



2020

# ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER *of the YEAR* AWARD CEREMONY

*September 26, 2020*

*Virtual*





SEQUENCE OF EVENTS  
ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER *of the* YEAR AWARD CEREMONY

Call to Order

National Anthem

Welcoming Remarks

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, and the National Capital Region Air and 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, the European Missile Defender of the Year, established in 2014 with our allies in Europe, the Japan Missile Defender of the Year, established in 2015 with our allies in Japan, and the Dutch Missile Defender of the Year, established in 2017 with our allies in the Netherlands.

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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.





## 611th Air Operations Center Awardees ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR

On 16 June 2020, North American Aerospace Defense Command F-22 Raptors, supported by KC-135 Stratotankers and an E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System, successfully completed two intercepts of Russian bomber aircraft formations entering the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone. The first formation of Russian aircraft consisted of two Tu-95 bombers, accompanied by two Su-35 fighter jets and was supported by an A-50 airborne early warning and control aircraft. The second formation consisted of two additional Tu-95 bombers supported by an A-50. The Russian military aircraft came within 32 nautical miles of Alaskan shores, but remained in international airspace. On the ground, members of the 611th Air Operations Center directed the response to the Air Defense Identification Zone incursion and coordinated with mission partners to ensure a successful intercept. Heralding the Alaskan NORAD Region's readiness and ability to respond to these incursions, General Terrence O'Shaughnessy, NORAD Commander, stated, "For the eighth time this year, Russian military aircraft have penetrated our Canadian or Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zones and each and every time NORAD forces were ready to meet this challenge... Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, NORAD constantly monitors the northern approaches to our nations and our operations make it clear that we will conduct homeland defense efforts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year." The nominees from 611th Air Operations Center and the Alaskan NORAD Region represent a small sample of the men and women who, through their professionalism, dedication, and tireless efforts, protect North American air sovereignty. This most recent event showcases their ability and willingness to go above and beyond the daily expectation and typical pattern of operations, to the benefit of all under their watch.



611th AOC Awardee

## ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



### AIRMAN FIRST CLASS CARSON WILLARD

A1C Willard serves as an Intelligence Duty Technician on the 24/7 Indications and Warning team that guides real time analysis, supporting the decision cycle for the Chief of Combat Operations (CCO) as well as the Commander of the Alaskan NORAD Region (ANR). On a daily basis, Airman Willard analyzes over 200 messages as well as monitoring 1.4 million square miles of Alaskan airspace for U.S. North American Aerospace Defense-Northern Command. As part of the Indications and Warnings (I&W) team, A1C Willard has delivered 208 update briefs which have primed and influenced real-world combat ops decision making. He has also managed dynamic Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) reporting and analysis for five Northern Sovereignty Operations (NSO) and Alaskan Air Identification Zone entries by unauthorized aircraft enabling senior leadership decision making. His efforts are in keeping with ANR's mission of maintaining the U.S.'s aerospace sovereignty and integrity. A1C Willard is a native of Houston, Texas. He attended Friendswood High School graduating in 2011. After graduation, he attended Texas State University – San Marcos and later transferred to the University of Houston, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a Minor in U.S. History in 2017. He enlisted in the Air Force in 2018. Following basic training, A1C Willard attended the Air Force Intelligence All-Source Analyst Basic Course at Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo, Texas. After graduating from Intelligence School, he was assigned to the 611th Air Operations Center at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.





611th AOC Awardee

## ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



### MASTER SERGEANT BRANDON RENKO

MSgt Renko is currently serving as Superintendent, 611th Air Operations Center, Joint-Base Elmendorf Richardson, Alaska. As the Superintendent, he is a principal advisor to the commander on issues related to unit readiness, morale, admin actions, discipline, quality of life initiatives, and mentoring for 11 different AFSC's. Furthermore, MSgt Renko provides the commander with a mission ready force prepared to execute unit operations. MSgt Renko graduated from Samuel Clemens High School in 2001. He enlisted in the Air Force on April 15, 2003 and upon graduation from Basic Military Training, he stationed at Keesler Air Force Base (AFB) for Weather Technical Training, later earning his CCAF in Weather Technology in 2012. His first duty assignment was with the U.S. Air Forces in Europe Operational Weather Squadron at Sembach AFB, Germany. MSgt Renko's additional tours of duty include Moody AFB, Georgia; Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina; Creech AFB, Nevada; and his current assignment to Joint-Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. His contingency deployments have taken him to Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, and Afghanistan. MSgt Renko has a wide breadth of experience supporting different platforms including the F-22, F-15 Strike Eagle, A-10, RQ-170, and multiple combat deployments, some of which were in direct support of Brigade Combat Teams.



