



ACQUISITION
AND SUSTAINMENT

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3000

October 6, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
CHIEFS OF THE MILITARY SERVICES
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS

SUBJECT: 2021 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards Selection

The Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards Program recognizes the Department of Defense's most outstanding military maintenance units in four categories: Sustainment Training, Advice, and Assistance of Foreign Military Forces Award; the Robert T. Mason Award for Depot Maintenance Excellence; the Rear Admiral Grace M. Hopper Award for Software Maintenance Excellence; and the field-level awards. I am pleased to inform you of the 2021 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Award winners listed below. A brief narrative of each unit's accomplishments is attached.

SUSTAINMENT TRAINING, ADVICE, AND ASSISTANCE OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES AWARD

Ministerial Category

- Colombia Country Project Team, Institute for Security Governance, Defense Security Cooperation Agency

Operational Category

- Charlie Troop, Regimental Support Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, 7th Army Training Center, United States European Command

ROBERT T. MASON AWARD FOR DEPOT MAINTENANCE EXCELLENCE

- Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility Submarine Maintenance and Overhaul Program, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility, Bremerton, Washington, United States Navy

REAR ADMIRAL GRACE M. HOPPER AWARD FOR SOFTWARE MAINTENANCE EXCELLENCE

- Extreme Digital Development Group – Enterprise, 76th Software Engineering Group, Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex, United States Air Force

FIELD-LEVEL AWARDS

Large Category

- 3D Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3RD Armored Brigade Combat Team 1ST Cavalry Division, Ft Hood, Texas, United States Army
- USS AMERICA, Sasebo, Japan, United States Navy

Medium Category

- Marine Wing Support Squadron 172, Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan, United States Marine Corps
- Assault Craft Unit Five, Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, California, United States Navy

Small Category

- Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron SEVEN SEVEN, Naval Air Facility, Atsugi, Japan, United States Navy
- 801st Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 1st Special Operations Wing, Air Force Special Operations Command, Hurlburt Field, Florida, United States Air Force

From the six field-level award-winning units, one is singled out as the very best and named the Phoenix Award winner. I am extremely proud to announce Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron SEVEN SEVEN as the 2021 Phoenix Award winner.

My points of contact are [REDACTED], Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Materiel Readiness (ODASD(MR)), [REDACTED]

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

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Gregory M. Kausner
Executive Director, International Cooperation
Performing the Duties of Under Secretary of
Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment

Attachments:
As stated

**2021 Secretary of Defense
Maintenance Award Winners' Summaries**

**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SUSTAINMENT TRAINING, ADVICE, AND
ASSISTANCE OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES AWARD
MINISTERIAL CATEGORY**

Colombia Country Project Team
Institute for Security Governance

The Institute of Security Governance's (ISG) Colombia Country Project team distinguished itself by facilitating multi-year work with the Colombian defense and security sector logistics enterprise. ISG Colombia facilitated the development and ongoing implementation of the Ministry of National Defense's logistics modernization plan, setting the conditions for enhanced Colombian military logistics interoperability with DOD and NATO, and through both efforts incrementally posturing Colombia to become a regional defense logistics leader. The innovative work with the Ministry of National Defense and its Directorate of Logistics is orienting and driving Public Force and National Police efforts to improve their sector-wide logistics functions, policies, programs and practices; is strengthening their codification and standardization efforts, to include the nation's defense industrial base; and is increasing national sustainment capacity that produces a better return on investment for U.S. security assistance and cooperation investments. During the period of performance, ISG's direct involvement with delivering effective, enduring, and timely logistics solutions to partner nation civilian and military logistics leaders, staffs, and the defense industrial base of Colombian has produced a number of swift changes that generated immediate, significant bilateral cost savings while simultaneously improving the integration of logistics functions with a key U.S. partner in the Western Hemisphere. These extraordinary accomplishments reflect great credit upon the Institute for Security Governance Colombia team, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, and the Department of Defense.

