



2022

**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER
of the YEAR
AWARD CEREMONY**

*March 30, 2022
Alexandria, Virginia*



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER
of the YEAR AWARD CEREMONY

Call to Order

National Anthem

Invocation

Welcoming Remarks

Dinner

Remarks

Presentation of Awards

Closing Remarks by Mr. Riki Ellison

AWARD HISTORY



Defender of the Year

January 14, 2011 marked the inaugural Defender of the Year Award Ceremony, recognizing and honoring members of our military who command fully operational and deployed missile defense systems. The event recognized a United States Armed Forces service member from each branch, that currently deploys a U.S. missile defense system, for their outstanding work in the previous year. The event has since become an annual tradition and has been expanded to include the NORAD & USNORTHCOM Missile Warning and Defender of the Year in Colorado, established in 2013; the Alaska Missile Defender of the Year, established in 2014; the Guam Missile Defender of the Year, established in 2015; the Indo-Pacific Air and Missile Defender of the Year, established in 2015; and the National Capital Region Air & Missile Defender of the Year, established in 2019.

Defender of the Year Award Ceremonies have also expanded beyond the U.S. homeland to recognize the best regional missile defenders from the U.S. and U.S. allies to include the Peninsula Defender of the Year, established in 2012 with our allies in the Republic of Korea; the Okinawa Missile Defender of the Year; established in 2013 with our allies in Okinawa, Japan; the Gulf Cooperation Council Air and Missile Defender of the Year, established in 2014 with our allies in the Gulf Cooperation Council; and the European Missile Defender of the Year, established in 2014 with our allies in Europe.

We want to thank all those who have supported MDAA for over a decade to fulfill its mission to educate the American public on the need for our nation to develop and deploy missile defense.

ABOUT MDAA



The Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance

MDAA's mission is to make the world safer by advocating for the development and deployment of missile defense systems to defend the United States, its armed forces, and its allies against missile threats.

MDAA is the only organization in existence whose primary mission is to educate the American public about missile defense issues and to recruit, organize, and mobilize citizens to advocate for the critical need of missile defense. We are a non-profit organization that does not advocate on behalf of any specific system, technology, architecture, or entity.

MDAA was founded by Riki Ellison in 2002 to generate public support through education for the continued testing, development, and deployment of missile defense systems.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the YEAR*



Specialist Theodore Mandt Sentinel Team Awardee

SPC Mandt is currently assigned as a Sentinel Radar Operator in Team 4 of the Minimum Deployment Package (MDP) Platoon, Headquarters, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. Although he does not come from an ADA background, SPC Mandt scored a 98% on the General Knowledge and has consistently stepped up and proved to be among the best Air Defense Battle Management System Operators (14G) within the Battalion. SPC Mandt has demonstrated a set of challenging and highly technical skills that go above and beyond what is normally expected out of a 14G Soldier. These skills were March Order and Emplacement, General Knowledge, MIDS/SADL radio initialization, Troop Leading Procedures, and Deployment Readiness Exercise testing. SPC Mandt volunteered for and taught a SINCGARS class, streamlined the process for requesting resupply of consumable items, and became a subject matter expert on the BlueSky Mast and Rajant Radio. During mission planning for a potential outside the Continental U.S. MDP Mission, Team 4 took the initiative to help plan and coordinate the weighing and load planning of all MDP equipment in preparation for the planned airlift. This mission would have been the first of its kind and the work they did set the standard for future units to follow. As a team, SPC Mandt and SPC Gibson identified the need for an update to the MDP Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in regard to the testing and configuration of the MOXA Modem in a classroom environment. This vital task had been overlooked by at least six MDP rotations that came before them. After conducting testing and troubleshooting with the 263rd Army Air and Missile Defense Command, the team developed and trained the SOP resulting in consistent testing of the MOXA Modem over Cradle Point. SPC Mandt began his military service in 2014, enlisting into the North Dakota National Guard (NDNG) as a Combat Engineer. He is currently attending North Dakota State University for Veterinary Technology. SPC Mandt's awards and decorations include the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the NDNG Commendation Ribbon, the NDNG Emergency Service Ribbon, NDNG Service Ribbon, and the NDNG Basic Combat Training Ribbon.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Specialist Christopher Gibson Sentinel Team Awardee

