

By Joseph Bisognano

**Top 5 + One:** TSgt. Mark Giromini, SrA. Aaron Stande, TSgt. Harvey Holloway, guest speaker Maj. Gen. Kimberly Crider, SMSgt. Charles Carlin, and SSgt. Shane Coakley (left to right).

Massachusetts honors its

**Top 5.**

Photo by Joe Bisognano

# Best in the Bay State

**M**assachusetts has its own version of AFA's Outstanding Airmen of the Year program.

It's called the Top 5 Massachusetts Airmen.

The state's AFA organization and its Minuteman Chapter created the recognition program some three years ago.

They most recently honored the Bay State's five outstanding airmen last fall at a second annual awards dinner. It took place at the USS Constitution Museum in the Charlestown Navy Yard, Mass., right next to the landmark US Navy frigate nicknamed "Old Ironsides."

## THE TOP FIVE

The Air Force in Massachusetts includes approximately 11,000 people assigned to four primary installations. The Minuteman Chapter and its president, Yvonne Thurston, worked closely with all of the state's wing and group commanders to find nominees who were the best in job performance and in the local community. Here are the Top 5 selected:

■ SMSgt. Charles Carlin is the superintendent of Logistics Plans/Deployment and Distribution, 439th Logistics

Readiness Squadron, Westover ARB. He managed a first-ever beddown, of more than 130 Pakistani air force personnel, plus nine aircraft.

■ TSgt. Harvey W. Holloway is the noncommissioned officer in charge for training, 66th Security Forces Squadron, Hanscom AFB. He headed several initiatives to handle active-shooter situations and prepared security forces for an Operation Inherent Resolve mission surge.

■ TSgt. Mark A. Giromini is an aircrew flight equipment craftsman, 104th Operations Group, Barnes Arpt. He deployed to Al Jaber, Kuwait, to aid Michigan's Selfridge Air National Guard personnel. (See "A Century of Action," p. 46.) Giromini supported 10 combat sorties a day.

■ SSgt. Shane T. Coakley is a security forces journeyman, 104th Security Forces Squadron, Barnes Arpt. He deployed to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Freedom's Sentinel. He stood up the Security Forces Unit Control Center for Kandahar indirect fire attacks and implemented anti-terrorism measures.

■ SrA. Aaron J. Stande is an aerospace medical technician, 102nd Medical Group, 102nd Intelligence Wing, Otis ANGB. In Ghana he supported a disaster preparedness initiative in Accra, teaching first responder courses. In Kenya, he was attached to the medical outreach team on an African Partnership Flight.

## THEY REFLECT THE BEST

Approximately 135 people attended the awards dinner.

Maj. Gen. Kimberly A. Crider, the mobilization assistant to Undersecretary of the Air Force Lisa S. Disbrow, was keynote speaker. Crider described the accomplishments of each Top 5 airman and how their skills contributed to the Total Force concept of a shared mission between the components.

Massachusetts AFA and its 1,500 members were proud to recognize the contributions of these airmen who reflect not just the best in the state, but the best of the Air Force. ✪

Joseph Bisognano is Massachusetts state president and a member of the Minuteman Chapter.