

Active duty associate squadron a first for Air Force

by 2nd Lt. Kelly George
314th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

7/10/2006 - **CHEYENNE, Wyo.** -- In a July 8th ceremony at Cheyenne (Wyoming) Municipal Airport, the 30th Airlift Squadron became the first active-duty associate squadron, marking a groundbreaking partnership between Air Mobility Command and the Wyoming Air National Guard.

Under the active-duty associate concept, the 30th AS will be the first active-duty air mobility squadron to operationally report to an Air National Guard unit.

The Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Airlift Wing will provide operational support and aircraft to the 30th AS and the active-duty aircrews. Administratively, the 30th AS will report to the 463rd Airlift Group, Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., which will provide funding, equipment and personnel.

The 30th AS and the Wyoming ANG will share C-130 Hercules aircraft and other assets to provide support to combatant commanders in theater. Nearby F.E. Warren AFB will provide support including housing, medical treatment and amenities to Airmen and their families.

The 30th AS was officially reactivated July 1 with an initial staff of 10. By the end of October, the squadron will gain 64 more authorizations, for a total of 74 people.

Col. John J. Gomez, commander of the 463rd AG officiated at the ceremony, presenting the 30th AS guidon to Lt. Col. Steven L. Hopkins, the squadron commander. Colonel Hopkins previously was the 463rd Operations Support Squadron director of operations at Little Rock AFB.

"Our active-duty Airmen will train and fly with the Air National Guard," said Colonel Gomez. "We will learn from each other, and most importantly support each other. ... Like they say before the gates are opened at a rodeo, hang on, it will be a wild ride."

Maj. Gen. James A. Hawkins, 18th Air Force commander, said that the 463rd was chosen for this active-duty association in part because of expansions on behalf of the Base Realignment and Closure recommendations, and that the partnership is a forward-leaning movement, embodying the total force concept.

"We are at a critical time in our nation's history. (We're) in the fifth year of the Global War on Terror. ... This is the most effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars," said General Hawkins. "This is the biggest bang for their buck."

Wyoming Governor David D. Freudenthal also anticipates success.

"This is a great opportunity to show a joint effort," he said. "They are innovating an entirely new approach. We (the state of Wyoming) appreciate the opportunity to be the first in the nation to demonstrate this cooperative arrangement."



Col. John Gomez, left, passes the guidon to Lt. Col. Steven Hopkins while Master Sgt. Rick McKean observes during the 30th Airlift Squadron reactivation ceremony July 8 at the Wyoming Air National Guard base in Cheyenne. The 30th AS is the first active duty air mobility squadron to report to an Air National Guard wing. Colonel Gomez is the 463rd Airlift Group commander from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. Sergeant McKean is also from the 463rd. Colonel Hopkins is the 30th AS commander. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Kimberly Spinner)

Recommendations in the 2005 BRAC report paved the way for the 30th AS, which included moving four C-130 aircraft to Cheyenne specifically to create the first active-duty associate squadron.

The 463rd AG is an Air Mobility Command warfighting group that flies the C-130Es and Hs. Currently, Airmen from the group are deployed around the world, most notably in Iraq teaching Iraqi airmen how to fly and fight with the aircraft.