SPC Gibson is currently assigned as a Senior Operator in Team 4 of the Minimum Deployment Package (MDP) Platoon, Headquarters, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. SPC Gibson has demonstrated a set of challenging and highly technical skills that go above and beyond what is normally expected out of an Air Defense Battle Management System Operators (14G) Soldier. SPC Gibson scored a 96% on the General Knowledge which is in the top 15% of the MDP. SPC Gibson standardized the MDP mission boxes by developing a load out plan with serialized 1750's that increased overall platoon mission readiness. Additionally, SPC Gibson is highly sought after for his vastly superior knowledge of the 14G and the Air Defense mission within the National Capital Region. During mission planning for a potential outside the Continental U.S. MDP Mission, Team 4 took the initiative to help plan and coordinate the weighing and load planning of all MDP equipment in preparation for the planned airlift. This mission would have been the first of its kind and the work that they did set the standard for future units to follow. As a team, SPC Mandt and SPC Gibson identified the need for an update to the MDP Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in regard to the testing and configuration of the MOXA Modem in a classroom environment. This vital task had been overlooked by at least six MDP rotations that came before them. After conducting testing and troubleshooting with the 263rd Army Air and Missile Defense Command, the team developed and trained the SOP resulting in consistent testing of the MOXA Modem over Cradle Point. SPC Gibson began his military service in 2014 when he enlisted into the North Dakota National Guard (NDNG) as a 14G. He is currently attending Dakota County Technical College pursuing a degree in Biomedical Equipment Technology. SPC Gibson's deployments include Operation Noble Eagle (2017-2018, 2021-2022). SPC Gibson's awards and decorations include the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Mobilization Device, the Army NCO Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the North Dakota State Outstanding Unit Citation, and the NDNG Basic Training Ribbon.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Specialist John Freund Avenger Team Awardee

SPC Freund is currently assigned as an Avenger Gunner for Avenger Team 3, 1st Platoon, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. SPC Freund demonstrates his vast knowledge on the Avenger Weapon System by performing extensive VIP briefs. SPC Freund performs rigorous Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services of the Avenger Weapons System to ensure it is fully mission capable at all times. Team 3 consistently performs at a level above their peers and utilizes their knowledge to mentor other teams. During Avenger certification table V in January 2022, Team 3 finished as the top team in missile reload, Avenger emplacement, and convert to Man-Portable Air Defense Systems. Team 3 consistently finishes near the top in all categories and displays the determination and attention to detail that sets them apart. Team 3 has been recognized for having an outstanding site brief and displaying a professional demeanor on multiple occasions in the National Capital Region. SPC Freund enlisted in the North Dakota National Guard in 2018 and has completed Basic Combat Lifesavers Course. He has been previously assigned as a Team Member as part of the Covid-19 Task Force and an Avenger Crewmember 188th ADA Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion. SPC Freund's awards and decorations include the Army Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, North Dakota State Achievement Ribbon, Humanitarian Service Medal, and the Armed Forces Service Medal. SPC Freund Currently lives in Coon Rapids Minnesota.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Sergeant Carl Leinen Avenger Team Awardee

SGT Leinen is currently assigned as a Team Chief for Avenger Team 3, 1st Platoon, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. SGT Leinen has displayed dedication to the Army through the competition of Distributed Leader Course (DLC) I, Basic Leader Course (BLC), and DLC II, while still achieving top team on the National Capital Region (NCR) mission. Team 3 consistently performs at a level above their peers and utilizes their knowledge to mentor other teams. During Avenger certification table V in January 2022, Team 3 finished as the top team in missile reload, Avenger emplacement, and convert to Man-Portable Air Defense Systems. Team 3 consistently finishes near the top in all categories and displays the determination and attention to detail that sets them apart. Team 3 has been recognized for having an outstanding site brief and displaying a professional demeanor on multiple occasions in the NCR. SGT Leinen began military service in 2017 when he enlisted into the North Dakota National Guard as an Avenger Crewmember. In 2020 he successfully completed the Resilience Trainer Assistant course and in 2021 graduated from BLC to receive his promotion to the rank of Sergeant. SGT Leinen has received an Associate Degree in Applied Science in Practical Nursing and a Liberal Arts Degree in Applied Science from North Dakota State College of Science. Additionally, he has also completed a Baccalaureate Degree in Registered Nursing from North Dakota State University. SGT Leinen's previous assignment includes being a Gunner with Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment. SGT Leinen's awards and decorations include the Army Achievement Medal, the NCO Professional Development Ribbon, the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, and the North Dakota National Guard Basic Training Ribbon. SGT Leinen is married to Courtney Leinen from Lorette, Manitoba. They currently reside in Barnesville, Minnesota.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Sergeant Erin Brooks Avenger Team Awardee

SGT Brooks is currently assigned as Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of Avenger Team 3, 1st platoon, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. SGT Brooks has been recognized on several occasions by VIPs as having the best site brief in the Battery. She went as far as dedicating additional time during Culminating Training Exercise (CTE) to assist teams in bettering their site briefs. Her leadership directly resulted in Team 3 being the first to fully recite the new site brief from memory. Team 3 consistently performs at a level above their peers and utilizes their knowledge to mentor other teams. During Avenger certification table V in January 2022, Team 3 finished as the top team in missile reload, Avenger emplacement, and convert to Man-Portable Air Defense Systems. Team 3 consistently finishes near the top in all categories and displays the determination and attention to detail that sets them apart. Team 3 has been recognized for having an outstanding site brief and displaying a professional demeanor on multiple occasions in the National Capital Region. SGT Brooks began military service in 2014 when she joined the North Dakota National Guard as an Avenger Crewmember. She is a graduate of Basic Leader Course. Her previous assignments include Avenger Crewmember, 1-188 ADA; NASAMS Launcher Crewman 1, 1-188 ADA; Avenger Gunner, 2-263 ADA; Squad Leader for COVID-19 mobile test team in Fargo, North Dakota; and Team Leader, 1-188 ADA. SGT Brooks' deployments include Operation Noble Eagle (2017-2018), Operation Noble Eagle (2018), and Operation Noble Eagle (2021-2022). SGT Brooks' awards and decorations include Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal with 2 oak leaf clusters, Army Good Conduct Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Mobilization device, Army NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, North Dakota National Guard Basic Training Ribbon. SGT Brooks is married to Stephen Brooks from Westminster, South Carolina. They currently reside in Virginia, Minnesota with their chocolate lab, Timber. She is currently employed as a teacher at Iron Range Tykes Learning Center.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Specialist Noah Widmer **NASAMS Team Awardee**

