

Ready, Set, Airlift! Ep. 10 Wing CC & CCC Reflect On Command Time

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Julian Hernandez (Host): Greetings airmen and friends of the Alamo Wing. Welcome to episode 10 of ready set airlift, I'm your host Julian Hernandez from the wing public affairs team. And for this edition, we are discussing a major upcoming change for the 433rd Airlift Wing. The June UTA will be the last one for wing commander Colonel Wiliam Gutermuth and Command Chief Takesha Williams. I had an opportunity to chat with them to reflect on their time as a command team, and talk a little bit about what is next for the wing.

Chief Williams, Colonel Gutermuth, thank you for joining me on this special episode of Ready, Set, Airlift. Well, we are going to be discussing your time as a command team. As that era of the 433rd comes to a close, how do you feel about your time in command as it comes to an end?

Col. William Gutermuth: Well, before I start answering that, I want to thank you guys, you in particular, for this podcast and for all the podcasts you've done. I was a little skeptical at first but it's been well received and it is a great way of communicating with folks in their own time and in their own space, and also a good archive for, you know, future uh, Use so you should work with historian as well.

What's your question? You asked me about how how my time has been?

Julian Hernandez (Host): How do you feel as your your time as commander comes to an end?

Col. William Gutermuth: Conflicted there's a lot of Stuff ahead of us and ahead of the swing and I've been excited to be a part of The changes that the Air Force is bringing at the Air Force Reserve is bringing I've been excited to be able to help make the wing a little bit better, a little bit stronger.

And that makes it hard to leave because you don't get to see stuff that you've not, you've seen started with airmen around you and to see the success that comes about because of that. But I'm also excited to be a husband and looking after my wife's best interests in her career And the challenge of becoming a new person in, in many ways, 33 years of service just shy of that.

And I have worn the uniform a good number of those days in the last 33 years. And I've carried it with great pride, but I'm interested to see what Bill Gutermuth the private citizen looks like and, and what I might be able to become when I'm, I don't have the responsibilities that I have here.

Julian Hernandez (Host): We'll talk a little bit more about those retirement plans later on in the episode, but Chief, how about you? Big changes coming for you career wise as well?

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: I think I take a different approach than Colonel Gutermuth. I believe that all good things must come to an end. So as one chapter closes, another one opens.

Definitely looking forward to what the future may hold. I believe that what we've built here together, or what we've fostered more or less will continue to improve and grow. And so I know that the airmen of today will definitely be stronger and better than we were in our time here at the 433rd Airlift Wing.

Julian Hernandez (Host): So how will both of you remember your time? specific things that stood out to you from being the command team of the 433rd Airlift Wing? Colonel Gutermuth, I'll let you go first.

Col. William Gutermuth: Chief Williams has been a big part of the things that I'll remember. Having a teammate that was so strong and so well versed in what was happening with the wing really made my transition to commander here much easier.

And then the support that she's given me throughout the time that I've been here has been incredible. What will I remember? I'll remember the hard work that airmen have done. I'll remember engaging with airmen that are making a difference individually every day. I'll remember the, the leadership of particularly the squadron commanders because that's such a challenge as a TR to come in, a part timer, to run a squadron and to look after the, the people in that squadron.

That I have been impressed with and I'll remember the engagements with them considerably. How about you, Chief? What do you remember?

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: I would definitely concur with Colonel Gutermuth. I will remember the, The awesome teammate and wingman that I have in him always open and receptive and inclusive when it comes to, you know, my, my thought processes.

My ideas and what I think about our airmen and how we get after taking care of them. But also as well, the challenges that have brought us closer together as airmen and wingman within the wing, the opportunity to. advocate for our airmen to have dialogue and conversations just to get to know our airmen.

Definitely from, you know, some of their pain points and thought processes, but how their families are and things like that and them sharing their families with us. So those will probably be what I remember most about this wing, the camaraderie and the inclusion and just the all around good times.

That I believe we've had at the 433rd Airlift Wing.

Julian Hernandez (Host): And I think that's actually a perfect segue into, you know, the next thing I wanted to address was, some specific memories. And I know, sir, you mentioned one of your things was Family Day was a great memory for you.

Col. William Gutermuth: It was. I was new to the wing and it was eye opening to see.

