the mission.

En route, the crews sought to evaluate the new capabilities provided with the Block 40.2 upgrade. These capabilities included Selective Availability/AntiSpoofing Module (SAASM) upgrades for the Global Positioning System (GPS), an Ethernet-based database loading system, software upgrades to fix deficiencies found in earlier testing, a new Identification Friend-or-Foe (IFF) transponder Emitter Location System, and an Enhanced Ground Proximity Warning System (EGPWS). All of the changes were nicely packaged with more intuitive menus, easily accessed by the armrest-mounted hand-controller.

Flight-testing was only a small part of the overall evaluation. To complement the 45 hours of flight-testing, over 190 hours of ground testing was conducted. Maintenance crews from the 92 ARW tirelessly removed and replaced components wearing a multitude of weather and combat ensembles to determine the suitability of the system for operational use.

Overcoming challenges that are common for crews employing a 45+ year old aircraft on a tight flying agenda, the pilots and maintainers were also forced to exercise the most advanced military CNS/ATM system in the AMC operational fleet. After whizzing through hundreds of menus and functions, working with dozens of control facilities and systems, and pouring through mounds of questionnaires and data, the flight test team determined that the upgrade was indeed a valuable improvement over the baseline system.

In all, the test team determined that the GATM Block 40.2 aircraft could operate suitably and effectively in both civil controlled airspace and the Area of Responsibility (AOR) to support military operations and could be generated at the rates required to support such flight operations. Furthermore, the mission management process was capable of supporting GATM aircraft operations, as were the support forces and infrastructure. Finally, it was concluded that the Block 40.2-specific system enhancements were indeed effective.

Not bad for the Air Force’s oldest jet-powered tanker now leading the way for the mobility forces of tomorrow. Next up for similar technologies are the C-5, C-17, and KC-10. Stand by for more golden silence!

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New System Improves KC-135 Performance, Saves Money

by Mary Wagner, 72nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs

After years of development, the wheel and brake system improvement program for the KC-135 Stratotanker is ready for implementation by Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center workers at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma.

The steel brakes currently used on the KC-135 are being replaced with carbon brakes which allow the aircraft to complete 1,000 landings, as compared to 100 landings, before needing replacement, officials said.

"The reliability and maintainability of the whole system has improved," said Eduardo Ortega, an engineer for the 327th Tanker Sustainment Group. He added that the new system could last up to 10 years instead of the average one-year lifespan with the current setup.

The changes could save the Air Force $583 million throughout the life of the program, said Cathy Klea, the group's program manager.

Chris Couch, an equipment specialist for the 327th TSG, said other changes resulted from the project. They include brakes operating on three rotors instead of five, a pressure of 3,000 pounds per square inch instead of 965, and using different wheels on the aircraft.

"There's less maintenance on the aircraft, (thus) saving money on parts," Mr. Couch said. "Plus, it performs better."

The improvement program originated from the invention of the carbon brake in 1968, but the brakes did not appear on aircraft until 1985. Since then, carbon brakes generally have been found on primarily commercial U.S. aircraft rather than military. With a $144 million spending allotment, the aircraft would handle certain conditions better, the performance of system exceeded their expectations."

Despite the magnitude of the program, Ms. Klea said it might expand in the future. After flight tests showed a "45 percent reduction in stopping distance" under certain dry runway conditions, Ms. Klea said, officials wanted to further improve the new system.

"There's a push to capture what we couldn't in the basic program...improved performance," Ms. Klea said.

"When this program first started, they had a hunch that it would improve performance, but they didn't know how much," Mr. Ortega said. "The flight test proved that there was an improved performance in some areas, so now the program will be extended to help capture it and help create technical manuals that reflect it."
The Mobility Community's Premier Annual Event!

