

22nd SPECIAL TACTICS SQUADRON AIRMEN HONORED by Tyler Hemstreet, Staff writer
SEPTEMBER 25, 2009 - MCCHORD AIR FORCE BASE, WASHINGTON -- The 22nd Special Tactics Squadron recently hosted an awards ceremony honoring 40 Airmen with an array of combat awards earned during deployments over the last two years, ranging from the Purple Heart to the Air Force Achievement Medal. Family members and friends of the honored Airmen, as well as Col. William Sherman, Air Force Special Operations Command chief of operations, packed the squadron's auditorium Sept. 3 for the ceremony.



Colonel William Sherman, Chief of Operations Division, Air Force Special Operations Command, awards a Bronze Star to Master Sergeant Jason Dryer, 22 Special Tactics Squadron, during a ceremony here September 3. Twenty-nine members of the 22 STS were awarded thirty-seven medals, including five Bronze Star's and three Purple Heart's, as recognition for their performance while engaged in combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Abner Guzman)

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"The day was about recognizing the teamwork of our outstanding combat support and operators who work side-by-side delivering devastation to the enemy and winning hearts and minds while forward deployed," said Lt. Col. Bryan Cannady, 22nd STS commander. "As the mighty 22nd STS prepares to deploy once again, it is fitting to celebrate our accomplishments from last year."

The Purple Heart was awarded to Master Sgt. Anthony Bryant and Staff Sgts. Evan Jones and Shaun Meadows.

- Sergeant Bryant was injured in a high speed vehicle accident while tactically egressing a site under enemy fire.
- Sergeant Meadows was injured when his vehicle stuck an improvised explosive device while on a combat reconnaissance patrol.
- Sergeant Jones suffered multiple injuries during a coordinated enemy ambush. Although injured, he continued to fight and controlled all close air support and medical evacuation.



The Bronze Star medal is awarded to a person in any branch of the military service who, while serving in any capacity with the armed forces of the United States on or after December 7, 1941, shall have distinguished himself by heroic or meritorious achievement or service not involving participation in aerial flight in connection with military operations against an armed enemy. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Abner Guzman) <<<<

The Bronze Star Medal recipients included Master Sgt. Jason Dryer, Master Sgt. Brad Greisen, Staff Sgt. Scott Flannery, Staff Sgt. John Schmidt and Senior Airman Matthew Pich. All served as combat controllers working shoulder-to-shoulder with Army Special Forces units.

- During a patrol, Sergeant Dryer and his team were engaged by Taliban forces. Sergeant Dryer directed a flight of F-15 Strike Eagles and Apache helicopters, destroying the enemy and their base of operation in a 10-hour battle. Upon returning to their base, Sergeant Dryer also helped fend off an attack, exposing himself to enemy fire in order to launch a rocket at the enemy forces.

- Sergeant Greisen, working with his Special Forces and Iraqi counter-terrorism team, was directly responsible for the capture of 30 high value insurgent leaders and others responsible for attacks on coalition forces and Iraqi civilians. His planning and coordination efforts were also vital to recovery of multiple improvised explosive device components and numerous weapons caches.

- After Sergeant Flannery and his Army Special Forces team came under direct attack, he dismounted his vehicle and directed precision air attacks that devastated numerous enemy fighting positions and combatants. Over a three day period, Sergeant Flannery controlled 11 flights of aircraft that killed 28 enemy combatants.

- Sergeant Schmidt was solely responsible for linking more than 200 airborne platforms and intelligence during a religious holiday surge of more than two million visiting pilgrims in the culturally sensitive city of Karbala. He fused the air to ground picture and became the focal point for the city governor, 20,000 Iraqi Army and police personnel and the joint force commander, diffusing a potential strategic political time bomb.

- Senior Airman Mathew Pich worked with his Special Forces team, participating in 52 combat operations to neutralize anti-Afghanistan forces. After being ambushed on one mission, Airman Pich directed air strikes which killed seven enemy fighters and neutralized the situation.

Master Sgts. Jodi Williams and Jason Dryer were also awarded the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal for their roles in Operation Enduring Freedom.

- Sergeant Dryer, 22nd STS NCOIC, directed 28 joint terminal attack controllers and an assault zone reconnaissance team operating from remote locations and was instrumental to the success of 700 air-to-ground missions while coordinating and tracking 153 time-critical air requests.

- Sergeant Williams distinguished herself through outstanding achievement as a communications advisor. She advised 53 Afghan National Army Air Corps communications personnel in both their primary duties and military procedures. She also created the first-ever communications training program for the corps and squadron personnel, boosting Afghan Air Corps competency by 75 percent.

22nd STS Airmen were recognized with the following honors for their actions while deployed:

Combat Action Medal (In the spirit of cultivating warrior ethos in all Airmen, the Air Force created the Air Force Combat Action Medal in 2007. Any Airmen who have directly engaged enemy combatants are eligible for the award.)

- Tech. Sgt. David Owens
- Staff Sgt. Kyle Felix
- Staff Sgt. Scott Flannery
- Staff Sgt. Brandon Gross
- Staff Sgt. Evan Jones
- Staff Sgt. Simon Malson
- Staff Sgt. Christopher Martin
- Staff Sgt. Shaun Meadows

- Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Reiss

Air Force Commendation with Valor

- Staff Sgt. Gregory Arborgast
- Staff Sgt. Kyle Felix
- Staff Sgt. Douglas Frinnel
- Staff Sgt. Brandon Gross

Air Force Commendation Medal

- Capt. Joel Buelow
- Master Sgt. Anthony Bryant
- Tech. Sgt. Neil Lapham
- Tech. Sgt. Lindsay Ryan
- Tech. Sgt. James Vanherwaarden
- Staff Sgt. George McAlister
- Staff Sgt. Shaun Meadows
- Staff Sgt. Jason Schiffner
- Staff Sgt. David Yorton

Air Force Achievement Medal

- Capt. Stephanie Oldham
- Staff Sgt. Daniel Cook
- Staff Sgt. Aaron Jones
- Senior Airman Christopher Worden