SPC Widmer is currently assigned as a NASAMS Crewmember on Team 11, 2nd Squad, NASAMS 2nd Platoon, Shooter Battery, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. SPC Widmer has maintained a professional and calm demeanor while sharing his NASAMS general knowledge with his peers and has quietly become a leader amongst his peers. SPC Widmer dedicated over 60 hours to account for and maintain all mission critical NASAMS specific equipment, thereby ensuring uninterrupted air defense coverage for the assigned area of operation. SPC Widmer has studied over 400 hours on the Launcher system and demonstrated his knowledge by giving briefs to VIPs on five separate occasions and answering questions fully afterwards with praiseworthy responses. Team 11 has consistently maintained a high level of NASAMS knowledge, shared their knowledge with their peers, and volunteered for many other duties and tasks throughout the National Capital Region (NCR) mission. Team 11 was assembled one month before Exercise America's Shield (EAS), and each Crew Member has a different Military Occupation Specialty. At the start of EAS, Team 11 struggled with some of their initial VIP site briefs and NASAMS general knowledge. Team 11 acknowledged this pitfall and concentrated their efforts to be the most knowledgeable and most prepared NASAMS Team. By the end of Culminating Training Exercise (CTE), Team 11 was helping other teams study site briefs and general knowledge and each crew member received challenge coins from VIPs for excellent performance during CTE. SPC Widmer began military service in 2017 when he enlisted into the North Dakota National Guard as a Small Arms and Artillery Repairer where he has spent his entire tenure. SPC Widmer has also earned his associate degree from Lake Region State College and is working on his Bachelor of Education at Montana State University. SPC Widmer is currently deployed for Operation Noble Eagle (2021-2022) in the NCR. He was previously assigned to Delta Detachment 1-188th ADA before being assigned to Shooter Battery NASAMS Platoon. SPC Widmer's awards and decorations include the National Defense Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, and the Army Service Ribbon. SPC Widmer resides in Devils Lake, North Dakota and works for a charitable gaming company as well as a concrete foundation company.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Sergeant Joseph Bruce NASAMS Team Awardee

SGT Bruce is currently assigned as a NASAMS Crewmember on Team 11, 2nd Squad, NASAMS 2nd Platoon, Shooter Battery, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery Regiment. He has dedicated his civilian and military professional skills to ensure NASAMS Government Service Agency (GSA) fleet was mission capable. During the left seat/right seat process, SGT Bruce noticed the disrepair of the eight vehicles and volunteered to be the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the fleet. He did this knowing it would need to be accomplished during his off duty personal time. While learning the GSA Standard Operating Procedures quickly, he built relationships with six different dealerships, tire shops, and mechanic shops and was the liaison between them and Task Force Veritas leadership. In addition to using his Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic (91B) skills to make on the spot corrections, he spent 151 hours within our 220 days on the National Capital Region (NCR) mission, performing various tasks required to keep the fleet mission capable. SGT Bruce's attention to detail, general mechanics knowledge, and passion to take care of assigned equipment has ensured NASAMS readiness for the NCR mission. Team 11 has consistently maintained a high level of NASAMS knowledge, shared their knowledge with their peers, and volunteered for many other duties and tasks throughout the NCR mission. Team 11 was assembled one month before Exercise America's Shield (EAS), and each Crew Member has a different Military Occupation Specialty. At the beginning of EAS, Team 11 struggled with some of their initial VIP site briefs and NASAMS general knowledge. Team 11 acknowledged this pitfall and concentrated their efforts to be the most knowledgeable and most prepared NASAMS Team. By the end of Culminating Training Exercise (CTE), Team 11 was helping other teams study site briefs and general knowledge and each crew member received challenge coins from VIPs for excellent performance during CTE. SGT Bruce began military service in 2009 when he enlisted into the North Dakota National Guard as a 91B. He is a graduate of North Dakota State College of Science with an Associate's Degree in Automotive Technology and recently completed the Army's Basic Leadership Course. SGT Bruce is married to Brooke Bruce (Smykowski), and they have two children, Logan (11) and Leighton (8). They currently reside in Wyndmere, North Dakota.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Sergeant Raymond Ruschel **NASAMS Team Awardee**

