

Of all the airmen in the Air Force, only twelve a year are so honored.

The Outstanding Airmen of 1989

BY SUSAN KATZ-KEATING

THE most sought-after ticket at the AFA National Convention is always the one that admits the bearer to the elegant ballroom on Monday night. That's when the Air Force's twelve Outstanding Airmen of the Year are presented.

As the following profiles of the Outstanding Airmen of 1989 show, it takes real achievement to be selected. These twelve have been chosen from an enlisted force of 466,000 eligible contenders. In the thirty-three years that the Air Force Association has conducted this program, only 507 individuals have earned the distinction.

• **SrA. Michael L. Acker**, Mass Spectrometry Technician, Applied Physics Laboratory, McClellan Central Laboratory, Technical Operations Division, McClellan AFB, Calif. Airman Acker completed his on-the-job training in less time than any other previously assigned technician, allowing his section to alleviate a two-month backlog one month ahead of schedule. He went on to



become the top technician in his mass spectrometry section, exceeding average technician output by sixty percent. When his section was assigned to move to a new laboratory, Airman Acker saved the Air Force \$150,000 in moving costs. He was instrumental in dismantling, moving, and reassembling more than \$2,000,000 worth of delicate equipment. He is also credited with placing the reassembled spectrometry equipment back in service three weeks ahead of schedule. The data output is now accurate to a degree not previously attained. Airman Acker is now primary trainer on the mass spectrometers.

**SrA. Michael
L. Acker**



Airman Acker is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in physics and has maintained a grade-point average of 4.0. He won top honors from McClellan's NCO Preparatory Course and in 1988 was recognized as the Technical Operations Division Airman of the Year and the McClellan AFB Airman of the Year. He is active in the Sacramento community's Amiga Computer Club and the Planetary Society.

● **MSgt. Mary F. Baker**, Superintendent of Law Enforcement, 513th Security Police Squadron, RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom. When British Ministry of Defence police became available for work at RAF Mildenhall, Sergeant Baker researched and wrote a set of operational instructions that would integrate the British and US law-enforcement personnel. She was so thorough in her work that her procedures were accepted by British and US officials without alterations. She reworked a failing self-inspection program into one that wing inspectors called "error-free, best on base, and a model for other units to fol-

**MSgt. Mary
F. Baker**



low." Chosen over more senior personnel as the law-enforcement superintendent, Sergeant Baker developed fifteen new operating instructions and eighteen special security instructions. In addition, she automated programs for self-inspection, quality control, and individual evaluation and created a computerized test certification process that gives a realistic assessment of test validity.

Sergeant Baker earned a remarkable thirty-nine semester hours in one year and is working toward a degree in business management. She takes a leading role in community and Air Force projects. She was named Outstanding NCO of the Quarter by both her wing and her squadron; was chosen Law Enforcement NCO of the Year by 513th ACCW, Third Air Force, and USAFE; and was selected Outstanding NCO of the Year by her squadron, 513th ACCW, and Third Air Force.

**SSgt. David
E. G. Butler**



● **SSgt. David E. G. Butler**, Administrative Specialist assigned as Staff Administrative Technician, Hq. Human Systems Division, Brooks AFB, Tex. Sergeant Butler was promoted to staff sergeant after



only three years of service. As manager of command suspenses, Sergeant Butler developed a computerized suspense tracking system, from which he provides HSD's Chief of Staff weekly reports of suspenses. His development of a streamlined OES/APR tracking system has resulted in zero late reports. He redesigned HSD Individual Mobilization Augmentee program training schedules and was selected to prepare the commander's daily read file.

Sergeant Butler is currently completing a degree in electrical engineering. Nevertheless, he still finds time to donate an average of seven hours per month as a volunteer for Family Services and to assist in preschool classes at his church. He helped form a new Cub Scout troop at his church and is an assistant scoutmaster. Sergeant Butler was honored as Airman of the Quarter by both Hq. HSD and Brooks AFB. He received the John Levitow Award as a graduate of the NCO Preparatory Course. He was named the Brooks AFB Enlisted Administrator (Administration Management) of the Year. He was also named Airman of the Year by the Human Systems Division and by Air Force Systems Command.



