



Group and Tucson's MAC recognize outstanding performers

The 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group and the Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee recognized 10 outstanding performers nominated from throughout the Group at an annual awards ceremony on February 6. This dynamic group of individuals, ranging from financial management and supply staff to supervisory levels, set the standard for mission accomplishment, providing 309 AMARG's customers with the highest quality products and services, on time and at best value.

During a formal luncheon ceremony on Davis-Monthan AFB, each category nominee received a personalized medallion from the 309 AMARG Commander in recognition of their accomplishments throughout the year. Though impossible to provide an entire list of achievements here, we've highlighted a few of their outstanding contributions to AMARG and the Air Force.

Two individuals were standouts among their peers in Category 1 (GS-10 and below). Ms. Mary Lee, assigned to the 309th Support Squadron (309 SPTS), was the driving force behind a successful staff assistance visit by 309th Maintenance Wing personnel from Hill AFB, Utah, ensuring zero write-ups in a tool room inspection. Excelling as an acting chief of Forward Supply, Ms. Lee used her expertise to fulfill Command demands--specifically, the procurement of 120 tool boxes valued at over \$400,000.

Mr. Gregory Vestecka, a budget analyst for Financial Management, demonstrated vigilance in administering more than \$58.4M for 327 DoD and non-DoD agencies with 100 percent accuracy. Mr. Vestecka keenly ensured prompt execution of nearly \$3M for priority reclamation in support of the warfighter.

Two hard chargers were nominated for Category II (GS-11 & above). Ms. Doris Griffin, a 309 SPTS budget and contract support specialist, assured success in supporting key AMARG objectives and led joint service coordination for funding and contract requirements in \$5M worth of facility upgrades. She also demonstrated superior management skills by leading the effort to update the Command's conferencing capabilities.

Ms. Autumn Lessentine, also a budget analyst for Financial Management, was recognized for her valuable oversight of \$563K of Operations & Maintenance and \$127M of Depot Maintenance Activity Group budgets, ensuring the Group had no Anti-deficiency act violations. She researched and corrected 5K line items worth over \$908K in fiscal year

2010/2011 civilian pay errors for two appropriations.

Two talented individuals were nominated as contenders in Category III (WG/WL-9 & below). Mr. Ed Bellenger, a 309 SPTS materials examiner, was the lead inspector and verifier for the disposal of 38K F-111 aircraft production tooling assets, as well as 8K B-52 air-launch cruise missile and Peacekeeper assets, and more than 2K B-1B dual pylons associated with the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

The 578th Storage and Disposal Squadron's (578 SDS) Mr. James McDaniel safely inventoried and managed more than 5K disposal items for radiation waste, meeting all regulatory requirements and ensuring personnel safety. Mr. McDaniel is credited with the maintenance, preservation and storage of 65 Air Force engines for future requirements; saving millions in overhaul costs.

Category IV (WG/WL-10 & above) included an additional two accomplished nominees. Mr. William Edwards, an aircraft engine mechanic from the 577th Commodities Reclamation Squadron, is applauded for his impeccable system expertise that prevented unnecessary work on 96 augmenters, saving \$1.2M and 1,000 labor hours. His flawless response during a test cell engine fire prevented the loss of



U.S. Air Force photo by AIC Camilla Griffin

Col. Patrick Kumashiro, Ms. Ruthanne Pitts (AMARG Honorary Commander) with category award winners, Mr. James McDaniel, Mr. Oran Mansker, Mr. William Edwards, Mr. Gregory Vestecka and Ms. Autumn Lessentine.

a \$350K engine and a \$1.7M facility.

Mr. Caleb Hiner, not able to attend the ceremony, is an aircraft mechanic assigned to the 576th Aerospace Maintenance & Regeneration Squadron and recognized for his premier skills as a maintainer. Mr. Hiner led an 8-member team in key C-130 flight control removals, reducing the task time by 8 hours or 50 percent.

Two outstanding nominees were submitted for Category V (Supervisor). Mr. Oran Mansker, a 309 SPTS supervisory transportation specialist expertly led to the Squadron's successful packaging and transportation of 9,939 high priority assets. He also directly managed the special packaging and shipment of \$471M of reclaimed aircraft assets in support of the warfighter and critical AF and DoD missions.

Mr. Richard Ruley, a supervisor for the 578 SDS, was congratulated for leading his disposal team through an incident free 2011 though managing a high-hazard work area. Mentioning only a few accomplishments, Mr. Ruley's team safely managed the decontamination of 4 MiG aircraft, demilitarized 15 A-7 targeting pods, disposed of 9 TF-30 engines and performed the final demilitarization and classified radiation inspections of 40 aircraft.

For more than 14 years, the Chamber's Military Affairs Committee has also recognized AMARG's superior performers. This year, Ms. Ellen Jimenez presented the year's Civilian of the Year trophies to Mr. William Edwards and Mr. Oran Mansker (Supervisory).

The Espirit de Corps traveling trophy (presented to the squadron or office that displays the highest level of esprit de corps during the event) went to the enthusiastic 578th Storage and Disposal Squadron.

Group breaks ground for new maintenance hangar; start date April 1

Col. Allan Day, commander of the 309th Maintenance Wing at Hill AFB, Utah, delivered opening remarks during a groundbreaking ceremony for the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group Hangar here, Feb. 24.

The project will be built by Okland Construction at a cost of \$25 million and will take approximately 18 months to complete.

The massive 76,746 sq. ft. hangar will be the largest aircraft hangar on Davis-Monthan AFB, capable of supporting the maintenance of two C-130 or two KC-135 aircraft at once.

Designed by AECOM to achieve the LEED Gold certification, the flagship hangar will employ a number of energy efficient systems such as Indirect Evaporative Cooling systems; translucent panels for increased natural daylight illumination; solar thermal hot water heating; and magnetic water conditioning.



Mr. Bill Okland (Okland Construction), Ms. Christiane Dussa (AECOM), Col. Allan Day, Col. Patrick Kumashiro, Lt. Col. Kjall Gopaul (355th MSG Dep. Commander), Mr. Troy Morris from the US Army Corps of Engineers, break ground along with 355th Civil Engineering and AMARG representatives in a ceremony for the new Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group Hangar on Feb. 24. Col. Day, 309th MXW Commander hosts the ceremony, right.

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Missile Defense Agency retires Airborne Laser Test Bed (ALTB)

The Boeing 747-400F freighter aircraft that carried the Air Force's high-energy airborne laser, designated the YAL-1A, retired into 309 AMARG on Feb. 14.

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA), formerly referred to as the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, retired the vehicle saying the test bed had completed the key MDA knowledge points.

The ALTB demonstrated the viability of a directed energy weapon for missile defense by detection, tracking and destroying a boosting, representative of foreign ballistic missiles in flight.

According to the MDA, the agency will continue efforts to develop highly efficient electric lasers in support of missile defense to significantly reduce the complexity and cost of future directed energy weapons.



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