27-30 October 2005  Nashville, Tennessee

Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center
2800 Opryland Drive • Nashville, TN 37214-1295 • (615) 889-1000

Events Overview

Thursday, October 27th
- Registration* & Banquet Seating Reservations
- Golf Tournament

Friday, October 28th
- Registration* & Banquet Seating Reservations
- Exhibits Hall Activities
- Awards Presentations
- Lunch

Saturday, October 29th
- Registration*
- Exhibits Hall Activities
- Awards Presentations
- Lunch

Sunday, October 30th
- Farewell Brunch

*Registration will close 15 minutes prior to evening events.
†Banquet Seating Reservations end at 1800. No seating reservations will be made after the cut-off time.
**Various awards will be presented during certain symposium seminar blocks yet to be determined.

All events and times subject to change.

Convention Information Contacts:
Hotel Room Reservations & Info: See www.atalink.org for Main Hotels Information
Room Assistance (Association Help): Miles Wiley: Miles.Wiley@dhs.gov
Convention Information & Registration: Bud Traynor: (703) 385-2802 | ata@atalink.org
Golf Tournament: Wally Herzog: (817) 573-1554 | wherzog@sargentflethcher.com
Magazine Advertising: Nick McCollough: (478) 923-0968 | nmcollough@ray.mgacoxmail.com
Convention Symposium / Seminars: Doug Lynch: (321) 508-4752 | dlynch@symetrics.mil
Convention Exhibits: Bob Dawson: (951) 270-3065 | bob.dawson@smiths-aerospace.com
Airlift/Tanker Quarterly Articles/Stories: Collin Bakse: (618) 235-5070 | bakse@apci.net

Register Early and Save!
Submit Your Registration by 20 September and Save $67.00!(Compared to On-Site Registration)
Registration Form on Page 28.
2005 Convention & Symposium Rules of Engagement

We know that the instructions for the registration form have become quite lengthy. But this is to allow the maximum flexibility for the registrant. Without the complexity, cancellation and refund opportunities would be impossible. There are limits to the flexibility however. When Bud and Pam move to the convention site (approx 22 Oct), so moves the A/TA “headquarters” office. The A/TA office phone, (703) 385-2802 will be forwarded to Bud’s cell phone. If you can’t reach them that way, call the hotel and track them down. Every year, we have soulful requests for exceptions to our rules on refunds, including membership refunds. We don’t grant them. Ever. No duty or family emergency releases you from your responsibility to cancel or from the cancellation fee.

Overview:
- First check your membership status at www.budtraynor.com. You will need to enter your SSN.
- Before registering, RE-ACTIVATE YOUR CARD by calling the 800 number on the back of the card! After less than a month of non-use, Government cards get turned off for no apparent reason. Please call them first – it is very likely not active.
- Then read all the instructions below, especially the cancellation instructions.
- Visit the website, www.atalink.org to register (secure) and pay dues using separate cards if desired, or copy and send the form in this issue (page 28).

Frequent Answers:
- Member Rates: $215 by 20 Sep, 2400 EST; $250 by 20 Oct, 1700 EST; $282 Onsite.
- The Member Rate is a member benefit. To register at the member rate, your membership must be at least current through November. The membership fee is non-refundable – even if you subsequently don’t attend FOR ANY REASON.
- Visa, MasterCard or checks only (no AMEX., Discover, etc.) with card number, exp date, SSN, email address and signature. We currently cannot handle purchase orders or bank transfers.
- While our convention fees are extremely low, please bear in mind that partial registration is an attempt to accommodate those individuals who cannot attend the entire convention, e.g., the visiting associate who is in for the day, or an award-winner guest. Partials are not meant to reflect the cost for an individual event. Rather it is a reduced convention fee for that period of the convention that may include food. More than two partials can exceed the cost of early registration. You are usually much better off to pay full registration - particularly for accompanying spouses! Full registration is cheap. Please keep our fees in perspective.
- Use one form for a registrant and one non-member, social guest. Guest registers at member registration rate. If you have more than one guest, please contact us for instructions. Banquet-only registrations are permitted.
- Spouses who are A/TA members should complete separate forms.
- Full registration includes all events (except golf and your hotel).
- Members may receive the $215 early rate only if a completed form and full payment are postmarked or received by 20 Sep. CAUTION: You may have great difficulty getting through on 20 Sep because of others who also put it off. After 20 Sep, the higher $250 pre-convention rate will prevail – no exceptions. Incomplete forms OR payment will NOT qualify for early rate. Payment must accompany form, regardless of method of payment. On error, please do not send duplicate or “updated” forms. Call or email us.
- Postmark all mailed registrations NLT 13 Oct. No faxes/web/mail can be received after 1700 EST 20 Oct (office closed). We prefer no cover sheet for faxes. You may register at the A/TA registration desk upon arrival at the $282 on-site rate; however, banquet seating is not guaranteed.