**Sgt.
Stephen M.
Kravitsky**

• **Sgt. Stephen M. Kravitsky**, Minuteman Team Chief, Electro-Mechanical Team Section, Missile Electrical Branch, 321st Organizational Missile Maintenance Squadron, 321st Strategic Missile Wing, Grand Forks AFB, N. D. At twenty-one years of age, Sergeant Kravitsky is the youngest of this year's twelve Outstanding Airmen, but he clearly knows his way around a missile. Thanks to his efforts in security system maintenance, the 321st

Strategic Missile Wing can claim the highest security-system reliability rate in SAC. He was able to complete more than 350 work orders in support of emergency war orders and AFLC contractor support maintenance, while sustaining an unprecedented maintenance data collection accuracy rate of 97.8 percent. He saved more than 1,000 man-hours by clearing security malfunctions that had tied up twenty-one missile security sentry teams.

Sergeant Kravitsky performed an emergency entry into one missile site in a way that avoided the use of a destructive entry procedure—saving USAF \$75,000. He was selected to be the Lead Electro-Mechanical Team Chief for Glory Trip-129, an operational test launch, at Vandenberg AFB in California.

Sergeant Kravitsky earned the John L. Levitow Award while attending the NCO Preparatory Course. He was named the 321st Strategic Missile Wing's Airman of the Month and SAC ICBM Maintenance Airman of the Month. He is active in the Knights of Columbus and plays on his squadron's basketball and volleyball teams.

• **TSgt. Ronald A. LaRosa**, Comptroller, 4th Weather Wing, Peterson AFB, Colo. Sergeant LaRosa's knack for numbers has paid off handsomely for the Air Force. He is in charge of a \$3.5 million annual budget for twenty-three units scattered around the globe. After taking a close look at how the budget was operating, Sergeant LaRosa revamped the civilian pay procedures, establishing a system whereby civilian pay would be managed at individual subordinate units. This innovation resulted in a savings of 600 man-hours per year previously spent tracking down and correcting errors. He instituted a new process for reviewing commercial contracts, resulting in a saving of \$145,000. In addition, he helped save the service \$55,000 in salvaged equipment when he provided detailed advice to the 4WW's Office Automation Board.

Sergeant LaRosa holds a master's degree with specialties in management and computer resource management. He is a lay minister and youth coordinator at the Peterson chapel and an assistant den leader for the Cub Scouts. He was active in



**TSgt.
Ronald A.
LaRosa**

the Special Olympics and coached the Wing's basketball team. He is currently participating in a bowl-athon for muscular dystrophy. His one-man shop was honored as the 1988 Best Budget Office in MAC, Category III. He received the Wing Commander's Award as a MAC IG outstanding performer and was named the Peterson AFB Complex NCO of the Year for 1988. He is the Primary Tax Representative and Savings Bond Drive OPR for his wing and serves as the wing's alternate OJT monitor.

• **MSgt. William H. Nodine**, NCOIC, T-38 Flightline Support Section, 12th Field Maintenance Squadron, 12th Flying Training Wing, Randolph AFB, Tex. Under his stewardship, his jet engine test cell completed 1,149 performance and functional test runs while maintaining a reject rate of 2.9 percent, well below the ATC standard of 4.8. His technique for training engine technicians greatly increased their ability to troubleshoot without removing engines, which helped Randolph achieve the highest fiscal year mission-capable rate in the history of ATC. The rate for T-37s soared to 90.7 percent and the T-38 rate to



**MSgt.
William H.
Nodine**

85.9. Randolph also had the lowest deferred maintenance rates in ATC history: 0.23 for T-37s and 0.65 for T-38s.

While maintaining his normal work load, Sergeant Nodine provided sixty engine tests per month, plus technical assistance, to the ATC Queen Bee maintenance contractor. By so doing, he was able to save the Air Force \$600,000 per year in contractor support fees. He broke another record through his efforts to procure new equipment that would allow J69 test stands to accommodate J85 engines, thus achieving the highest J85 spare engine in-commission rate in the history of ATC.