Families with airmen that were working and the D&TF folks serving and, and supporting that, and particularly our community leaders that came out to provide us food and, be a part of it. It really felt good , to be involved with a wing that had that much interconnectivity between all the people that support, you know, we, we call people airmen when they put the uniform on, but Those civilians and families that serve have at least as big a role.

I know that I couldn't be successful without my wife, and I'm certain that the support that other airmen get from their families is critical to their success. And then you expand that out, and you find that the civilian community that really cares makes a difference. Not just to us. In the execution of our mission and the support of our airmen, but to the, the larger impact of support for the military and for our mission that keeps our political leaders focused on the things that we need to be successful.

Julian Hernandez (Host): Chief, any specific memories? On the top of your mind, as you reflect back on, on your time as the command chief,

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: I would definitely agree with Colonel Gutermuth with as far as family day and the airmen and their families and our community partners and honorary commanders. But I would also add to that the annual awards banquets that we've had over the past couple of years, again, a great opportunity to recognize our airmen for everyone to see some of the great things that we're doing or that they're doing.

And that's celebrating our airmen, which would be everyone in the wing. I mean, granted, everyone can't necessarily, you know, be front and center or win an actual war, but I know that everyone is doing their part to get after the future fight. And so yeah, definitely annual awards, banquets and family day.

Julian Hernandez (Host): And with that being said, you know, I think both of you had opportunities to learn a lot from your time in command here, addressing the challenges, making the wing meet mission, would you highlight any specific lessons learned from your time as the command team?

Col. William Gutermuth: Well, I certainly have learned the value of a wingman.

I've learned the value. I've already spoken to chief being a great support to my decision making and having a teammate making a difference. Well, I've seen that exponentially out in the wing. We have such an a large burden of mission sets that we have got to address on top of day to day administrative, bureaucratic stuff, that without supporting each other and without the efficiencies that come from two working, or three, or four, or more on a single problem.

We are not able to be a success, and we are a huge success because we have those bonds that wingmen have. And I've learned that from observation, but also from trying to teach that to the young airmen that are coming in. It's one of the top priorities that That I try to place with them is go find somebody else to help because it's such a value not just to you because you get that help back, but also gives you a perspective that you didn't have before.

And it's one of the challenges I think that we have in large organizations is that we are focused on getting our job done. Sometimes to the exclusion of understanding how that job fits into the larger picture. And that's the leadership challenge that we face as commanders and chiefs is to get out there and let folks

know how critically important the things that they are doing are to the larger endeavor for not just the wing, but the reserve command and the air force.

Julian Hernandez (Host): Chief, any lessons that you will be taking with you as you move forward in your career after your time here at the Alamo wing?

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: Lessons that stand out is that we are a team and we need to act as such. No one can do this alone. And I've definitely appreciated the support that I've received from the Chiefs Group. From the commanders group and squadron the conversations that we had, the opportunity to be able to have those conversations when an open dialogue is great because it helps us to broaden our perspectives of how we get after taking care of our airmen once again.

If I left it up to chief Williams We might not be as successful as we are today because, you know, sometimes, your thoughts are not necessarily the collective and as they say, it takes a village to raise a child, and we're not children, and I understand that, but it does take a village to come to a decision or a recommendation that benefits the, the majority.

Julian Hernandez (Host): Chief. I want to key in on something. You said they're broadening perspective. I think as, as both of you get ready to move on to new chapters, you can offer a broader perspective to some of the Alamo wing airmen of how the 433rd compares to, other assignments or other opportunities out there within the broader force.

For you, Chief, this is your second time that you were with the 433rd, so you have a little bit extra experience, I would say. How do you compare the 433rd to other places you've served?

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: Well, I initially came to the 433rd in 2017. And I knew from the very beginning just my short time there, I was only there maybe 19 months that this was definitely a great wing and it was a place that I would be very fortunate to be able to come back to with the opportunity presented itself.

And so I was very optimistic that one day it would happen. And it did. When I came back here to be the command chief. You, you just can't get type of what would I call it? I don't know, camaraderie or feeling or enthusiasm and excitement. I look forward to coming here every U. T. A. It's probably one of the great experiences of my career.

Again in 17 when I was the functional admin and then here as the command chief for the past 2 or 3 years. And so it really doesn't compare this would probably be my number 1. As far as career opportunities. And so I would definitely encourage anyone that is looking forward to being part of a wing, taking it to the next level.

The 433rd would definitely be a place. I would consider.

