



SPC William Bassat moves an unused bag of ready mix concrete onto the bed of a pickup as part of the completion of work on the ranges.

Space Soldiers PARTNER WITH KNIGHTS OF HEROES

By DJ Montoya, 1st Space Brigade,

DIVIDE, Colo. – This week in the beautiful Colorado outdoors just south of Divide, Colo., 26 boys spanning the ages of seven to 17 from all around the nation are enjoying a once-in-a-lifetime camping experience courtesy of a non-profit organization known as the Knights of Heroes in cooperation with the One Good Turn Ranch – and a little help from Army Space Soldiers from the 1st Space Battalion.

Rewind to a little over two weeks ago. MAJ Eric Little, commander of the 1st Space Company, 1st Space Battalion, and a Knights of Heroes foundation member, was looking for volunteer support to assist the Knights in readying the ranch for the boys. Little turned to his comrades in the battalion for help, expecting a detail of only 10 to 12. To his amazement and that of the Knights organization a total of 32 fellow Army Space Soldiers showed up in front of the One Good Turn Ranch Main Lodge on the morning of May 29 ready to do their part for the worthwhile cause.

“The turnout was much better than anticipated. There was plenty of work to be done with the primary goal being construction of an archery, air rifle, and tomahawk range for use by the boys when they come,” said Little.

Giving back to the community in his spare time, Little explained the purpose behind the Knights of Heroes.

“It was founded a little over three years ago by Air Force Major Steve Harrold. His best friend Air Force Major Troy Gilbert, an F-16 pilot, was killed while supporting troops in action. Gilbert had two sons and there was a void there when their father passed away. Harrold came up with an idea to provide some support for these boys and sons of other fallen Soldiers.”



LTC Thomas James, commander 1st Space Battalion, high atop his pickup prepares to unload a bale of hay next to what will become an archery range.

Ssg Christopher Knoth trims a board with a circular saw while SGT Alan Tyson holds it steady. The board is for placement on individual archery and air rifle stalls. Photos by DJ Montoya, 1st Space Brigade.



“Basically, we fly the boys to Colorado and spend a week with them doing activities like rock climbing, fishing, canoeing, horse-back riding and other activities. There is a limited amount of grief-work conducted as well, but the primary purpose of the camp is to let the boys rage in the outdoors with peers who share a similar loss all while being mentored by men who care deeply about their future. Family members also have the option to visit Colorado and have an opportunity to visit with other spouses and visit local attractions while the boys are at camp.”

The boys and their families for this year’s session arrived June 14 and will depart on June 21. The boys attend the camp while the moms and daughters spend the week visiting sights in and around Colorado Springs.

Prior to the setting out to build the range, Little introduced Joey Truscelli who is the owner of One Good Turn Ranch.

“As most of you know we have been filming a television show for the past four years called ‘One Good Turn,’” said Truscelli (or “Joey T” as he is better known).

“We are excited to be featuring this story of 26 boys along with the Knights of Heroes, an organization that is simply amazing. These boys all have something in common; they have each lost a father serving our country. This special episode is titled ‘Sons of the Fallen.’”

Joey T personally thanked each and every Army Space Soldier from the 1st Space Battalion onsite throughout the day giving them a One Good Turn T-shirt and providing lunch in the form of hot dogs with all the fixings.

“This place we purchased two and a half years ago – it still is a little run down, but every time people like you come out here it helps us a bunch. So we really appreciate you guys.”

After getting their assignments, volunteers from the battalion moved into action with the same dedication they have while performing their daily missions of providing Space-based capabilities and products to the warfighters on the ground, only this time it was for sons of the fallen heroes.

Armed with tools, building materials, and some guidance supplied by three members from the Knights’ organization, Army Space Soldiers proceeded to clean up around the cabins, move bales of hay and picnic tables, clear dead brush and branches, and build a massive fire pit, all in addition to their main goal of constructing an activities range from scratch.

Loading bales of hay into his truck for transport to the archery range, LTC Thomas James, commander of the 1st Space Battalion, said, “This is exactly the type of community service I’ve been looking for the battalion to become involved with.”

“The whole day was a success as far as I am concerned,” said CPT Everetta J. Davis, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Space Battalion.

“Not only did we get the range complete, but we cleaned up the area and completed a fire pit.”

“This will enable the kids to really enjoy themselves and it enabled my Soldiers to see what can be accomplished when you work together. This is an incredible cause and we were so glad to participate in this. Personally, it was great to be doing something for kids and to show Soldiers how satisfying volunteer work can be. We look forward to continuing this type of work.”

Would the battalion Soldiers welcome another opportunity to assist? SGT Matthew M. Olevano, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Space Battalion, put it best with a simple, “Yes.”

“We would like to do this type of community service in the future because it allows us to give back to the community and it also allows us to help out and assist family members of fallen Soldiers.”

By mid-afternoon Little gathered all of the day’s participants around a makeshift campfire to assess the day’s accomplishments as a few Soldiers roasted hot dogs over the flames.

“A lot of work was done, and a lot of things were accomplished. If you haven’t already done so, I encourage everyone to walk up to the Elk Lodge and take a look at the fire pit many of you dug. It is a good piece of work. We also filled a couple of truckloads worth of dirt to fill holes around the lake, got a lot of the slash piles chopped up and wood moved. Thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Thomas James, commander of the 1st Space Battalion for allowing this to happen.”

Little’s comments were echoed by the founder of the Knights of Heroes and one of the helpers in the day’s activities.

“There are only six of us on the foundation,” said Harrold.

“The work you have done today would have taken us probably six weekends to accomplish. It is immeasurable the amount of work you guys were able to accomplish in such a short amount of time. And really, we can’t do it without people like you coming out and helping us. Look for the show, sometime in the fall we hope, and you can say ‘Well, I built that!’ And you will see the smiles on the kid’s faces.”

James presented Harrold with a battalion coin stating, “The work that you have done for those kids is just amazing. And to give us the opportunity to come over here and be part of this is just as important to us as I think it is to the kids who are receiving your support.”

According to Joey T. the end result of the boys experience this week will be aired sometime in the fall on a major network television broadcast.