Sergeant Nodine is pursuing his second associate in arts degree, plus a bachelor's degree, and is enrolled in the Senior NCO Academy. He was Senior NCO of the Year for Randolph AFB and for his squadron and was Squadron Senior NCO of the Quarter. He was honored by the city of San Antonio for outstanding service to the community.



**MSgt.
Michelle D.
Oakes**

● **MSgt. Michelle D. Oakes**, Detachment Chief of the AFCC Detachment, Transmitter Facility, OLA, 1957th Communications Group, Bellows AFS, Hawaii. Sergeant Oakes earned her grade under the Stripes for Exceptional Performers program. Thanks to her efforts, the purchase and installation of two unnecessary omni antennas were canceled, saving the Air Force more than \$213,000 in one year alone. She consolidated on-hand heavyweight log periodic antennas into a matrix system, thereby ensuring a reliable backup to the Mystic Star Presidential support mission. Sergeant Oakes helped her division earn an excellent rating during an operational readiness inspection.

Sergeant Oakes is enrolled in the Senior NCO Academy correspondence course and has maintained a perfect grade-point average of 4.0 in college courses. She supervised a major self-help project at her site's dormitories that included repainting the entire facility and installing a new security fence surrounding more than 560 acres. She coordinated the filming of scenes at Bellows for the television series "Magnum, P. I." She is the Senior NCO of the Year for AFCC, Pacific Communications Division, and 1957th Communications Group. She is president of the Hickam AFB Falcon Youth Booster Group, a "T-Ball Mom," and a volunteer for Special Olympics.



**TSgt.
Vincent E.
Paoletta**

● **TSgt. Vincent E. Paoletta**, Material Facilities Supervisor, 347th Supply Squadron, 347th Tactical Fighter Wing, Moody AFB, Ga. In 1983, while taking his three-level examination, he achieved the highest score to date for the 436th MAW. He is credited for leading his section and branch to a rating of "Outstanding—Best Seen to Date" during the recent TAC Unit Effectiveness Inspection. His high standards for supply operations have resulted in a remarkable accuracy rate of 98.46 percent and a refusal rate of zero at base supply. He oversees most of the branch's key projects.

Sergeant Paoletta designed and constructed forty bin rows to house more than 12,000 F-16 spares. This effort was a large contribution to his wing's achieving the smoothest F-16 conversion to date. After only five years in the Air Force, he was promoted under the Stripes for Exceptional Performers program.

Sergeant Paoletta is pursuing a bachelor's degree in engineering and has a grade-point average of

3.63. He was a multiaward winner upon graduation from the NCO Leadership School and is now enrolled in the Senior NCO Academy correspondence course. He is a volunteer counselor for troubled teens and teaches Sunday school at his church. He was Outstanding Senior Supply Technician of the Year for both Ninth Air Force and TAC. He also earned recognition as NCO of the Month and NCO of the Quarter for Supply and was the 347th TFW's Outstanding NCO of the Quarter.



**TSgt. Alva
Patterson**

● **TSgt. Alva Patterson**, Supply Systems Analyst, Hq. Air Force Logistics Command, Deputy Chief of Staff/Distribution, Directorate of Supply. Her Base Automated Service Store project for Air Logistics Centers conserved more than 300 manpower positions service-wide, allowing for increased productivity at the store level. The average customer was spared an estimated sixty-two seconds of shopping time per line item purchased. The project also benefited USAF, saving \$4.5 million per year.

Sergeant Patterson's extensive knowledge of the supply computer system causes her to be called away on temporary duty to various AFLC units. She came to the rescue at Robins AFB after that base's supply computer had been down for more than a week. The existing backlog was a virtual nightmare, but she was able to bring the system back on line in less than seventy-two hours, recovering more than 1,000 line-item issues and back orders.

Sergeant Patterson is pursuing a degree in data processing. She is active in her local Parent-Teacher Association and is a Red Cross volunteer. She was chosen the AFLC NCO of the Year and graduated from the AFLC NCO Academy

with two major honors: the Commandant's Award and the NCO Association Communicative Skills Award.

