



## THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3010 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3010

AUG 16 2012

ACQUISITION,  
TECHNOLOGY  
AND LOGISTICS

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ARMY  
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES NAVY  
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

SUBJECT: 2012 Secretary of Defense Field-level Maintenance Awards Selection

Annually, the Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards Program recognizes the Department of Defense (DoD)'s most outstanding field-level military maintenance units. This year, we received 24 nominations forwarded by the Military Services. Each nominee should be proud of their exceptional performance and contribution to our Nation's defense. I am pleased to inform you of the 2012 Secretary of Defense Field-level Maintenance Award Winners. Brief summaries of the units' accomplishments are attached.

### SMALL CATEGORY

Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron SEVEN SEVEN  
Naval Air Station North Island, San Diego, CA  
United States Navy

353d Special Operations Maintenance Squadron  
Kadena Air Base, Japan  
United States Air Force

### MEDIUM CATEGORY

Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 40  
2d Marine Aircraft Wing,  
MCAS Cherry Point, NC  
United States Marine Corps

3<sup>rd</sup> Aircraft Maintenance Squadron  
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, AK  
United States Air Force

**LARGE CATEGORY**

1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment  
United States Division - South  
Fort Hood, TX  
United States Army

23<sup>rd</sup> Maintenance Group  
Moody Air Force Base, GA  
United States Air Force

The Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards Ceremony and Banquet is scheduled for Thursday, November 15, 2012, at the DeVos Place Convention Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, as part of the 2012 DoD Maintenance Symposium and Exhibition. One of the highlights of the awards ceremony will be the presentation of the Secretary of Defense's Phoenix Trophy. The recipient of the Phoenix Award is selected from the six Secretary of Defense Field-level Maintenance Award winners listed above and is recognized as the "Best of the Best" maintenance unit within the Department of Defense. The Phoenix trophy is the highest award for field-level maintenance within the Department.

Please extend my sincere congratulations on behalf of the Secretary of Defense to each of your Secretary of Defense Field-level Maintenance Award winners and to all of the nominees for their outstanding efforts.

My point of contact is Ms. Corey Battistoni, Logistics and Materiel Readiness, at 703-614-9329 or corey.battistoni@osd.mil.



Frank Kendall

Attachments:  
As stated

## **2012 Secretary of Defense Field-level Maintenance Awards Summaries**

### **353d Special Operations Maintenance Squadron**

Kadena Air Base, Japan  
United States Air Force

The primary mission of the 353d Special Operations Squadron (SOMXS) is to ensure the aging MC-130H/P aircraft assigned to the 353d Special Operations Forces are capable and ready to meet their operational requirements. In FY 2011, the 353 SOMXS clearly excelled in executing that mission responsibility by launching 723 sorties totaling 3,340 flying hours, posting high mission capable rates, and supporting 162 additional sorties over the number planned. In addition to the 353 SOMXS's impressive overall accomplishments, its actions were instrumental in providing humanitarian support following the Japanese tsunami that included 161 sorties and the delivery of more than 439 tons of cargo. The airmen of the 353D SOMXS also received an "Excellent" rating following an Air Force Special Operations Command Operational Readiness Inspection and successfully supported a Joint Chiefs of Staff exercise in Thailand and Cambodia, launching 8 aircraft and generating 94 sorties. These successes readily warrant the 353d SOMXS being designated as one of the Department's best field-level maintenance organizations for FY 2011.

### **Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 40**

2d Marine Aircraft Wing,  
MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina  
United States Marine Corps

In FY 2011, the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 40 (MALS 40) had the challenging mission of supporting aviation combat operations from forward, austere locations. It supported 13 flying squadrons of the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), which operated out of 5 dispersed sites throughout Helmand and Kandahar Provinces in Afghanistan. The squadrons were assigned 90 aircraft of 8 different types of fixed wing, rotary wing, and tilt-rotor platforms. Despite geographical and platform challenges, MALS 40's superb performance enabled the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) to achieve 82-percent mission capable and 66-percent fully mission capable rates and to conduct 37,247 flight hours. Unlike other squadrons that deploy, the marines, sailors and civilians of MALS 40 never had an opportunity to train and prepare as a unit. MALS 40 was formed from 17 different units and immediately deployed to Southern Afghanistan; many of its members met for the first time in Afghanistan. As the only forward deployed intermediate level maintenance squadron, MALS 40 achieved significant accomplishments and is justified in being called one of the Department's best field-level maintenance units.

