MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE AIR FORCE
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS

SUBJECT: 2018 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards Selection

Annually, the Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards Program recognizes the Department of Defense’s (DoD) most outstanding military maintenance units in three categories: field-level, depot-level, and in the maintenance training, advice, and assistance of foreign security forces. I am pleased to inform you of the 2018 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Award winners listed below. A brief summary of each unit’s accomplishments is attached.

Field-level Awards

Large Category
1st Maintenance Battalion, Combat Logistics
Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, I
Marine Expeditionary Force
United States Marine Corps

48th Maintenance Group
United States Air Force

Medium Category
Headquarters and Headquarter Company, 4th
Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation
Regiment (Airborne)
United States Army

Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic Oceana
United States Navy

Small Category
Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron TWELVE
United States Navy

31st Munitions Squadron
United States Air Force

Robert T. Mason Award for Depot Maintenance Excellence

Nuclear Aircraft Carrier Maintenance and Emergent Repairs
Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility
United States Navy
Secretary of Defense Award for Excellence in Maintenance Training, Advice, and Assistance of Foreign Security Forces

Operational Category Winner

Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Technical Assistance Field Team
United States Southern Command

The awards will be presented on December 18, 2018 at the Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, Florida, at the Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards banquet and ceremony held in conjunction with the 2018 DoD Maintenance Symposium. 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.

My point of contact is Mr. Michael P. Hynes, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Materiel Readiness, at 703-697-1903 or michael.p.hynes.civ@mail.mil.

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Attachments:
As stated
2018 Secretary of Defense Field-level Maintenance Award Winners’ Summaries

1st Maintenance Battalion
Combat Logistics Regiment 15
1st Marine Logistics Group
I Marine Expeditionary Force
United States Marine Corps

The 1st Maintenance Battalion consistently provided the highest quality of overflow and intermediate maintenance support for all I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) and units west of the Mississippi River, completing 94 incident free maintenance support team and maintenance contact team missions, and achieving an average materiel readiness rate of 89 percent for I MEF. The battalion closed an unprecedented 21,696 maintenance service requests, 602 with a high urgency of need status, while performing corrective maintenance for over 15,109 principle end items, and over 6,587 secondary repairable items. Moreover, the Intermediate Maintenance Activity (IMA) supply activity account managed and executed $2.66 million in maintenance purchases for seven IMA accounts across two states; Combat Logistics Company (CLC) -11 in Miramar, California; CLC-13 in Twentynine Palms, California; and CLC-16 in Yuma, Arizona.

With a comprehensive intermediate maintenance efficiency strategy, the unit completed over 25,000 service requests, while concurrently decreasing backorder customer wait time from 100 days to an enterprise low of 57 days, and increasing fill rates from 41 percent to a high of 69 percent. Despite operating at 73 percent of its staffing goal as a result of supporting global force requirements, 1st Maintenance Battalion continued to develop innovative methods to increase its capacity to support maintenance requirements. Exercising the basic tenet of “train as we fight,” 1st Maintenance Battalion pushed their fight forward by proactively deploying communication, engineering, ordnance, utility, and motor transport support across the area of operations. From expanding the battalion’s organic ability to repair circuit cards to providing training opportunities to I MEF units to expand their own field-level repair capabilities, 1st Maintenance Battalion remained dedicated to ensuring today’s warfighting readiness while simultaneously preparing for tomorrow’s challenges. The battalion’s actions reflected credit upon themselves and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps, the United States Naval Service, and Department of Defense.

48th Maintenance Group
United States Air Force

The 48th Maintenance Group, 48th Fighter Wing, Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, distinguished itself by earning the United States Air Forces’ Europe as best Nuclear Surety Inspection results in six years. They accomplished superior aircraft maintenance by flawlessly executing a $245 million Flying Hour Program, which encompassed more than 8,900 sorties and 16,200 hours, while simultaneously deploying 462 Airmen and 19 aircraft in support of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE. Deployed Liberty Wing Maintainers, generated more than 9,600 combat hours and expended over 5,000 bombs, resulting in the destruction of 2,500 targets and the elimination of 1,400 enemy combatants. Their combat prowess enabled an around-the-
clock alert status, dislodging Islamic State fighters from the cities of Mosul, Iraq, Raqqa, and Syria. In addition, the unit recorded the first Air Force air-to-air kill in over 26 years. Moreover, the Group maintained a 21 aircraft readiness posture for an on-call bomber presence that supported a United States Navy carrier strike group. Furthermore, the 48th Maintenance Group paved the way for future operations through innovation. The Air Force Repair Enhancement Program team utilized disruptive manufacturing techniques, incorporating Additive Manufacturing, 3D printing capabilities. They locally manufactured 208 backlogged parts and avoided a 21 month delivery delay. The Maintenance Group also created an oxygen deprivation simulator, to train aircrew on emergency procedures. The team’s ingenuity safeguarded pilot safety by ensuring they can correctly identify a hypoxia event. Their professionalism and commitment to excellence demonstrated by the men and women of the 48th Maintenance Group reflect great credit upon themselves, the United States Air Forces in Europe, United States Air Force, and the Department of Defense.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company
4th Battalion
160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne)
United States Army