Cancellations:
- Send one form only. Do NOT fax THEN mail. Do not try to send payment one way and the form another.
- And no, you can’t pay now and send names later.

Membership:
- Membership must be current through November to register at the member rate. The membership fee is non-refundable. Ever. If you wish to register at the member rate and need to pay dues, please do it on the same registration form -- even if you are paying for registration with an IMPAC card (you can use 2 cards on the form).
- No need to first become a member separately.
- Armed with your SSN, you can check your membership at www.budtraynor.com.

Registration:
- Do not send a cover page and do NOT send a “corrected copy.” If you have a correction, just call or email us. Payment must always accompany the form, regardless of method of payment or form. Registration forms with checks MUST be mailed together. Marrying them up later is too time consuming and error generating. If you send a form via fax or mail or email, please do not send it a second way, or send twice. Everyone with a valid email address will be sent an email confirmation when the registration is processed.

Early registration ($215) is only an incentive to register early for
continues on page 26
administrative processing reasons – not just for early payment of the money. This means, for example, if you do not have the name of a registrant, you cannot just pay by the deadline and get an early rate. Similarly, if you want to register someone after the early registration deadline, you must pay the higher rate for the new person as appropriate. The canceled person will be reimbursed at the rate paid (less cancellation fee and dues, if applicable). If you choose to fax your registration form, recommend you not wait until the last day. If the fax machine is too busy for you to get through, we will not receive your form “early,” and the higher pre-registration rate ($250) will apply. If you need to have your account charged by a certain date, be sure to indicate it on your form. Credit cards otherwise may get charged immediately or some time later, depending on workload.

To register at the member rate, membership must be current through November. The membership fee is non-refundable. Members may receive the early rate only if this completed form and full payment are postmarked or received by 20 Sep. Incomplete forms or incomplete payment do not qualify for early rate. Use one form for a registrant and non-member guest; your guest registers at the member rate. Spouses, who are A/TA members, should complete a separate form. We can take VISA or MC only with SSN and email address, card number, exp date, and signature. (NO AMEX or Discover). Full registration includes all events except golf.

Postmark all mailed registrations NLT 13 Oct to ensure they arrive before the office moves to the hotel. After that, plan on web or fax NLT 1700 20 Oct, or registering at the hotel Wednesday on-site ($282). Onsite registration does not guarantee banquet seating will be available.

No Substitutions

There can be no substitutions. Individuals may be canceled and individuals may register. Specifically, no one may capture someone else’s early rate after the early deadline. We cannot “bank” funds. Remember a new registration must have all information supplied on a new form. Dues are neither transferable nor refundable to a person canceling. (See cancellation instructions above) This includes IMPAC card transactions.

IMPAC Cards or Group Registrations

If use of IMPAC cards or other group registration is approved, do not mail or fax the form in this magazine: All completed registration forms, including dues payments if applicable, must be received at the same time via web registration (www.atalink.org). All tracking must be managed at the local level. We treat all registrations as individual registrations. If any person is submitted who is not a current member through November, we will charge $30 dues to the IMPAC card if that is the only card given. Alert your IMPAC card monitor to this possibility. Some units have individuals give paper copies (with a separate credit card for dues ) to the card manager who then keys in the registrations with the IMPAC card number. It is not necessary to do membership first; please do both on the registration form.

