

The Outstanding Airmen



By Tamar A. Mehuron, Associate Editor



SrA. Linn Aubrey. Medical Laboratory Journeyman, 59th Medical Wing (Air Education and Training Command), Lackland AFB, Tex.—Led blood donor center processing team collecting and preparing critical blood shipments to Southwest Asia. ... Spearheaded blood drive efforts to reach Lackland's basic trainee population. ... Created new blood labeling process, significantly reducing blood-labeling errors at Balad AB, Iraq. ... Set a blood donation center record, collecting 16 percent more blood than previous year. ... Reduced donor processing time and increased blood collection productivity through new training initiative. ... Trained Reservists and certified airmen for deployments. ... Created supply spreadsheet to reduce errors during mobile blood drives and increase productivity. ... Named AETC's 2006 Lab Airman of the Year.

SMSgt. Tammy L. Brangard-Hern. Chief, Assignment Issues, Procedures, and Training (Air Force Personnel Center), Randolph AFB, Tex.—Developed action plan to implement personnel reductions in 130 specialties Air Force-wide. ... Aided activation of USAF's Web-based virtual Military Personnel Flight. ... Developed plan to enable reduction in personnel staffs at major commands. ... Proposed options to mitigate Fiscal 2007 budget shortfall for permanent changes of station. ... Modified special duty assignment process, giving commanders more flexibility and reducing PCS moves. ... Identified and corrected a retraining restriction that had limited the number of airmen who volunteered to deploy for 365 days. ... Developed Air Force policy to provide follow-on assignment preference program for airmen on 365-day deployments. ... Streamlined management of airmen who deploy for 365 days, reducing assignment mismatches.



SMSgt. Ronald A. Colaninno. Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, Training, 514th Security Forces Squadron (Air Force Reserve Command), McGuire AFB, N.J.—During deployment to Afghanistan, led squad for a joint security forces-Office of Special Investigations team offensive operation against Taliban suicide bombers. ... Credited with defeat of suicide assault on Bagram Air Base and capture of two armed bombers. ... Acted as convoy commander for weapons recovery mission. ... Secured a damaged C-130 at a forward operating base and ensured security during eight-hour repair job. ... Worked with US Secret Service for first-time Presidential visit to Bagram. ... Initiated creation of Joint Defense Operations Center to provide central control for defense of Bagram. ... Developed urban warfare training plan. ... Provided security forces expertise for F-16 beddown at Bagram. ... Orchestrated beddown plan for 167 security forces airmen from 15 different bases.



The Air Force Outstanding Airman program annually recognizes 12 enlisted members for superior leadership, job performance, community involvement, and personal achievements.

The program was initiated at the Air Force Association's 10th annual National Convention, held in New Orleans in 1956. The selection board comprises the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and the command chief master sergeants from each USAF major command. The selections are reviewed by the Air Force Chief of Staff.

The 12 selectees are awarded the Outstanding Airman ribbon with the bronze service star device and wear the Outstanding Airman badge for one year.



TSgt. Jeremy L. Griffin. Fire Protection Station Chief, 45th Civil Engineer Squadron (Air Force Space Command), Patrick AFB, Fla.—During deployment to Balad AB, Iraq, arrived first on scene for F-16 hot-brakes ground emergency, safely removed pilot, and secured aircraft. ... Applied life-saving emergency medical treatment to wounded Iraqi police officer. ... Led effort to extinguish fire on Humvee, getting troops out and preventing ammo from igniting. ... Directed first response to C-130 hot-brakes emergency during mortar attack. ... Stabilized soldier who had gunshot wound. ... Administered critical initial medical care outside the base to Iraqi youth with gunshot wound. ... Directed crew in quickly extinguishing fire in Balad housing area. ... Led team to equip and test new fire truck for Iraq operations. ... Named base NCOIC of the Year for his work as station chief at Patrick and self-improvement and volunteer efforts.