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) (Airborne) serves within the nation’s only special operations aviation regiment. HHC 4-160th SOAR demonstrated relentless commitment to excellence that resulted in unparalleled mission readiness, support, proficiency, and sustainment of equipment services during ongoing training, deployment, and contingency operations throughout the world. During the competition period, HHC 4-160th SOAR deployed and supported 14 missions, including 10 to the Pacific and Central Commands operational areas. HHC 4-160th, stationed out of Joint Base, Lewis-McChord, logged 32,750 man-hours, while maintaining over 200 pieces of tactical and non-tactical equipment, 600 pieces of communication electronics, 1100 weapons, and 800 pieces of CBRN equipment. Additionally, HHC 4-160th drove over 18,500 miles to distribute 1.5 million gallons of fuel. These efforts were directly reflected in the unit’s operational readiness rating of 99 percent, exceeding Department of the Army standards. The unit’s hard work and dedication to duty in an effort to sustain and improve unit readiness and quality of life reflects great credit upon the soldiers, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), the United States Army, and the Department of Defense.

Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic Oceana
United States Navy

Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic (FRCMA) Oceana set the standard for maintenance excellence by providing world class aviation support and repair of engines, airframes, components, and aircraft launch and recovery systems. During the performance period, FRCMA Oceana provided direct maintenance support and deployed with four Carrier-Strike Groups. Their professional achievement and superior dedication while providing unmatched production support and customer service to forward deployed and local during the competition period of performance is unsurpassed. Through steadfast commitment to maintenance excellence and continuous process improvement, the 956 Sailors, Marines, civilians, and contractors of Fleet
Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic Oceana, expeditiously met all Warfighter needs by providing vital Intermediate and Depot Level maintenance support and logistics services to 43 activities around the globe. They performed 61,226 “by-the-book” maintenance actions and expended 380,787 man-hours in direct support of 19 Commander, Strike Fighter Wing Atlantic squadrons and six Carrier Strike Group Teams. This outstanding team also completed 1,131 Beyond Capability of Maintenance Interdiction actions, resulting in a cost avoidance for the Naval Aviation Enterprise in excess of $52.9 million. Setting the standard for innovation, their junior and senior Innovation Think Tank Teams harnessed the imaginative and inventive ideas of their Sailors, Marines, and civilian teammates to promote bold and novel concepts, which successfully aligned the command with the Secretary of the Navy’s Task Force Innovation Initiative and the Chief of Naval Operations’ Design for Maintaining Maritime Security. Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic Oceana is the benchmark of effectiveness across the Department of Defense. Their outstanding achievement in providing safe, professional, and on time Warfighter support, across the globe, reflected great credit upon each individual assigned and was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service and the Department of Defense.

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron TWELVE
United States Navy

The “World Famous” Golden Falcons of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 12 served as proud ambassadors to the Asia-Pacific Theater, demonstrating outstanding success in tactical proficiency and operational readiness while finding innovative solutions to ensure mission success. Operating as a forward deployed naval force aboard USS RONALD REAGAN, HSC-12 participated in a variety of joint and multinational exercises such as KEEN SWORD, ANNUALEX, and TALISMAN SABER. The squadron flew 4,337 flight hours supporting Carrier Air Wing 5 and Battle Force SEVENTH Fleet tasking, including providing a 54-hour continuous open-ocean search for a man overboard, and rendering immediate and critical medical and logistical assistance to the USS FITZGERALD following her collision at sea. The squadron was selected to be the primary rotary wing unit responsible for moving the Vice President of the United States and Secretary of Defense during visits to Japan. Making it all possible was the squadron’s maintenance department, which maintained an impressive mission capable aircraft rate of 87.1 percent, resulting in a 99.8 sortie completion rate. During the Vice President and Secretary of Defense moves, the squadron maintained a remarkable 100 percent mission capable aircraft rate; a testament to the hard working, fully qualified, and supremely dedicated men and women of the Golden Falcon maintenance team. The Golden Falcons shattered Naval Aviation maintenance metrics for the entire twelve-month period by leading in Ready Basic Average and Ready for Training among their entire carrier air wing and all Naval helicopters, with a qualification gap of zero. Such aviation metrics performance is remarkable and the squadron achieved all of this while completing a six month SEVENTH Fleet strategic deployment aboard the USS Ronald Reagan. Additionally, in recognition of their superlative maintenance efforts within Carrier Air Wing 5, the Golden Falcons were awarded the coveted CVW-5 “Golden Wrench” award for First Quarter, 2017. The “World Famous” Golden Falcons of HSC-12 proudly continued their tradition of excellence in all that they accomplished, and were keeping in tradition with the highest traditions of the United States Navy and the Department of Defense.
31st Munitions Squadron
United States Air Force