SGT Ruschel is currently assigned as the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) of NASAMS team 11, 2nd Squad, NASAMS 2nd Platoon, Shooter Battery, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. SGT Ruschel has become a National Capital Region (NCR) mission subject matter expert and spends most of his scheduled commanders time visiting the NASAMS sites, sharing his knowledge and quizzing the other NASAMS teams. SGT Ruschel completed Distributed Leader Course II and Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education as well. Additionally, SGT Ruschel volunteered for 130 hours of charitable work with local Non-Governmental Organizations. This work was conducted during his unscheduled Commander's time and inspired one crew member to volunteer for 40 hours as well and another crew member to complete 30 volunteer hours. Team 11 has consistently maintained a high level of NASAMS knowledge, shared their knowledge with their peers, and volunteered for many other duties and tasks throughout the NCR mission. Team 11 was assembled one month before Exercise America's Shield (EAS), and each Crew Member has a different Military Occupation Specialty. At the beginning of EAS, Team 11 struggled with some of their initial VIP site briefs and NASAMS general knowledge. Team 11 acknowledged this pitfall and concentrated their efforts to be the most knowledgeable and most prepared NASAMS Team. By the end of Culminating Training Exercise (CTE), Team 11 was helping other teams study site briefs and general knowledge and each crew member received challenge coins from VIPs for excellent performance during CTE. SGT Ruschel began his military service 2007 when he enlisted into the Pennsylvania Army National Guard as an Automatic Rifleman. In March of 2019, he interstate transferred into the North Dakota Army National Guard as an Avenger Crewmember. He was a graduate of Avenger Crewmember PH1 and PH2 in March 2021. SGT Ruschel is currently enrolled at North Dakota State College of Sciences pursuing an Associate's Degree in Business Management. SGT Ruschel's deployments include Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (2010), Operation Inherent Resolve (2016-2017) in Jordan, Operation Noble Eagle (2021-2022) in the National Capital Region. Sgt Ruschel has a daughter, Chloe (23), and a son Connor (25) that reside in Flat Rock, Michigan. Sgt Ruschel works at MINNDAK in Wahpeton, North Dakota as a Top Mechanic.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Specialist Gordon Isler Support Team Awardee

SPC Isler is currently assigned as a Signal Support Systems Specialist with the 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. SPC Isler has performed two grades above his own from Exercise America's Shield all the way through the mobilization for Operation Noble Eagle. He quickly established himself as a knowledgeable technical expert by creating an Enhanced Position Location and Reporting System Network Manager (ENM) network plan that was utilized for the live-fire exercise during the Culminating Training Event at Fort Bliss, Texas. He continually demonstrates to peers and superiors his technical expertise in the realms of waveform communication, networking, and computing. He has provided guidance to improve the performance and processes at the ENM desk and has proved invaluable on the contact team, frequently identifying resolutions to issues encountered on sites. SPC Isler is sought after for communication and network related issues and is a great asset to the Battalion and Operation Noble Eagle. SPC Isler's dedication to service and professional excellence has been essential to the success of the communication section of the Ground Based Air Defense Battalion in the National Capital Region. His knowledge and expertise have elevated the communications section for Operation Noble Eagle and mission readiness. SPC Isler enlisted in April 2018. SPC Isler is currently working towards a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science from the University of North Dakota. SPC Isler completed Basic Leadership Course while supporting Operation Noble Eagle. SPC Isler has spent his entire career after Advanced Individual Training with the 1st Battalion, 188th ADA Regiment. SPC Isler's only deployment is Operation Noble Eagle (2021-2022). SPC Isler's awards and decorations include two Army Achievement Medals, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal, the Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, and the Army Service Ribbon. SPC Isler is married to Morgan Isler, they have one son Cade Isler, and they live in East Grand Forks, Minnesota.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Staff Sergeant Matt Llewellyn Support Team Awardee

