



EUROPEAN
MISSILE DEFENDER
of the YEAR
AWARD CEREMONY

February 10, 2023
Breda, Netherlands



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS
EUROPEAN MISSILE DEFENDER
of the YEAR AWARD CEREMONY

Call to Order

National Anthem

Welcoming Remarks

Dinner

Remarks

Presentation of Awards

Closing Remarks by Mr. Riki Ellison

AWARD HISTORY



European Missile Defender of the Year

April 4, 2014 marked the inaugural European Missile Defender of the Year Award Ceremony, recognizing and honoring members of our military who command fully operational and deployed missile defense systems. This event coincided with the 65th anniversary of the founding of NATO on April 4th, 1949. This year, the award is given to North Atlantic Treaty Organization servicemembers that make significant contributions to missile defense. These select individuals represent the best in leadership and personal effort, demonstrating their commitment to excellence and their critical role in missile defense. They are an inspiration to their subordinates, peers, and superiors.

The purpose of this award is to recognize exceptional individuals and their role in defending against the missile threat. Recognizing them helps to educate the public and inspire those they work with.

The Defenders of the Year are selected by their peers and commanding officers from the United States Navy, United States Army, United States Air Force, United States Space Force, NATO, Germany, and the Netherlands.

We want to thank all those who have supported MDAA for over two decades 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.



EUROPEAN MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Master Sergeant William White U.S. Space Force Missile Defender of the Year

MSgt White is Detachment Chief S5789, USAFE-AFAFRICA Director of Space Forces, Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany. MSgt White serves as Chief of Academics and Senior Enlisted leader for the USAFE-AFAFRICA Warfare Center Combat Training School providing support to the European and African Integrated Air & Missile Defense community. As part of the United States Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa (USAFE-AFAFRICA) Directorate of Space Forces, MSgt White was a key exercise planner integrating space effects into European Command's priority exercise. Additionally, he was critical in obtaining key space support for a EUCOM Operational level exercise, which examines new defense designs and blue force laydowns for the air and missile defense of Europe. His efforts highlighted a previously unknown gap with the integration of the Space Component that was briefed to the USAFE-AFAFRICA Deputy Commander and ultimately improved the Air and Missile Defense posture in Europe. MSgt White has also served as the Senior Enlisted Leader and Chief of Academics for the USAFE-AFAFRICA Warfare Center's Combat Training School. In this capacity, he is responsible for IAMD training for both EUCOM and AFRICOM. MSgt White supported a Combined US-NATO Mobile Training Team to Romania focusing on Patriot capabilities and air defense doctrine. His efforts were lauded by the Chief of the Romanian Air Force Staff. Additionally, he is preparing to support an additional Mobile Training Team to Sweden in January. He also instructed IAMD lessons for 3 Inter-European Air Force Academy courses, 4 NATO School Oberammergau courses, and 1 NATO AIRCOM course. MSgt White is nominated for the European DOY because he led academics for 8 organizations for a 10 day Joint/NATO IAMD M&S exercise validating a new defense design and recommending ops SPINS updates for 2 current USEUCOM missions, thereby improving kill chain coordination and enhancing procedures between NATO and US forces. Additionally, his training informed Patriot crews, Navy Aegis personnel and joint C2 watchstanders on system capabilities and provided an overview of the operational missions in theater. His training contributed to the certification of 10 US Navy and Army personnel as Upper Tier and Upper Layer Coordination Officers providing EUCOM personnel who can deconflict Aegis and THAAD engagements something that hasn't been done before in the European Mission.



EUROPEAN MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Lieutenant Commander Brandon Naddell U.S. Air Force Missile Defender of the Year

