

## Family Readiness Group Buttressing Space Battalion Warriors

By SPC Aaron Evans & Sharon L. Hartman

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Of paramount importance to our soldiers abroad is the need for contact with those they hold dear back on the home front. There's a good percentage of the population that, in the spirit of patriotism, wish to support our soldiers by mailing care packages and letters of encouragement to them to uphold their morale.

With many soldiers from the 1st Space Battalion deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the battalion's Family Readiness Group (FRG) held a meeting to discuss ways in which they could continue to support the soldiers from afar, and their families close by.

"We conduct monthly battalion FRG meetings, and provide childcare to allow maximum participation," said Bettina Bailem, wife of the battalion CSM Lester Bailem.

"During our last meeting, we elected to take part in a bratwurst lunch fund-raiser and use the monies raised to finance a massive care package that would be distributed amongst the various deployed teams.

"We also provided materials at the meeting for the children to make homemade Easter cards for the soldiers, and family members from Army Space Support Team 1 put together Easter goody bags for all of the teams."

The luncheon brought in \$470 and helped offset the cost of the fundraiser, as well as allowed the FRG to purchase items for the care package such as coffee, lip balm, wet wipes, soap and other necessities.

Due primarily to security issues and the delayed mailing system, supporting soldiers via mail has become increasingly difficult.

"Packages can only be sent to an individual soldier, so we are sending it to one person and they will distribute it to the other members of the teams," said Jackie Netherland, wife of the battalion commander LTC Scott Netherland.

In addition to supporting the deployed soldiers with the care packages, the FRG additionally accepted the responsibility to show that same support for the family

members left behind.

"We were also able to set some money aside for our Easter egg hunt," added Mrs. Bailem.

"On Easter Sunday we conducted an Easter egg hunt for the children at the park on Peterson Air Force Base. We wanted to still be able to get the families together and do this for the children because many of them have a parent that is deployed."



SFC Edward Breeden and SGT Richard Provinzano of the 1st Space Battalion put together care packages to be sent to members of the various teams from the battalion that are deployed in support of Iraqi Freedom. Photo by Sharon L. Hartman

While the traditional letter or package has been the modus operandi for as long as many people can recollect, there has also been the mass mailings (i.e. form letter campaigns) to soldiers that show them that civilians at home support their efforts.

But, with the heightened concern for security, the U.S. Postal Service put firm restrictions on mailings to soldiers overseas.

Fortunately, a number of organizations have offered alternatives so that the flow of support can continue at a steady pace.

Operation Dear Abby began as a way for individuals to send messages via e-mail to personnel. The message can be anything from a holiday greeting, to a message stating how important their job is to the future of our nation.

Individuals with Internet access can send messages to service members by accessing [www.OperationDearAbby.net](http://www.OperationDearAbby.net).

Other avenues one might explore would be donating a calling card, signing on to a virtual thank you card; sending personal messages through the "Stars and Stripes" overseas newspaper, or simply making a donation to relief agencies like the Red Cross, Army Emergency Relief, or Air Force Aid Society.

These are simply a few of the many ways in which we at home can continue to show our personnel abroad that they are remembered and cared for.

## Army Space Forces Inaugurates Quarterly Prayer Breakfast

By Sharon L. Hartman

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — With times as they are in the world — many servicemen and service-women fighting a dangerous and unpredictable war far

from home — timing was impeccable for the 1st Space Brigade's first quarterly prayer breakfast. The event, planned well before the outbreak of the war, allowed attendees from the brigade and Army Space Command, time to reflect and to pray for the situation that has put many of their own in harm's way.

Hosted by the 1st Satellite Control Battalion's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, the inaugural event was conducted in Army Space Command's new headquarters building on Peterson Air Force Base, and commenced appropriately with the invocation, given by the command's chaplain, MAJ Allen M. Stahl from Fort Carson.

LTC Mearen Bethea, the battalion commander, followed by providing a bit of history regarding the purpose behind the occasion.