The 31st Munitions Squadron, 31st Maintenance Group, 31st Fighter Wing, Aviano Air Base, Italy, has distinguished itself by accomplishing superior munitions maintenance during the competition period of performance. During this period, the 273-person unit excelled in delivering and maintaining over $12.2 billion in munitions stockpile, $26 million in Weapons Storage and Security Systems, and $48.6 million in combat ready armament equipment for the 51 Block-40 F-16CM aircraft. Their continuous drive for excellence and unparalleled attitude cemented the foundation for the successful generation of 7,170 sorties while sustaining the best Combat Air Force Block-40 F-16 mission capable rate of 81 percent for 12 consecutive months. The Squadron armed 56 combat aircraft across 7 airframes and supported Air Force Special Operations Command AC-130 and HH-60 Close-Air Support Combat, Search and Rescue missions. Hellhounds inspected, assembled, and delivered over 700 precision Air-to-Ground Munitions, 133 Joint Advanced Precision Kill Weapons Systems, and 13,552 countermeasures. Additionally, the “Hellhounds” solidified itself as the bedrock of the Fighter Wing’s nuclear surety programs, leading 74 real world and exercise protection level-one events. These efforts culminated in nine 2017 United States Air Forces in Europe Inspector General Nuclear Surety Inspection “Excellent” and/or “Outstanding” ratings and four “Superior Team” award, and the 31st Fighter Wing’s only Inspector General “Award of Excellence.” Furthermore, the unit executed deployments and Flight Training Deployments throughout 10 geographically separated areas of responsibility; these actions culminated in 17,500 aircraft flying hours that destroyed over 2,000 enemy personnel and targets. The professionalism and commitment to excellence demonstrated by the men and women of the 31st Munitions Squadron reflect great credit upon themselves, the United States Air Forces in Europe, the United States Air Force, and the Department of Defense.

2018 Secretary of Defense Robert T. Mason Award for Depot Maintenance Excellence Winner Accomplishments

Nuclear Aircraft Carrier Maintenance and Emergent Repairs
Puget Sound Naval Shipyards and Intermediate Maintenance Facility
United States Navy

The Puget Sound Naval Shipyards and Intermediate Maintenance Facility’s Nuclear Aircraft Carrier Maintenance and Emergent Repairs Program provided unprecedented, sustained superior execution and achievement in maintenance, innovation, and operational support for the United States Navy during the competitive period of performance. Puget Sound Naval Shipyards and Intermediate Maintenance Facility returned three aircraft carriers to the fleet on or ahead of schedule. Significant accomplishments include: the first organic in-yard nuclear aircraft carrier availability delivered early since 2009, significant carrier maintenance cost avoidance of $8.136 million, significant repair of casualty damage to the sonar dome of the USS LOUISIANA, early completion of a critical refueling evolution, implementation of innovative solutions reducing Inactive Ship Recycling and Reactor Compartment Disposal by eight months while also providing $4.9 million in cost avoidance, and swiftly performing Casualty Report repairs to ships.
underway. The accomplishments of Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility at home and abroad truly live up to their mission to “Maintain, Modernize, and Retire our Navy’s Fleet.” The professionalism and commitment to excellence demonstrated by this workforce reflect great credit upon themselves, Naval Sea Systems Command, the United States Navy, and the Department of Defense, therefore, their accomplishments truly deserve the designation as the 2018 Robert T. Mason Award for Depot Maintenance Excellence award winner.

**2018 Secretary of Defense Award for Excellence in Maintenance Training, Advice, and Assistance of Foreign Security Forces Award Winner’s Summary**

**Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Technical Assistance Field Team**  
**United States Southern Command**

The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative - Technical Assistance Field Team (CBSI-TAFT) is recognized for outstanding achievement and excellence in all facets of maintenance mission support. As part of a U.S. presidential priority and department of state funded team, CBSI-TAFT deployed 39 times to 11 nations amounting to 1,459 days on scene, positively influencing 29 percent of U.S. Southern Command’s area of responsibility by improving citizen security. The joint-service U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Army team installed an enterprise-level maintenance/logistics solution in 8 countries thus promoting standardization throughout the Caribbean for 12 dissimilar classes of maritime interceptor vessels with 8 different configurations of propulsion systems, electronic navigation, and communication suites, as well as fostering a cultural shift from responsive to preventative practices. In addition, the team executes the U.S. Coast Guard Commandant’s western hemisphere strategy as a critical enabler to nearly 4,000 Foreign Service members with a combined fleet of nearly 80 vessels valued in excess of $30 million. Through the application of prudent mission support concepts in nations that historically struggle with programmatic maintenance practices, CBSI-TAFT substantially enhanced the operational availability of partner nation coast guard and navy assets to counter illicit maritime trafficking threats in their littoral waters. For the 7 nations under the regional security system, CBSI-TAFT’s direct influence resulted in a 29 percent increase in patrols, 112 percent increase in patrol hours, 182 percent increase in boardings, 50 percent increase in vessel seizures, and 184 percent increase in search and rescue operations. In the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria, CBSI TAFT evaluated post-hurricane damage and post-storm capabilities of their partner nations, and proved critical to the recommencement of sustained maritime operational readiness. The dedication and devotion to duty displayed by the personnel of the CBSI TAFT are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States military.