



*Tenth Annual*

**U.S. MISSILE DEFENDER**  
*of the YEAR*  
**AWARD CEREMONY**

*January 10, 2020*  
*Alexandria, Virginia*



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS  
U.S. DEFENDER *of the* YEAR AWARD CEREMONY

Call to Order

National Anthem

Invocation

Welcoming Remarks

Dinner

Service Components Present their Defender *of the* Year

Award Presentations

Closing Remarks by Mr. Riki Ellison

Conclusion of Ceremony

Post Event Reception



# 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. Each year the award is given to 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. 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 our homeland, armed forces, and allies. Recognizing them helps to educate the American public and inspire those they work with to defend our nation.

The Defenders of the Year are selected by their peers and commanding officers from the United States Army, United States Navy, United States Air Force, and the United States National Guard.

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*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.*

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# 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.



## U.S. MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



### Captain Eric Grant

CPT Grant enlisted into Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1-265th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) in 2007 as an Air Defense Tactical Operations Center Operator/Maintainer. After reaching the rank of Private First Class, he attended ROTC at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Air Traffic Management while receiving his direct commission and appointment to Second Lieutenant in the Florida Army National Guard. CPT Grant previously served as a Platoon Leader and Executive Officer with Charlie Battery, 1-265th ADA, where he was deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan in 2015-2016 for the Counter-Rocket Artillery and Mortar (C-RAM) mission. CPT Grant successfully led his Battery to become the first National Guard Battery to intercept incoming Indirect Fire in Afghanistan. In May 2016, CPT Grant was transferred to Bravo Battery, 1-265th ADA, where he currently serves as the Air Defense Battery Commander deployed in the European Command (EUCOM) in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve and the European Deterrence Initiative. Bravo Battery 1-265th ADA uncased their unit's flag and colors in Grafenwoehr, Germany on June 20, 2019, as being only the third National Guard Unit to provide Air Defense to Eastern Europe since the Cold War. As the Active Component cannot yet meet Short-Range Air Defense (SHORAD) requirements, Bravo Battery 1-265th ADA was tasked to support in the interim. Here, the unit is entrusted with providing pivotal SHORAD coordination for the Regionally Aligned Force (RAF) rotations and NATO forces in Europe. CPT Grant currently serves as a Strategic Criminal Analyst with the Florida Army National Guard Counterdrug Program and is assigned to the Central Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (CFHIDTA) in Lake Mary, Florida. He currently resides in Deland, Florida with his wife April and daughter Arianna. CPT Grant's military decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, NATO Medal, Army Service ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Florida Counterdrug ribbon, Florida Service Medal, Florida Commendation Medal, Florida Meritorious Service ribbon, Florida State Active Duty ribbon w/ three Oak Leaf Clusters.





## U.S. MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



### Captain Nolan Hebein

Capt Hebein is an Acquisition Manager assigned to the Small Launch and Targets Division (ECLX), Launch Enterprise, Space and Missile Systems Center as the Operations Branch Deputy Chief and National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) Mission Manager, Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. Capt Hebein is from Illinois and graduated from Grant Community High School in May 2010. He graduated and commissioned from the United States Air Force Academy in May 2014 with a Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Area Studies with a focus on Latin America. In 2018, while assigned to ECLX, Capt Hebein deployed to the 379th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron, Al Udeid AB, Qatar. Capt Hebein was a Current Operations Advisor that tracked and reported over 3000 missions across 4 AORs including over 40 million pounds of fuel delivered, over 450 bombs dropped, and 198 members medically evacuated. As the Operation Branch Deputy Chief, Capt Hebein oversees 13 government and commercial space launch missions, including multiple Missile Defense Agency (MDA) and target vehicle missions. Capt Hebein led the development of a highly successful MDA Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) Flight Target Missile and two U.S. Army Lower Tier Projects Office Target Missiles missions. Specifically, Capt Hebein directly served as the program manager and target vehicle lead, in which he led the development of the MDA's Flight Test THAAD-23 (FTT-23) target missile mission and two Patriot target missiles to conduct threat-representative Operational Test & Evaluation (OT&E) for each weapon system. For FTT-23, Capt Hebein led integrated process team meetings over the past 18 months to ensure the target missile presented a true, threat representative target. The FTT-23 mission was highly successful, due to the high-fidelity threat representative target that Capt Hebein developed. In his second mission, Capt Hebein led a target design review, kicked-off an 18-month build, and synchronized two new qualification programs which expanded Patriot target range to match real-world, threat scenarios. He built a strategic procurement plan that permitted a new baseline Patriot OT&E and expedited the U.S. Army's OT&E by three years. Capt Hebein's military awards include the Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service, and the Air Force Training Ribbon.





