

AFA and the Air Force recognize the best crews, aerial tactician, and crew chief for their 1999 accomplishments.

USAF's Best in Operations

Lt. Gen. Claire L. Chennault Award

Best Aerial Warfare Tactician

Prior to the launch of Allied Force, Maj. Phil M. Haun, weapons and tactics chief for the 52nd Fighter Wing (USAFE), Spangdahlem AB, Germany, masterminded NATO's first integrated combat search and rescue task force operational concept centered on the use of A-10 pilots as combined mission commanders. His training program for A-10 and MH-53J crews was critical to successful rescues of downed pilots during Allied Force. He also created the blueprint to employ NATO's aircraft against tactical targets. And Haun used A-10s and F-16CGs to provide 24-hour coverage—A-10s in daytime, F-16CGs at night—for airborne forward air control. Haun also was mission commander for 19 strike packages flown in Kosovo. When his A-10's right engine was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile, he coaxed his aircraft to the Macedonian border and landed safely.



Lt. Gen. William H. Tunner Award

Best Airlift Aircrew

En route from Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, to NAS Lakehurst, N.J., the C-130 flown by Lt. Col. Paul A. Curlett and his 3rd Operations Group (PACAF) crew developed two severe engine leaks, forcing them to shut down engines No. 1 and No. 4. The crew, flying over Canada, was too far away to make an emergency landing at either Edmonton or Cold Lake airfields, 1.5 hours away. Copilot 1st Lt. Brent R. Himes noticed a small airfield called The Pas, with 6,300 feet of runway, located only 10 miles away. The crew decided to divert to The Pas but were unable to get radar guidance from Edmonton. Relying only on visual cues, they made a safe landing at The Pas.

From the left: Lt. Col. Paul A. Curlett, SSgt. David L. Walker, SSgt. John D. Sheets, and 1st Lt. Brent R. Himes. Not pictured: Capt. Richard K. Wells and Ronnie Hall.



Gen. Curtis E. LeMay Award

Best Bomber Aircrew

The B-52H crew Havoc 11, 20th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron, RAF Fairford, UK, fired Allied Force's first weapon—an AGM-86C conventional air launched cruise missile. Havoc 11 was leading an eight-ship formation of B-52s. The crew achieved several other firsts, including the first to lead a combined formation of B-52Hs and B-1Bs in combat. Their first sortie lasted more than 15 hours. They flew a total of 16, more than any other bomber crew. They developed, planned, and implemented multibomber formation operations. They were the "airspace experts" and trained some 150 aircrew members.

Standing, from the left: Capt. Linden C. Adams, Merrice Spencer, Jason W. Taylor, and Richard A. Sposato. Kneeling from the left: Capt. James W. Dunn and Jeffrey D. Neischel. Not pictured: Maj. John E. Colletta.



CMSAF Thomas N. Barnes Award

USAF's Best Crew Chief

"Better, Faster, Cheaper" might well be the motto of TSgt. Stewart J. Crerar, B-2 crew chief with the 393rd Bomb Squadron, 509th Bomb Wing (ACC), Whiteman AFB, Mo. He prepared his aircraft for combat three days ahead of schedule and launched the first B-2 strike in Allied Force. Crerar produced a flawless sortie production rate. His efficiency meant that in 45 combat sorties, spare aircraft were never needed. His leadership and expertise made him the 393rd BS Crew Chief of the Year and the 509th BW's Maintenance Professional of the Year.

Gen. Thomas S. Power Award

Best Missile Combat Crew

Capt. Keith A. McCartney and 1st Lt. Cynthia L. Perry, 341st Space Wing (AFSPC), Malmstrom AFB, Mont., teamed to win the 1999 Guardian Challenge Award with the second highest ICBM crew score in the history of the competition. McCartney's rigorous training and evaluation regimens enabled squadron crews to achieve an annual evaluation pass rate of 96 percent. Perry's drive and leadership resulted in her selection for early assignment to the standardization/evaluation team. This crew directed the squadron in the crucial task of the transportation and installation of nuclear code panels. Their efforts earned the Blanchard Trophy for the wing for a second straight year.



Space Operations Award

Best Space Operations Crew

Charlie Crew—a strategic missile warning crew of the 21st Space Wing (AFSPC), Peterson AFB, Colo.—achieved several firsts. They provided key combat support during Allied Force by manually developing and releasing data usually seen only by tactical sensors. They were the first crew to detect and report a no-notice space launch.