611th AOC Awardee

## ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



### CAPTAIN SAMUEL KELLER

Capt Keller is currently assigned as a Senior Intelligence Duty Officer (SIDO) and Team Chief with the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Division (ISR), 611th Air Operations Center (611 AOC) at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. He leads a ten-member 24/7 Indications and Warning team that drives real-time analysis, safeguarding Alaskan and U.S. aerospace integrity and sovereignty for over 1.4 million square miles, as well as supporting the decision cycle for the Chief of Combat Operations and the Commander of Alaskan NORAD Region (ANR). Capt Keller is from Dayton, Ohio and commissioned through Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps from Wright State University in 2011 with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. In 2012, Capt Keller completed the Missile Launch Officer Initial Qualification Training Course for the Minute Man III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile weapon system and subsequently the Air Force Intelligence Officer Initial Skills Training Course in 2013. He has served at the 42d Attack Squadron (42ATKS) at Creech Air Force Base (AFB), Nevada, the U.S. Air Force's first operational MQ-9 Reaper Squadron and has led intelligence support in Operations INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR), JUKEBOX LOTUS (OJL), and ODYSSEY RESOLVE (OOR). Capt Keller was also assigned to the 1st Air Force (1AF) at Tyndall AFB, Florida where he assisted the Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) during three hurricanes and helped to reestablish capabilities for the Continental NORAD Region (CONR), following the aftermath of Hurricane Michael. Capt Keller's next assignment is as a student in U.S. Air Force Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training (SUPT) at Laughlin AFB, Texas.





611th AOC Awardee  
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## **MAJOR KARLTON WOLF**

Maj Wolf is an Air Battle Manager assigned to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. He is currently working as an Air Surveillance Officer aboard the E-3 Airborne Early Warning and Control platform with the 962d Airborne Air Control Squadron. Maj Wolf currently performs duties at the 611th Air Operations Center as the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Branch Chief; Defense Duty Officer for Command & Control; Reconnaissance Duty Officer; and Joint Interface Control Officer. Maj Wolf started his career in the Air Force in 1999 as a Medical Technician before earning his commission in 2006. As an Officer, he has worked aboard the E-3 Sentry, at a Control and Reporting Center, and at an Air Operations Center deploying three times to United States Central Command supporting counter-terrorism operations and once to United States Southern Command supporting counter-drug operations. Additionally, Maj Wolf has done research as well as developmental and operational testing in Radar and Data Link Operations for the Air Force.



611th AOC Awardee

## ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



### MAJOR BRIANNA CARROLL

Maj Carroll is Chief of Combat Plans Branch, 611th Air Operations Center, Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Region at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. She is responsible for the planning, allocation, and tasking of air and cyberspace forces for the Alaskan NORAD Region Combined Air Forces Component Commander. She leads planning for contingency responses across the Alaskan NORAD Region by assessing resources, managing operation objectives, and informing strategic Alaskan NORAD Region alert forces of daily posture options. Maj Carroll received her commission in 2009 from the Reserve Officer Training Corps at Pepperdine University. Her first two assignments were with the 964th Airborne Air Control Squadron and the 621st Air Control Squadron. She is currently assigned to the 962d Airborne Air Control Squadron and the 611th Air Operations Center. As an Air Battle Manager, she is an Evaluator Senior Director with 1,180 Combat and Combat Support hours in Operation INHERENT RESOLVE, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, Combined Defense of the Arabian Gulf, Operation NOBLE EAGLE, and counter-drug operations. Maj Carroll is a Senior Air Battle Manager with over 2,240 flying hours.





## Ft. Greely Base Defender Awardee **ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR**



### **SPECIALIST EMANUEL DIAZ SANTIAGO TORRES**

SPC Diaz Santiago has been stationed at Fort Greely since May 2018 and has become the example for which all Junior Enlisted Soldiers should strive. As a driver trainer, SPC Diaz personally qualified over 30 Soldiers on the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer; which then allowed him to conduct driving tests and ride checks for them as well. SPC Diaz Santiago further certified Soldiers of the company in proper tow bar training; which further increased Soldier knowledge, training, and certification in the proper way to manipulate government property. This training iteration was an asset, not only to the platoon, but the company as a whole, as it reinforced the concept of stewardship for government property. His experience and knowledge were also utilized from his Communication Clerk role that has been part of multiple company level inspections that met 100% of all accountability and maintenance requirements of all sensitive items. All other accomplishments aside, SPC Diaz Santiago takes time to personally instruct and mentor other Soldiers for personal improvement and career progression. SPC Diaz Santiago joined the Army in 2012 as a Computer Detection/System Repairer Soldier. He completed Basic Combat Training at Fort Benning, Georgia and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Gordon, Georgia. He was then assigned to the 192nd Support Battalion, Bravo Company at San Juan, Puerto Rico. In 2013, he was reassigned to the 225th Military Police (MP) Company in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico; which is when he reclassified as Military Police at Fort Allen, Puerto Rico. SPC Diaz Santiago was then assigned to the Puerto Rico National Guard Counter-drug Program as a Criminal Analyst in 2014. In 2015, his home unit was mobilized to Soto Cano Air Force Base, Honduras where he supported the security mission for local coalition forces until mobilization completed in 2016. In May 2018, SPC Diaz Santiago transitioned to the MP Ground-Based Interceptor Security Company, at Fort Greely, Alaska. SPC Diaz Santiago is married to Sheila Negron Rosado and he has five children Camilla, Arianis, Yasser, Gabriela, and Lia. He has completed his Associate of Art Degree in Electrical Technology and is currently pursuing his Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Science.