It will be usually possible to query the database directly at www.budtraynor.com for your membership and registration status.

Faxes:

No fax cover sheet is necessary for membership or convention registration forms. Save your time and our paper; all arrive in a closed office. Cover sheets are usually discarded. But if you do fax the form, do so only with credit card full payment for membership and registration. Please do not send a fax with the intention of mailing a check. Faxes arriving without payment will likely be discarded.

No faxes/web after 1700 EST 20 Oct. You may register at the A/TA registration desk upon arrival at the on-site rate.

Exhibitors:

There is usually some confusion. The Exhibit-floor-only rate is meant to cover the food events in the exhibit hall for the exhibit workers who are not generally participating in the social events. As a paid-booth-space benefit, each exhibit, regardless of size, gets 3 certificates that can be used in lieu of money for an Exhibit-floor-only registration. This allows some exhibitors to operate on a slightly tighter budget. This certificate cannot, however, be used as partial payment toward anything else. In practice, most exhibitors just pay normal registration so they can attend all events. Please see www.atalink.org/exhibitors.html.

Banquet Seating:

Along with your Association’s popularity comes complexity. In recent years, we have tripled the number of folks attending the Saturday night banquet. What that means is that we continue to push the capacity of our banquet seating and our ability to assign specific seats. To manage the process, we have instituted some procedures to maximize the service to all who wish to attend this superb event. Key to this is that you make your seating preferences known early in addition to registering for the convention.

Pre-Convention Banquet Seating Sign-up:

We will take seating requests starting 30 July. Please download the seating request form and send it via email to Bob Ford at robert.g.ford2@boeing.com or bobford01@comcast.net. Please provide the last four of your SSN to aid us in matching you up with your paid registration, as well as your real first and last names, the ones you used on your convention registration.

Your banquet sign-up date (priority in seating) will be based on when your banquet seating reservation is made. While you are invited to request seating at any time, your banquet sign-up date will be established when payment is received. And while we will take seating requests from anybody -- Chapters, Units, Groups, or Individuals – the preferred solution is to get block checks with your respective chapter/unit reps so your name is only submitted once.

For the chapters/units/groups, that means all seats you submit for your group must have a paid A/TA registration. Without it, that individual will be “bumped" from the chapter/unit/group seating request. Remember the priority: FIRST SIGNED-UP, FIRST SEATED! Email submission cutoff for seating requests will be 1700 Thursday, 20 October.

Award Winners will be seated as a group with one spouse/guest. Special guests/family may be seated at tables nearby providing Award Winners put the request in the remarks portion of their registration form and inform Bob Ford using the request form mentioned above.

On-Site Banquet Seating Sign-up:

We will try to accommodate everyone, however, preferred Banquet Seating cannot be guaranteed onsite. The Banquet Seating Sign-Up which will be located next to the A/TA Registration desk, will be open Thursday and Friday, the 27th and 28th of October, from 0900 – 1800. The CUTOFF for onsite banquet seating will be 1800, Friday the 28th. Those arriving Saturday without prior seating coordination will be not be given a seating preference.

Prior to the Banquet, in-progress seating charts will be posted daily about noon in the Banquet Seating Sign-Up Area. A final Banquet seating chart should be posted 1800, Saturday, 29 Oct. If you have paid for the Banquet and have not shown up on the seating chart, you will be seated at non-assigned tables.

