

C-17 Crew delivers vital school supplies to the children of Dominica

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3/17/2008 - **MELVILLE HALL, DOMINICA** -- Among the lush palm trees with a tropical backdrop of a beautiful Caribbean island there are children in need of basic school supplies like pencils and paper. Delivering these and other vital materials was the mission of an Air Force Reserve crew from Charleston Air Force Base.

After a fantastic, real life short field landing on a runway about the size of a postage stamp by Lt. Col. Mike Phillips of the 300th Airlift Squadron, the United States Ambassador to the Eastern Caribbean, Mary Ourisman along with a delegation of local officials welcomed the crew to this small island country just north of South America.

"This is really people helping people," she said while greeting the crew. "As a country, this is what we do best."

Along with the Ambassador, the C-17 crew was greeted by local members of "Good News," the organization who helps coordinate and distribute these needed supplies throughout the island.

"We will share these supplies between the schools and the hospitals," said Jude Jean, an island native and "Good News" member.

One of the mission's loadmasters, Staff Sgt. Chantal Olski of the 300th Airlift Squadron, reflected that of the many missions she has flown, these are always the most rewarding.

"A lot of times you fly a mission to a place and really don't get much out of it because you're there and gone. This time you see the people and see how much this helps them," said Sergeant Olski as she waited for a forklift to unload the Denton Cargo pallets of donated goods.

Lt. Col. Bert Bailey, mission commander, also had the opportunity to show our Ambassador and visitors the mighty C-17.

"They don't get to see an airplane like this very often," said Colonel Bailey. It's nice to be able to show them what we do."

Once the aircraft landed and was secured, members of "Good News" along with local media came aboard the jet and in a ceremony presentation to the United States Ambassador and the Air Force Reserve crew, thanked the many people it took to make this humanitarian delivery possible.

Colonel Bailey then presented the Ambassador and members of the Dominican delegation with coins from the 315th Airlift Wing along with a hand drawn lithograph of a U.S. airman's "the last bag drag," of which he is the artist.

Jude Jean of "Good News" was thrilled with the whole experience while sharing with the crew what his life is like. "I donate myself to "Good News" to help build schools and houses, Jude Jean said. "This (delivery) will help with the schools for the children."

His organization also works hard to build small houses for those who can not afford to build them themselves.

"We can build five 12x12 houses in a week," explained Jean as he toured the Globemaster III for the first time noting that the inside of the jet was bigger than some of the houses they build.

"I've seen what good this does with my own eyes," explained Ambassador Ourisman. "I'm proud of the Air Force and what you all do to help the people of these small countries.



Senior Airman Jason Krause a loadmaster for the 701st Air Lift Squadron briefs United States Ambassador to the Eastern Caribbean, Mary Ourisman on the pallets of cargo loaded on a C-17 Globemaster III, while on the island of Dominica, Mar. 15, 2008. An Air Force Reserve crew from Charleston Air Force Base delivered Denton Cargo pallets of vital schools supplies to the children of Dominica. (Air Force photo by James M. Bowman)