SSG Llewellyn is currently assigned as an Automated Logistical Specialist with the 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. SSG Llewellyn has been a vital role in cleaning up processes since arriving in the National Capital Region (NCR). He has worked tirelessly to clean up a service schedule that had been neglected and back log maintenance that needed to be conducted. He diligently scrubbed a chaotic parts ordering process by ordering needed parts, cancelling unnecessary parts, and helped prioritize the ordering of high priority parts. His air defense maintenance experience and knowledge has been displayed numerous times as he has conducted scheduled and impromptu maintenance and safety classes. SSG Llewellyn has trained three other Soldiers in the Production Controller role for future Operation Noble Eagle rotations to ensure the Battalion is always prepared for the mission. Even now as the Battalion is in a steady state rhythm, he has continued to turn wrenches and troubleshoot equipment all while still performing at a top level as the Battalion Production Controller. SSG Llewellyn's dedication to service and professional excellence has been essential to the success of the maintenance section of the Ground Based Air Defense Battalion in the NCR. His knowledge and dedication have set the standard for maintenance as a part of Operation Noble Eagle. SSG Llewellyn enlisted as a Combat Engineer in February 2000. While a part of the North Dakota National Guard (NDNG), SSG Llewellyn completed his Associates Degree in Automotive Technology at Williston State College. In September 2001, he transferred to Active Duty as a Maintenance Data Analyst in the U.S. Air Force. During his Active-Duty career, SSG Llewellyn was stationed and supported maintenance operations at Warner Robins Air Force Base (AFB), Georgia and at Royal Air Force Lakenheath, United Kingdom. Following the end of SSG Llewellyn's Active-Duty career, he became a member of the 219th Security Forces Squadron, Minot AFB, North Dakota, as an Information Management Specialist in April 2007. He then returned to the NDNG as a Combat Engineer with the 818th Engineer Company in Minot, North Dakota. SSG Llewellyn is married to Air Force Master Sergeant Beverly Llewellyn, who is assigned to the 5th Operations Group, Minot AFB North Dakota, and is also currently deployed.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Specialist Billy Payne Battalion JADOC Operations Team Awardee

SPC Payne is currently assigned as a Tactical Control Assistant (TCA), HQ Battery, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. SPC Payne, along with 2LT Eberle, received the Top Team award at the NASAMS course at the beginning of Exercise America's Shield (EAS). SPC Payne has covered shifts for other TCAs and was selected to lead re-training when other TCAs require re-training. Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC) Team 4 performed without error during the Culminating Training Event (CTE) at Fort Bliss, Texas in June 2021, performing 100% on 96 Target of Interest prosecutions, which is tied for the most prosecutions during the CTE. JADOC Team 4 has not been cited for any errors on any Falcon Virgos, Falcon Gains, Distributed Mission Operations (DMO) or simulations since 1-188th ADA Regiment conducted the battle hand-off on in July 2021 in the National Capital Region (NCR). Team 4 also includes the top Fire Distribution Control Crew from the training conducted during EAS at Camp Grafton Training Center in May 2021. As the best JADOC team, Team 4 has been selected to support 2nd Battalion, 263rd ADA (South Carolina Army National Guard) CTE to train their JADOC teams so they are fully mission capable upon arrival in the NCR. SPC Payne began military service in 2013 when he enlisted into Iowa Army National Guard as a Religious Affairs Specialist. He is currently attending Purdue University Global to complete his Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. SPC Payne's deployments include Afghanistan Global War on Terrorism (2016-2017); Humanitarian Service in support of Covid-19 (2020), and Operation Nobel Eagle (2021-2022). SPC Payne's awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal Ribbon, Army Achievement Medal Ribbon w/ one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal Ribbon, Afghanistan Campaign Ribbon w/ Campaign star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal Ribbon, Armed Forces Service Medal Ribbon, Humanitarian Service Medal Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal Ribbon w/ M Device, Army NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Army Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal Ribbon, Iowa National Guard Commendation Medal Ribbon, North Dakota National Guard Achievement Ribbon, and achieved Top Team in the NASAMS Fire Distribution Center Operators Course. SPC Payne currently resides in Bismarck, North Dakota.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Specialist Jack Schwartz Battalion JADOC Operations Team Awardee

SPC Schwartz is currently assigned as a Forward Area Air Defense Air Battle Management Operator (FAAD AO), HQ Battery, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. SPC Schwartz volunteered to cover shifts for other FAAD AOs when they were at school or out sick. He has also been methodically cleaning workstations inside the Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC), destroying outdated documents, to de-clutter the work areas. JADOC Team 4 performed without error during the Culminating Training Event (CTE) at Fort Bliss, Texas in June 2021, performing 100% on 96 Target of Interest prosecutions, which is tied for the most prosecutions during the CTE. JADOC Team 4 has not been cited for any errors on any Falcon Virgos, Falcon Gains, Distributed Mission Operations (DMO) or simulations since 1-188th ADA Regiment conducted the battle hand-off on in July 2021 in the National Capital Region (NCR). Team 4 also includes the top Fire Distribution Control Crew from the training conducted during Exercise America's Shield at Camp Grafton Training Center in May 2021. As the best JADOC team, Team 4 has been selected to support 2-263rd ADA (South Carolina Army National Guard) CTE to train their JADOC teams so they are fully mission capable upon arrival in the NCR. SPC Schwartz began military service in April 2019 when he enlisted into the North Dakota National Guard as an Air Defense Battle Management System Operator. His previous assignments include duty in response to Covid-19 testing and Sentinel Radar Operator, Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 188th ADA Regiment. His deployments include Operation Noble Eagle (2021-2022). SPC Schwartz awards and decorations include the National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and the Armed Forces Service Medal for Coronavirus Operations and Activities. SPC Schwartz is married to Megan Schwartz. They currently reside in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Staff Sergeant Alexander Bryson Battalion JADOC Operations Team Awardee