## Ft. Greely Base Defender Awardee **ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR**



### **SERGEANT VINCENT WEITERS**

SGT Weiters is a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) who continues to grow exponentially in his role at the Military Police Ground-Based Interceptor Security Company at Fort Greely, Alaska. He utilizes his experience as an Air Force Security Policeman, with his personal experience, and experiences gained while serving with the 49th GMD to help his colleagues on a daily basis. He is proactive and diligent in his work while he serves as The Equal Opportunity NCO, Assistant Master Resilience Trainor, Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention, and Hazardous Materials Certifier. SGT Weiters is a vital part of Team, Squad, Platoon, and Company Level Training, training Soldiers for internal and external evaluations. He trains his fellow Soldiers in Room Clearance, Hand Cuffing Techniques, Interpersonal Communication Skills, and Entry Control Point Procedures. His fellow Soldiers see him as a leader to emulate. In 2003, one year after completing High School, SGT Weiters enlisted in the Air Force. He went to Lackland Air Force Base (AFB) to complete basic training and Security Forces Advanced Individual Training. His first duty station was at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming working in the Convoy Support Squadron. In 2005, SGT Weiters enlisted in the Wyoming Army National Guard as a Dental Specialist for six years. In 2011, SGT Weiters took an interstate transfer to the Alaska Army National Guard to work in the Medical Detachment unit. In his time in the unit, SGT Weiters completed Warrior Leader Course in 2012 and was promoted to Staff Sergeant in 2013. In 2015, SGT Weiters joined the 49th Missile Defense Battalion at Ft. Greely, Alaska. In 2016 he reclassified to Military Police. In 2020, SGT Weiters successfully completed Military Police Advanced Leader Course. SGT Weiters awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. SGT Weiters has also earned the M4 Carbine Expert Badge and Drivers Badge. SGT Weiters has also successfully completed Equal Opportunities Leaders, Master Resilience Training, and Hazmat Transportation.





Ft. Greely Top Crew Awardee  
**ALASKA MISSILE  
DEFENDER of the YEAR**



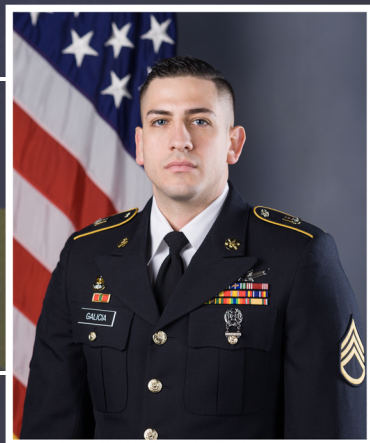
## **STAFF SERGEANT MATTHEW MYERS**

SSG Myers is a native of Juneau, Alaska. He enlisted in the Alaska Army National Guard (AKARNG) in May of 2011. He was assigned to the One Stop Unit Training at Fort Benning, Georgia where he became an infantryman in December of 2011. SSG Myers began his military infantryman career at Company C. 1-297TH Reconnaissance & Surveillance, Long Range Surveillance in Alaska. In January 2013 he transitioned to the 297th military police company in Alaska. In October 2013, he transitioned to Alpha Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion where he was assigned as a Military Police Officer. Staff Sergeant Myers' prior assignments include Team Leader, Alpha Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Fort Greely, Alaska; Communication Operator, HHB, 49th Missile Defense Battalion. He is currently serving as Weapons Operator, HHB, 49th Missile Defense Battalion. His military education/courses include, Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP), 11B Infantryman course, Airborne school, 31B Military Police Course, Warrior Leader Course, Combative Course Level 1, Ground Based Midcourse Defense Fire Control Qualification course, Military Police Advance Leader Course Phase 1 and Phase 2, Air and Missile Defense Crewmember Phase 1 and Phase 2, and Introduction to Space. He is currently completing his bachelor's Degree in Networking and Cybersecurity from University of Maryland Global Campus. His awards and decorations include the Army Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Non-Commission Officer Professional Development Ribbon with Numeral 2, The Army Superior Unit Award, Alaska Humanitarian Service Medal, and the Army Basic Space Badge. He currently resides in Delta Junction, Alaska. He is married to Delaney Myers. They have three kids, Ryder Myers (6), Piper Myers (3) and Layla Myers (4 months).