• Note: Should banquet sign-up exceed facility capacity, Banquet Registration may be stopped and the 1800 Friday banquet seating- cutoff time may be moved up. Check the A/TA web site or the A/TA Sign-up Booth for the most current information.
C-130J Conducts First-Ever Combat Airdrop

by Staff Sgt. Chyenne A. Griffin
U.S. Central Command Air Forces Forward Public Affairs

Air Force history was made 30 June 2005 when the newest addition to the cargo fleet proved its capabilities during the first-ever C-130J Hercules combat airdrop.

The new J-model aircraft has been put to the test on various missions both at home and abroad on numerous occasions to ensure it meets all requirements and continues to maintain its reputation as the Air Force’s workhorse.

Another perfect opportunity presented itself when Army ground forces requested civic assistance and troop re-supply drops in Afghanistan, officials said. The Combined Air Operations Center air mobility division went to work on the day’s air tasking order to match the right aircraft to the job: the C-130J.

“As coalition ground forces interact with the local people, they are constantly on the lookout to improve local health and welfare,” said Army Chief Warrant Officer John Robinson, CAOC battlefield coordination detachment plans officer. “The air component has been extremely supportive in pre-positioning both aid bundles and aircraft to quickly meet the needs of the ground component. Afghans, particularly women and children, benefit from this vital assistance.”

A cast of many came together to ensure this mission’s success. A crew from the Rhode Island Air National Guard’s 143rd Air Wing at Quonset-Holland ANG Base and deployed to the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing flew this first J-model airdrop mission. This deployment of the C-130J into Southwest Asia since June 7 is the second time the new model has been in the U.S. Central Command theater of operations.

Behind the scenes, maintainers did what they do best, ensuring preparedness – even changing out an important component on the morning of the mission.

Officials, including those from requirements, intelligence, tactics, flight following and air traffic control, have a stake in every mission flown and had placed a keen eye on this test of the J-model’s credibility.

When the aircraft lifted its wheels off the tarmac and pointed its blunt nose towards Kandahar Air Base in Afghanistan to pick up the day’s load, all minds were on the mission at hand, officials said. Army ground personnel were waiting on the ramp to load approximately 16,000 pounds of aid bundles – which included food, water, tools, blankets, school and work supplies for villagers and food and water for coalition ground troops -- into the mammoth belly of the aircraft. Its “stretch” capacity provides for two additional pallet positions.

“That anything that comes off an airplane with a parachute attached is our job,” said Army Chief Warrant Officer 2nd Class Eugenia Emmons, a parachute rigger with Alpha Company 173rd Support Battalion, and one of the support troops waiting on the ground. “It can become monotonous until something like this comes along and you realize that you have a part in a line of supply that can save someone’s life.”

After the cargo was loaded and the parachute riggers and loadmasters ensured everything was set to go, the aircraft once again soared into the air. Everyone then prepared for the airdrops, coordinated to run concurrent with the operational maneuvering of Combined Joint Task Force 76 on the ground.

Master Sgt. Sean Ballard and Tech. Sgt. Kyle Gurnon, the aircraft’s loadmasters, readied the cargo on the way to the first drop zone, also maintaining a watchful eye out of the aircraft’s windows for any sign of anti-Coalition militia.

Then the time had come. The ramp door opened and the aircraft commander dropped the rear of the aircraft slightly to assist the load in sliding smoothly off the rollers and out back of the plane. The austere terrain of Afghanistan was momentarily blocked by the opening of the chutes, signaling the first successful part of the drop.

“This whole aircraft is still cosmic to me,” said Sergeant Gurnon. “Just coming off (C-130) E-models makes all the little time-savers in this J-model all the more obvious – the built-in rollers, the (center-line vertical restraint) that guides the bundles out, the electronic locks that ensure we can safely control the cargo locks from several places in the aircraft.”

Before there was even time to think, information came in to the aircrew about the results of the first airdrop and the preparations began for the second.

Once again, the aircraft dropped to the appropriate altitude and the container delivery system bundles slid down to the earth. The loadmasters finally told time for a smile.