SSgt. Matthew J. Hefti. Explosive Ordnance Disposal Craftsman, 775th Civil Engineering Squadron (Air Force Materiel Command), Hill AFB, Utah—Received Army Commendation Medal for securing improvised explosive devices during deployment to Iraq. ... Briefed AFMC commander on combat operations and latest threats to coalition forces in Iraq. ... Selected for special Secret Service detail at the White House. ... Led Joint IED division conference for EOD specialists. ... Directed 20-man team to clear unexploded ordnance from Navy SEAL training range. ... Provided hands-on training for younger EOD specialists. ... Oversaw safe disposal of two Navy Trident missile motors. ... Spearheaded disposal of last Titan IV rocket. ... Chosen as one of three USAF spokesmen for DOD's "Why We Serve" program.



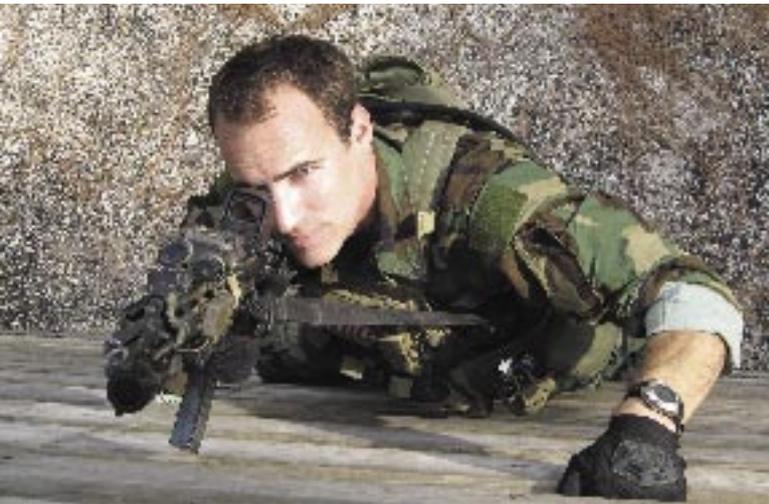
SrA. Matthew C. Hulsman. Explosive Ordnance Disposal Apprentice, 3rd Civil Engineering Squadron (Pacific Air Forces), Elmendorf AFB, Alaska—Rescued two injured troops in an Afghanistan combat zone, killing two enemy combatants. ... Helped successfully repel numerous Taliban attacks during combat missions. ... Neutralized a minefield, saving 40 trapped civilians. ... Cleared improvised explosive devices from roads. ... Identified new enemy tactics during investigations of bombing locations. ... Eliminated 48,000 unexploded ordnance threats. ... Performed two post-blast investigations while under rocket attack, preserving key evidence. ... Led a drive to upgrade robotics equipment. ... Trained contract security personnel at Elmendorf on vehicle search techniques. ... Awarded Army Commendation Medal for actions while deployed to Afghanistan. ... Selected as PACAF Airman of the Year.





The Outstanding Airmen

TSgt. (now MSgt.) Sachiko D. Jones. Lodging Manager, 423rd Services Squadron (United States Air Forces in Europe), RAF Alconbury, England—Directed an Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment beddown, arranging for linen contracts, hundreds of tents, and thousands of beds. ... Reworked Ali Base, Iraq, beddown plan. ... Reconfigured abandoned trailers as visiting officer quarters for one-year tours. ... Led arrangements for first coalition leadership luncheon. ... Led team of 57 military and civilian lodging employees. ... Wrote a mortuary affairs plan, training 12 staff members in its use. ... Exceeded USAFE room utilization rate. ... Spearheaded self-inspection drive, creating a tracking chart. ... Negotiated and secured USAFE funding for needed facility renovations. ... Named USAFE NCO of the Year.



SSgt. David Orvosh. Combat Control Journeyman, 21st Special Tactics Squadron (AFSOC), Pope AFB, N.C.—Served in Afghanistan and Iraq. ... Helped train Iraqi counterterror unit. ... Engaged in firefights on Baghdad patrols. ... Guided AC-130 gunships to targets in congested, urban Sadr City during raids against insurgents. ... Briefed air assault plan to helicopter crews and Iraqi-Army Special Forces team. ... Integrated ROVER III into operations, using real-time Predator unmanned aerial vehicle data to identify threats and clear routes. ... Served as sole airman with Special Forces team, hunting Taliban in Afghanistan-Pakistan border area. ... Directed rapid close air support to defeat a mortar attack. ... Taught emergency close air support procedures to SOF troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. ... Served as lead fire supporter during major command operational readiness inspection. ... Led team through complex night urban training with AC-130 gunship. ... Received Bronze Star with valor for service in Afghanistan.

