

**AFA and the Air Force name the best crews, crew chief, and aerial tactician of 1995.**

# Foremost in Their Fields

## Chennault Award

*Best Aerial Warfare Tactician*

*Maj. Robert J. Beletic of USAFE's 31st Fighter Wing (4190th Provisional Wing), Aviano AB, Italy, wrote the book on the USAF F-16 airborne forward air control (AFAC) mission. The manual he wrote has been submitted to the Air Warfare Center at Nellis AFB, Nev., for inclusion in Multicommand Manual 3-1. It covers AFAC tactics, pilot equipment, rocket employment, and laser-guided bomb (LGB) employment during close air support configurations. As assistant operations officer of the 555th Fighter Squadron, Aviano AB, he planned tactics for the air raids near Pale—the Bosnian Serb stronghold—during Operation Deliberate Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina, marking the first time F-16s have used LGBs in combat. He wrote the wing upgrade syllabus and developed an extensive training program. Major Beletic was largely responsible for planning the employment of LGBs used in Deliberate Force. His tactics also provided crews maximum flexibility during poor weather in Bosnia.*



## Hoyt Award

*Best Air Refueling Aircrew*

*The professionalism of the crew of TURBO 48, 22d Air Refueling Wing, McConnell AFB, Kan., saved a multimillion dollar Air Force aircraft and its crew. On March 16, 1995, GASSR 31—a KC-135R from Altus AFB, Okla.—lost its left main landing gear truck assembly in a routine touch-and-go landing at the base. With little fuel and few options, the tanker called for assistance. Forty-six minutes later, the TURBO 48 crew was flying toward the crippled tanker for a reverse-refueling rendezvous. Once in position behind GASSR 31, TURBO 48 began supplying fuel. Complicating the procedure was GASSR 31's inability to refuel at tech-order airspeeds. The rescue tanker fought to maintain aircraft control, refueling the aircraft at thirty knots below prescribed speed. After multiple refuelings of GASSR 31, the TURBO 48 crew flew chase until the damaged aircraft landed safely at White Sands Space Harbor, N. M. Crew (left to right): Capts. Glenn M. Farrar and Michael E. Leighton. Not pictured: Capts. Nicholas S. Myers, Bradley K. Wright, and Thomas E. Wood, and MSgt. Jack B. Martin, Jr.*

## LeMay Award

### Best Strategic Aircrew

Based at Barksdale AFB, La., Crew R-70 of the 96th Bomb Squadron set a new world speed-over-distance record in a B-52 during Long Rifle '95. They flew 6,200 miles unrefueled, carrying a payload of nineteen 500-pound bombs, maintaining an average speed of 550 mph. During the flight, the crew also carried out a flight-test program focusing on sensitive telemetry equipment. Conducting the test on a training mission saved the Air Force more than \$100,000 in flight-test costs and provided important data. Crew (left to right): aircraft commander Capt. Russell F. Mathers, pilot Capt. Daniel G. Manuel, Jr., radar navigator Capt. Henry C. Jenkins, Jr., navigator Capt. Ralph Delatour, and electronic warfare officer Capt. Allen D. Patton.



## O'Malley Award

### Best Reconnaissance Crew

This composite crew from the 45th Reconnaissance Squadron and 97th Intelligence Squadron, both of Offutt AFB, Neb., flying an RC-135S Cobra Ball, performed numerous missions of national importance, including a short-notice deployment to collect data on foreign ballistic missile systems. The crew developed tactics, checklists, and safety procedures for a new sensor—a laser range finder—and thus enhanced the aircraft's role in theater missile defense. Crew (left to right): SSgt. Thomas Lawton, Capts. Valerie Noll, Edward Franklin, Richard Blocker III, John Harrison, Robert Floyd IV, and Richard Sutton, and (not pictured) Maj. Jerry Huff, Capts. Thomas Hirstand and David Pavik, MSgt. Robert Allen, TSgts. Robert Brandriff, Wendell Miller, and Mark Trimmer, SSgt. Sherolyn Hallmark, and SrA. Barry Navarre.

## Power Award

### Best Strategic Missile Combat Crew

Crew S-121—Capt. Paul B. McArthur (standing) and 1st Lt. William L. Rittershaus—Minot AFB, N. D., took first place in the Command Data Buffer weapon system competition at Guardian Challenge 1995. In Minot AFB's first Air Force Space Command Nuclear Surety and Technical Inspection (NSTI), their performance helped their unit, the 742d Missile Squadron, earn an Inspector General rating of excellent. Captain McArthur led the development of the NSTI preparations plan and conducted near-perfect IG-observed evaluations of squadron crews—a key element of the unit's success. Lieutenant Rittershaus's performance on his NSTI missile-procedures trainer observation ride and his 100 percent score on NSTI codes testing were key factors in squadron and group excellent ratings.





## Space Operations Award

### Best Space Unit

When the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed a Titan IV launch call-up five months early and ninety days into another launch cycle, the 30th Space Wing launch crew at Vandenberg AFB, Calif., responded. Working twenty-four-hour days for more than 200 days, the crew brought together the efforts of contractors, Air Force agencies, and nearly 900 workers. The result was the fifth successful launch of a Titan IV from Vandenberg (December 5, 1995). The launch achieved a bull's-eye insertion into orbit. Crew (front row): 1st Lt. Jeffery M. Parks, Lt. Col. Michael E. Hatch, Capt. Timothy A. Slauenwhite, and Capt. Kent B. Dalton; (back row): Capt. David G. Helfrich, SSgt. Lee J. Williams, 1st Lt. James E. Colebank, and (not pictured) Capts. Stacey L. Nelson, John S. Shattuck, and Thomas J. Chiavacci.

## Tunner Award

### Best Air Mobility Aircrew

Despite rain, fog, and overcast, the MUSEL 08 helicopter crew from the 1st Helicopter Squadron volunteered for an emergency medevac mission to transport a retired USAF member from Andrews AFB, Md., to Bethesda Naval Hospital, Md., on November 14, 1995. The UH-1N crew determined that the most direct route would take them near towers and over heavily populated areas. Shortly after takeoff, the weather deteriorated into heavy rain. The crew cut airspeed to seventy knots and relied on low-level visual navigation. Exemplary coordination, pinpoint navigation, and outstanding aviation skills enabled the crew to land safely at Bethesda, in the midst of whipping winds and heavy rain and between tall trees and buildings. Crew: aircraft commander Capt. Michael W. Harding, copilot Lt. Col. Henry B. Gaither, Jr., and flight engineer SrA. James M. Strauss.



## CMSAF Thomas N. Barnes Award

### USAF's Top Crew Chief

Outstanding leadership, dedication to duty, and desire to complete the mission earned SSgt. Thomas G. Woller the honor of Crew Chief of the Year. Assigned to Hurlburt Field, Fla., he is a dedicated crew chief on an MC-130E Combat Talon with the 8th Aircraft Maintenance Unit, 16th Aircraft Generation Squadron, 16th Special Operations Wing. In 1995, Sergeant Woller maintained a 100 percent mission-effectiveness rate for four consecutive months and launched 249 sorties totaling 931 flying hours, achieving a 92.2 percent on-time departure rate. He was specially selected to work at a bare-base location in a JCS-directed exercise, in which his aircraft performed flawlessly. ■