## Ft. Greely Top Crew Awardee **ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR**



### **STAFF SERGEANT ALBERTO GALICIA**

SSG Galicia is a native of Aguada, Puerto Rico. He enlisted in the Puerto Rico Army National Guard (PRARNG) in November of 2010. After successfully completing Pre-Basic Combat Training and the non-resident English Language Training Program, he attended the One Stop Unit Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri where he became a Military Police Officer in February of 2012. SSG Galicia began his military police career at 770th Military Police Company in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. In January 2013, he performed duties on State Active Duty alongside the Puerto Rico Stated Police. In September 2013 he transitioned to Alpha Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion where he was assigned as a Military Police Officer. SSG Galicia prior assignment include Team Leader, Alpha Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Fort Greely, Alaska; Communication Operator, HHB, 49th Missile Defense Battalion; Squad Leader, Alpha Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion; Battle Analyst, HHB, 49th Missile Defense Battalion. He is currently serving as Weapons Operator, HHB, 49th Missile Defense Battalion. His military education / courses include Pre-BCT English Language Course, Recruit Sustainment Program, 31B Military Police Course, Warrior Leader Course, Vindicator Command and Control Operator course, Combative Instructor Course Level 1, None Lethal Ammunition Instructor, Resilience Training Assistant, Ground Based Midcourse Defense Fire Control Qualification course, Military Police Advance Leader Course Phase 1 and Phase 2, Air and Missile Defense Crewmember Phase 1 and Phase 2, Ground Missile Defense GST Operator Course, Introduction to Space, and Air and Missile Defense Crewmember Senior Leader Course. He is currently completing his Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from University College Online, Puerto Rico. His awards and decorations include the Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon with Numeral 3, Puerto Rico English Language Proficiency Ribbon, Alaska Governor's Distinguished Unit Citation, the Army Superior Unit Award and the Army Basic Space Badge. He currently resides in Delta Junction, Alaska. He is married to Michelle Galloza. They have three kids, Justing Alberto (11), Josean Alberto (5), and Hope Alchelsy (11 Months).



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Ft. Greely Top Crew Awardee  
**ALASKA MISSILE  
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## **FIRST LIEUTENANT KYLE REHBERG**

1LT Rehberg is a native of Hainesville, Illinois. He enlisted in 2011 in the Florida Army National Guard in the Simulations Membership Program and went to Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Upon graduating Basic Combat Training, he was assigned to the 1218th Transportation Company in West Palm Beach, Florida. 1LT Rehberg commissioned in 2015 through the Reserved Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program at Palm Beach Atlantic University as a Military Police Officer and was assigned as a Platoon Leader in the 715th Military Police Company in Melbourne, Florida. In 2018, 1LT Rehberg accepted a position as a Sensor Operator in HHB, 49th Missile Defense Battalion at Fort Greely, Alaska. In 2019, he transitioned to Higher Headquarters Battery (HHB), 49th Missile Defense Battalion where he is assigned as Deputy Director for Echo Crew. 1LT Rehberg's prior assignments include: Sensor Operator, Higher Headquarters Battery, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Fort Greely, Alaska; Platoon Leader, 715th Military Police Company (CS), Melbourne, Florida. His military education/courses include: Introduction to Space, Ground-based Midcourse Defense Qualification Course, Air Defense Artillery Transition Course, and Military Police Basic Officer Leaders Course. He holds a Baccalaureate degree in Political Science from Palm Beach Atlantic University. His awards and decorations include the Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, and Army Service Ribbon. He also is awarded the Basic Army Space Badge.





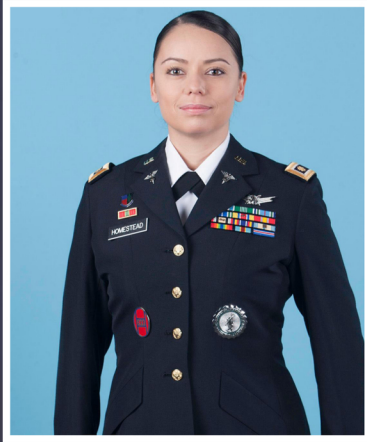
## Ft. Greely Top Crew Awardee **ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR**



