

Liberty Press Weekly

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512th Airlift Wing, Dover Air Force Base, Del.

And, the 512th AW annual award goes to ...



**Senior Airman
Matthew Ronan**
Airman
of the Year



**Staff Sgt.
Robert Rossey**
NCO
of the Year



**Senior Master Sgt.
Jerome Smolarek**
Senior NCO
of the Year



**Capt. Crystal
Beach**
Company Grade
Officer of the Year



Willie Hairston
Civilian
of the
Year

Master Sgt. Veronica Aceveda 512th AW Public Affairs

About 300 people gathered at Dover Downs Saturday evening to find out who would walk away as the 512th Airlift Wing's annual award winners.

Col. Randal L. Bright, 512th Airlift Wing commander, bestowed the year-long title and honors to the following Airmen.

Senior Airman Matthew Ronan, 512th Logistics Readiness Squadron, is the 512th AW Outstanding Airman of the Year. The fuels journeyman deployed to Southwest Asia, where he issued 5 million gallons of fuel to more than 1,100 coalition aircraft and was inducted into the base's Grand Hall of Fame. Ronan returned from deployment and completed all required training needed for the wing's Operational Readiness Exercise in only two weeks, earning an Excellent rating.

Staff Sgt. Robert Rossey, 512th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, is the Outstanding NCO of the Year. During a deployment in Kyrgyzstan, the aerospace maintenance technician served as the assistant NCO in charge of de-icing operations, which serviced 317 missions with zero weather delays. He saved a mission by identifying a loose nose landing gear axle spacer. Rossey was a member of a team which raised \$25K for multiple sclerosis, marking the highest event total in the last five years.

Senior Master Sgt. Jerome Smolarek, 512th AMXS, is the Outstanding Senior NCO of the Year. While deployed to Kyrgyzstan, the production superintendent managed 39 maintainers and orchestrated maintenance action procedures for 621 aircraft, which contributed to the deployed wing's 95.9 percent mission success rate. Smolarek was named Superior Performer for avoiding 16 mission recovery taskings, which saved \$19K in travel costs and maintenance man-hours.

Capt. Crystal Beach, 512th AW, is the Outstanding Company Grade Officer of the Year. The wing executive officer deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, where she served as the assistant Installation Control Center director, leading the airfield through seven attacks, alerting 45,000 wing personnel and increased the defensive posture in less than an hour. Beach managed more than 75 higher headquarters taskings and reduced the unit's awards and decorations backlog by authoring more than 600 medals.

Willie Hairston, 512th Force Support Squadron, is the Outstanding Civilian of the Year. The administrative assistant processed more than 165 Requests for Personnel Action with the lowest Air Force Reserve Command error rate. Hairston's Time and Attendance program received zero errors for three quarterly audits. For the 2011 ORE, he served as a unit control center representative, supporting more than 70 Airmen, achieving 100 percent mission readiness.

Bright, who initiated the creation of having an annual awards banquet upon his arrival, conveyed a sense of pride to the crowd of Airmen, spouses and distinguished visitors such as the base commander, honorary commanders and the mayor of Dover.

"You've finally reached the pinnacle I envisioned five years ago," he said. "You made it to Dover Downs, there are hundreds in attendance and the support and recognition for these deserving Airmen is phenomenal."

Throughout the night, Capt. Otis Wilson, 512th Operations Group, and Master Sgt. Mike Derasmo, 512th Maintenance Squadron, continued to entertain the audience as the emcees of the event. They also spotlighted Airmen in the audience, who had reached milestones at levels beyond the base.

Lt. Col. Mark Visco, 512th Airlift Control Flight commander, accepted five of those awards on behalf of his unit and Airmen.

"I'm exceptionally proud of the members of my unit," said Visco. "They earned every one, and I'm proud to lead them."

Bright, who has led the Liberty Wing since June of 2007, will be moving to Robins Air Force Base, Ga., in May. Serving as the banquet's guest speaker, he embraced the opportunity for a farewell address.

"This is a great wing, and it's been a great ride," said Bright. "I wish I had an award to give to every person in the room."

Nominate Airmen for first quarterly awards board

The 512th Airlift Wing Airman, NCO, Senior NCO, Company Grade Officer and Civilian of the Quarter Board will be April 14 in Bldg. 520. The suspense for packages meeting this board is April 6. For questions about the nomination process, call Brian LaRochelle, 512th Force Support Squadron, at (302) 677-3520.