

MCCHORD COMBAT CONTROLLERS RECEIVE MEDALS

by Airman Leah Young, 62nd Airlift Wing public affairs

September 8, 2010 - Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington - Seven combat controllers assigned to the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron received several medals September 8 for their accomplishments while engaged in combat operations in Afghanistan.



<<<< Lt. Gen. Donald Wurster, Air Force Special Operations Command commander, joins the seven Airmen from the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron in an award ceremony Sept. 8 at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., for their accomplishments while engaged in combat operations in Afghanistan. (U.S. Air Force Photo/Airman Leah Young)

"These Airmen deserve to be recognized and praised for their efforts down range," said Lt. Col. Michael Flatten, 22nd STS commander. "They aren't the kind of guys who go looking for any sort of recognition, they just do their job. It's great to see their work is appreciated."



The seven Airmen received medals including the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Combat Action Medal and the Air Medal.

<<<< Lt. Gen. Donald Wurster, Air Force Special Operations Command commander, joins Staff Sgt. Michael Orlando, 22nd Special Tactics Squadron combat controller, in an award ceremony Sept. 8, 2010, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. (U.S. Air Force Photo/Airman Leah Young)

Among the recipients was Staff Sgt. Michael Orlando, who deployed twice between 2008 and 2009 to the Middle East in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

He received the Meritorious Service Medal for outstanding achievement while serving as the team leader of the six-man special tactics assault zone reconnaissance team and as the tactics chief for the expeditionary special tactics squadron.

Sergeant Orlando led the planning and execution of 12 assault zone reconnaissance missions, one of which enabled the establishment of a forward operating base in a remote area of Afghanistan. Another allowed fixed-wing airlift access to a base in Helmand Province, dramatically expediting the coalition troop surge.

"It was unusual for my rank to receive this medal," said Sergeant Orlando. "I'm very proud and thankful to receive it, and I'm glad I got the chance to show recognition for our job."

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<<<< Lt. Gen. Donald Wurster, left, Air Force Special Operations Command commander, salutes Senior Airman Joshua Mattert, 22nd Special Tactics Squadron combat controller, during an award ceremony Sept. 8, 2010, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. (U.S. Air Force Photo/2nd Lt. John Wylie)

Senior Airman Joshua Mattert, another medal recipient from the 22nd STS, received the Bronze Star for his service as the joint terminal attack controller for a special forces team during his deployment to east Afghanistan in 2009.

Airman Mattert served as the primary air controller for a large scale coalition operation. This position included coordinating all air support for a combined force of 5,000 personnel, while managing four subordinate controllers from an allied nation.



"I wasn't thinking of earning any medals while I was over there," said Airman Mattert. "I was just doing my job the best I could."

<<<< Lt. Gen. Donald Wurster, left, Air Force Special Operations Command commander, and Staff Sgt. Christopher Tyndall, 22nd Special Tactics Squadron combat controller, stand at attention during an award ceremony Sept. 8, 2010, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. Sergeant Tyndall recieved a Purple Heart for wounds sustained in action March 30, 2010, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S. Air Force Photo/2nd Lt. John Wylie)

Staff Sgt. Christopher Tyndall received the Purple Heart, which is presented to any person wounded in action while serving the Armed Forces of The United States. It is awarded for wounds or death as a result of an act of any opposing armed force, as a result of an international terrorist attack, or as a result of military operations while serving as part of a peace keeping force.

"These medals are a good way for JBLM to learn about our mission and understand what this squadron does every day," said Colonel Flatten.