### **CAPTAIN GILBERTO ORTIZ**

CPT Ortiz is a native of Hormigueros, Puerto Rico. He enlisted in the Puerto Rico Army National Guard (PRARNG) in August 2003 as a Military Police Soldier. In 2004 he went to One Station Unit Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Upon Graduation, he served as a driver in the 544th Military Police Company, PRARNG. In 2005, CPT Ortiz enrolled in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program at University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus. After receiving his commission to 2LT in June 2007 as a Military Police Officer, he was assigned as a Platoon Leader in the 544th Military Police Company, PRARNG, and shortly after he was assigned as the company's Executive Officer. In July 2009 he transitioned to Alpha Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion where he was assigned as Platoon Leader. CPT Ortiz's prior assignments include Platoon Leader, Alpha Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Fort Greely, Alaska; Sensors Operator, HHB, 49th Missile Defense Battalion; Deputy Director, HHB, 49th Missile Defense Battalion and Battalion S-2, 49th Missile Defense Battalion. He is currently serving as Senior Tactical Director, HHB, 49th Missile Defense Battalion. His military education / courses include Basic Officer Leaders Course (Phase 2), Military Police Basic Officer Leaders Course (Phase 3), Cold Weather Leaders Course, Special Reaction Team Course, GMD Basic Course, Army Space Cadre Basic Course, GMD Qualification Course, Introduction to Space, Air Defense Artillery Officer Reclassification Course, Air Defense Artillery Captains Career Course, OPSEC Level 2 Certification, Security Manager Course, Special Security Officer Course, Military Intelligence Officer Transition Course. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Criminology from the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus. His awards and decorations include the Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Puerto Rico English Language Proficiency Ribbon, Alaska Governor's Distinguished Unit Citation, the Army Superior Unit Award, and the Army Basic Space Badge. He currently resides in Delta Junction, Alaska. He is married to Noeliana Valentin-Hernandez of Guayama, Puerto Rico. They have two sons, Danel (12) and Dylan (4).





## Ft. Greely Top Crew Awardee **ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR**



### **MAJOR TERRI HOMESTEAD**

MAJ Homestead of Ensenada, Mexico, enlisted into the Army Reserves as Transportation Coordinator for the 519th Transportation Detachment in Camp Pendleton, California in 2002. In 2004, she received a Track and Field scholarship to Gardner – Webb University in Boiling Springs, North Carolina. Here she joined ROTC and transferred to the North Carolina National Guard and commissioned in the Medical Service Corps in May 2007. MAJ Homestead earned her Bachelor of Science in Health and Wellness with a Minor in Military Science. She is currently working on her Master's of Public Health through Liberty University. From 2009-2010 she deployed as the Evacuation and Treatment Platoon Leader with the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2011, she served in El Salvador as the Medical Operations Officer for the Beyond the Horizons joint exercise which provided humanitarian services. From 2011-2013, she served as the State Partnership Program Operations Officer in Stuttgart Germany, European Command. In 2017, she was selected to be the Senior Tactical Director for E Crew, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Fort Greely, Alaska and then as the Executive Officer for the Battalion. In addition to her full time duties, MAJ Homestead proudly serves as a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator and Victim Advocate since 2010. MAJ Homestead became the first female Missile Defense Crew Director at Fort Greely and her and her crew were afforded the opportunity to execute FTG-11, the first ever salvo test of the GMD system. She is currently assigned as the Deputy Human Resources Officer for the Alaska National Guard. MAJ Homestead's military awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with Double Bronze Star Device, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Force Reserve Service Medal with Mobilization Device, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon, National Guard Recruiting Badge. MAJ Homestead currently resides in Anchorage, Alaska with her husband Clint, son Jaxon (3), and stepdaughter Emily (9).



## Cobra Dane Awardee **ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR**



### **MASTER SERGEANT TARIQ SIMPSON**

MSgt Simpson is the Site Chief, COBRA DANE Operations, 13th Space Warning Squadron (SWS), Joint-Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER), Alaska. He is the site lead for COBRA DANE missile defense radar support. MSgt Simpson supervises one Amn towards improving quality of life, logistics, and security on a remote island location. He authorizes radar site access by verifying security clearance, need-to-know and purpose of personnel. MSgt Simpson leads the sole Information Technology (IT) network sponsoring office by creating and maintaining user accounts for 28 maintenance and operations personnel. Directs upgrade projects by bridging communications with program office, 21st Space Wing, and Pacific Air Forces Regional Support Center (PRSC) for critical support at Eareckson Air Station (EAS), Alaska. MSgt Simpson enlisted from Macon, Georgia in January 2004 and completed the Ground Radio Communications Apprentice course in September 2004. He has 16 years of active service with experience that includes diverse duties within the Radar, Airfield, and Weather Systems (RAWS) career field on both deployable & fixed air traffic control radio communications, radar, and navigational aid systems. Prior to his current position, he was assigned as Quality Assurance (QA) Evaluator 57 Operations Support Squadron (OSS), Nellis Air Force Base (AFB), Nevada. His awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, and Air Force Achievement Medal with three oak leaf clusters.



