

Deployed Wing Transports its One Millionth Passenger

Contributed by 1st Lt. Jeff Roberson
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ASIA - The 386th Air Expeditionary Wing lived up to its motto of "Boots on the Ground" when it recently transported its one millionth passenger in a little more than two years.

The wing reached this historic milestone when they transported 10 Army soldiers to their final destination within the area of responsibility in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The more convoys we can keep off the road, the safer we make it for our soldiers," said Col. Timothy Hale, wing commander. "That's a million people who didn't have to get on a truck or a bus and drive up the most dangerous highway in the world."

The wing is also putting up record-breaking numbers in cargo, according to Lt. Col. Pollyanna Montgomery, 737th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron commander. Since October 2003, airlift has delivered more than 75,000 tons of cargo to destinations throughout the AOR.

She said the difference between airlift and ground transportation is like night and day.

"To transport more than 1 million passengers, it would have taken more than 22,300 45-passenger buses traveling into potentially dangerous areas," the colonel said. "To transport the same amount of cargo, it would have taken more than 10,000 trucks convoying their way throughout Iraq."

"Our airlift mission is one of the best in the Air Force," Colonel Hale said. "Every airman in the wing should be proud of the accomplishments we've made throughout the years. We're here to put boots on the ground, and that's just what we're doing!"

The wing provides intra-theater combat airlift and theater casualty evacuation.

The first C-130 Hercules from the base supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom dates back to October 2003. At that time, the number of passengers monthly ranged between 25,000 to 3,000. Today, the monthly amount of passengers has nearly doubled.