Command In Brief

ARSS TEAM 2 Members deploy to Iraq

By MSG Dennis Beebe

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — Army Space Support Team (ARSST) 2, a unit of U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command's 1st Space Battalion recently headed to Camp Victory in Baghdad, Iraq to provide Space support to the Multi National Corps, Iraq (MNCI) in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"This team is deploying to Iraq to fight the war on terror, which is our nation's number one priority," said LTC Lee Gizzi, 1st Space Battalion Commander.

"The rest of us here in Colorado Springs, whether it is the 1st Space Battalion or the 1st Space Brigade, have the responsibility of fully supporting the needs of our forward deployed Soldiers. Whatever their support requirements are, we will meet them"

The 18th Airborne Corps had the mission in Iraq until V Corps, with ARSST 2 attached, took over in January.

While deployed, the ARSST will provide Space support to the combatant commander in several ways. The team is an on-site capability that provides satellite imagery from both commercial and military sources. This includes the ability to produce 3-D fly-throughs and maps for both planners and operators. The team keeps a constant watch on Space weather and the effects it can have on Space-based platforms. The team also deploys with its own independent communications system, providing extensive reach back to Space forces, organizations, and analysis centers within theater or back to the U.S.

In preparing the team to deploy, Gizzi reiterated the Warrior Ethos and charged the team with living it.

"This is not a war like we have ever seen in previous times, where you seize terrain and gain ground. It is a war of attrition. I want to ensure that the guys in charge, Major Robinson and Staff Sergeant McCoy, make sure the team does not take shortcuts, and that they adhere to what is important and what is right, and that they bring their team home intact. I have the utmost confidence in their abilities and I look forward to greeting Team two at the end of their tour," said Gizzi.

CPT Matthew Anderson spends time with his daughter during a farewell ceremony for Anderson's Army Space Support Team that is now in Iraq. *Photo by MSG Dennis Beebe*

Spouses of deployed Soldiers honored

By Ed White

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — Having a husband or wife deployed to a war zone is one of the most difficult events a military spouse can go through, but it's a common thing in today's military. Recently U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command, represented by the 1st Space Brigade CSM Daryall Sumpter and 1st Space Battalion

Commander, LTC Lee Gizzi, held a luncheon to honor the spouses of the brigade's deployed Soldiers. The luncheon provided a great opportunity for these spouses to get to know some of the command staff and allowed the brigade leadership the opportunity to determine how the families of deployed Soldiers are doing in the absence of their spouses.

Six spouses attended the luncheon at the Peterson Air Force Base Officer's Club. Megan Martinez, wife of SSG Jason Martinez with the 2nd Space Company; Donna Rogers, wife of SFC Richard Rogers, G-3 Plans and Exercise; Elizabeth Tompkins, wife of MSG Kenneth Tompkins of Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 53rd Signal Battalion; Alexandra Robinson, wife of MAJ Lawrence Robinson of the 2nd Space Company; and Janet Anderson, wife of CPT Matthew Anderson of the 2nd Space Company all shared anecdotes of situations they have worked through since their husbands deployed.

"We heard stories of broken garage doors, frozen pipes, sick babies and good neighbors responding to help," said MSG Frances Sanchez-Jones of the command G-6, whose efforts were instrumental in bringing the luncheon about.

"We also learned that these women have adjusted, adapted, and overcome a number of obstacles that would have normally been handled by their spouses when not deployed. These are remarkable women, they have no idea how much we appreciate their silent sacrifice," Sanchez-Jones added.

