

ARMY SPACE SUPPORT TEAMS DEPLOY IN SUPPORT OF OIF

By Ed White

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — Two Army Space Support Teams recently departed Colorado in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The first group, a three man Army Space Support Team is now providing Space support along with members from the Colorado Army National Guard Space Support Battalion already supporting the warfighters in Iraq.

These Soldiers were farewelled in ceremonies held at the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command operational headquarters. COL Timothy Coffin, 1st Space Brigade commander said, “The reason why we have these ceremonies for our deploying troops is that we want you to understand the level of support you have behind you as you go out on deployment. We are here to help you and to make sure that all the important things stay connected while you are gone.”

LTC Lee Gizzi, the team’s battalion commander presented the team leader with a coin symbolic of the team’s commitment and unity. A coin goes with each team and symbolizes their unity, their purpose and their role as Soldiers. As each team returns from a deployment, the coins are retired and hung in the Battalion conference room. Currently there are 23 returned coins hanging on the wall.

“I charge you to accept this coin, protect it while you are deployed and bring it and all your Soldiers back safely from the fight,” Gizzi said. “You are responsible for each other. Watch each other’s back, help each other accomplish the mission and come back as one team.”

Army Space Support Team 7 was also feted in a departure ceremony as they deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom to replace Army Space Support Team 2.

“You are replacing a team that has set the bar high,” said Gizzi. “However, I know you will exceed their standard. You are trained. You are ready, now go and execute the mission. I charge you to look out for each other and bring everyone on the team

home safely.”

“This Team is a combination of Active and Reserve Soldiers — each one volunteering for this mission. Many of them are on their second tour to Iraq. They represent the Warrior Ethos in all of us,” Gizzi said as he presented a battalion coin to yet another team leader.

Space support plays a key role on the modern battlefield and Army Space Support Teams have been deployed in support of combat operations in the theater since the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism. They have been a constant presence in the theater, providing timely, accurate and tailored Space support to the planners and operators prosecuting combat operations. Whether it is digital imagery that can be used in a wide variety of ways for planning and executing operations; or the effects of Space weather on the accuracy and capabilities of communications and location systems; or the ability to make 3-D flythroughs for mission rehearsal, Space support has earned its place in the pantheon of primary military operational requirements and it is here to stay.

For the families left behind, Gizzi added, “For these Soldiers it is easy. They know what they are going to be doing for the duration of their deployment. For you, it is much harder, and we appreciate the support that you provide to them. It is the unknown that makes it difficult on the families. It is all the responsibilities that you have as wives and as mothers taking care of the family, keeping things moving on the home front that often goes unrecognized and underappreciated. We recognize and appreciate your sacrifices and we have a Family Readiness Group standing by to support you for whatever you might need during your husband’s deployment.”

Ed White has 21 years experience in military public affairs and is currently an editorial assistant for the Future Warfare Center Directorate of Combat Development to help produce the **Army Space Journal**.



Above, COL Timothy Coffin, (right) commander, 1st Space Brigade, wishes members of Army Space Support Team 4, Godspeed on the eve of the team's departure for Iraq. One member of the team held his infant daughter, who in a touching moment seen to the right, crawled to her father during the farewell. Her father scooped her up into his arms and held her throughout the remainder of the ceremony.



Above, Army Space Support Team 7 is made up of Active Duty and Reserve Soldiers. Right, LTC Lee Gizzi (right) passes the unit coin to the team leader. The coin symbolizes the unit's commitment, solidarity and professionalism and serves as a reminder that they are a team. When returned at the end of their tour it will hang on the wall of the battalion's conference room with the twenty three others that have been returned from successful deployments in the global war against terror.