Julian Hernandez (Host): Sir, this was your second wing command opportunity. How do you compare it?

Col. William Gutermuth: Well, I'll tell you I think chief mentioning that this is a great opportunity for growth here. This wing has some of the greatest complexity that I've been involved in and all the wings that I've served in, not just as a wing commander.

It's a unit equipped, meaning it's got its own airplanes. So you have responsibilities for the care and feeding of those airplanes and the mission sets that are tied to them. It's got a formal training unit teaching the C 5 crew members so that has its own individual nature. There are many different mission sets in the wing.

We have the largest A E squadron in the country. Two large ports, C E, fire department. Of course, maintenance to support the airplanes. And those functions exist in other places. But what I've found to be unique here is the interweaving of the wing with the 960th which we take responsibility for many of the support functions of the cyber wing.

One of the, one of the critical mission sets that the air force reserve command has, but because of resource limitations has been placed under the care support care of this wing. So that drives some complexities, not just for the support group, but many of the, the wing agencies. And also we are in the nation's largest joint base.

And that provides us many opportunities that other wings don't have, but it also provides some challenges as well. The lines of communication can be very complex. So working through that, working with, and finding those opportunities that the joint base brings make this an incredibly good assignment.

And I'm proud to have been selected to be here. And I've grown as a person. I hope I've grown in, the efforts that I've made and I appreciate the airmen, the

individual airmen that live and operate in this environment and may, may have not gone anywhere else. This is their whole experience.

It's a very rich and robust experience. And if, if they go and try working at another wing, they'll find they'll, they're going to be a little homesick for what they had here. There's greatness out side of the wing, but there's also a lot of good stuff here. So it's been a wonderful assignment and I think yes, chief is right.

It's a great place for growth and we have a lot of growth happening now. And I'm very positive for what the future will be for this wing.

Julian Hernandez (Host): I think one of the fascinating things about the 433rd too is, is not just the joint base aspect, but the San Antonio side of that, right? San Antonio is a very unique city in the U.

S., not a lot of other places like it. How have you both enjoyed, Colonel Guttemuth in your case, living here in San Antonio, and Chief, for you, coming to work here in San Antonio every UTA?

Col. William Gutermuth: San Antonio has been great. My first three or four weeks, I didn't have a house, I'm on base, and I was waiting for the house on base, so I was living right downtown in San Antonio, going on the river walk and experience all that greatness.

And then to move out on base, which was, I highly recommend that, if it works for your family, if you have an opportunity because the commute is wonderful. Difficult when you're coming on base because there's the wait at the gate, particularly on Wednesdays with the graduations, the basic training.

And springtime was beautiful, green everywhere, birds chirping the flooded rivers, which is exciting. Then summer hits and then you start thinking there's gotta be a better solution. It's a hot place. I gotta be honest with you, it's a tough place in the summertime.

I'm impressed with the lifelong residents here that have been here for all the seasons and have learned to live and be successful in Texas, because Texas is a bit of a tough place to, to make it through. But man, what a neat, neat town. It's an exceptional place. The support we've gotten. The mayor of San Antonio is my honorary commander.

That's a pretty cool thing, and it's one of the nation's largest cities. I don't know what number it is, nine or eight or something like that.

. And you know it, when you're out there driving around, and we're all out there zigzagging on the highways around here.

So it's an incredibly exciting place to be, and it's been very rewarding.

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: Well, for me, I like it hot, so I definitely look forward to coming to San Antonio every month. Enjoy the eight hour drive, windows rolled down, sun, and again, just being with the airmen. But then we have, you know, great food great opportunity to go to different restaurants and just, you know, enjoy the evening nightlight.

I would say. So I will miss my time driving here. And I'll miss the sun, but hopefully what's ever next, there'll be some sun there as well, but it'll never be as great as San Antonio.

Julian Hernandez (Host): I know San Antonio is incredibly popular with military retirees for a host of reasons, military city, USA, the climate, the support infrastructure for, for those who served. Chief, any thoughts maybe when you, when you decide it's time to retire, maybe come back to San Antonio, what do you think?

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: No.

Col. William Gutermuth: She's a country girl. She doesn't want to come back to San Antonio.

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: Love San Antonio. I love the heat. But you know there's no place like home.

Julian Hernandez (Host): It is getting a little crowded here in San Antonio to be sure. So I respect

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: be where my family is.

knows? Could be second on my list.