“It’s a blast. It just happens so fast you can’t really appreciate it until it’s over,” said Sergeant Gurnon. “Hours of groundwork go into 30 seconds of pure adrenaline when those doors open and you’re coming in on the drop zone.”

All the crewmembers had their initial reservations about the reduced manpower requirements of the new model (two pilots and a loadmaster -- no navigator or engineer), but proper situational awareness and crew resource management ensure the mission actually comes off cleaner, they said.

“I’d rate the J-model at quite a bit more capable than the E-model,” said Lt. Col. Dan Walters, aircraft commander. “(The manufacturer) did a good job of automating tasks that the engineer and navigator perform (in the other models). Although having (fewer) bodies in the cockpit limits your flexibility at times, the advantages outweigh the risks – better performance and lighter crew load, which means less people into a danger zone.”

The loadmasters still buzzed around in the rear of the aircraft, returning the plane to its original air-land configuration, as the pilot and co-pilot, Lt. Col. Bernie Duskievicz, began the route home.

“The mission, intra-theater airlift, couldn’t be done without the C-130. It’s the right airplane for the job,” said Colonel Walters. “It can handle the full gamut of missions -- surface and pavement, dirt landing zones, airdrops -- and it can handle the vast majority of the loads we need to carry. As an aircraft commander, it’s a very credible aircraft to fly and it’s pretty tough to get bored on this plane. Can’t think of anything else I’d rather fly.”


“The contribution to the war effort we provide is profound – anywhere, anytime, anyplace,” he said. “Supporting the warfighter is what we are about, it’s all we are about, and we’ll do whatever it takes to deliver what he needs to execute his mission. That is the essence of (tactical) airlift and that’s what sets us apart from everybody else.”

With the mission successfully complete, the plane landed to find another group waiting on them – maintenance personnel -- ready to take the plane over again and make sure it is just as good to go the next time around. A mission planner was at work in the CAOC, starting another day’s ATO to plan just that.
Airmen Teach C-130 Ops to Iraqis, Learn About Sacrifice

by Tech. Sgt. Melissa Phillips, 407th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

When a crew of instructors deployed to Ali Base, Iraq. (Ali Base, situated near the city of An Nasiriyah, in south central Iraq, is the main airfield in southern Iraq from which Iraqi, coalition and U.S. Airmen operate. Until January, coalition forces called the base Tallil. Now, all use the legacy name: Ali Base] to teach Iraqi airmen the finer points of flying and maintaining C-130 Hercules, they knew they had a monumental task in front of them. But what they found was something unexpected.

Slowly over several months, Iraqi and U.S. Airmen have developed lifelong friendships with the very men they previously called enemies. “Our instructors are more than just a friend,” said Iraqi air force Capt. S, a maintenance officer with Squadron 23. “We are like brothers.” Names of Iraqi airmen were withheld as a means of force protection.

The squadron is the first medium airlift postwar Iraqi air force flying squadron and is now more than 100 airmen strong. More than 30 advisory support team instructors, all assigned here to either the 777th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron or 777th Airlift Squadron, teach their Iraqi counterparts in aircrew and logistics specialties.

The team also maintains a few specialized jobs such as maintenance operations center controller, sortie support section, production supervisor, maintenance officer and superintendent.

Master Sgt. Patrick Shaw, an aerial port instructor deployed from McChord Air Force Base, Wash., said coming here has revealed a new world to him. He teaches students who previously subscribed to a different philosophy on how to get the aerial port mission done.

Before learning the U.S. aerial port processes, the Iraqi students would go straight from the aircraft to the battlefield, Sergeant Shaw said. Under the old regime, Iraqi airmen did not have the same level of accountability over cargo and people. So it has been an interesting process of getting them to understand why the paperwork is so important and will help reduce duplication of effort in the long run, Sergeant Shaw said.

Most of the Iraqi airmen have been doing the same job on other transport aircraft for years, some for longer than a few of the U.S. Airmen have been alive. Although the Iraqi air force has a solid foundation in transport flight processes, it still has not been an easy process to access their past experience.

