

Mission ACCOMPLISHED!

CET returns from the fight

By Ed White



CPT John Yungbluth receives a welcome home hug upon his return from his tour supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Commercial Exploitation Team is one of several units from U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command currently supporting operations in the Middle East. *Photograph taken by DJ Montoya*

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – Welcome home and farewell ceremonies are a staple part of life at U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command. Soldiers deploy and redeploy regularly. It's part of their jobs. Recently the Commercial Exploitation Team from 2nd Space Company, 1st Space Battalion redeployed from the Middle East after a tour

of duty supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I could not have asked for a better team," said MAJ James T. Bushong, team leader. Each and every one of these Soldiers worked their tails off to support the fight."

"There are Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines who are alive today and a whole bunch of terrorists who are not because of the support

this team provided,” said LTC Lee Gizzi, battalion commander, 1st Space Battalion.

“They increased their productivity by a factor of three from the previous team,” said MAJ Rob Gray, their company commander. “They have set the bar very high for their follow-on team.”

COL Timothy Coffin, brigade commander, 1st Space Brigade addressed the assembled Soldiers and civilians during the welcome home ceremony. “Each one of these Soldiers brought something special to the mix,” Coffin said. “They were engaged and brought their special skills and experience to bear in support of the warfighter. I couldn’t be prouder of a team and their accomplishments.”

Bushong returned to Gizzi a coin he was given when he took the team overseas. The coin acted as a rallying point for the team, a reminder of the importance of the mission and as a tangible reminder of the support they had from home. With each deployment from the battalion a coin is given to the team or element leader and every one has been brought back successfully. There are

25 of these coins hanging in the battalion’s conference room, all of which date from 2003 to the present.

“You were given two missions a year ago,” Gizzi said. First was to support the warfighter with your CET system. Mission accomplished! Second was to return home with your troops and equipment intact. Mission accomplished!”

For those who do not deploy, very little changes. Their lives go on pretty much the same. For those who deploy, their lives can be entirely different for the experience. Every day in a war zone brings its own stress, its own surprises, both good and bad. No one who spends any time in a war zone comes away unscathed, unhurt. It’s just not possible. But the war goes on and more Soldiers go and then come back changed by the experience.

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

2007 SMDC/ARSTRAT NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER AND SOLDIER OF THE YEAR



SGT PATRICK J. MANN



SGT MARTIN A. JENSEN

SGT Patrick J. Mann was selected as the 2007 U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, and SGT Martin Jensen was selected as the 2007 SMDC/ARSTRAT Soldier of the Year after a weeklong competition in June. Be sure to read the next issue of the Army Space Journal for an in depth look at the competition.