



Eleventh Annual
U.S. MISSILE DEFENDER
of the Year
Award Ceremony

March 23, 2021
Virtual



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

Call to Order

National Anthem

Invocation

Welcoming Remarks

Remarks

Service Components Present their Defender *of the* Year

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. 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 selected 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, United States National Guard, and the United States Space Operations Command.

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.



U.S. MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Sergeant First Class Johnny Washington

SFC Washington is the First Platoon Sergeant for Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment (ADAR) at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. In 2020, he deployed to Camp Dahlke, Afghanistan; Camp Taji, Iraq; and the U.S. Embassy Baghdad with Bravo Battery 2-44 ADAR as the C-RAM Platoon Sergeant and Site Noncommissioned Officer in Charge. He created a training program that achieved a 100% "GO" rate for Table VIII certifications across Bravo Battery prior to the unit's deployment to Afghanistan. There, SFC Washington developed a training and certification program for new counter-unmanned aircraft system (C-UAS) assets deployed to the Area of Responsibility (AOR). Within the first month of the mission, SFC Washington's platoon was ordered to Camp Taji, Iraq in response to a casualty producing rocket attack. SFC Washington planned and executed the first inter-theater, "no-notice" relocation of C-RAM assets in U.S. Central Command's history. In Iraq, SFC Washington led a team of over 50 Soldiers and civilian engineers in the hasty emplacement and calibration of C-RAM assets and the team was able to reduce the doctrinal install timeline by sixty percent. SFC Washington and his platoon were once again called upon for an unprecedented mission; to establish indirect fire protection over Baghdad's International Zone in direct support of the U.S. Diplomatic Mission in Iraq. SFC Washington synchronized efforts across Department of Defense and Department of State entities to calibrate and make ready the C-RAM system. This action represented the first time in history a military grade system such as the C-RAM has been employed at any U.S. embassy. SFC Washington's innovation, dedication, and decisive leadership produced strategic results for the Air Defense Artillery branch and the United States of America. SFC Washington enlisted in the United States Army in 2006 out of his hometown of Virginia Beach, Virginia. His first duty station was Camp Casey, Korea as an Avenger Crewmember Gunner in 2007. SFC Washington also deployed to Baghdad, Iraq between 2009-2010 with Echo Battery, 3-4 ADAR. He is actively pursuing his Associates Degree at American Military University (AMU). SFC Washington has shared his military experience over the last 14 years with his wife Amber, and their three sons, Jaden, Mason and Wyatt.



U.S. MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Sergeant Major Jason Junkins

SGM Junkins is the Command Sergeant Major for the 1st Battalion (BN), 265 Air Defense Artillery Regiment (ADAR) in the Florida National Guard (FLARNG). In 2020, he served as the First Sergeant for HHB/1-265 ADAR during their mobilization in the National Capital Region (NCR). SGM Junkins successfully managed the execution of all training and certification events during Exercise America's Shield (EAS) and the Culminating Training Event (CTE) at Fort Bliss, Texas. His mentorship and guidance reflected in Soldiers' performance that resulted in 100% of all mobilization tasks being completed with zero loss or damage to equipment or personnel. SGM Junkins is also known to develop and guide other Soldiers from adjacent FLARNG units to include individuals from external organizations. SGM Junkins is revered by many as a leader, expert, and a paragon of the Non-commissioned Officer (NCO) Corps. His dedication and commitment to excellence as a senior NCO within the ADA community as well his service to his unit is second to none. SGM Junkins is of the highest character and a quiet professional, whose dedication to service and commitment to excellence has no equal. SGM Junkins enlisted in to the United States Marine Corps in March of 1990. He served on active duty for five years as a Heavy Machine Gunner and a Field Radio Operator and then in the Marine Corps Reserve until 1998. In 2002, SGM Junkins enlisted into the FLARNG and reclassified as an Avenger Crewman where he was assigned to Bravo Battery, 1-265 ADAR. Over his 19 year career in the FLARNG, SGM Junkins has served as a recruiter, Avenger Section Sergeant, Avenger Master Gunner, and Avenger Platoon Sergeant, Air Defense instructor, Senior Small Group Leader, the National Guard Bureau Air Defense Artillery Subject Matter Expert (SME), and Deputy Commandant of the 211th Regional Training Institute. SGM Junkins' deployments include Okinawa, Japan, Desert Shield / Desert Storm, two to Somalia, two to the Western Pacific, and two for the NCR – Integrated Air Defense mission in Washington D.C. SGM Junkins is a member of the Honorable Order of St. Barbara. He has a Bachelor's degree in History from Stetson University in his hometown of DeLand Florida where he resides with is 20 year old son, Robert.