**3rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron**  
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska  
United States Air Force

The 3rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (3 AMXS) is responsible for the on-equipment maintenance, generation, launch, and recovery of 40 F-22A Raptor aircraft. The 3 AMXS carried out that responsibility in FY 2011 with incomparable expertise and effectiveness. It supported 4,731 combat and training flying hours; achieved a nearly 78-percent mission capable rate, the highest rate of any F-22A unit in the Combat Air Forces and 14 percentage points higher than the next Raptor wing; performed over 65,000 maintenance actions; and completed more than 1,250 Time Compliance Technical Orders and One-Time Inspections. The 3 AMXS also led the Combat Air Force in 9 of 12 maintenance performance indicators and demonstrated its readiness for combat capability by successfully passing the first F-22A Fighter Alert Force Evaluation, earning a “Mission Ready” rating in all areas. The men and women of the 3 AMXS have clearly earned the distinction of being one of the Department’s best field-level maintenance units in FY 2011.

**23d Maintenance Group**  
Moody Air Force Base, Georgia  
United States Air Force

The 23d Maintenance Group (23 MXG) has seven squadrons of airmen supporting the Air Force’s A-10 fleet and the only active duty CONUS Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) HH-60s and HC-130s. Through the maintenance efforts of those airmen, Air Combat Command successfully executed 14,300 A-10 sorties, totaling more than 52,000 flying hours; 11,400 HH-60 sorties (nearly 13,000 flying hours); and 2,800 HC-130 sorties (6,000 flying hours) in FY 2011. The innovative accomplishments of the 23 MXG were particularly evident with the A-10 fleet: through management attention on training and inspections, it lowered the repeat rate for first-time A-10 repairs by 21 percent, resulting in increased productivity and throughput. The 23 MXG also generated new ideas that had an Air Force-wide impact, resulting in the redesign of cables, elimination of overhauls, and substitution of less-costly parts. These and other accomplishments make the 23 MXG obviously worthy of being singled out as one of the Department’s best field-level maintenance units.

**1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, United States Division-South**  
Fort Hood, Texas  
United States Army

The 1/3 Armored Cavalry Regiment assumed the Advise, Train, and Assist mission for all Iraqi Security Forces in the contentious Iraqi provinces of Babil and Karbala in FY 2011. Its primary focus was securing Contingency Operating Station Kalsu from indirect fire attacks. One of the keys to providing that security was the ability of the 1/3 Armored Cavalry Regiment to sustain 271 combat vehicles, including tanks, Bradleys, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, and HMMWVs. Their innovative maintenance programs included consolidating maintenance teams, instituting comprehensive quality control and assurance efforts, using all available resources, and acting on lessons learned. These and other initiatives resulted in an impressive reduction of 50 percent in non-mission capable rates for combat vehicles, and the facility to retain that reduction. The 1/3 Armored Cavalry Regiment also adopted a “repair forward and return to user” philosophy, further enhancing their maintenance performance. The men and women of the 1/3 Armored Cavalry Regiment carried out their mission responsibilities under the most trying of environments, making them truly deserving of being designated an elite DoD field-level maintenance unit.

**Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron SEVEN SEVEN**  
Naval Air Station North Island, San Diego, California  
United States Navy

Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron SEVEN SEVEN (HSM-77) was the first Navy fleet squadron to transition to the MH-60R Seahawk. It provided Carrier Air Wing Two and Carrier Strike Group Nine with combat ready aircraft and equipment and flawlessly executed the first MH-60R deployment to the Fifth and Seventh Fleet Areas of responsibility in FY 2011. HSM-77 maintenance personnel accomplishments included completing more than 38,000 work orders, performing 100,800 hours of maintenance, supporting 7,168 hours of mishap-free flight hours, and executing 2,344 sorties with a 97-percent completion rate, all while achieving 84-percent mission capable and 78-percent full mission capable rates. These accomplishments are even more impressive because HSM-77 was concurrently experiencing a 45-percent turnover in maintenance personnel and, in response to a compressed Fleet Readiness Training Plan, devising and implementing an extensive training plan. That plan resulted in the qualification of additional collateral duty inspectors, quality assurance representatives, and landing signal enlisted personnel, among others, to support an upcoming surge deployment. For these and other numerous accomplishments, the sailors of HSM-77 are most deserving of being designated as one of the Department’s best field-level maintenance organizations for FY 2011.