## Clear AFS Base Defender Awardee **ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR**



### **STAFF SERGEANT MATTHEW DUNLAP**

SSgt Dunlap is a Base Defense Operations Controller, Flight Trainer, and certified Flight Sergeant assigned to the 268th Security Forces Squadron, Clear Air Force Station, Alaska. SSgt Dunlap, as a Base Defense Operations Controller, provides command and control for all incidents on Clear Air Force Station, while keeping base leadership informed of all daily tasks and responses. SSgt Dunlap is entrusted to train all flight personnel on all standards and regulations to ensure each Defender is capable of carrying out the mission of Clear AFS. Additionally, SSgt Dunlap serves as Unit Safety Program Representative for all Security Forces personnel. SSgt Dunlap Provides force protection for Protection Level-1 Solid State Phased-Array Radar, supporting infrastructure, over 600 personnel on an 11,500 acre remote base, and the Long Range Discrimination Radar (LRDR) Construction project. He responded to suicide hotline call from LRDR Temporary Workers Camp and led investigation of possible intoxication and unauthorized firearms in camp living quarters; prevented loss of life--restored good order and discipline, prioritized safety of workers and residents critical to completion of LRDR defense project. SSgt Dunlap also Activated advanced EMS in response to a Medical Emergency for a civilian contractor's spouse and secured a safe route for rapid arrival of medical responders--quick reaction time led to patient's vitals restored and saved her life. SSgt Dunlap enlisted in the active duty Air Force in October of 2009 as a Security Forces member. He completed technical training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas and he was assigned to Lajes Field Air Base, Portugal from 2010 to 2012. During his time at Lajes Field, he was selected for the installation Emergency Services Team along with assisting flight operations as a Base Defense Operations Controller. SSgt Dunlap permanently changed station to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska where he worked as a Security Forces Patrolman and Alarm Monitor. Prior to SSgt Dunlap's current position, he served two years as an Armory Custodian and Hazardous Material Program Manager for the 673rd Security Forces Squadron. His awards and decorations include the Air Force Achievement Medal with device and the Alaska National Guard Adjutant General's Marksmanship Proficiency Award.





## Clear AFS Base Defender Awardee **ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR**



### **STAFF SERGEANT GERSOM RIVERA**

SSgt Rivera is a security forces craftsman for the 268th Security Forces Squadron, 168th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, Clear Air Force Station, Alaska. He is responsible for providing installation security and law enforcement at the 11,500 acre remote, subarctic installation, in support of the Air Force's 24/7 ballistic missile warning/defense and space surveillance missions. SSgt Rivera aided development of a mission essential list; provided oversight of the installation entry control process--ensured 100% compliance of COVID-19 and health protection condition protocol. He assisted critical electronic security system functions and issued 60+ restricted area badges for LRDR contractors in a five month period, keeping the restricted area badging system unhindered. He networked in newly appointed position and established communication with POCs for Missile Defense Agency/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project which bolstered base relationships. SSgt Rivera enlisted the Puerto Rico Air National Guard in September 2006. He graduated from the Security Forces Academy, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas and was assigned 156th Security Forces Squadron (SFS), Muniz Air National Guard Base, Puerto Rico. While assigned to the 156th SFS he deployed to Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan in December 2008 and Al Dhafra AB, United Arab Emirates in January 2013. SSgt Rivera later joined Clear in December 2015 and has served as one of the installation's defenders since that time. He was selected as the Pass & Registration noncommissioned officer in charge and is serving as the installation's point of contact concerning fitness determination, for denial of installation access and access credentials. SSgt Rivera is also the point of contact for the newly implemented Air Force Justice Information System in Clear AFS as well as the Unit Security Manager. Prior to his current assignment, SSgt Rivera served as a Security Response Team Member for the 268th Security Forces Squadron, Clear AFS, Alaska. His awards and decorations include the Air Force Achievement Medal.



## Clear AFS Top Crew Awardee **ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR**



### **STAFF SERGEANT KENNETH JEWITT**

SSgt Jewitt commands operational control of a \$250 million (AN-FPS-132) phased-array radar in the enlisted crew position of mission crew chief for the 213th Space Warning Squadron. His primary duties include detection and reporting of missile warning events for North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) and U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), while providing subject matter expertise in the field of Space Surveillance; in the processing of space launches foreign, domestic, and collecting observations on satellites assets in the battle space. SSgt Jewitt enlisted in the Alaska Air National Guard in June of 2010 while he was a junior in high school and in his eight and a half years of service he has completed upgrade training in multiple career fields ranging from space operations to law enforcement. His awards and decorations include the Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal, and Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (one oak leaf cluster). SSgt Jewitt serves as Crew Chief, Bravo Crew, 213th Space Warning Squadron, Clear AFS, Alaska. Upon certification in the Weapon System, SSgt Jewitt has pushed farther and faster than anyone to explore system capabilities and tactics to meet current and emerging threats. SSgt Jewitt was instrumental in supporting testing and the trial period of new hardware and software which led to Operational Acceptance of the Upgraded Early Warning Radar which provides Missile Warning, Missile Defense, and Space Domain Awareness for North America. Closely working with newly assigned intel personnel and a new Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility, SSgt Jewitt was able to align current intel products to foreign missile testing, and preparing crews for Real World Missile events. He also incorporated additional notifications and information for Cobra Dane crews, alerting them of critical Missile Defense Periods of Interest. Finally, SSgt Jewitt was responsible for up channeling two Missile Warning Site reports, providing Dual Phenomenology to the NORAD/NORTHCOM Commander ensuring accurate Missile Threat Assessments.