Julian Hernandez (Host): There you go.

You know, things change and, and maybe San Antonio will be even better when, when that time comes. Comes for you to make that decision. Sir. I know your retirement plans you you alluded to them a little bit They're taking you up to the frigid north. Tell us a little bit

Col. William Gutermuth: north Yeah, heading to New York City, Manhattan If it all works out where my wife will be continuing to pursue her career and I'll go into the support role there So I'm looking forward to that although there's, there's a chance we could end up back in Texas, but my brother lives in Austin.

So this is a great state for us. And I like the support that we've been given here. It's a good cost of living and very familiar. So we may come back, but first we got to do a little bit of running around to get my wife through the remainder of her career. And we'll see where we settle after that.

Julian Hernandez (Host): Chief. we discussed it a little bit offline, you know, the next steps in your career, you're waiting to hear. What next assignment the Air Force Reserve needs you to, fulfill, but anything more you can share with us at this time?

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: No, sir. I have nothing else to share. I'm just looking for the next challenge.

And hopefully I'll take some of the things that I've learned here at the 433rd with me, I'm sure I will. And continue to be the wingman that I would want for myself. So, just standing by to stand by, but always ready to serve in the next capacity.

Julian Hernandez (Host): Absolutely. And so, with both of you moving on to different new opportunities, that means the Alamo wing will be welcoming new leaders.

I want to take a chance to discuss the new leadership. We know the new wing commander is going to be Colonel Douglas Jeffery. Can you share any intel maybe for the airmen with us, sir? What to expect with Colonel Jeffrey?

Col. William Gutermuth: Well, not intel. But I'll give you my impression and a little bit of what I know.

He is very excited to be coming here. His family is supportive. He's got I think he's got a daughter that's in college nearby. His wife wants to be here. So, they're gonna be excited to be in San Antonio, and, perhaps will settle here

permanently, I'm not sure. He's younger, so he's got, he's got some room in his career for another move after this, potentially.

C 5 background, so he'll be comfortable with the airplane, get an easy transition into that. And my experience with him is that he's been very insightful. I've been sharing some information with him about the wings and challenges that we have and some of the successes that we've had just sort of prep him for the, for the space and I've been surprised at how adeptly he has understood the issues and the, and the successes that we have had.

So I think he's going to be a pretty easy fit. Very approachable from what I can see. So I think that folks will like that aspect of him. And I think he'll hit the ground running. We'll see. He'll be here end of June.

Julian Hernandez (Host): We look forward to welcoming him, certainly on the podcast, but in the, in the wing in general

chief, I believe we aren't sure yet who the next command chief will be to step in for the 433rd, but could you share with the enlisted members, some things they could do when that person is selected and arrives to make that person successful or, or welcome that person into the wing as an enlisted community?

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: I think that some of the things we could do is be open minded, definitely. Allow them an opportunity to kind of settle in and observe the wing as a whole. When they ask questions, be transparent let them know exactly what's going on. Don't sugarcoat because the only way that we can truly get after, , making it better for everyone is that we give honest, true assessments from our vantage point, of course, of what's going on within the wing.

I think other than that, just continue to, be the model or citizen airmen, I should say, that we've always been and allowed them to do their job and advocate for each and every one of our airmen. But recognize that a lot of times the decisions that we make as a leadership team are from our perspective and our vantage point.

And so it may not always be what we want, but In the long run, it'll be what's in the best interest of the wing. but hopefully we'll have a decision by mid June. looking forward to that.

Julian Hernandez (Host): We'll waiting to hear who's going to take the baton. But on that note, I want to close out with an opportunity for both of you to share

what I'm calling a parting message, maybe some, some words of wisdom to the airmen who maybe after this won't, really get a chance to, to hear from either of you. Sir if you'd like to start us off.

Col. William Gutermuth: This is a tough question because it's an emotional one because you really care as you retire. You sort of look back and say you've I've I've known a lot of airmen, I've known a lot of people That have worked hard to help us get where we are today we have a long way to go to where we need to be tomorrow words of wisdom or Insight that I have Each individual airman matters.

You matter. It's the bottom line. And what does that mean? It means more than you matter as a human being. It means you matter to the mission. What you're doing matters. Your choices, your decisions that you make matter. They matter not just to you, they matter to me, your wingman. They matter to the people in your squadrons and your units.