LCDR Naddell is the Chief of Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) Operations Support Branch for US Air Forces Europe (USAFE). In this role he expertly leads his team of four IAMD professionals in the development and support of defensive operations for NATO allies and partners, strengthening US commitment and NATO resolve during this critical year of the Ukrainian crisis. LCDR Naddell synchronizes a cross-component team of IAMD subject matter experts from NAVEUR, USAREUR, MARFOREUR, and USAFE as the USAFE lead for the Joint Theater Air and Missile Defense (JTAMD) working group. Through the inclusion of AIRCOM this group was initially tasked to analyze the rising threat of Russia to NATO. However, at the onset of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict the JTAMD transitioned their focus to the creation of real-world defense designs which were rapidly employed in key locations along NATO's Eastern Flank. LCDR Naddell led 38 recurring training events, exercising and validating the entire Ballistic Missile Defense kill-chain from Area Air Defense Command and Control to joint and coalition sensors and shooters as the Integrated Air and Missile Defense Training Officer. He personally trained 5 General Officers on the theater's Ballistic Missile Defense mission detailing how the 603d Air Operations Center (AOC) provides operational-level command and control to ensure seamless missile defense across the European theater in support of named operations. LCDR Naddell is nominated for the European DOY award because of his role as the 603d AOC lead for regional partner exercise training engagements on behalf of HQ USAFE and is dedicated to shaping the continued defense of a vital partner nation's strategic interests. LCDR Naddell advises the Joint Task Force Israel training audience for both Exercise SILVER FALCON and SILVER COBRA training events. After a program-hiatus due to COVID, LCDR Naddell re-instated a crucial unit level quarterly exercise designed to test real-world tactical and operational level integration and Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) architectures. As the lead BMD trainer, LCDR Naddell personally trained three Regional Air Defense Commander-Representatives (RADC-Reps) and four Upper Tier Coordination Officers (UTCOC) further enabling USAFE's enduring commitment to maintain the highest levels of operational readiness for key partner nations.



EUROPEAN MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Lieutenant Colonel Marcel Szalai NATO | AIRCOM Missile Defender of the Year

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Lt. Col. Marcel Szalai acted as the Combat Plans Division Surface Based Air and Missile Defence lead in the Tailored NATO Command Structure. He supported, guided and mentored the deployments of all forward deployed Air Defence units from Germany, Netherlands, USA, France, and Spain; and ensured a safe and effective integration into NATO Command and Control. Also, as a Team Chief in AIRCOM's evaluation and standards division, Marcel was directly tasked by Commander AIRCOM to ensure the seamless and safe integration of the units and forces into the current NATO posture. Again, his brilliance and willingness to commit fully to the Air and Missile Defence mission and its deployed soldiers led to the development of a completely new program for evaluations – the Surface Based Air and Missile Defence Readiness Verification. In addition to training and evaluating the deployed units in the use of NATO procedures, he developed and wrote all necessary documents and procedures to safely incorporate the national Air and Missile defence units into NATO, and ensured with that effort that no fratricides occurred over the last 12 months.



EUROPEAN MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Captain Michael Shannon U.S. Army Missile Defender of the Year

CPT Shannon was born in Sandy Hook, CT. He attended the Virginia Military Institute where he received a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies. He enlisted in the Virginia National Guard while simultaneously enrolling in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), and the Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP). CPT Shannon exited the National Guard upon commissioning into the Active Component in May 2015. As an Air Defender, CPT Shannon attended the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC) to broaden his knowledge and skills in maneuver doctrine. After MCCC, he was assigned to the 10th Army Air Missile Defense Command at Rhine Ordnance Barracks, Germany serving as the Division G35 Future Plans Officer. CPT Shannon was the lead planner for Defender 21, the largest exercise in Europe, conducting three exercises simultaneously across six countries alongside NATO partners. In OCT 2021, CPT Shannon took Command of Charlie Battery, 5-7 ADA BN (Patriot). Upon notification, CPT Shannon rapidly deployed his Battery within 72 hours to Poland in support of Operation Endure, Assure, Deter, and Reinforce, one of the fastest deployments in the history of Air Defense. CPT Shannon is nominated for the European DOY award because he rapidly deployed his Patriot Battery, C/5-7 ADA, to Poland fewer than two weeks after Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine. Under CPT Shannon's leadership, his battery quickly integrated into a responsive joint and combined kill chain and established air and missile defense of a key security cooperation hub. His decisive action at the tactical level paid untold dividends at the strategic level. CPT Shannon and his unit assured our Allies that the U.S. Army is committed to defending every inch of NATO territory. CPT Shannon and his unit also bolstered a clear message of deterrence to Russia-any expansion of the war into NATO territory will fail. CPT Shannon led efforts to develop and execute a unique 360-degree integrated defense design, a concept tailored to meet the unique challenges of a complex threat within challenging terrain, and to leverage the capabilities of a diverse array of layered systems. His "People First" mentality and mission command philosophy inspired his troops to action. C/5-7 ADA continuously improved tactical positions, built crew depth, and achieved interoperability-while maintaining a sustained operational posture.



