

SMDC Commander awards returning deployed soldiers

By DJ Montoya

PETERSON Air Force Base, Colo. — A ceremony honoring 64 members of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command who have returned from duty in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom was conducted at the SMDC-Colorado Springs building on Peterson Air Force Base Aug. 22.

As part of a welcome home tribute, LTG Joseph M. Cosumano Jr., commanding general of SMDC, awarded seven soldiers of the command with a total of 11 awards ranging from the Bronze Star Medal to the U.S. Marine Corps Certificate of Commendation.

“Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom are about protecting our way of life,” said Cosumano addressing an audience of soldiers, civilian co-workers and family members.

“We are here today to honor those who have been a part of this global war on terrorism and to properly acknowledge the wonderful contributions that soldiers, family members, Department of the Army civilians, and contractors have made to these operations, making it happen for this command, this Army, and this nation in their own special way.”

Cosumano said SMDC continues to live up to its motto “First in Space” by listing a number of firsts achieved in OIF where Space-based capabilities were brought to the warfighter. They include: first time an Army Space unit provided support to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in combat; first ever split-based operations between rear and forward command posts by an Army Space unit; first time support in a Joint Special Operations Task Force by an Army Space unit; and first time sustained Space control operations were conducted in combat by an Army Space unit.

Concerning Space control, Cosumano said, “This command, with only a few hundred soldiers, really has the unique capability — that no other service has — to ensure we can control the high ground.”

In addition, Cosumano stated that the Joint Tactical Ground Stations in Europe and Qatar provided battle Space characterization to the war effort for the first time.

After making his remarks, Cosumano presented awards.

Receiving the Bronze Star was MAJ Daniel Cockerham, member of Army Space Support Team 5, for support to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

CPT Robert Barrett and 1LT Angela Johnson, both members of ARSST 5, received the Joint Service

Commendation Medal in support of their actions in OIF.

The Army Commendation Medal was awarded to LTC Jeff Souder, MAJ Greg Glover and MAJ T.I. Weintraub, all from the Space and Missile Defense Battle Lab Space Support Element Toolset - Light Fielding Team.

SPC Joshua Foye, a member of ARSST 5 with the 1MEF was presented with the Joint Service Achievement Medal for his actions in OIF.

The USMC Certificate of Commendation was presented to Cockerham, Barrett, Johnson and Foye for their contributions to OIF.

Cosumano then personally acknowledged eight additional soldiers for their contributions in support of OEF and OIF with coins.

These soldiers previously received their awards from their supported units in the field: MAJ Andrew Weate, V Corps ARSST 1, Bronze Star Medal, OIF; CPT Bo Taylor, Combined Force Land Component Commander ARSST 3, Joint Service Commendation Medal, OIF; 1LT Shawn Price, CJTF-180 ARSST 2, Joint Service Commendation Medal, OEF; SSG Kipp Wilson, CFLCC ARSST 3, Joint Service Commendation Medal, OIF; SGT Samuel Huseby, CJTF-180 ARSST 2, Joint Service Commendation Medal, OEF and, Joint Service Achievement Medal, OIF, CFLCC ARSST 3; SGT Eugene Justice, CJTF-180 ARSST 2, Joint Service Commendation Medal, OEF; 1LT Mathew Rapp and SSG Jessica Adams, V Corps ARSST 1, Army Commendation Medal, OIF.

Two additional groups of soldiers came forward to receive coins and personal thanks from the Commanding General. These were soldiers who have returned most recently from deployments, and are awaiting the processing of their awards.

Afterward, a reporter asked the Commanding General to summarize what all the awards and acknowledgments in the day’s ceremony meant.

Cosumano replied, “If you were to ask the soldiers and me as the commander, we were just doing our jobs. We don’t expect anything other than the support of our families and the nation — and we certainly have that.”

Donald Montoya is a Public Affairs Specialist at Army Space & Missile Defense Command in Colorado Springs, Colo. Previously, he spent 25 years at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., serving as chief of Command Information. He served as an authority on missile range historical footage providing assistance to various independent production outfits such as PBS, BBC, The History Channel and The Discovery Channel.



MAJ Daniel Cockerham OIC of ARSST Team 5 receives the Bronze Star from LTG Joseph M. Cosumano, Jr., Commanding General, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command for his teams support of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in Iraqi during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). SGT Brandi Hariis, right, watches as SGT Fabienne Van Cappel receives a coin from Cosumano for her service during OIF. MAJ Andrew Weate, CPT Bo Taylor, 1LT Shawn Price, and SSG Kipp Wilson are recognized for their service during Operation Enduring Freedom at an awards ceremony recognizing soldiers who served in support of the war campaigns.
Photos by Dennis Plummer