"The first prayer breakfast was held in 1953 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to encourage Americans to seek divine guidance for national leadership and proclaim their dependence on God and faith in Him."

Bethea then introduced the guest speaker, COL John Bauer, post chaplain for Fort Carson, who proceeded to speak on what the word SOLDIER really represents.

"S' stands for Selfless service," began Bauer.

"The word 'Self' yields other words, selfishness, self-centeredness, but it is a mark of maturity that, as we grow older, we begin to reach beyond ourselves."

Bauer then followed with examples of the other letters of the acronym, "Obedience, Loyalty, Discipline, Integrity, Empathy and Religious faith."

As Bauer continued, participants enjoyed an array of food, from homespun pancakes and eggs to biscuits with gravy, all prepared by the soldiers and families of HHC 1st SATCON Battalion.

SSG John Ciesiolka, NCOIC of the team that coordinated the breakfast, commented on the dedication of the soldiers and families of the battalion:

"Some of the wives pre-cooked muffins and other baked items. I also had soldiers come in the evening before to help set-up, then they were in the next day at 6:30 in the morning on their days off from shift work to start cooking, and remained after to clean up."

COL David Shaffer, commander of the 1st Space Brigade, noted that this event was proof positive that the newly formed brigade was making great strides into becoming a fully functional brigade.

"I thought it was really great. It was our very first effort and I thought it went really, really well," Shaffer said.

"I've been around the Army for a long time and know that this is something that should be done as a brigade, and I think it is just one more step in progressing toward becoming a fully operational brigade.

"We had a good turnout, and a great speaker who had very inspirational words. It was also very opportune that we had a chance to do this prayer breakfast as the real world operations were kicking off. We can't take credit

for the timing as it was not planned, but it was good to try to take a moment and put everything that is going on around the world into perspective."

To end the breakfast, participants joined in singing "God Bless America" and "The Army Song" prior to Stahl giving the benediction. Many attendees also brought their families to the event to show their support and faith in prayer.

"Coming from a Christian upbringing, it was nice to have something like this going on while my mother was here visiting because she was able to attend and see that the Army really does take Christianity into consideration," said SSG Megan Fowler, battalion training NCO for the 1st SATCON Battalion.

## Team Army Space Marches for the Tiniest Soldier

By Sharon L. Hartman

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — What began as two ladies desiring an outing with their children, quickly turned into 17 command members and their families teaming up for the smallest member of the ranks.

Anjoleen Baca, electronics engineer and Cassandra Shigley, a telecomm specialist with the Wideband Gapfiller Satellite - SATCOM System Expert section of the G-6, had decided to participate in the March of Dimes annual WalkAmerica as a chance to do something together with their children. They had just decided to invite other members of their section when LTC Robert King, the command chief of Operations Division, asked them if they would open it up to the entire command, and coordinate a team effort.

Baca, a volunteer with the Ronald McDonald house, and no stranger to charity fund-raising, took on the mission.

"The March of Dimes is an organization that focuses on prenatal, premature and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) programs. As a team, we needed to sponsor an Ambassador Family," said Baca.

"We looked first within the command to see if we could sponsor one of our own as our Ambassador family. Unfortunately, in the only one that we could find, the father was deployed, so the family had left the area to be with other family members.

"Since I volunteer with the Ronald McDonald House, I knew we would be able to find a family there, and that is how we found our Ambassador family, the Umdens."

The Umden baby thus became that smallest member mentioned.

After an emergency Caesarian section, William Umden was born nine-weeks early to Emily and Gerry Umden of Pueblo, Colo. He was taken to Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs where he stayed for nearly a month in the NICU.

Unable to make the daily drive while recuperating from the Caesarian section and unsure of how to afford

the expense of staying in Colorado Springs, the Umnden's turned to the Ronald McDonald House, and that's where Baca found them.