● **Sgt. Timothy R. Rademacher**, Communications Maintenance Technician, 6911th Electronic Security Squadron, Hahn AB, West Germany. Sergeant Rademacher keeps a sharp eye out for the good of the Air Force. One example of this is his discovery of usable electronics equipment that was gathering dust in a government salvage yard. After securing permission, Sergeant Rademacher purchased, repaired, and installed the equipment, thereby saving the service more than \$50,000. His keen awareness also contributed toward national security when he discovered what he thought to be classified information contained in the annual Air Force Inventory Survey. He was subsequently able to protect the material that was indeed classified.



**Sgt.
Timothy R.
Rademacher**

Sergeant Rademacher was in charge of converting his unit's "B" hut from tube-theory to solid-state equipment. The conversion was completed without disrupting service, increasing circuit reliability by twelve percent. He also led an upgrade of power wiring and signal cabling equipment, which channeled three operational units into one.

Sergeant Rademacher is working toward degrees in electronic engineering and computer science. He is well versed in communications and cryptographic machinery and was able to develop a training program to qualify Teletype technicians on cryptographic equipment. He twice won Airman of the Quarter for logistics and earned that honor for both the 6911th ESS and the 691st ESW. He was named the ESC Communications-Electronics

Maintenance Technician of the Year.

● **TSgt. Raymond N. Walker, Jr.**, NCOIC of Electronic Warfare Systems, 6200th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, Clark AB, the Philippines. Sergeant Walker is credited with greatly improving both the Cope Thunder electronic combat training scenario and its corresponding data-reporting procedures. His analysis of the radar-warning receiver and IFF procedures used in Cope Thunder exercises enabled both Hq. PACAF and the IG team to implement command-wide directives on acceptable testing procedures. In addition, he



**TSgt.
Raymond N.
Walker, Jr.**

was instrumental in the creation of a manpower planning guide, used by Cope Thunder participants to project and maintain manpower requirements. Units returning home from Cope Thunder will also benefit by his efforts through his updated version of the redeployment procedures handbook. He has updated and reviewed many other logistics products, including the Advance Party and Special Assignment Airlift Mission Processing checklists.

Sergeant Walker has nearly completed his college degree and is enrolled in the NCO Academy correspondence course. In addition to his other duties, he manages the squadron Land Mobile Radio Net, which has assets of more than \$75,000. He is an active member of the squadron Morale Club's Fund Committee and is a financial counseling advisor for the Family Support Center. He earned honors as NCO of the Quarter and as NCO of the Year.



**MSgt.
Stephen C.
Woodard**

● **MSgt. Stephen C. Woodard**, NCOIC and Chief of the Electronic Warfare Section, 124th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Idaho Air National Guard. Sergeant Woodard is one of those rare individuals who have directly affected a weapon system. The arming of all RF-4C aircraft, which have been unarmed for twenty-five years, has been made possible through his efforts. He single-handedly designed aircraft wiring, fire-control panels, and cockpit switches, which he then adapted for use with AIM-9 missiles on existing LAU-7 missile rails. He tested his design on a jet in Boise and later supervised a live-firing run at Eglin AFB. His modification was so successful that it was adopted for use by the entire RF-4C fleet.

Sergeant Woodard then turned his attention to modifying the aircraft's chaff and flare dispensing system. The resulting modification, which used the RF-4C's internal ejector racks, was adopted for use throughout the fleet. It is little wonder that his fifteen-man shop has a waiting list of personnel wishing to join.

Sergeant Woodard is pursuing a degree in business administration. He completed the USAF Senior NCO Academy correspondence course. He is a prize-winning country-and-western dancer and is part of a group that took second place in a national competition at Reno. He received the Air Force Commendation Medal for his work on the chaff dispenser and was named NCO of the Quarter and NCO of the Year. ■

Susan Katz-Keating, a writer for Insight Magazine since 1985, specializes in military topics. Her most recent article for AIR FORCE Magazine, "Blue Two," appeared in the April '89 issue.