**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SUSTAINMENT TRAINING, ADVICE, AND
ASSISTANCE OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES AWARD
OPERATIONAL CATEGORY**

Charlie Troop, Regimental Support Squadron, 2nd Calvary Regiment, 7th Army Training Center
United States Army Europe - Africa
United States European Command

Charlie Troop Regimental Support Squadron is recognized for exceptionally meritorious achievement and excellence in operational level sustainment, advice, and assist of European allied forces in all facets of maintenance. Charlie Troop's commitment to the maintenance of ground, Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear, communication, and medical equipment, in addition to weapons, ensured the squadron and its foreign allies were prepared to execute United States Europe-Africa Command (USAREUR-AF) Commander's intent of providing medical treatment to the soldiers and families of USAREUR-AF and its partner multinational

allies. Their comprehensive maintenance sustainment training, logistical support advice, and ability to assist foreign forces are a testament to the culture of excellence established in the unit. They successfully provided operational level advice, assistance, and training support to multinational troops from France, Germany, Poland, Italy, Ukraine, Romania, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the United Kingdom, during real world missions and training exercises. Charlie Troop's dedication to maintenance ensures the regiment can conserve the fighting force and execute the mission. Charlie Troop's actions reflect great credit on the Regimental Support Squadron, the 2d Cavalry Regiment, the United States Army, and the Department of Defense.

ROBERT T. MASON AWARD
FOR DEPOT MAINTENANCE EXCELLENCE

Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility Submarine Maintenance and Overhaul Program
Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility
United States Navy

The Submarine Maintenance and Overhaul Program at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility is recognized for unprecedented, superior execution in submarine maintenance, overhaul, and innovation. The program completed four Continuous Maintenance Availabilities and 12 Voyage Repair Periods on USS SEAWOLF, USS CONNECTICUT and USS OHIO on time or early, with combined savings of \$4.3M and 9,996 man-days. USS LOUISIANA benchmark refueling execution was completed in 164 days, 39 days ahead of schedule and shattering the previous corporate best by 23 days. Inactivation of USS PITTSBURGH nearly a month early saved \$1.2M and 1,506 man-days and allowed early return of the crew to the fleet. Nonstop aircraft carrier maintenance execution and unparalleled performance in the Command Cyber Operational Readiness Inspection demonstrated unflagging operational commitment. Despite the global emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility continued to outperform, delivering exceptional results on mission-critical tasks while orchestrating an aggressive mitigation response to protect the workforce and community. Their efforts reflected great credit upon themselves, the United States Navy, and the Department of Defense.

REAR ADMIRAL GRACE M. HOPPER AWARD
FOR SOFTWARE MAINTENANCE EXCELLENCE

Extreme Digital Development Group – Enterprise, 76th Software Engineering Group
Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex
United States Air Force

The Extreme Digital Development Group – Enterprise Team, 76th Software Engineering Group, distinguished itself by pursuing internal capabilities to rapidly innovate, develop, integrate and deploy war-fighting capabilities. Through in-depth weapon system engineering knowledge, paired with Agile and DevSecOps principles, they grew to lead innovation for weapon systems software across the Department of Defense. The 76th acted as the primary Technical Advisor for the Standard, and provided the warfighter and contractors with training and tools to implement Open Mission Systems across the warfighter. This included a government developed Critical Abstraction Layer, a multimillion-dollar piece of software, that allowed the warfighter and smaller contractors to design Open Mission Systems Compliant systems without vendor lock

issues. The team's efforts enabled over 11 programs and 12 contactors to successfully apply Open Mission Systems to improve warfighter efficiency and reduce the risk of vendor lock. The professionalism and commitment to excellence demonstrated by the men and women of the Extreme Digital Development Group – Enterprise Team reflect great credit upon themselves, Air Force Materiel Command, the United States Air Force, and the Department of Defense.

