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AFTAC Airmen haul in annual STEM hardware

By Susan A. Romano, AFTAC Public Affairs

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – Six Airmen from the Air Force Technical Applications Center here earned Air Combat Command accolades for their accomplishments in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

The winners, all of whom are assigned to AFTAC's Technology Coordination Office (TC), learned of their selection from AFTAC's commander, Col. Steven M. Gorski, after ACC's 4-star general made the final selections.

The awards were broken up into two distinct groups: one for Science and Technology, and one for Acquisitions. Within the groups were specific categories and recipients were required to submit a lengthy nomination package for each award.

Three of the six awards are named after luminaries associated with the respective award. Capt. Jeffrey B. Archer, chief of TC's Aerospace Systems Branch, won the Harold Brown Award, the highest award given by the Air Force to a scientist or engineer who applies scientific research to solve a problem critical to the needs of the Air Force. It is named after Dr. Harold Brown, the eighth Secretary of the Air Force and 14th Secretary of Defense.

Capt. Kimberlee S. Pottinger, chief of TC's Sensors, Surveillance and Development Branch, won the Air Force Science and Engineering Award/Research and Development category for her work on global persistent surveillance and characterization of high value assets within the Department of Defense.

Maj. Ernesto F. Curiel, TC's deputy director, earned the Air Force Science and Engineering Award/Research Management category. Curiel was instrumental in the advancement of unique communications and identification technologies to meet critical mission requirements.

Maj. Michael Butler, who serves as the chief of TC's Space Situational Awareness Sensors Branch, was selected for the Air Force Science and Engineering Award/Advanced Technology Development after he led a 62-member team from 15 national organizations to develop a space situational awareness characterization technique. This is Butler's third consecutive win (same group, different categories), and the past two years he went on to win at the Air Force level as well.

Curiel collared a second award from the acquisitions group—the Gen. Lester L. Lyles Developmental Engineer of the Year award. Lyles was the commander of Air Force Materiel Command who received degrees in mechanical and nuclear engineering.

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The sixth winner was Capt. Joshua J. Ford, a TC systems engineer, who was presented with the Dr. Paul G. Kaminski Most Promising Systems Engineer Award for his work on a \$2.5 billion geosynchronous earth orbit missile warning spacecraft. Kaminski is best known for his role in the development of stealth aircraft.

“AFTAC Airmen absolutely overshadowed the competition and came away with impressive hardware,” said Lt. Col. David Laird, director of TC. “These awards are a true testament to the caliber of our workforce here, and the recognition our Airmen continue to receive around the Air Force is well deserved. I am honored to serve with them, and I am confident their hard work will continue as it always has.”