SSG Bryson is currently assigned as a Forward Area Air Defense Army Airspace Command and Control (FAAD A2C2), HQ Battery, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. SSG Bryson was selected as the acting Platoon Sergeant while the actual Platoon Sergeant was away for a professional military education school for three weeks. SSG Bryson was also selected as the Range Safety Officer for the M4 range at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. He has also volunteered to cover shifts for all the other FAAD A2C2 throughout the rotation. Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC) Team 4 performed without error during the Culminating Training Event (CTE) at Fort Bliss, Texas in June 2021, performing 100% on 96 Target of Interest prosecutions, which is tied for the most prosecutions during the CTE. JADOC Team 4 has not been cited for any errors on any Falcon Virgos, Falcon Gains, Distributed Mission Operations (DMO) or simulations since 1-188th ADA Regiment conducted the battle hand-off on in July 2021 in the National Capital Region (NCR). Team 4 also includes the top Fire Distribution Control Crew from the training conducted during Exercise America's Shield at Camp Grafton Training Center in May 2021. As the best JADOC team, Team 4 has been selected to support 2-263rd ADA (South Carolina Army National Guard) CTE to train their JADOC teams so they are fully mission capable upon arrival in the NCR. SSG Bryson began his Military service in 2007 when he enlisted in the North Dakota National Guard as a Bridge Builder Crewmember (12C). In 2009 he re-classed as an Air Defense Battle Management System Operator (14J – now 14G) in order to mobilize in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He is a graduate of the 12C Advanced Individual Training, 14J re-classification course, Combat Engineer (12B) re-classification course, Warrior Leader Course, and 14G Advanced Leaders Course. In 2019, he completed his Bachelor's Degree in History with Minor in Criminal Justice from the University of North Dakota. SSG Bryson's deployments include Operation Enduring Freedom (2009-2010), Operation Enduring Freedom (2012-2013), and Operation Nobel Eagle (2021-2022). HQ NCR 1-188th ADA. SSG Bryson lives in Grand Forks, North Dakota and previously worked in sales for DSG, an Industrial products wholesaler.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Second Lieutenant Jacob Eberle Battalion JADOC Operations Team Awardee

2LT Eberle is currently assigned as a Tactical Control Officer (TCO), HQ Battery, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. 2LT Eberle, along with SPC Payne, received the Top Team award at the NASAMS course at the beginning of Exercise America's Shield (EAS). 2LT Eberle was assigned as the Battery Safety Officer and has diligently been making work areas safer places for all Soldiers. He was also selected as the Officer-in-Charge of the M4 range at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. 2LT Eberle has volunteered over 75 hours at local charities in the National Capital Region (NCR) and has mentored a younger Soldier to help him pass the Army Combat Fitness Test. Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC) Team 4 performed without error during the Culminating Training Event (CTE) at Fort Bliss, Texas in June 2021, performing 100% on 96 Target of Interest prosecutions, which is tied for the most prosecutions during the CTE. JADOC Team 4 has not been cited for any errors on any Falcon Virgos, Falcon Gains, Distributed Mission Operations (DMO) or simulations since 1-188th ADA Regiment conducted the battle hand-off on in July 2021 in the NCR. Team 4 also includes the top Fire Distribution Control Crew from the training conducted during Exercise America's Shield at Camp Grafton Training Center in May 2021. As the best JADOC team, Team 4 has been selected to support 2-263rd ADA (South Carolina Army National Guard) CTE to train their JADOC teams so they are fully mission capable upon arrival in the NCR. 2LT Eberle enlisted in the North Dakota National Guard in 2016 and entered the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at North Dakota State University as a Cadet in the Simultaneous Membership Program. He commissioned in 2020 after receiving his degree in Crop and Weed Science. He is a graduate of the Air Defense Basic Officer Leadership Course. 2LT Eberle's awards and decorations include the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, ND Commendation Ribbon, Air Assault Badge, Parachute Badge, the German Armed Proficiency Badge (Gold), Norwegian Foot-March Badge (Bronze), and achieved Top Team at the NASAMS Fire Distribution Center Operators Course. 2LT Eberle is married to Chiharu Kondo of Las Vegas, Nevada. They currently reside in Fargo, North Dakota.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Captain Tanner Sundet Battalion JADOC Operations Team Awardee