Around the table the discussion turned to what could be done to help the spouses and families of future deployed Soldiers. "More meetings like this," said one spouse. "Better contact with the chain of command," said another. Throughout the discussion, several major issues came to light. One important observation was made on how to reestablish a close relationship with a returning spouse and how to reintegrate the Soldier into family life. For many, the concern has become a larger issue as the redeployment date of their spouses gets

Spouses of deployed Soldiers attending the luncheon include: (left to right) Terri Horne wife of BG Jeffrey C. Horne, who deployed to Iraq in January; Elizabeth Tompkins, wife of MSG Kenneth Tompkins, 53rd Signal Battalion (SATCON); Donna Rogers, wife of SFC Richard Rogers, G-3 Plex; Melissa Pollock, wife of 2LT Matt Pollock, 193rd Space Battalion.; Alexandra Robinson, wife of MAJ Lawrence Robinson, 1st Space Battalion; Megan Martinez, wife of SSG Jason Martinez, 1st Space Battalion; and (seated) Janet Anderson, wife of CPT Matthew Anderson, 1st Space Battalion. *Photo by Ed White*

closer. Information on Web sites and publications that give guidance and information on how to accomplish the reintegration process was traded amongst the spouses.

Gizzi and Sumpter encouraged the wives to call the command via the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to contact their spouses, especially during emergency situations, or to notify the command of any difficulties with calls. "It is hard to hide from the EOC," Gizzi said. "Rest assured they can track anyone down anywhere in the world and make contact." "The Brigade is here to help in whatever way we can," Sumpter said. "You all are part of our military family and we are here to support you too."

This luncheon was the first of its kind with more to come, providing an informal means for the brigade to maintain two-way contact with family members of Soldiers deployed far from home.

"This was very helpful to us at the brigade," Sumpter said. "Taking care of our Soldiers and their families is a top priority and this interaction will help us do a better job now and in the future."

Luncheon arrangements and gift packages were provided courtesy of Army Family Team Building representative, Tonya Daniels. Also assisting with the luncheon were Karen Butler and 1LT Liesl Hammond, of the G-1.

Army/Air Force Football

MSG Dennis Beebe

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — With the Army vs. Air Force annual gridiron battle happening at the Air Force Academy's Falcon Stadium, a pep rally was held on Peterson Air Force Base, which is also home to a strong contingent of Army personnel in the form of U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command. Although outnumbered by more than 5 to 1, SMDC/ARSTRAT held their own against the masses of the Air Force personnel in a spectacle of events.

53rd Signal Battalion (SATCON) SPC Ivan Melendez, S-2 NCOIC, harasses the Air Force mascot, "The Bird" during the pep rally. *Photo by MSG Dennis Beebe*

The Air Force Academy Pep Squad, along with their mascot, "the Bird," did their best to whip the crowd into frenzy with cheers and acrobatics as Air Force personnel sold opportunities for people to "Kiss the Mule." The so-called winners of the contest, were the ones who had the highest amount of money paid for them to be the 'kissers.' With red lipstick applied very heavily on their lips, the kissers made their mark on the hind end of the white mule that had been brought in to represent the Army's mascot.

One Air Force lieutenant colonel remarked "I don't know whether to be more concerned about people wanting to kiss an animal, or why guys would want to wear lipstick."

The true competitive events began with a punt, pass and kick contest. Except for the strong northwesterly wind blowing some of the footballs off course, the contest went fairly well with SMDC/ARSTRAT's own SPC Theodore Fuller,

1st Space Company winning the overall contest by beating out the second place finisher by more than 40 feet. The competitors lined up next for the arm-wrestling contest where another 1st Space Company Soldier, SSG Ronald Morgan went through three contestants before letting an Air Force Captain slightly get the best of him in the championship match. Morgan lead throughout the bout and thought he had won, but when he let up his opponent made a big deal and overturned the table in an adrenalin rush. Although Morgan lost, the captain only had two opponents to beat to get to the finals, whereas Morgan had been through three tough matches.

The tug-of-war contest was next with one team from each service lined up on each side of the sand volleyball court. The flag was dropped and the Army team held tough against the heavier Air Force team, but once the cheerleaders for the Air Force started a chant of "Go-Go-Go," the Air Force used the rhythm to overpower a well dug in and tough Army team.