FIELD-LEVEL AWARDS
LARGE CATEGORY

3D Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment
3RD Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1ST Cavalry Division
United States Army

The 3D Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment is recognized for innovation and exceptional performance in the field of maintenance during its mission execution throughout the rating period, including outstanding maintenance performance and sustainment support. The 3D Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment's commitment to maintenance excellence is illustrated by their average operational readiness rate of 98.15 percent. Their performance during Garrison and forward deployed operations in the Republic of Korea demonstrated their maintenance prowess and allowed them to project a command presence to support deterrence efforts in the Republic of Korea. This is directly attributed to the tireless efforts of its officers, warrant officer, non-commissioned officers, and most importantly, its soldiers. The "*Warhorse*" maintenance program contributed greatly to the success of the 3D Armored Brigade Combat team, the 1st Cavalry Division, the 2nd Infantry Division, the United States Army, and the Department of Defense.

USS AMERICA
United States Navy

USS AMERICA is recognized for superior achievement, mission accomplishment and maintenance performance. The USS AMERICA began the period of performance by embarking and operating a fleet record 13 F-35B Joint Strike Fighter aircraft during the Surface Warfare Advanced Tactical Training exercise, validating the "Lightning Carrier" concept. After charting the fastest-ever Pacific transit for a ship of her size during a seamless homeport shift from San Diego, California to Sasebo, Japan, the crew advanced amphibious force lethality through the development of innovative tactics, techniques, and procedures, bringing to bear the unique capabilities of the AMERICA Class LHA on its inaugural SEVENTH Fleet deployment. AMERICA successfully fended off novel coronavirus, maintaining 100% combat mission readiness throughout the spread of COVID-19, becoming SEVENTH Fleet's only operationally deployed aircraft carrier and providing commanders with ready combat power and a strong strategic message that the United States' commitment to freedom of the seas in the international commons would prevail - undaunted. AMERICA's execution of the 20.1 and 20.2 Forward Deployed Naval Forces Patrols and extension in support of freedom of the seas in the vicinity of the West Capella drilling operation in the South China Sea demonstrated the resilience and self-sufficiency of our naval force during a challenging time. The crew of USS AMERICA served as proud ambassadors to the Indo-Pacific Theater demonstrating unblemished support to our regional allies and partners. The superior professionalism, initiative, and dedication to duty demonstrated by the crew of USS AMERICA proudly continued the Navy's tradition of excellence and reflect great credit upon themselves, the United States Navy, and the Department of Defense.

FIELD-LEVEL AWARDS
MEDIUM CATEGORY

Marine Wing Support Squadron 172 (MWSS-172), Marine Aircraft Group 36 (MAG 36)
1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW), III Marine Expeditionary Force
United States Marine Corps

Marine Wing Support Squadron 172 is recognized for outstanding contributions to Marine Corps Aviation. The Wing exhibited versatility and stellar performance, providing aviation ground support to Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Corps Installations Pacific, and joint and foreign partners throughout the western Pacific region. Despite the COVID-19 Virus Pandemic, the squadron participated in 15 squadron level and higher events to include supporting five major joint or bilateral exercises in four nations across the theater. The squadron also completed massive engineering projects on Marine Corps Installations Pacific's Ie Shima Training Facility, including resurfacing a 5,300 foot expeditionary runway and constructing a 360,000 square foot Vertical Takeoff and Landing Zone to enhance Marine and joint aviation training in Okinawa, Japan. The Squadron's motto, "Committed to Excellence," shined through in all maintenance actions and operations, inspiring Marines to continue to train, fight and win in a competitive environment. With a constant eye on innovation and improvement, the *Firebirds* reconfigured existing Aviation Group Support capabilities to improve embarkation, mobility, and survivability. The squadron also received two formal inspections, demonstrating its commitment to excellence, exemplary readiness and program compliance. Through their steadfast dedication to duty, the Marines and Sailors of Marine Wing Support Squadron 172 reflected great credit upon themselves and upheld the highest traditions of Marine Corps Aviation, the United States Marine Corps, the United States Naval Service, and the Department of Defense.