CPT Sundet is currently assigned as an Air Defense Artillery Fire Control Officer (ADAFCO) as well as the Platoon Leader for 1st Platoon, HQ Battery, 1-188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment. CPT Sundet has been vital to the success of all the Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC) teams during this rotation. He was selected to assume Platoon Leader responsibilities when the original Platoon Leader was pulled for Executive Officer duties. CPT Sundet also planned and is training two other ADAFCOs ensuring the JADOC always has four available. JADOC Team 4 performed without error during the Culminating Training Event (CTE) at Fort Bliss, Texas in June 2021, performing 100% on 96 Target of Interest prosecutions, which is tied for the most prosecutions during the CTE. JADOC Team 4 has not been cited for any errors on any Falcon Virgos, Falcon Gains, Distributed Mission Operations (DMO) or simulations since 1-188th ADA Regiment conducted the battle hand-off on in July 2021 in the National Capital Region (NCR). Team 4 also includes the top Fire Distribution Control Crew from the training conducted during Exercise America's Shield at Camp Grafton Training Center in May 2021. As the best JADOC team, Team 4 has been selected to support 2-263rd ADA (South Carolina Army National Guard) CTE to train their JADOC teams so they are fully mission capable upon arrival in the NCR. CPT Sundet began his military service in 2004 when he enlisted into the North Dakota Air National Guard as Security Forces. He spent six years enlisted and, after transitioning from Air to Army in 2011, he received his commission upon graduation from North Dakota Officer Candidate School. He is a graduate of the Military Police Basic Officer Leader Course, the ADA Officer Re-classification Course, and Air Defense Captain's Career Course. CPT Sundet has a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from North Dakota State University, and an Associate's Degree in Information Technology from Minnesota State Community and Technical College-Moorhead. CPT Sundet's deployments include Operation Iraqi Freedom (2009) and Operation Noble Eagle (2017 and 2021/2022). CPT Sundet is married to the former Briana Edwards of Eugene, Oregon. They have one daughter, Evelyn. CPT Sundet works as an IT Help Desk Agent. They currently reside in Fargo, North Dakota.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Senior Master Sergeant Angel Aponte Air Force Awardee

SMSgt Aponte serves as the Cyber Defense Operations Superintendent, at the Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC), 224th Air Defense Group Detachment 1. SMSgt Aponte made a tremendous impact on National Capital Region-Integrated Air Defense System (NCR-IADS) mission throughout 2021 and 2022. He led a 50 person staff that provided information technology (IT) support to Air Force, Army and various NCR Agencies. SMSgt Aponte oversaw the seven month Enhanced Regional Situational Awareness laser consolidation effort, which resulted in an increase of Visual Warning Effectiveness by 39%. Additionally, he designed a test environment in support of an Air Combat Command-directed risk mitigation event. Furthermore, he led a network infrastructure modernization effort, increasing network capabilities by 300% and implemented next generation cyber security tools securing the cyber terrain for numerous NCR-IADS mission systems. SMSgt Aponte also secured additional funding for Phase 2 of a JADOC Military Construction effort. Additionally, in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SMSgt Aponte developed telework accommodations which provided hardware and Air Force Network access to over 50 personnel. Lastly, he coordinated two cyber protection team missions and the installation of the Cyber Vulnerability Assessment-Hunter toolkit to secure Army and Air Force networks and mission systems. His efforts saved over 200 man hours by providing an immediate equipment capability to the deployed Cyber Protection Team, thereby allowing them to quickly identify NCR-IADS cyber terrain vulnerabilities and follow-on corrective action tasks. SMSgt Aponte is a native of San Juan, Puerto Rico. He graduated from the University of Puerto Rico Bayamon Campus in May 1998. He enlisted in the Puerto Rico Air National Guard in June 1993. In May of 2003, SMSgt Aponte augmented the 728th Air Control Squadron out of Tyndall Air Force Base and deployed to Iraq. He drove a 45ft Tactical Air Operations Module from Kuwait to Baghdad in two days, part of the longest and largest convoy through a combat zone in Air Force command and control history. In January 2004, SMSgt Aponte took a follow-on rotation to the JADOC. In May 2009, he again deployed to the JADOC in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. SMSgt Aponte is married to Maria de Lourdes Martinez formally of Guaynabo, Puerto Rico; they have two daughters, Mariangelica and Marisabelle, one son Angel, and a granddaughter, Rose.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Sergeant Vincent Kennedy Task Force JADOC Operations Team Awardee

SGT Kennedy is currently assigned as a Status Coordinator for Team A, Task Force Veritas, Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC). SGT Kennedy has distinguished himself by becoming the only Status Coordinator to become fully certified as a back-up Battle Captain. He also on short notice filled in as the Battle Captain for Team A when the current Battle Captain had to miss duty due to a medical issue. SGT Kennedy assumed the role without any hesitation. He flawlessly performed the job ensuring all reports were sent successfully and on-time. SGT Kennedy also volunteered to travel to the five-day, Command and Control Culminating Training Event after coming off a 12hr night shift duty. This selfless initiative requires him to quickly transition to day shift for five days and then back to a night shift schedule. SGT Kennedy's dedication to professional excellence has been essential to the success of the National Capital Region-Integrated Air Defense System mission. SGT Kennedy was born in Rochester, Minnesota and currently lives in South Carolina. He graduated from Mcbee High School in Mcbee, South Carolina in 2013. Initially attending Florence Darlington Technical College, he transferred to ECPI University where he will graduate with a degree in Electronics Engineering Technology in 2022. He entered the South Carolina Army National Guard in November 2011. In 2013, SGT Kennedy attended Advanced Individual Training in Fort Sill, Oklahoma where he was trained as an Air Defense Battle Management Systems Operator (14G). SGT Kennedy played a key role in the establishment of the 678th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Brigade, prior to its official activation in 2016. In late 2016, he was activated with the 678th ADA and assigned to the Horry County, South Carolina where he assisted in evacuation, emergency response, and recovery missions because of Hurricane Matthew. In 2017, SGT Kennedy attended Air Defense Airspace Management (ADAM) Net Operator and Admin courses in Huntsville, Alabama. After completion of ADAM Net Operator and Admin courses he was selected to mobilize with the 678th ADA in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve/European Reassurance Initiative as an Assistant Operations Sergeant in the ADAM Section. The 678th ADA participated in Saber Strike 2018, where SGT Kennedy helped create the first ever combined operational air picture with the Polish Military.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Major Matthew Campbell Task Force JADOC Operations Team Awardee