The final contest, which involved a baseball bat and 10 freshly cooked hot dogs, was a bit more complex. Each team of five contestants lined up and in a relay fashion started with ten revolutions around the baseball bat which was held to their foreheads. After becoming thoroughly dizzy and disoriented, the contestants had to run, stagger and thrash their way 25 yards down to the tray of cooked hotdogs and completely down one to the satisfaction of the hot-dog-swallowing-judge before running back and tagging the next team member. The Army jumped out to a quick start with the 53rd Signal Battalion (SATCON) CSM Reginald Williams spinning quickly around the bat and dashing to the hot-dog tray first, but he was held up a bit trying to finish off the hot dog. The Army team had lost a little time but was slowly work-

SPC Ivan Melendez, LTC Hae-Sue Park and 1LT Theodore Perry of the 53rd Signal Battalion, revel after sweeping the Air Force Academy mascot "The Bird" off his feet. *Photo by MSG Dennis Beebe*

ing their way back to the lead when the last Air Force competitor finished his spin, dashed down the track, inhaled a whole dog in 1.2 seconds and dashed back, while the Army's last contestant was still chewing and swallowing. It looked like all was lost until one of the spin-count judges declared the hot-dog inhaler had only spun nine times and was therefore disqualified putting another win in the Army column.

With the events over, the Army and Air Force competitors shook hands, gave each other a slap on the back and went their separate ways. But the real contest was the battle on the football field where the Army Golden Knights defeated the Air Force Falcons 27-24. It was the first time the Knights have defeated the Falcons in Falcon Stadium since 1977. The Knights unfortunately lost later in the year to Navy, and thus lost the Commander in Chief's Trophy, an honor which they have not held since 1996.

Tour de humility

Commentary by SPC Brian L. Metz, 53rd Signal Battalion (SATCON)

OKINAWA, Japan — It's easy to stay humble on Okinawa. Every time you go to the gym there's some Marine curling what you can leg press on a good day. At least a third of the people I work with are flat-out smarter, have fresher brains, or both. At least there's the Tour De Okinawa. It's the most ambitious thing I've ever done, but after watching the septuagenarians ride the same course with what seemed like less effort, the most tempering as well.

This year the 17th Annual Tour De Okinawa, an international multi-course bicycling event, was held Nov. 12 and 13, featuring 18 different events ranging from a 200 km professional race to a 50 meter kids unicycle race, and even three courses

SPC Brian L. Metz poses with a Shi-Sa dog at the finish line of the Tour de Okinawa race. *Courtesy photo*

which traveled to a neighboring island and back.

The professional racers included members from many national teams including Japan, China, and the United States. The event I participated in was the Around Okinawa Island course, a two stage 313 km (190 mile) trip around the island offering a sample of almost every kind of riding to be found.

This event was unlike any I had done in the U.S. for several reasons. To start with, our event did not have any police support for traffic control since that was reserved for the larger racing events. Despite that the actual riding was a lot more controlled by the event staff than I was used to, especially the mandatory rest stops and scheduled restarts. The English-speaking riders were provided a translator named Mikuni-san who was very helpful and even met us at most stops along the way. But the little things like pineapple cake, iced green tea, and small plates of sea-salt next to the usual bananas and sports-drink at the rest stops impressed me as much as anything else.

Stage one was a 189 km clockwise course covering the northern part of Okinawa, which started at the Nago Convention Center roughly centered on the west coast of the island. We started in-groups determined by the stoplight, and with the staff keeping a moderate pace at the front via bikes and motorcycles, started to work our way around the Motobu Peninsula. We were required to stay behind the pace bikes all the way until the first mandatory rest stop. After that we were allowed to ride at our own pace but were still led by an event motorcycle. After the Peninsula, the course went up the west coast around Hedo Point, then down to the small town of Oku where we were stopped for a lunch of pork-broth and greens soup served with steamed rice and oolong tea.

