

MAJ Robert Metcalf looks on with his daughter as his son Alex shows a Dr. Seuss book to COL Douglas Wheelock.



# WELCOME HOME

## Wheelock Greets Building 3 with Signatures & a Smile

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COL Douglas Wheelock, U.S. Army Astronaut, signs a Space-themed tie for a fan during an autograph signing event in Colorado Springs.

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — At an elevation of more than six thousand feet, Colorado Springs is one of the closest cities to Space in the United States. This should make Army Astronaut COL Douglas Wheelock feel right at home. As the commander of the International Space Station, Wheelock spent six months in Space, leading the international crew of Expedition 25. The five-member crew returned to Earth this past November. On March 9, Wheelock stopped at the headquarters building, USASMDC/ARSTRAT to visit with personnel and their families.

Wheelock was the first Army Astronaut to command the International Space Station, and has become even more of a local hero for the command. Former USASMDC/ARSTRAT Deputy Commanding General for Operations BG Kurt S. Story came down to the building lobby to greet the recently returned astronaut, and motioned to a copy of the Army Space Journal with the headline “First in Space.”

“This is an Army first. That needs to go in the lobby, right up there ‘First in Space,’” Story told the crowd, motioning to a wall near the main staircase.

One young fan brought her blanket to show Wheelock and ask him if he brought a blanket into Space.

Wheelock leaned in to whisper “Shh...it’s a secret. Yes, I sleep with one every night in Space. But don’t tell anyone, okay?”

SPC Roger Rodriques asked Wheelock his favorite thing about being an astronaut. “Talking to kids when I visit the schools. That’s absolutely my favorite part, just being able to share what I do with the younger generation, and inspiring them to achieve their dreams,” said Wheelock.

Wheelock signed most photos with inspirational sayings including “I hope all your dreams come true” and “Aim High! Touch the stars!”

Several parents also had him write special comments to their children, telling them to “keep doing math” and “stay in school.”

Wheelock stayed to sign for nearly three hours, talking with fans, taking photos and answering any questions about his mission. While he was in town, he also spoke to classes at the National Security Space Institute about his mission, and signed autographs for families on Fort Carson. He now returns to his home station at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.