

We want you to know This Journal's for you

When I came to the U.S. Army Space community from the big Army, I didn't have a clue. Some would say the managing editor still doesn't, but it took Operation Iraqi Freedom to pry open some pretty stubborn eyes.

Questions circle around the Army about what the Army's doing in Space. Are we astronauts? Do you fly satellites? Do you go to Space? Mostly, it's a blank look on the person's face whom you just told you're a member of U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, a look that seems to ask what in the heck do you do?

So, talk about excitement.

We found the answer. Or part of it.

Listen to MAJ Michael Scheiern, a Marine officer with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, who speaks of the importance of Space during the war. His full interview begins on page 18.

"We were given the mission, after seizing the eastern half of Baghdad, of advancing on both Tikrit and Kirkuk. That's where the Space assets kicked in. Between your ARSST (Army Space Support Team), and the TES-Forward section, within 24 hours of receiving that new mission, we had the best imagery possible to execute analysis ... The information was detailed and complete, and what we learned from it was enough, in fact, to negate the need for movement towards Kirkuk. The information gave us the flexibility to shape the battlespace ... enabling us to best decide how and when to put Marines in harm's way."

That means, to my mind, that a team of Army soldiers were able to tap in to satellites during a war to bring information to Marine leaders to help them make decisions that reduced risk to life and increased the chance of victory. Of course, nobody wants American service members to die and we all want our Nation to win, so anything that furthers those two aims is a great and patriotic thing.

This special edition of the Army Space Journal is chock-full of more information like Scheiern's bottom-line across the full spectrum of what the Army Space community brought to the warfight. To highlight this, take a look at the Tip of the Sphere. We've taken a different approach this time, focusing on personal- and Space-specific vignettes.

A special thanks is owed to all the authors - our FA40s assigned in the field, leaders from the 1st Space Brigade (Provisional), Space operators from the Battle Lab and SMDC staff and researchers from the SMDC Historian Office. This exhaustive look at OIF from a Space perspective would not have happened without their extra effort.

One last point. This is the muddy boots side of Space.

I remember an early discussion at the Defense Information School 25 years ago about communications during a war. The school is the center for teaching Public Affairs Officers and military journalists their trade. We were still typing on manual typewriters, using teletype machines and using film for photographs. The discussion and great debate over the years centered on how instantaneous communications would impact public perception and opinion during a war. Ours in the Public Affairs business has been focused on the burgeoning news phenomena illustrated by 24-hour news coverage.

We never even considered the main point highlighted by this special edition. Instantaneous communication does more than impact public perception, it helps save lives and win battles.

— Managing Editor

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