Following the 12 p.m. restart we hit an area that reminded why I was happy to have spent a lot of money modifying my mountain bike to a more road bike configuration, i.e. skinny tires, clip-on pedals, etc. Highway 70 is a gorgeous road with little traffic and few stoplights that winds down the northeast coast and parts of the interior to Highway 329 for about 80 km. It also has many, many, MANY, hills ranging from challenging to brutal. Five hours and three stops later the course turned west, had a slight detour around a Habu (local poisonous snake), traveled back to Highway 58, then finally turned

south to the Kise Beach Hotel where we stayed for the night.

Stage two on Sunday was a much easier 124 km trip around the southern part of the island, which offered a tour of Okinawan weather as well. Starting at Kise Beach, we rode south to Highway 104, turned east and riding through the first rainstorm turned south onto Highway 330. Enjoying both a coastal view and a friendly tailwind, I made it to Okinawa City which is where the fun really began. Okinawan drivers are a bit random in nature. Add to that the coral that's mixed into the asphalt then throw in some rain and you have an attention-getting ride. Shortly after making it to the first check point, the rain was probably causing nine decibel attenuation for my coworkers on shift. A funny thing about thunder is no translation is needed. I was resting under a breezeway next to a Japanese speaking group when we heard what sounded like thunder. Their conversation stopped and we all grinned at each other while waiting for the next rumble.

After a good rest we pushed-on to through the warm

rain to Highway 29 and turned west towards the capital city of Naha. By the time we got there for the lunch break the rain had stopped and the roads even started to dry. Sunday's lunch was a feast. Udon soup (an Asian pasta), seasoned rice, some spicy Octopus, a Prawn, a mix of shredded cabbage and pickled Kelp, two pieces of Tempura fish, and hot and cold tea.

A stoplight-rationed restart onto Highway 58 got us going north back towards Nago. I grinned while passing familiar parts of Naha including the several blocks where the Great Naha Tug-of-War is done, and Tomari Port where the Dragon Boat Races are held. The final 40 km was a blend of stoplights, car dodging and sightseeing. We had three more rest stops, the last including a photo-op for groups, teams and individuals. All this being done during the event instead of after was another first for me. The event finished with a mass restart escorted by motorcycle all the way back to the Convention Center, where all of the riders were greeted by traditional Okinawan music and two-person Shi-Sa dogs.

After the event I had a chance to speak, with Mikuni-san's help, with one of the riders who had been amazing me for the last two days. The man who wore the event number "1" was one of at least two dozen riders over the age of 60. This gentleman, whose name I withhold out of respect for his great humility, is 75 years old, rides this event every year, and plans to continue until he turns 80. Then he plans to slow down and ride it only every three years. Small wonder that despite this being the toughest event I've ever done, I came away with very little pride, just great satisfaction.

100th GMD Soldier pedals his way to victory

By SGT Sara Storey

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Hard work, endurance and dedication helped smooth the rocky trails for 1SG Herbert Rodriguez as he pedaled his way to victory during a recent mountain bike competition.

Rodriguez is the first sergeant for Headquarters/Headquarters Battery, 100th Missile Defense Brigade (Ground-based Midcourse Defense). The 100th, working in conjunction with other elements of the multi-layered Ballistic Missile Defense System, defends the U.S. Homeland by protecting against accidental or intentional launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Rodriguez took the second place trophy for his age group (age 40-49, males) in the Mountain States Cup Regional Championship Series Sept. 4. This summer series consists of nine races throughout the mountain states — including Colorado, Utah and New Mexico. A typical race is anywhere from 8-12 miles and usually takes place on ski slopes after the snow has melted. Rodriguez said the terrain is rocky, steep and requires a lot of technical expertise to handle twists and turns, while avoiding exposed roots and rocks.

"An average race is five miles straight up and then five miles straight down," Rodriguez said. "The downhill makes the agony of the uphill worthwhile."

Rodriguez began mountain biking in Alabama about four years before coming to the GMD and Colorado. Since he and his family moved here nearly two years ago, Rodriguez has discovered many great mountain biking trails in and near Colorado Springs.

"If you like the great outdoors and mountain biking, this is the place to live," Rodriguez said.