## Clear AFS Top Crew Awardee **ALASKA MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR**



### **CAPTAIN KEVIN NELSON**

Capt Nelson is Chief of Operations Support, Mission Assurance and a Crew Commander in the Missile Warning Operations Center 213th Space Warning Squadron, Clear Air Force Station (AFS), Alaska. Capt Nelson exercises operational control of a \$250 million (AN/FPS-123) phased-array radar. Capt Nelson supports missile warning threat assessment for North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) and Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and Space Domain Awareness for the Joint Space Operations Center. Capt Nelson has excelled as a Crew Commander, commanding 46 flawless shifts. He was responsible for reporting two foreign ICBM valid site reports, tracking & cataloging 1.5K satellites, supporting eight foreign satellite maneuvers, and reacting to 30 Period Of Interest alerts. His exceptional knowledge and leadership were influential in being chosen for Officer In Charge of Operations Support Flight and primary Point Of Contact for squadron Operations Mission Assurance responsibilities. Capt Nelson enlisted into the Alaska Air National Guard in July 1997. After completing Air Force Basic Military Training, he attended the Security Forces Apprentice Course at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in 1998. Capt Nelson departed the Air National Guard after completing his initial enlistment in order to focus on his civilian law enforcement career. He Reenlisted in May 2009 and rejoined the 168th Security Forces Squadron, serving as a security forces apprentice. In October 2009, he was selected for commissioning as the unit's operations officer and subsequently became the commander from June 2012 – December 2016. He graduated the Academy of Military Science at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, in December 2010 and graduated from the Security Forces Basic Officer Course at Camp Bullis, Texas, in December 2011. Capt Nelson has deployed in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. His awards and decorations include the Army Achievement Medal, Meritorious Unit Award, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal, Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Fold Border, Air Force Longevity Service, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with 1 "M" Device, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon (Pistol), Air Force Training Ribbon, NATO Medal, and Alaska State Service Medal.





Ted Stevens Memorial Awardee  
**ALASKA MISSILE  
DEFENDER of the YEAR**



## **MASTER SERGEANT DANIEL KENNETT**

MSgt Kennett is a Staff Evaluator for the 213th Space Warning Squadron, Clear Air Force Station (AFS), Alaska. The 213th Space Warning Squadron operates an AN/FPS-123 Phased Array Warning System to provide early warning of ballistic missile attack against the United States and Canada and tracking of space objects in low earth orbit for Northern and Air Force Space Commands. In this position, MSgt Kennett actively participates in standardizing training material for the crew force as well as evaluating the crew in a simulated environment to maintain the certification and proficiency of both the Early Warning Radar (EWR) and Upgraded Early Warning Radar (UEWR). MSgt Kennett was hand selected to Standardization and Evaluations flight and has evaluated crew performance for a 37 member multinational force ensuring members are certified to complete a no-fail mission. MSgt Kennett's knowledge and experience were critical in developing and administering new training and evaluation scripts to certify crews to perform a new missile defense mission and operate a \$113 million upgraded radar system. MSgt Kennett was also selected as the United States Space Force Front Range unit representative where he leveraged his experience to identify several system enhancements, coordinated new Tactics Techniques and Procedures, and was able to enhance tactics for five geographically separated units. MSgt Kennett was born in Michigan. He enlisted in the Air Force in May 2009 as an Airman First Class. He then went on to complete the technical training for Cyber Systems Operations. In 2012 MSgt Kennett cross trained to the Client Systems career field and served the 168th ARW faithfully in this position until he was awarded a Space Systems Operations position at Clear AFS, Alaska in 2015. His awards and decorations include the Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal (two oak leaf clusters), National Defense Service Medal, Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service (one oak leaf cluster), Air Force NCO PME Graduate Ribbon, Basic Military Training Honor Graduate, and Air Force Training Ribbon.