Master Sgt. Tommy Lee, a flight engineer instructor, and his other teammates have had to find new and inventive ways to bridge the language gap.

“Time one I had to explain in six different ways why the instrument panel wasn’t lit up,” said Sergeant Lee, who is deployed from Little Rock AFB, Ark. “One of the students had skipped a step on the checklist, and it took me 30 minutes to explain what it would have taken less than 30 seconds to explain to a U.S. Airman, because of the communication barrier.”

In the beginning, there were no interpreters. Now the unit has three.

Despite the obstacles, in less than six months the first Iraqi air force pilot and co-pilot flew alone without a U.S. pilot in a flight seat position, and the first navigator was fully qualified. Plus, more than 65 Iraqi air force mechanics have received their equivalent of a 5-level certification and are now working toward their 7-level equivalent.

“These are the best people I’ve ever worked with,” said Tech. Sgt. Aaron Havens, an electrician and environmental instructor deployed from Pope AFB, N.C. “They pay attention, they like to keep everything clean (while performing maintenance), and with them it’s all about the airplane.”

The students are continually struggling to understand a new language and different ways to do things while simultaneously fighting for their lives and worrying about keeping their identities secret to protect themselves and their families from harm by insurgents.

But for them, they say it is worth it because they no longer fight for just one man – they fight for their country.

For Captain S, who was also an officer during the previous regime, that shift in mentality is priceless.

“I recently went to visit an Iraqi solider in the hospital,” he said. “He had lost both his legs, and we went there to comfort him. When we were leaving, we told him, ‘May God be with you.’ He called back out to me, ‘For Iraq, I would give up my whole life, not just my legs.’”

Most of the Iraqi airmen have businesses or farms and are relatively well off already. But when the opportunity came to return to the service they love, regardless of the risk, they jumped on it.

Since Jan. 14, when the squadron was officially formed, the airmen have been sneaking in the shadows and many have hid their allegiance to the Iraqi air force from family and friends, some even from their own wives.

Captain S’s wife, concerned for her family’s safety, continually pleads with him to quit and has also asked his father to pressure him. But the captain, whose own son does not know he is currently serving, said, “If I don’t do it, who will?”

“I dream that Iraq will someday be safe,” he said. “We will be at peace, and at peace with our neighbors. I wish for a civilized country and a better place for my children.

“I try to teach my son to respect the armed forces when he sees them in the streets,” he said. “One day when he grows up, I want him to know his father sacrificed during the worst period in his country in order for his children to have a better Iraq.”

Flight Engineer J also fights for the same dream and a chance to build a new Iraqi air force.

He has been a flight engineer for 10 years, but until now has never felt able to express concerns to his superiors because of his lower rank.

“I’m impressed at how Americans treat each other as far as rank,” Engineer J said. “They treat each other equally. During the previous
regime there was a huge difference between a flight engineer and pilot. Now, we work together.

“Because of the treatment we’ve experienced from our instructors firsthand and the friendship they’ve shown us, it’s made me change my views on all Americans,” he said. “We understand the true (meaning of) American kindness.”

Both Iraqi airmen said one of the proudest moments in their lives was during the ceremony when the Department of Defense gave three C-130 Hercules to the squadron, and the Iraqi air force placed the Iraqi flag on their own planes. The second was when they saw one of their planes take off and fly for the first time.

“We are so proud to be the first unit to fly Iraqi air force planes,” Engineer J said.

Their pride is contagious.

“This is the pinnacle of my career and the most rewarding job I’ve ever had in my Air Force career,” Sergeant Shaw said. “This job has given me a lot of insight to working outside your comfort zone. You really get a front seat to how other peoples’ actions (affect) organizations across the board.

“My students will continue to teach new students, and what we started here will allow them to move their forces and security folks to where they’re threatened to secure their nation,” he said.