MAJ Campbell is currently assigned as a Tactical Director for Team A, Task Force Veritas, Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC). MAJ Campbell is the senior Army member of Team A and is the Task Force Commander's representative on the JADOC Operations Floor when on duty. He is one of the top two Tactical Directors for Task Force Veritas. MAJ Campbell has been instrumental in helping to streamline processes of communication between all Tactical Directors. He noticed a problem with the communication and initiated a continuity log ensuring all Tactical Directors are aware of previous systems issues, new scheduled outages, and any communication from Task Force Staff is received properly. MAJ Campbell also provided the necessary input when discussing new tactics and procedures. His knowledge of Patriot systems allowed for seamless transition into using brevity words within the current tactics and procedures. MAJ Campbell is constantly improving himself and improving his team members by emphasizing and pushing them to increase their education. MAJ Campbell's dedication to service and professional excellence has been essential to the success of the National Capital Region-Integrated Air Defense System mission. His knowledge and expertise have elevated and enhanced the tactics and procedures used at the JADOC. MAJ Campbell was born in Spartanburg, South Carolina and enlisted into the Army National Guard shortly after the events of 9/11/2001. He served in the Signal Corps as an IT Specialist at the 263d Army Air and Missile Defense Command, achieving the rank of Sergeant. He graduated from Wofford College in 2007 with a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and completed Military Intelligence Basic Officer Leaders Course. He received his Master's Degree in IT Management from Webster University in 2014 and has been Project Management Professional certified since 2018. MAJ Campbell has served as an Intelligence officer for the 263d AAMDC, serving in Germany with the 10th AAMDC and at Tyndall Air Force Base (AFB), Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Peterson AFB, Colorado and Hatzor Air Base (AB), Israel. MAJ Campbell deployed to Central Command in 2016-2017, serving in Qatar and at Muwaffaq-Salti AB in Azraq, Jordan. MAJ Campbell has been married to his lovely wife Jennifer for 15 years and they have two children, Ryan (14) and Bailey (6).



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AIR & MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR



Major Austin Garland Task Force JADOC Operations Team Awardee

MAJ Garland is currently assigned as a Tactical Director for Team D, Task Force Veritas, Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC). MAJ Garland is the senior Army member of Team D and is the Task Force Commander's representative on the JADOC Operations Floor when on duty. MAJ Garland is one of the top two Tactical Directors for Task Force Veritas. He has been vital in helping to solve issues that arise and constantly providing relevant and essential feedback for Operations Floor processes. MAJ Garland provided the extremely valuable input to initiate a change to one of the processes on the Operations Floor. He noticed one of the processes was outdated and took the initiative to get the process changed. The change included a technical update and a modification to Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. MAJ Garland's dedication to service and professional excellence has been essential to the success of the National Capital Region-Integrated Air Defense System mission. His knowledge and selfless service have set the standard for Tactical Directors under Operation Noble Eagle. MAJ Garland was born in Seneca, South Carolina. In 2011, MAJ Garland graduated with a degree in Political Science and minors in Geology and Meteorology from The College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina. As a freshman in college, MAJ Garland enlisted as a third-generation member of the South Carolina Army National Guard and was initially trained as a Human Resources Specialist. In 2009, he joined the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina and earned his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Adjutant General's Corps. In 2013, MAJ Garland earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Anderson University in Anderson, South Carolina. In 2016, MAJ Garland transferred to the 678th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Brigade in Eastover, South Carolina and transitioned to the ADA branch. From 2017-2020, MAJ Garland served as a Battle Captain and then as the Battery Commander for the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery of the 263rd Army Air and Missile Defense Command in Anderson, South Carolina. From March to May 2020, he commanded the unit as it mobilized supporting the national efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. MAJ Garland's deployments include Operation Enduring Freedom (2012/2013) and Operation Noble Eagle (2016/2017 and 2021/2022).

Members of the Order of National Capital Region Air & Missile Defender of the Year

2019

NASAMS Team

Specialist Alexander Costello
Sergeant Max Tauber
Sergeant Denisse Villalobos

Avenger Team

Specialist Bertrand Pepper
Sergeant Kenny Harris
Staff Sergeant James Bristol

Air Force

Master Sergeant Stuart King



A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU

To the Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC)