With the Ambassador family selected, Baca started the process of recruiting members of the command to participate. Each participant had to find people who would sponsor him or her with a donation. In addition to that, Baca sold candy bars and extra team ARSPACE T-shirts to be added to the overall donation.

"We had never done this before, so we didn't know what to expect, but set a goal of 10 walkers and \$1,000," said Baca.

"I was also informed, that in the 33 years they have done the walk in Colorado Springs, this is the first year that the Army has had a team."

In the end, 17 walkers, both soldiers and civilians, plus many family members, took on the challenge of either the 2.5 mile or the 5 mile walk with the Army Space Headquarters and Headquarters Company guide leading the way.

A total of \$1,144 was raised for the March of Dimes.

Unfortunately, little William and his parents were unable to make it to the walk, because William ended up back in the hospital the night before with a fever.

On a good note, the littlest "soldier" was only battling a new tooth this time, but the money raised by the Army Space team will assist him in the bigger battles he has yet to face.

## SATCON soldiers take temp jobs at DISA-EUR

By SSG Franklin Barrett

LANDSTUHL, Germany — In an effort to improve Space-based communications support for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, C Company, 1st Satellite Control Battalion, Landstuhl, Germany, recently assigned its Satellite Network Control NCO and a soldier to temporary positions at the Defense Information Systems Agency-Europe Headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. SGT Jeremy Landuyt and SPC Shawn Michaud started the 90-day temporary duty on April 1. They have been working side-by-side with U.S. Navy and other Army personnel permanently assigned to the Regional Network Operations Security Center (RNOSC).

The RNOSC plays a large role in communications support for the European and Middle-Eastern Theaters

of Operations. A major element in the overall mission of the RNOSC is Space-based communications, or satellite communications, and this is precisely where Landuyt and Michaud provide their support and knowledge.

On a day-to-day basis, the RNOSCs from all Theaters of Operations (continental U.S., Europe, and Pacific) work together with the Defense Satellite Communications System Operations Centers (DSCSOCs) in coordinating, managing, monitoring, and maintaining the satellite communications network known as DSCS. C Co., 1st SATCON, is the DSCSOC for the European, Middle Eastern, and Indian Ocean theaters. The DSCSOC at Landstuhl and the RNOSC at Stuttgart work together to maintain a constantly updated database for all the DSCS satellite networks in the region. These databases are highly dynamic and the accuracy of the information contained within them is imperative.

The role that Landuyt and Michaud play at the RNOSC mirrors the database management role at the DSCSOC itself. Most of the personnel assigned to the RNOSC are not as proficient at utilizing the DSCS Network Planning

Software (DNPS) as the soldiers and NCOs assigned to the DSCSOCs. DNPS is the tool that the network planners at the RNOSC and the Regional Space Support Centers (RSSCs) utilize to develop and maintain the databases associated with DSCS. DNPS is also utilized by the DSCSOCs to configure their network monitoring tools according to the databases provided by the RNOSCs. While on duty, Landuyt and Michaud assist the RNOSC personnel in creating new databases, updating existing databases, and disseminating databases as necessary.

The unique opportunity has enabled these satellite network controllers to gain a new perspective on how their normal day-to-day business at the DSCSOC fits into the broad spectrum of satellite communications. Landuyt said, "I think it is something that all the NCOs in the 1st SATCON should be given a chance to do. It gives you a better understanding of the big picture."

That "big picture" is often overlooked in world media. Most notable news sources reporting from the front lines are showing the world the challenges faced by the war fighters, leaving the public to overlook the importance of our support units, especially communications.

For these two 1st SATCON soldiers, the importance of communications, primarily Space-based communications, is not overlooked. Landuyt and Michaud serve as part of the voice of command that still sounds off in the deserts of the Middle East, and around the world.



Soldiers, civilians and family members of Army Space Command pose for a team photo under the WalkAmerica Banner for the March of Dimes fund-raising event. Monies raised by the team went to help a child who was born prematurely. Photo courtesy of March of Dimes