## Senator Theodore “Ted” Stevens



November 18, 1923 - August 10, 2010

Senator Stevens had the courage where others did not, the foresight against the majority where others dare not, and the tenacity of a skilled and determined man who came from humble American beginnings to help bring the 49th state into the Union. Senator Stevens defended our nation with valor, wisdom and vision. He reached out to enable every part of Alaska from its native tribes, wildlife, natural resources and its people to significantly add to the fabric and strength of the American people and its culture. Senator Stevens, with his intimidating presence and reputation of passionate deliberate confrontation on issues important to our nation and his state had a more compassionate reputation to those that knew him of deep love and respect.

He enabled and led the multitudes of people he touched in so many ways throughout his 86 years in the making of today's America. We were fortunate to have him grace our nation, share his wisdom, use his knowledge, and live with freedom from his legacy. For missile defense, there has been no greater legislator or representative of the American people in the history of our country.

No one has done more to evolve, develop and deploy our nation's missile defense systems that are placed throughout the world, making our world, allies and troops safe today. Without Senator Steven's visionary leadership, this nation would not today have a deployed missile defense system and architecture protecting our homeland.

The Missile Defense Agency would not have been formed or supported without the iron will of Senator Stevens. From all of us that support missile defense, we are eternally grateful for his legacy, leadership and determination.

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

**2019**

**Ted Stevens Memorial Awardee**  
SFC Caroline Domenech

**Ft. Greely Top Crew (Bravo Crew)**  
SGT Angel Perez  
SSG John Sorrells  
SSG Austin McNamee  
1LT Ryan Hairston  
1LT Justus Neumann  
CPT Kurtiss Clark

**Ft. Greely Base Defenders**  
SPC Sychelle Gonsalves  
SSG Elvin Martes

**Cobra Dane Radar**  
TSgt Justin Hart

**Clear AFS Top Crew**  
MSgt Chad Petrie  
Capt Michael Harvey  
Capt Micah Hanauer

**Clear AFS Base Defenders**  
SSgt Joshua Marugg  
TSgt David Davis

**2016**

**Ted Stevens Memorial Awardee**  
1st Lt Steven Havens

**Clear AFS Top Crew**  
MSgt Carleas Parsons  
Maj Joseph Garner

**Clear AFS Base Defenders**  
SrA Jezabelle O'Neil Roulette  
SSgt Anthony Deppe

**Ft. Greely Top Crew (Charlie Crew)**  
SGT Bensian Correa  
SSG Javier Solla  
1LT Mindy Cason  
CPT Kevin Fulmer  
CPT Peter Browning

**Ft. Greely Base Defenders**  
SGT Robert Stamper  
SSG Derrick Butler

**2018**

**Ted Stevens Memorial Awardee**  
Lt Col Keith Grimes

**Clear AFS Top Crew**  
TSgt Kit Dawson  
2nd Lt Sebastian Moore  
Capt Sarah Atherton

**Clear AFS Base Defenders**  
SSgt Justin Smythson  
TSgt Robert Ives

**Ft. Greely Top Crew (Alpha Crew)**  
SGT Bethany Hendren  
SSG Josef Carstens  
1LT Benjamin Maye  
CPT Gilberto Ortiz  
MAJ Bernard Smith

**Ft. Greely Base Defenders**  
SPC Jonathan Dasta Cortes  
SGT Bryan Gonzalez Nieves

**2017**

**Ted Stevens Memorial Awardee**  
CPT Anthony Montoya

**Ft. Greely Top Crew (Delta Crew)**  
SGT Jose Aponte  
SSG Caroline Domenech  
1LT Rachel Simmons  
MAJ Michael Long

**Ft. Greely Base Defenders**  
SGT Nathan Williams  
SGT Travis Hall

**Clear AFS Top Crew**  
TSgt Mark Lockwood  
Capt Erik Haugen

**Clear AFS Base Defenders**  
SSgt Stanislav Barilov  
SSgt Jonathan Rivera-Calderon

**2015**

**Ted Stevens Memorial Awardees**  
MSgt Thomas Wright II  
Capt Eric Vantrease

**Clear AFS Top Crew**  
TSgt Brian Brian Rowbotham  
1st Lt Micah Hanauer

**Ft. Greely Top Crew (Alpha Crew)**  
SGT Josef Carstens  
SSG Michael Diachenko  
1LT Cody Hennelly  
CPT Gilberto Ortiz  
MAJ Jeremy Shepherd

**2014**

**Ted Stevens Memorial Awardee**  
CPT Eric Kraus

**Ft. Greely Top Crew (Bravo Battery)**  
SGT John Sorrells  
SSG Derrick Holmes  
CW3 Jacob Moore  
CPT Jason Brewer  
CPT Ryan Richard

**Clear AFS Top Crew**  
TSgt Brian Rowbotham  
Capt Erik Haugen

## A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU

To the U.S. Air Force, Air National Guard of Alaska, and the Army National Guard of Alaska