U.S. MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Captain Marco Catanese

Capt Catanese is the Chief, Innovation and Analysis at the European Integrated Air and Missile Defense Center. He leads innovation and assessment efforts in support of European Command (EUCOM) and Africa Command (AFRICOM) Integrated Air and Missile Defense enabling future concept exploration and validation. Capt Catanese significantly increased the quality and quantity of assessments conducted, from two to five Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) exercises providing critical information to senior leaders on operational readiness and vulnerabilities related to Aegis, THAAD, Patriot employment and air defense integration. In Astral Knight 20, he led a 10-day assessment to determine how well the U.S. Army Patriot and Polish SA-3 were integrated with the Polish and U.S. Air Force. In Juniper Cobra 20, his IAMD assessment experience was critical in providing key information to the Joint Force Air Component Commander, identifying four gaps in the operational plan. In the European Test Bed (ETB), Capt Catanese led twelve joint organizations to develop a plan to evaluate new defense designs and command and control concepts for Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) of Europe using Aegis and THAAD under U.S. and NATO control. Additionally, he was pivotal in developing a roadmap to evolve ETB from BMD to IAMD, to support new missions and to refocus its role as an experimentation venue. Finally, he finalized a 5-year Missile Defense Agency support agreement worth \$3.5M to support test efforts in theater. Capt Catanese attended the University of Portland in Oregon and gained his commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps in 2011. His first assignment was an Operations Analyst at Eglin AFB, Florida. Capt Catanese's second assignment was lead analyst for the Operational Test and Evaluation of multiple space systems and became the Executive officer for the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center, Detachment 4 at Peterson AFB, Colorado. Next, he was a Flight Commander at the 1st Manpower Requirements Squadron, leading a team of 13 analysts developing manpower studies for the Force Support, Squadron Commander's Support Staff and Air Education and Training Command specific functions. Capt Catanese has deployed in support of Operation Joint Guardian in Camp Film City Kosovo where he developed long term plans and determined future force requirements to support the NATO mission.



U.S. MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



Fire Controlman Aegis First Class (SW) John Long

FCA1 Long is the Combat Systems Leading Petty Officer at Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System in Deveselu, Romania (AAMDSRO). Currently serving his 5th European Command (EUCOM) Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) deployment, FCA1 Long is the go-to subject matter expert (SME) for Aegis BMD. While stationed back at the Dam Neck Detachment, FCA1 Long was hand selected to provide his warfighting expertise at the Missile Defense Agency integrated ground test (GTI-20 Sprint 1 E/C) where he conducted training to USS Decatur, Aegis Ashore Poland, and Romania. Although initially billeted to be his team's Combat Systems Coordinator (CSC), he flawlessly stepped up to fill the role of Tactical Action Officer (TAO) when the billeted TAO was unable to attend. FCA1 Long leveraged his subject matter expert level of knowledge to train all of the Radar System Controller (RSC), Missile System Supervisor (MSS), CSC and Ballistic Missile Defense Watch Officer (BMDWO) watchstanders at the event. His efforts directly contributed to the development of advanced procedures between NATO and U.S. Forces as well as the development of upper level watchstander proficiency for the EUCOM IAMD Operators and refining the collective European Phased Adaptive Approach Phase II Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures. FCA1 Long personally mentored and trained AAMDSRO watchstanders across four deploying teams as they executed their rigorous eight-week Aegis Ashore Team Trainer certifications, with each team's overall score well in the high 90s. FCA1 Long then mentored his own team during their BMD Qualification events and earned high praise from Afloat Training Group for his team's performance and communications. During his team's recent deployment, FCA1 Long executed his billeted role as RSC while simultaneously standing the CSC watch to cover a critical manning gap with zero degradation. FCA1 Long is a native of Blanch, North Carolina and enlisted in the United States Navy in June 2001. His afloat assignments include, SPY Technician USS Laboon (DDG-58), SPY Technician USS Gonzalez (DDG-66), SPY Technician USS Stout (DDG-55), and Lead SPY Technician USS Arleigh Burke (DDG-51). During this challenging COVID-19 environment, FCA1 Long was still able to serve his community by supporting his local food bank with his time and effort. Additionally, he has a Bachelor's degree in Cybersecurity, and earned various certifications through CIW, CompTIA and ISC2.