From the start, Sergeant Shaw realized the historical significance of his job, but said he did not realize how strongly he would feel for the plight of his students.

“You get very close to these guys and you want to see them succeed,” Sergeant Shaw said.

He and the other instructors know their students’ family members by name and take an interest in their daily lives and vice versa. Some of the instructors and students have the other country’s flag in their homes and can recognize the sound of the other servicemember’s spouse on the other end of the phone.

“We get incredibly close to each other and our families get involved,” Sergeant Haven said.

The relationship between the two country’s airmen has not been all perpetual seriousness.

“I remember one of the first times our class shared a laugh together was during a training session where I was teaching them hand signals so they can marshal cargo properly,” Sergeant Shaw said. “Well, one of my students was trying to do more than one signal at a time, and he looked like an orchestra conductor.

“That became his nickname for a while,” he said. “Everyone had a good laugh and that’s when I realized we really weren’t so different.

“Sometimes it’s overwhelming to know how much of an (effect) you’re making when you’re in the middle of it,” Sergeant Shaw said. “But then you realize you’re helping specific people -- specific people I know by name -- and we are helping them to succeed.

“I don’t know what history will write, but if this is the smallest footnote or biggest chapter in history, I’ll never forget it,” he said.

McNabb Nominated to Command AMC

President Bush has nominated Lt. Gen. Duncan J. McNabb for the rank of general and to command Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

General McNabb is currently Director for Logistics, the Joint Staff, Washington, D.C. General McNabb provides direction and guidance to the military services and combat support agencies in planning and coordinating logistics operations, to include strategic mobilization, medical readiness, civil engineering, and humanitarian and contingency operations. The general is responsible to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense.

General McNabb graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1974. He has held command and staff positions at squadron, wing, major command and Department of Defense levels. These positions included duties as Chief of the Logistics Readiness Center with the Joint Staff where he was responsible for operational logistics and strategic mobility support to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. During operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, General McNabb commanded the 41st Military Airlift Squadron, which earned Military Airlift Command’s Airlift Squadron of the Year in 1990. The general commanded the 89th Operations Group, overseeing the air transportation of our nation’s leaders, including the President, Vice President, Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. The general then served as Commander of the 62nd Airlift Wing. The wing’s performance in 1996 earned the Riverside Trophy as the 15th Air Force’s outstanding wing. He also commanded the Tanker Airlift Control Center where he planned, scheduled and directed a fleet of more than 1,400 aircraft in support of combat delivery and strategic airlift, air refueling and aeromedical operations around the world.

General McNabb has served as Director of Programs with the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Programs, Headquarters U.S. Air Force. He also served as Chairman of the Air Force Board and had oversight of all Air Force programs. Prior to assuming his current position, the general was Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Programs, Headquarters U.S. Air Force.

If confirmed by the Senate, General McNabb will succeed Gen. John W. Handy, AMC commander since November 2001.

Mobility Graduate Course Celebrates 10th Year

On 27 June, 16 more officers graduated from the Advanced Studies in Air Mobility program at the Air Mobility Warfare Center at Fort Dix, N.J. The class brought the alumni of mobility experts envisioned by now retired Gen. Ronald R. Fogelman more than a decade ago to 157.

General Fogelman, while serving as commander of U.S. Transportation Command and Air Mobility Command during the 1990s, recognized the need for an educational program to bridge the tanker and airlift missions, and mold the future Air Force leaders with a thorough knowledge of air mobility. From his vision, the ASAM program was born, with its first class of 10 students in September 1995.

In a recent interview General Fogelman said, “I am proud of what the school has done in the first 10 years of its existence, but its full impact is just now beginning to be felt as those early graduates move into senior leadership positions.”
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b.) We prefer you instead register online with credit card (secure) at www.atalink.org

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- Friday Evening Reception (Food, Refreshments & Exhibits) $82 _______
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