SSgt. Jonathan C. McCoy. Special Tactics Team Leader, 24th Special Tactics Squadron (Air Force Special Operations Command), Pope AFB, N.C.—Led elite forces in combat in Iraq, serving as point man on high risk compound assault, engaging in hand-to-hand combat and paving the way for capture of high-value target. ... Dodged fire to drag wounded teammate to safety. ... Helped advance effort to take a key al Qaeda command and control facility. ... Rewrote Vietnam War-era rescue template. ... Integrated three helicopter rescue units into special operations. ... Developed integrated strike aircraft and helicopter tactics. ... Led joint team in improvised Scuba search technique, reduced aircraft payload. ... Folded US Navy helicopters and crews into combat search and rescue predeployment training. ... Revised unit's predeployment concept of operations for Afghanistan deployment training. ... Led joint Air Force-Army team in night rescue of Army Black Hawk helicopter crew that crash-landed into Iraqi lake. ... Received two Bronze Star Medals, one with valor, for efforts during deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq.





The Outstanding Airmen

SSgt. Richard W. Rose. Aerial Combat Photographer, 1st Combat Camera Squadron (Air Mobility Command), Charleston AFB, S.C.—During deployment to Iraq, led combat camera team. ... Returned fire quickly to stop attacking insurgents as he was photographing work of explosive ordnance disposal patrol. ... Taught tactics and techniques and mentored several photojournalists in Iraq. ... Trained joint replacements. ... Led team that documented enemy sniper fire during weapons cache mission. ... Served with Army airborne unit for 30 air assault “grab and destroy” missions, capturing thousands of photos and hours of video for legal and intelligence operations. ... Lauded for courage under fire for coverage of direct assault on sniper positions and mortar attacks on coalition forces and schoolyard. ... Earned Combat Action Badge. ... Selected by 10th Special Forces commander to document insurgent raids, capturing ground and air action. ... Provided combatant commanders with near real-time view of tactics and procedures. ... Received Bronze Star for heroic actions on Iraq deployment.



MSgt. Lawrence B. Taylor. Air Traffic Control Tower Chief Controller, 270th ATCS (Air National Guard), Klamath Falls, Oregon—Supervised Baghdad air traffic control operations on volunteer deployment to Iraq. ... Certified to control aircraft just 48 hours after arrival. ... Ensured smooth and safe transit of more than 4,000 military flights. ... Instituted a backup air traffic control capability with a mobile ATC facility. ... Acquired two-way tower satellite communications, providing control capability during power outage. ... Overcame language barriers and differing ATC rules to blend US-Iraqi team of controllers. ... Created new helipad routes through Baghdad airspace, streamlining special operations missions. ... Drew up an emergency “tower-crash plan” to correct flaw in emergency response procedures. ... Reviewed home base control tower and radar operations, identifying procedures not meeting FAA, USAF, and ANG directives. Photo not available.

SSgt. Geoffrey M. Welsh. Military Working Dog Handler, 4th Security Forces Squadron (Air Combat Command), Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.—Conducted critical K-9 explosive detections while deployed with Army unit working in Baghdad and Sadr City in Iraq. ... Received Army Combat Action Badge. ... Conducted bomb sweeps, working under indirect and direct fire and insurgent attacks. ... Engaged in 45-minute firefight, killing 12 insurgents. ... Aided rescue of convoy hit by IED. ... Planned dog team support for Army sweep team patrols aimed at suspected IED manufacturing sites, uncovering 100 anti-personnel mines and armed IEDs and capturing a bomb maker. ... Provided immediate first aid on separate occasions for wounded soldiers, saving lives. ... Identified an internal threat, seizing detonation cord and triggering devices from interpreter’s quarters on base. ... Educated forward operating base personnel on military working dog abilities, integrating dogs into Army tactics and techniques. ■