Assault Craft Unit Five
United States Navy

Assault Craft Unit FIVE (ACU 5) is recognized for meritorious service in maintenance performance and efficiency. The Swift Intruders of ACU 5 met an unprecedented demand signal from operational forces in the Pacific Fleet with record-high numbers of reliable and well-maintained Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC). With meticulous planning, ACU 5 met all operational commitments and realized over 230 million dollars of cost avoidance initiatives through superb management of personnel, materials, and innovative maintenance procedures. The command's achievements in maintenance during this period include enhancements in LCAC refurbishment programs, corrosion control inspections to 100 percent within periodicity, improved repair processes with more efficient scheduling and planning of work projects, and frugal stewardship of supply parts and other resources. The exceptional performance, initiative and devotion to duty of the officers and crew of ACU 5 reflected great credit on themselves, the United States Navy, and the Department of Defense.

FIELD-LEVEL AWARDS
SMALL CATEGORY

801st Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 1st Special Operations Wing
Air Force Special Operations Command.
United States Air Force

The 801st Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron has distinguished itself by accomplishing superior aircraft maintenance. During the rating period, the squadron's 284 active duty and civilian personnel flawlessly maintained 16 CV-22 Osprey aircraft valued at 1.9 billion dollars. Their actions produced over 630 sorties and 2,130 flying hours, generating an outstanding 15 percent of the 1st Special Operations Wing's total missions. These mighty 801st maintenance professionals supported 20 major off-station operations and training events that enabled the credentials and certifications of 20 aircrew members and 197 special operators. Additionally, the squadron provided safe and reliable aircraft for 365 continuous days across Central Command locations, supporting in-theater Special Operations combat missions. Furthermore, the squadron has continued to cement itself in combat operations history as the sole CV-22 unit to continue to swiftly execute operations during the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. The exceptional maintenance of the 801st and vertical lift mastery allowed it to be the benchmark in the dominant execution of countless exercises and real world rescue missions. Moreover, the squadron executed deployed joint casualty evacuation missions in support of allied nation's warfighters, rendering lifesaving assistance. Finally, the unit possesses the most efficient Inspection Section fleet-wide, setting the Department of Defense standard by completing 11 CV-22 Phase inspections and 32 time compliance technical orders and executing over 7,000 maintenance actions. The professionalism and commitment to excellence demonstrated by the men and women of the 801st Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron reflect great credit upon themselves, Air Force Special Operations Command, the United States Air Force, and the Department of Defense.

Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron SEVEN SEVEN
United States Navy

Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron SEVEN SEVEN demonstrated sustained superior leadership and execution in maintenance while deployed for nine months in support of Battle Force SEVENTH Fleet operational tasking. With unrivaled pride, professionalism, and teamwork, the squadron's maintenance team safely and efficiently completed a staggering 99,415 maintenance man hours and 47,555 work orders to execute 4,278 mishap-free flight hours and 1,356 sorties with a 98 percent sortie completion rate while meeting or exceeding aircraft Mission Capable and Fully Mission Capable targets. The *Saberhawks* showcased their superior capabilities by making advances in the Carrier Strike Group's ability to project power including organic Long Range Maritime Strikes. While in the operational environment, the *Saberhawks* performed advanced and innovative tactics in the pivotal South China Sea operating area providing persistent coverage and security to Carrier Strike Group FIVE. The *Saberhawks* continued to excel in all assigned operational tasks, meeting or exceeding all operational and material readiness standards while safely expending 34,301 rounds of 7.62mm, 31,259 rounds of .50 Cal, 798 sonobuoys, 462 chaff and flares, 8 HELLFIRE missiles, 32 Advanced Precision Kill Weapons System rockets, and 9 torpedoes. Despite a large amount of personnel turnover and a demanding operational tempo, Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron SEVEN SEVEN developed and implemented a detailed training plan resulting in the highest Aviation Maintenance Experience score across all of Carrier Air Wing Naval Aviation enabling the squadron to meet all deployed tasking despite reduced manning due to COVID-19 mitigations. By their truly distinctive achievements, unrelenting perseverance, and unflinching devotion to duty, the Officers and Sailors of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron SEVEN SEVEN reflected great credit upon themselves, the United States Navy, and the Department of Defense.