U.S. MISSILE DEFENDER of the YEAR



First Lieutenant Eryn Daman

1st Lt Daman is a Mission Commander with the 2d Space Warning Squadron, Space Delta 4, Buckley Garrison, in Aurora, Colorado. As Mission Commander, she operates and presides over 14 enlisted and officer personnel as part of America's Premier Missile Warning entity, providing first alert and early warning indications to over 345,000 military, civilian, and allied forces across the globe. Lt Daman played a pivotal alert role in the Iranian Strike against two U.S. based in Iraq on January 7, 2020. As leader of a 15-person team, she worked with four missile warning agencies and created five critical mission plans for eight enemy threat platforms in anticipation of a catastrophic attack on U.S. and Allied forces. Lt Daman's accuracy, attention to detail, and leadership during the crisis allowed her crew to provide first indications to 5,000 coalition members in the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), leading to zero casualties. Her heroic efforts not only earned the crew a group-level award, but also personal kudos and thanks from USCENTCOM Combined Forces Air Component Commander, Chief of Space Operations, Secretary of the Air Force, and even the President of the United States. Additionally, Lt Daman volunteered to lead a 9-member, 30-day sequester operation to ensure vital missile defense support throughout the entirety of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the sequester she was able to operate 300 error-free survival mission hours, and identify and report 23 infrared events. This tremendous execution fulfilled both the Wing Commander's and Secretary of Defense's top missile warning priority. Furthermore, Lt Daman created 15 mission plans for 50 new missile profiles, optimizing tactics on eleven satellites for U.S. Space Command. Lt Daman was born and raised in Dewitt, Michigan where she excelled as an athlete and scholar throughout her life. She earned her commission from the Virginia Military Institute in 2018 where she majored in Physics. She is currently pursuing a Master of Science Degree in Exercise Science from Liberty University. Lt Daman has accumulated over 2,000 operational hours on the Space Based Infrared System as part of the Overhead Persistent Infrared Community. She is a certified line tactician and has also earned an Air Force Achievement Medal for her work with the Wing Command Action Group during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Members of the Order of Missile Defender of the Year

2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Army CPT Cody Williams	Army CW3 Lucas Watterson	Army 1LT Benjamin Schiff	Army CW2 Kevin Kruthers	Army CPT Jason Roberts
Navy FCA1 Mario Amaro	Navy LTJG McKenzie Anderson	Navy CPO Zachary Quirk	Navy PO1 Nathaniel Lynch	Navy FC1 Elizabeth Clark
Air Force Capt Nolan Hebein	Air Force Capt Rex Villa	Air Force Lt Col Rocco Angiolelli	Air Force Lt Col Anthony Owens	Air Force Maj Michael Sward
National Guard CPT Eric Grant	National Guard CW4 Jacob Moore	National Guard CPT Jason Brewer	National Guard SSG Caroline Domenech	National Guard SSG Trampas Vojtasek
2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Army SSG Michael McSherry	Army SSG Nancy Wingo	Army CPT Kyle Kirkpatrick	Army CPT Will Andrews	Army 1LT Ted Kimmey, Jr.
Navy FC2 Bartholomew Ringer	Navy LT Brandon Bridges	Navy FC2 Ronald Barbee	Navy FC2 Mathieu McIntosh	Navy FC1 (SW) Shawn Walker
Air Force Lt Col Jerry Frazier	Air Force Capt Benjamin Szutar	Air Force Capt Gregory Tengco	National Guard SSG Craig Davis	Air Force 1st Lt Brian Yoakam
National Guard SSG Norman Perkins III	National Guard SSG Nicholas Power	National Guard SGT Arie Wilkins		National Guard MAJ Michael Tobe



A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU

To the Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, Department of the Air Force, the National Guard Bureau, and the Space Operations Command.

