

Air Force base in South Carolina honors Utah's 'candy bomber'

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Utah native **Gail Halvorsen**, better known as the candy bomber of Berlin, was honored Friday in South Carolina, where an Air Force commander called him a "symbol of hope and kindness for an entire nation."

Joint Base Charleston named its C-17 aircrew training building after Halvorsen during a dedication ceremony, according to the Department of Defense.

Halvorsen, now 92, was a young pilot from Garland during the Russian blockade of Berlin in 1948. Western nations were dropping in food and coal, but Halvorsen decided to brighten the lives of the children as well.

"Flying through the Russian blockade of Berlin in his C-54 aircraft, then-Lt. Halvorsen tied together tiny candy-laden parachute bundles to drop for the city's hungry children," according to The Post and Courier's account of Friday's ceremony.

His kindness inspired other crews to do the same, and American school children even made their own parachutes and donated candy for the German children.

Halvorsen, along with more than 20 other candy bombers, dropped more than 3 million pounds of chocolate, gum and other candies for the German children, according to the DoD story.

"Col. Halvorsen is, in large part, a symbol of hope and kindness for an entire nation," said Col. Erik Hansen, 437th Airlift Wing commander, during the Halvorsen C-17 Aircrew Training building dedication ceremony. "His greatest accomplishment was found, not only from his extraordinary aviation skill, but also from his compassion."

Halvorsen said he hopes the training building will be a reminder of those who sacrificed their lives in the name of freedom, the DoD story said.

"There are 31 American heroes and 39 British heroes of the Berlin Airlift," said Halvorsen, during the building dedication ceremony. "And I'm not one of them. Today's dedication is not mine; the dedication is for those that gave their all for the cause of freedom. So, I'm not here for myself, I'm here to represent them."

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Caption: Courtesy U.S. Air Force Retired Col. **Gail Halvorsen**, a Utah native, stands in front of the C-17 Aircrew Training Center moments after it was dedicated in his honor at Joint Base Charleston, S.C., June 15, 2012. Halvorsen piloted C-47s and C-54s during the Berlin Airlift from 1948-1949, and dropped candy attached to parachutes to children below.; Courtesy U.S. Air Force Retired Col. **Gail Halvorsen**, a Utah native and the famed "candy bomber," speaks with children moments after the C-17 Aircrew Training Center was dedicated in his honor at Joint Base Charleston, S.C., on Friday, June 15, 2012. A pilot of C-47s and C-54s during the Berlin

Airlift from 1948-1949, Halvorsen dropped candy attached to parachutes to children below.

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