Additionally, Rodriguez has an opportunity to share his expertise with a younger crowd — this year, he coached his son's high school mountain bike team, the Front Rangers Cycling Club.

"I like to encourage kids to exercise and influence the young to live a healthy lifestyle," Rodriguez said. "These days, so many youngsters just sit in front of the TV. It's very rewarding to be so instrumental in getting them outside."

In addition to competing in the nine championship series races throughout the summer, Ro-

1SG Herbert Rodriguez navigates rocky and steep terrain during a mountain bike competition near Colorado Springs, Colo. *Photo by SGT Sara Storey*

driguez and his team do two training rides each week — regardless of weather conditions. They ride mountain bike trails to train for handling rough terrain, participate in road rides to build endurance and take part in criterion races — intense races featuring "explosive acceleration" and taking place on a concrete track. According to Rodriguez, practicing these three different types of biking builds both endurance and technical ability.

Getting out on the trail is the best way to learn, but Rodriguez also encourages his team to read biking articles and learn from the experience of others.

Rodriguez said teaching these eight team members to be better mountain bikers parallels being a good first sergeant in many ways.

"I'm not a coach — I'm just a motivator," Rodriguez said. "I try to teach the kids a good work ethic and I use the Army philosophy of 'crawl, walk, run.'"

Luckily, by the end of the season, Rodriguez's team was up and running — they took first place in the "junior" category of the Mountain States Cup Regional Championship Series. Many of Rodriguez's team also took home trophies in their own age groups.

Rodriguez's experience with his youth team pushes him to the limit and helps him stay in shape.

"I try to lead by example with the youth — I refuse to be the last one up to the top," Rodriguez said.

In addition to his training and competitive rides with the youth team, Rodriguez gets plenty of exercise with adult riders. Rodriguez said he and his friends often do one-half day rides — hard, fast and climbing to incredible elevations. Rodriguez also takes part in an annual Independence Day ride, traveling more than 40 miles over the Continental Divide.

Rodriguez enjoys challenging rides with other enthusiasts — in fact, his motto is "ride with those who are faster than you" — but, he's always willing to help novices. In keeping with this effort, Rodriguez introduced nearly 15 GMD members to mountain biking during a recent unit morale day. The group spent the day negotiating the Air Force Academy's Falcon Trail Sept. 21.

Following are Rodriguez's tips for new mountain bikers:

- Learn proper trail etiquette and practice it.
- Use the buddy system – never ride by yourself.
- Find a local bike club and learn from those with more experience.
- Purchase a quality used bike instead of a less-expensive new bicycle.
- Don't be afraid to take a fall — "if you're not wiping out once in a while, you're not going hard enough," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez finds mountain biking exhilarating, although he warns that it can be dangerous at times because of the tricky terrain and intense speed.

"Sometimes it seems like there are only two speeds — stopped and wide open," Rodriguez said.

This is true whether mountain biking for pleasure or competition, according to Rodriguez. And, although proud that he took home a trophy this year, winning a competition isn't Rodriguez's No. 1 priority — taking first place is the quality time he's able to spend with his

son while biking, tying for a close second are the fresh air and physical challenges associated with the sport.

"I probably will quit the competitive aspects of mountain biking when my son leaves for college," Rodriguez said. "But, I'll never give up mountain biking — I hope to be known as 'that guy riding the bike who looks like ZZ Top' when I retire."

Delta Diablos raise 38,000 pounds of food during food drive

By SSG Clay Rhoads

CAMP ROBERTS, Calif. — Around mid-November, April Rhoads, Delta Company, 53rd Signal Battalion (SATCON), Family Readiness Group Secretary tuned into the local news and saw that the local county food bank was nearly bare. Due to recent support of Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief efforts and shipments of food to the Middle East earthquake disaster area, the food bank stores were depleted. Knowing that the holiday season was just around the corner and that there would be many families who depended on the San Luis Obispo County Consolidated Food Bank for support, Rhoads along with the rest of the Family Readiness Group got together and immediately started brainstorming how they could contribute. What they came up with would exceed all expectations, even their own. It took a month of planning, coordination, calling, emailing (even while on vacation for some), but the date for the Delta Company Community Food Drive, nicknamed "Food for Folks," was set.