They were the first to process data from two foreign experimental ICBM launches, which gave US experts the chance to study the new boosters. When a satellite anomaly and data-relay outage threatened the ability to monitor a foreign submarine, the crew stepped in to provide coverage.



From the left, back row: A1C Jami Nelson, SrA. Terry Witmer, A1C Mickey Sederberg, SrA. Gregory Reed, and Capt. Andrew Kovich. Front row: MSgt. (sel.) Steve Ryan and 1st Lt. Sabine Slover. Not pictured: MSgt. Rick Green and SSgt. Anthony Hernandez.



An RC-135 Rivet Joint aircraft flies near Yugoslavia during an Operation Allied Force mission.

Gen. Jerome F. O'Malley Award

Best Reconnaissance Crew

Recon 01, an RC-135 Rivet Joint crew, interrupted a scheduled in-flight refueling during an Allied Force reconnaissance mission to support the rescue of a downed F-117 pilot. As the pilot was parachuting down, Recon 01 crew members tracked his position and alerted a nearby E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft crew. The RC-135 pilots, Lt. Col. Michael Zenk and Capt. Rodney Cousins, flew the unarmed Rivet Joint closer to the Serbian border. They provided the pilot's location and data on the immediate threat, enabling controllers to guide search and rescue forces for extraction. Recon 01 also provided support in the search for three missing US Army soldiers, as well as the rescue of a downed F-16 pilot. Award recipients are from the 38th and 343rd Reconnaissance Squadrons and the 55th Operations Support Squadron, all at Offutt AFB, Neb., and the 95th RS and 488th Intelligence Squadron, both from RAF Mildenhall, UK.



From the left: SSgt. Terence Wiley, Army Spc. Carolee Caine, SSgts. Keith Standring and Jennifer Wade, 1st Lt. William Roach, Maj. John Mahaffey, 1st Lt. James Chambers, SSgt. David Benbrook, and MSgt. Mark Georgeff. Not pictured: CMSgt. Cristopher Bailey, SrA. John Burke, Maj. John Carter, TSgts. Christopher Cook and Walter Downing III, Maj. Robert Faulk Jr., SSgt. Christina Gosling, Capt. James Gray, Maj. Jeffery Herd, SSgts. Heather Leach and Sandra Lott, MSgt. Adam Mangual, SrA. Justin McGowan, Maj. Thomas Powell, SrA. Jason Redmond, SSgt. Jeremy Roberts, Capt. Gregory Taylor, Maj. Brian Vaughan, John West Jr., and Mark Whitmire, and TSgt. John Williams.

Airborne Battle Management Crew of the Year

Best Crew of the Year

In the first integration of information from an E-8 Joint STARS radar aircraft and data from unmanned aerial vehicles and an Army fire-finder artillery detection radar system, Crew 3 members were able to detect and target Serb positions for attack by Allied Force fighter aircraft. The crew, from the 12th Expeditionary Airborne Command and Control Squadron (ACC), Robins AFB, Ga., conducted ground surveillance of the Kosovo region, reported significant enemy movement, and directed successful strike fighter attacks. Their pioneering use of these intelligence assets confirmed the revolutionary role of the E-8 as a battle management platform.



From the left, back row: MSgt. Michael Moran, SSgts. Gary Martin and Lonnie Allen, MSgt. Bruce Kingsbury, Lt. Col. James Pankau, MSgt. Robert Wood, and Lt. Col. Ross Victor. Front row: Capt. Gregory Ervin, Maj. Matthew Brand, Capt. Eric Zimmerman, Maj. John McGuire, and SSgt. Billy Wilkins.

Brig. Gen. Ross G. Hoyt Award

Best Air Refueling Aircrew

Flying out of San Vito AS, Italy, the crew of Ogre 01, from AFSOC's 67th Special Operations Squadron, RAF Mildenhall, UK, participated not once, but twice in the course of the rescue of the F-117 pilot downed in Serb territory. On March 27, the MC-130P Combat Shadow crew was tasked to refuel the three helicopters sent to rescue the pilot. They orbited the area for 90 minutes, avoiding Serb surface-to-air missile threats and, in poor weather, refueled the helicopters at 700 feet and within five miles of Serb territory. At this point the MC-130P was critically short of fuel itself, but the crew located a KC-135, refueled, and returned to the Serbian border. The F-117 pilot was rescued and delivered by helicopter to Tuzla AB, Bosnia. The Ogre 01 crew was then directed to pick him up at Tuzla and deliver him to Aviano AB, Italy.