EUROPEAN MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Lieutenant Commander David Ingel U.S. Navy Missile Defender of the Year

LCDR David J. Ingel was raised in Los Angeles, California. He enlisted in the Navy on July 11, 2001 and joined the USNS COMFORT as his first command. LCDR Ingel joined USS MILIUS for his first Department Head tour as the Plans and Tactics Officer. He then fletted up to serve as the Combat Systems Officer. He now serves at CTF-64 as IAMD and Formidable Shield 23 Exercise Lead Planner. LCDR Ingel was hand-selected as the NAVEUR representative for a special multi-branch team of Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) experts providing a Ukrainian Air Defense assessment for SECDEF. His knowledge and efforts allowed Sixth Fleet to develop operational IAMD products and analysis for the Fleet Commander and Regional Air Defense Commander (RADC) during a time of existential crisis that has been the key focus within the AOR this year. He has worked to ensure the 24/7 work performed by the IAMD Cell in the NAVUER Maritime Operations Center (MOC) is in line with SECDEF and EUCOM on reporting and coordination during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. LCDR Ingel was the FORMIDABLE SHIELD 23 Project Lead where he developed and coordinated the SIXTH Fleet-led, STRIKFORNATO (SFN) executed multi-domain exercise to demonstrate SFN's Commander Task Group IAMD command and control in deterrence and defense of the Euro-Atlantic Area. FORMIDABLE SHIELD 23 involves 13 nations executing jointly in the maritime, air, land, and space domains for the largest live-fire exercise in the European Theater to rival RIMPAC. LCDR Ingel's efforts have been critical at every milestone from initial planning, development of scenarios and objectives, daily coordination of participating countries, integration and synchronization of mission timing, along with administrative oversight to ensure successful execution to demonstrate the lethality of the NATO alliance. LCDR Ingel is nominated for the European DOY award because he has displayed himself as one CTF 64's premier Upper Tier Coordination Officers (UTCO). He participated in several of the weekly European Theater Ballistic Missile Defense exercises providing operational command and control over NAVEUR's Aegis ships and Aegis Ashore in support of the RADC's mission against regional threats. He is qualified as an Upper Layer Coordination Officer (ULCO) for EUCOM's Southern Mission and has been a key component for multiple bi-lateral exercises with the host nation.



EUROPEAN MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Captain Christian Weicker German Missile Defender of the Year

For many years, Captain Christian Weicker is well known and respected as an outstanding officer within the Air and Missile Defence community. His service is based on profound tactical experience, technical expertise, organizational capability and excellent leadership. He has recently proved the latter during operation BRAVE SHIELD in Slovakia. Always striving for excellence, Captain Weicker is key for mission success in day-to-day operations. Based upon an outstanding performance as a PATRIOT Tactical Director, he helps to build and maintain the highest standards of operational knowledge and training as an ICC/ESC instructor in the Luftwaffe's Air and Missile Defence Training organization. In 2022, Captain Weicker made an outstanding contribution to German surface air defense. As Tactical Director (TD) at battalion level and Execution Officer (XO), he deployed SAM Group 26 to Slovakia within a few days after being alerted. Under adverse conditions and high time pressure, his technical expertise and dedication helped him to conduct the Multinational Air and Missile Defense Task Force on March 24 as part of the Enhanced Vigilance Activity Battlegroup Slovakia (eVA SVK) to ensure Engagement Capability until today. Excellent leadership and exemplary camaraderie brought him respect and recognition in the multinational environment of this mission. During AirCom Ramstein's Operational Readiness Review in April 2022, Captain Weicker's tactical and operational leadership received particular praise.



EUROPEAN MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Captain Rick 't Jong Dutch Missile Defender of the Year

Capt 't Jong has joined active duty on the 16th of August, 2006. He first applied to become a military Air Battle Management Officer, but later switched to become an operator (Tactical Control Officer) on the Dutch PATRIOT Air and Missile Defence system, stationed at the Guided Weapons Group at Airbase the Peel. He graduated in October, 2010, was promoted to Lieutenant, and performed his job for 5 years as a Tactical Control Officer. During this time, he contributed to the Dutch Patriot Mission (Active Fence) in Turkey, with four tours of duty over the span of two years. His accumulated time accounts for 10 months of deployment in Turkey. In 2015, he was assigned to be the head of training and evaluation within one of the Dutch Patriot Fire Units. After performing this assignment for 3 years, he was promoted to the rank of Captain and assignment of Tactical Director, in 2018. He would leave the Fire Unit behind for good, to be stationed at the Dutch Patriot Tactical Operations Centre. During this time, he had his capabilities tested to the limit by participating in the internationally acclaimed Weapons Instructor Course, which he graduated in 2021. After these achievements, he was reassigned within the Tactical Operations Centre, to become the head of Training and Datalink in January 2022. Capt 't Jong has contributed to the success of his unit, 802 squadron, and the Dutch Ground Based Air Defence Command in the past year. He participated in the Fact-Finding Mission for the deployment of Dutch Air Defence in Slovakia, laying the foundation for the deployment of our PATRIOT battalion to Slovakia. Furthermore, he planned and directed the much-needed education of new operators to guarantee continued operation of the Dutch mission in Slovakia. Lastly, as the latest graduate of the Weapons Instructor Course, he has provided numerous training and exercise opportunities within the fixed-wing Fighter community, to understand each other, learn from each other and train how to effectively cooperate with each other in a Defensive Counter Air scenario. Captain 't Jong's ability to think and act outside of existing constraints, and his ability to convince his fellow operators about his innovative ideas is an inspiration to the colleagues and future leaders around him.