## U.S. MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



### **Fire Controlman Aegis First Class Petty Officer Mario Amaro**

FCA1 Amaro is a native of San Antonio, Texas. He graduated from William Howard Taft High School and enlisted in the U.S. Navy in June of 2006. FCA1 Amaro's sea assignments include Aegis Computer Technician/Work Center Supervisor on USS Monterey (CG 61) where he completed two deployments to the 6th Fleet AOR. His second sea assignment is Combat Systems Maintenance Manager Assistant and CFO2 Work Center Supervisor onboard USS Lake Erie (CG 70), completing two deployments in the 5th and 7th Fleet AORs, including multiple Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) and Enforcement Coalition Cell tasking missions. His shore duty assignment was at Navy Recruiting District in San Francisco, California. As the Combat Systems Maintenance Manager Assistant, FCA1 Amaro works directly with the Systems Test Officer and CSMM in the coordination of all preventative and corrective maintenance for 20 workcenters from Combat Systems, Weapons and Operations departments. The only Aegis Weapons Supervisor Computer Technician onboard, FCA1 Amaro spearheaded all troubleshooting and repairs for the Aegis Computer Suite, resulting in a sustained 100% operability for every mission tasking presented to USS Lake Erie. He was sought out to troubleshoot more than 15 BMD computer casualties which allowed for the completion of a BMD certification, BMD Exercise (EX) 19-04 and two live 7th Fleet BMD tasking missions. FCA1 Amaro is the BMD Watch Officer for USS Lake Erie's BMD Blue Team and completed more than 15 scenarios in the 5th, 6th, and 7th Fleet AORs in preparation for USS Lake Erie's upcoming sustainment BMDEX. FCA1 Amaro is Master Helmsman qualified and conducted more than 15 special evolutions with USS Lake Erie's navigation team. He is the only junior sailor standing watch as Combat Systems Coordinator, Anti Air Warfare Coordinator, and BMD Watch Officer, all watch stations typically manned by E-7 and senior. He has also mentored and qualified 4 Master Helmsmen, 10 Combat System Officer of the Watch, 4 Combat Systems Coordinators, and 12 Anti-Air Warfare Supervisors. FCA1 Amaro is also completing his Bachelor's of Science in Information and Technology through Pennsylvania State World Campus. He is married to Mayghen Amaro of California. His personal awards include the Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal (five awards).





## U.S. MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



### Captain Cody Williams

CPT Williams was born and raised in Warren, Pennsylvania. CPT Williams enlisted in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard in 2007 and served two years as a Financial Management Technician before transitioning into the ROTC program. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and commissioned through ROTC at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania in 2011. Prior to attending the Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Basic Officer Leaders Course (BOLC), CPT Williams served as the Executive Officer (XO) for C Battery, 1-56 ADA Battalion. After completion of BOLC he was assigned as a Platoon Leader (PL) to A Battery, 5-7 ADA Battalion in Germany. While within 5-7 ADA Battalion, CPT Williams served as a Support PL, Launcher PL, Battalion S4, and Battery XO. His next assignment was the 69th ADA Brigade Headquarters in Ft. Hood, Texas as a Brigade Battle Captain. He graduated from the ADA Captains Career Course in 2017 before being assigned to C Battery 2-6 as an AMEDD DCC Instructor. CPT Williams assumed Command of Bravo Battery on 18 July 2018. CPT Williams has two operational deployments. He first deployed with A Battery 5-7 ADA Battalion from Germany to Gaziantep, Turkey in support of the NATO Expeditionary Mission Operation Active Fence (2012-2013). His second deployment was from Ft. Hood to Al Udiid Air Base, Qatar in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. CPT Williams has also served in numerous joint and international exercises including the Combined Defense Working Group / Israeli Test Bed in support of the Israeli Defense CONPLAN, Juniper Cobra and Austere Challenge in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve, and two "EUROPEAN SHOCK" emergency deployment readiness exercises. CPT Williams is joined in active service by his brother CPT Jeremy Williams. The veterans in his family include his brother Tobias Williams, his father Dennis Williams (Vietnam), and both of his grandfathers: Morton Williams (WWII) and George Hesch (Korea). CPT Williams' awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal (2 OLC), the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Superior Unit Award, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terror Expeditionary and Service Medals, the Army Service Ribbon, three Overseas Service Ribbons, and the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (Silver).

# Members of the Order of Missile Defender *of the Year*

2018

ARMY: CW3 Lucas Watterson

NAVY: LTJG McKenzie Anderson

AIR FORCE: Capt Rex Villa

NATIONAL GUARD: CW4 Jacob Moore

2017

ARMY: 1LT Benjamin Schiff

NAVY: CPO Zachary Quirk

AIR FORCE: Lt Col Rocco Angiolelli

NATIONAL GUARD: CPT Jason Brewer

2016

ARMY: CW2 Kevin M. Kruthers

NAVY: PO1 Nathaniel Lynch

AIR FORCE: Lt Col Anthony Owens

NATIONAL GUARD: SSG Caroline Domenech

2015

ARMY: CPT Jason Roberts

NAVY: FC1 Elizabeth J. Clark

AIR FORCE: Michael D. Sward

NATIONAL GUARD: Trampas J. Vojtasek

2014

ARMY: SSG Michael McSherry

NAVY: FC2 Bartholomew Ringer

AIR FORCE: Lt Col Jerry Frazier

NATIONAL GUARD: SSG Norman D. Perkins III

2013

ARMY: SSG Nancy A. Wingo

NAVY: LT Brandon Bridges

AIR FORCE: Capt Benjamin C. Szutar

NATIONAL GUARD: SSG Nicholas W. Power

2012

ARMY: CPT Kyle L. Kirkpatrick

NAVY: FC2 Ronald H. Barber

AIR FORCE: Capt Gregory Tengco

NATIONAL GUARD: SGT Aric Wilkins

2011

ARMY: CPT Will Andrews

NAVY: FC2 Mathieu McIntosh

NATIONAL GUARD: SSG Craig Davis

2010

ARMY: 1LT Ted Kimmey, Jr.

NAVY: FC1 (SW) Shawn Walker

AIR FORCE: Maj Michael Tobey

NATIONAL GUARD: 1Lt Brian Yoakam

## A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU

To the Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, Department of the Air Force, and National Guard