They matter to the success and potentially they matter to whether we win or whether we lose. And losing is not a great option and those decisions matter in every moment that you make the decisions. When you come to work and you decide whether to, hey, I'm gonna spend some time working on this project or that project, even if you're doing something as benign perhaps as a travel voucher and as frustrating as a travel voucher.

It matters how you do that travel voucher because it, there are downstream impacts to other folks that have to process that. And so if you can do your best. It makes a difference to other people. And it's really hard, I mean, I can say you matter a million times and you may not get it. If you were able to see, what I've been had the blessings to be able to see, is a process from the beginning through some conclusion.

You can see that the most important impact is the first action that's taken. It's the first decision that's taken. After that things get fixed, get moved left or right to adjust into a larger mission set. But if you get the first action right, it's so much easier the whole way through. And also the families matter.

recognizing our spouses, recognizing our kids, the people that love us, that support us is important because It's them that make sure that you can come to work without all the distractions so that you those initial decisions that you make That matter so much are good decisions So if I could do something over and do it better, it would be to communicate better, to let folks know how

important the work that they do is and that the decisions that they make are and how they impact us throughout the system.

And I have a ton more things I could just keep going on, but I think that's the most important thing, the individual airmen, and I see them at the table. We're sitting at a table now. You can't see it on a podcast, but I, around this table, I have brand new recruits go on to basic training and I see them and I can feel how much they matter, how much it matters people along the way, support them and give them the mentoring they need to be the better, stronger airmen that they're going to be in the future.

my hope is that somewhere along the line I've impacted somebody or two maybe if I'm lucky two people Positively in my career so that they know they matter and so that they've been more successful chief What do you think?

I'm

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: I'll go back to my initial podcast and share some of what Colonel Gutermuth said as well We are stronger collectively than we'll ever be individually.

We have a voice And we should use it. But most importantly, I would always tell our airmen that don't count yourself out, you let the powers that be count you out. You are more capable and stronger and skilled than you ever thought you would be. But sometimes we don't see it and we downplay ourselves because we think we don't know what we should know.

We don't think that, you know, we're ready for the next move or the next challenge. But you're more than ready. You're more than capable. And if you're not, you're going to learn what you need to learn to make yourself lethal, so to speak. And so, those are the things that I would add as parting takeaways from, from my time here at the 433rd.

Keep leaning forward, keep doing your part and be transparent with yourself and with your airmen. Because we are ultimately, Building for the next airmen for the future fight. And so we got to make sure that we're setting them up for success. Like the people before set us up for success.

Julian Hernandez (Host): Excellent conclusion. I think a great way to end what, you know, it could be a little bit of a sad moment with an end of an era at the Alamo wing with positive thoughts leaning forward, like you said, chief. So I can personally say I've, I've very much enjoyed working with both of you. I

came to the wing in July and both of you welcomed me in as the, as the leadership and have been supportive of my sometimes crazy ideas within the public affairs team, great ideas like this podcast, for example, but I wish you both the best in the next steps you're taking in your lives and careers, and hopefully life finds a way to bring us all together again down the road.

I second that.

Col. William Gutermuth: That's wonderful.

Julian Hernandez (Host): On that note, we will close up this episode of Ready, Set, Airlift, and maybe on the next one we'll be welcoming in the new wing leadership team and hearing their perspective. Oh, yeah. Colonel Guttemuth, Chief Williams, thank you very much for everything.

Col. William Gutermuth: Airpower. We did it.

CMSgt. Takesha Williams: Yes, we did.

Julian Hernandez (Host): Some quick announcements before we go... Applications for first sergeant vacancies are still open. Master sergeants, or tech sergeants eligible for promotion, are encouraged to apply by the deadline of June 7th. See your military email for instructions on applying.

The 433rd Airlift Wing Chief Group is hosting a speed mentoring event on Sunday June 2nd from 1000 to 1100 at Wilford Hall. Mentees will have the opportunity to network with leaders from different career fields, gain different perspectives with strategic insights, and go through sessions focused on career and personal enhancements.

That is it for the this episode of ready set airlift. Make sure you are subscribed to the podcast on whichever platform you like to listen on, that way you can get updates on new episodes as they release, and it also lets us know you are enjoying the show. I've been your host Julian Hernandez, thanks for joining us and until next time, stay safe and have a great UTA.