On Dec. 16-17 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. each

Left to right, SSG Clay Rhoads, SGT Taylor Roynon and SPC Matthew Decicco hold a sign to attract attention to Delta Company's holiday food drive "Food for Folks." Delta Company raised enough food and cash donations to supply the local food bank with more than 38,000 pounds of food. *Photo by SGT Valencia Hollaugh*

day, more than 30 Soldiers, spouses, and even their kids gathered in the Paso Robles Albertson's parking lot and started collecting donations, both monetary and food. The idea was to give back to the community that has whole-heartedly supported them, even though many supporters did not know that there is still active duty military on Camp Roberts. "The community has always supported us in all the fundraisers that we have put on for the unit. We just saw this as the perfect opportunity to give back to them. It felt really great to be a part of something like this," said Rhoads.

Soldiers danced on street corners, local news crews showed up, and Soldiers did push-ups at the customer service desk for donations. All the stops were pulled out to get the community on our side. "It felt good to do something for all the people in the community that aren't as fortunate as most," said SPC Matthew Decicco. "They are the ones who are always there for us, so this was just a way to show our appreciation." The added bonus was that the food bank could buy 15 pounds of food for every dollar donated. When the smoke cleared, everybody worn out, the final count was staggering.

All in all, the Soldiers and their families had raised an impressive total of nearly 3,000 pounds of donated food, and more than $2,300 in cash donations which translated into over 38,000 pounds of food for the food bank. To put this into perspective, a local radio station was planning to do their own food drive and was aiming for 98,000 pounds in seven days. Overwhelmed by his Soldiers' and their families' efforts, CPT Conway Lin reflected, "I am proud of the size of Delta Company's heart."

Missile Defense Flight Test Successfully Completed

Excerpt from Missile Defense Agency release

The director of the Missile Defense Agency, Air Force LTG Henry "Trey" Obering, announced the successful completion of an important test involving the launch of an operationally-configured Ground-based Interceptor missile designed to protect the United States against a limited long-range ballistic missile attack.

The test, held Dec. 13, was primarily designed to evaluate the performance of the interceptor missile's rocket motor system and exoatmospheric kill vehicle, which is the component that collides directly with a target warhead in Space to perform a "hit-to-kill" intercept using only the force of the collision to totally destroy the target warhead. Initial indications are that the rocket motor system and kill vehicle performed well.

The flight test results will help to further improve and refine the performance of numerous Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) elements that will be used to provide a defense against the type of long-range ballistic missile that could be used to attack an American city with a weapon of mass destruction.

The interceptor missile was launched at approximately 3:04 p.m. (local time, Dec. 14); (10:04 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Dec. 13) from the Ronald Reagan Test Site, Republic of the Marshall Islands, in the central Pacific Ocean. For this exercise, there was a simulated launch of a target missile from Kodiak, Alaska using data from previous launches.

The test also successfully tested a wide variety of components and subcomponents as part of the evaluation of system performance, including improved missile silo support equipment, booster/kill vehicle separation, kill vehicle cryogenic sensor cooling, kill vehicle orientation and positioning, and several others.

The Ground-based Midcourse Defense system currently has seven interceptors deployed at Fort. Greely and two at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. Other components of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense currently include the upgraded Cobra Dane radar in the Aleutian Island chain of Alaska, and upgraded early warning radars at Beale Air Force Base, Calif., and at Fylingdales in the United Kingdom. Up to four forward deployed air-transportable X-band radars are also planned for the system, as well as an upgrade to the existing early warning radar at Thule Air Base in Greenland. A new seabased X-band radar mounted aboard a large sea-going platform began its transit in November to its operating base at Adak, Alaska in the Aleutian Islands. It will have the capability to operate in any ocean to support both operations and testing.