

Army Space on Target in Iraqi Freedom with Command-wide Effort

By MAJ Laura Kenney

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Sandstorms, heat, insects, worry about the war, personal hygiene, homesickness... All these things affected Army Space soldiers serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom — just as they affected the troops waging direct war — but, like their infantry brethren, Army Space soldiers, professionals all, persevered, and were an essential part of the war effort.

Every element of the command was fully engaged, from the Army Space soldiers working hand in hand with combatant commanders in the desert, to the Space and Missile Defense Command Operations Center here tracking movement of soldiers and providing reachback support for all deployed Space teams.

Speaking of deployed Space teams, a total of five were deployed and directly involved in Iraqi Freedom. Since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, Army Space has deployed 10 Space support teams to the U.S. Central Command region. Teams served in Iraq, Oman, Kuwait, and elsewhere in the CENTCOM area of operations. They provided Space capabilities, expertise, and products in support of theater commanders.

The teams moved with those combatant commanders, sharing the same dangers and hardships, while providing up to the minute Space force enhancement, including satellite communications health and welfare status and analysis; global positioning system accuracy predictions; strategic and theater ballistic missile early warning; weather terrain and environmental monitoring awareness; and intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance products.

MAJ Daniel Cockerham, Team Leader of Army Space Support Team 5, traveled with the Marine

Expeditionary Force 1 as they took Baghdad. Prior to entering the city, he e-mailed his unit.

"We're fully integrated with the Marines of the IMEF, and are treated as family since we've been living and operating with them from the beginning. Our soldiers pull duty with them in addition to performing our mission. We haven't had showers in weeks and are filthy, but, hey, we're on the outskirts of Baghdad! We're all very proud to be part of this effort," said Cockerham.

A Joint Tactical Ground Station — which provides direct down-linked, in-theater, early warning of missile launches — was deployed to the Central Command region. Together with its European based sister units, the JTAGS provided an encompassing, 24 hour continuous in-theater processing of missile alerting and early warning on tactical ballistic missiles and other infrared events.

The JTAGS monitored infrared signatures coming from hot spots within Iraq to provide critical information to maneuver commanders regarding the timing and operational employment of their units.

One specific incident illustrates the value of early warning. JTAGS operators presented early warning of hostile aircraft approaching a Predator surveillance mission. Thanks to the timely warning, commanders were able to divert the mission, thereby averting potential loss of the vehicle, and maintaining the secrecy of the mission.

LTC Scott Netherland, 1st Space Bn. commander, commented "Many people consider the first Gulf War as the first Space war. Our ability to exploit Space capabilities for communications, navigation, and precision



SGT Sabrina Bannister of the 1st Space Battalion's Army Space Support Team 5 stands in front of a sign near the border of Iraq. Bannister's team deployed to support the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Photo courtesy of Combat Camera

guided munitions, detection of relevant infrared events, imagery products, blue force tracking, and weather all give the U.S. warfighter a tremendous advantage over our adversaries. Our experiences with Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom have revalidated the need to continue close integration of Space forces and capabilities with the warfighter.

The Spectral Operations Resource Center was also a key player. An element of the SORC was forward deployed to CENTCOM, and in tandem with home base, produced more than 300 products in support of Iraqi Freedom.

The SORC (Forward) produced imagery that provided spectral analysis of vegetative areas and rugged terrain to eliminate unsuitable sites for airborne assault operations during the planning process. Standard image maps were created to conduct standard mission planning.

Working in tandem with ARSSTs, SORC rear and forward provided detailed change detection assessments to identify potential enemy locations. Archived satellite imagery was merged with more recent spectral imagery to identify changes. The noted changes were passed on to combatant commanders, identifying potential hidden enemy assets, and assisting in the targeting process. The technology also assisted with locating enemy mine fields.

Bo Dunaway, chief, Remote Sensing Branch, said, "This is the first time that we've been able to put all the pieces together and deliver spectral products from start to finish in a timely relevant manner. From units forward requesting products to downlinking unclassified imagery via Eagle Vision I and delivering digital products within 24 hours is a significant milestone for the commercial imagery arena. The use of SORC (Forward) ensured continuity and mission focus for all Army Space elements using commercial imagery products."

Another vital piece of the Army Space effort could be found in the 1st Satellite Control Battalion. Although not forward deployed, the SATCON companies were as integral a part of Iraqi Freedom as their desert-located sister units.

The 1st SATCON supported the ground units involved in Iraqi Freedom since they first entered theater. SATCON units enabled satellite communications, connectivity, voice, and video teleconference capability to the combatant commanders of CENTCOM, V Corps, 3rd Infantry Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, Special Operations Command, and other deployed forces.

The two primary units involved in this support were B Co., Fort Meade, Va., and C Co., Landstuhl, Germany. They controlled the satellite links for tactical and strategic warfighter communications networks.

Together, they supported more than 140 terminals and

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Army Space Support Team prepares for Post-war Iraq

By LTC Michael Yowell

ETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — Historical. That was the overarching feeling as Army Space Command formally bade farewell to its latest Army Space Support Team, commonly referred to as an ARSST, during a departure ceremony March 31.

ARSSTs allow today's warfighters to accomplish their missions using Space-based assets. Capabilities are enhanced by satellites such as: communications; position, navigation, and timing; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; weather, terrain, and environmental monitoring; and missile warning.

"All that is happening right now in the Southwest Asia area of operations in Afghanistan and Kuwait," said BG Richard V. Geraci, deputy commanding general for Army Space Command.

Unlike every other team that is supporting the warfighter, this team went to support the humanitarian aid and reconstruction of Iraq after the war. The Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) will work the relationships with all those involved in the humanitarian and reconstruction activities: the United Nations, nongovernmental agencies and various expatriate Iraqi groups. Team ORHA will provide Space expertise and access to Space assets to help bring peace and stability to the Iraqi people.

"We truly are an 'Army of One,'" remarked MAJ Richard Brence, ARSST ORHA team leader. "Half of us are mobilized National Guard and half regular Army but you couldn't ask for a better team make-up."

Since early January the team trained together six days a week and were certified fully mission capable. Right away they were providing Space-based products on a twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week schedule.

"This really helped me learn my mission," said CPT Mike Daniels, the team's intelligence officer. "We put into real life what we've learned in the classroom. Our customer liked what we did and they asked for more," he added.

This team and mission truly are blazing new ground for Army Space Command.

LTC Michael Yowell is a mobilized Colorado National Guardsman currently serving as the Commander of the 193rd Space Battalion in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He served ten years Active Duty as a Field Artillery Officer in Alaska and Okla., and as a Public Affairs Officer in Germany. As a full-time Colorado Guardsman he has served in several assignments prior to his selection as the battalion's first commander in June 2001.