

Previewing...



58th AS supports South American humanitarian missions

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97th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

2/23/2011 - **JOINT BASE CHARLESTON, S.C.** -- More than a year after the earthquake that devastated Haiti, members of the 58th Airlift Squadron from Altus Air Force Base, Okla., delivered 10 pallets of food and building material to Port-au-Prince, Haiti and seven pallets of food to Managua, Nicaragua in support of humanitarian aid operations Feb. 19-20.

"We got to actually go out and do a mission," said Maj. Matthew C. Martin, 58th Airlift Squadron pilot and mission commander. "That is what we do [at Altus] - train people to do the mission. So to get the opportunity to go out and do a mission ourselves and make sure we are still teaching correctly is one of the reasons we do this."

Both deliveries were made possible because of the Denton Program.

The Denton Amendment is a commodities transportation program that is jointly administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense. It allows for the transportation of humanitarian goods on a space available basis using U.S. military transportation. The program was initially created to use the extra space on U.S. cargo aircraft that were flying supplies into Central America.

The crew took off from JB Charleston Feb. 19 and headed for Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Ten pallets were offloaded and picked up by Haitian citizens and American volunteers from the Apostolic Christian World Relief program.

When the crew arrived in Haiti, there was a group of about 10 people waiting to help and manage the unloading of cargo. Some were Port-au-Prince Airport employees and others were from the Foundation Bethel d'Haiti, which is a local organization providing humanitarian aid by building infrastructure and delivering food to those in need.

"This was a great opportunity for us to do both our training mission, as well as provide humanitarian aid," Major Martin said. "It is great for the U.S. to be providing assistance to those who need it."

After a brief hiatus at JB Charleston, the crew took off for Managua, Nicaragua Feb. 20. The seven pallets of food from the World Mission Outreach Center were offloaded and the crew then returned to JB Charleston.

Evidence of the January 2010 earthquake are the piles of rubble and camps with dozens of tents seen in Haiti. Both Haiti and Nicaragua have vast amounts of open land and towering mountains stemming into rolling hills with small compact urban areas.

"We delivered 26 tons of building materials and food to Haiti and 24 tons of food to Nicaragua," said Tech. Sgt. Jim A. Hader, 58th AS loadmaster.



JOINT BASE CHARLESTON, S.C. -- Ten pallets of food and building materials in support of relief operations in Haiti, sit in a C-17 Globemaster III from Altus Air Force Base, Okla., before being delivered. The food and building materials were delivered by members of the 58th Airlift Squadron, and was made possible by the Denton Program, which allows donors to use space available on U.S. military cargo aircraft to transport humanitarian goods and equipment to countries in need. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kenneth W. Norman)