EUROPEAN MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Jan Marinus Career Achievement Missile Defender of the Year

Retired Lieutenant Colonel Jan Marinus started his career in the Royal Netherlands Air Force in 1971. Throughout his 40 years of active duty, he served in a variety of positions all related to Air Defence. After having completed the common Military training, he was transferred to the German border to join the 5th Guided Missile Group Basic HAWK system at the beginning of 1973. In 1978, he followed the Improved HAWK Course to be updated on the system. In 1986, he introduced, as member of the Instruction Team, the PATRIOT Weapon system in the Royal Netherlands Airforce, after it was decided to phase out the NIKE system. It took 4 years to familiarize the personnel of the 3rd and 5th Guided Missile Groups on the systems. Jan Marinus was one of the initial instructors introducing the PATRIOT weapon system into the Dutch armed forces and acted as trainer and mentor for many Air Defence Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers over the years. Being an authority in his area of expertise, Jan was involved in the very first steps the Dutch armed forces made in the area of Missile Defence and he became one of the founding fathers of the Air and Missile Defence exercise Joint Project Optic Windmill. With his tremendous knowledge on Air & Missile defence operations, he helped to develop the exercise, starting in 1996, into the biggest Integrated Air and Missile Defence exercise in Europe, creating a unique environment used to train over the last 25 years generations of Missile Defenders of many NATO nations. Once retired Jan Marinus continued to support the Joint Project Optic Windmill as senior exercise advisor, helping to maintain and improve the quality and relevance of the exercise. Till the day of today at age 70, Jan Marinus always showed great commitment and dedication. Throughout his entire career he was an example for many generations of Dutch Air Defenders and without his constant efforts Joint Project Optic Windmill would not be as successful and relevant as it is today.

Members of the Order of the European Missile Defender of the Year

2018

U.S. Army
SSG Nathan Kavanagh
U.S. Navy
CPO Jeremiah Wright
U.S. Air Force
MSgt Kelli Anquiano
U.S. National Guard
SSG Randall Norris
NATO Civilian
Mr. Daniel Tosh
NATO
Lt Col Arthur Lynch
Netherlands
WO Willem Dorenbos
Spain
Lt Col Jose Alberto Munoz
Martinez
Germany
CDR j.g. Stefan Becker
Career Achievement
SMSgt Thomas Franke

2017

U.S. Army
SPC Robert Clinger
U.S. Navy
CDR Jonathan Lipps
U.S. Air Force
Lt Col Brian Koch
Germany
CMSgt Gunter Rosler
Italy
Cdr Guiseppe Musolino
NATO CIV
Mr. Paul Enderle
NATO
LTC Thorsten Stratemann
Netherlands
Maj Johan Hendrix

2016

U.S. Army
SGT Joseph Frey
U.S. Navy
LCDR John Mastriani
U.S. Air Force
Lt Col Kevin Miller
France
Cpt Arnold Ansquer
Germany
MSgt Dustin Heise
Italy
Col Antonio Evangelio
NATO
Maj Ignacio Galindo
Netherlands
Cdre Fred Douglas
Spain
Cpt Juan Jeronimo Villalon
Carbellido
Career Achievement
LtCol Ralf Zwingmann

2015

U.S. Army
CW3 Wesley Dohogn
U.S. Navy
LT Lis Bydairk
U.S. Air Force
Lt Col Eric Lazenby
France
Sgt1C Sabrina van den Goorbergh
Germany
Capt Heiko Precht
Italy
Lt Col Marco de Massari

2014

U.S. Army
SSG Enrique Martinez
U.S. Navy
LT Michael Laich
U.S. Air Force
Mr. Kenneth Dustin
Germany
SMSgt Thomas Tapken
Netherlands
Lt Col Edwin de Boer
NATO
Lt Col Gurkan Costur



A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU

To the Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, Department of the Air Force, United States Space Force, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Armed Forces of Germany, and the Armed Forces of the Netherlands.



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