



AIR FORCE TECHNICAL APPLICATIONS CENTER

Office of Public Affairs ** 1020 S. Patrick Drive, Suite 4222
Patrick Air Force Base, Florida 32925
(321) 494-7688 * DSN 854-7688 * aftac.pa@us.af.mil

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Treaty Monitoring Center inducts three to its Wall of Honor

By Susan A. Romano, AFTAC Public Affairs

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – The Air Force Technical Applications Center here inducted three new members to its Wall of Honor at a ceremony held in the center's Doyle Northrup Auditorium March 27, 2018.

Lt. Col. Robert Wiley, Chief Master Sgt. Bill McClelland and Chief Master Sgt. Sue Spencer, all former members of the nuclear treaty monitoring center, were recognized for their contributions to AFTAC's long range detection mission by having their names engraved on the wall in the center's main lobby.



The tradition began four years ago after AFTAC moved in to its newly constructed headquarters in 2014. The center's Heritage Committee was formed and its first order of business was to develop the criteria to establish a way to recognize individuals who profoundly contributed to AFTAC's global mission, while personifying the Air Force Core Values: integrity, service, excellence.

This year's selectees bring more than 75 years of experience and service to the Department of Defense's sole nuclear treaty monitoring center.

Wiley, a career physicist and nuclear explosion detection expert, spent a good deal of his time at AFTAC working in the Space Operations Division, managing the center's multi-million dollar acquisition support contracts for the U.S. Atomic Energy Detection System. Many of the techniques he implemented during his tenure with AFTAC are still used today.

"I hadn't really expected to receive this recognition," Wiley said, who is also very active in the AFTAC Alumni Association. "I've attended every ceremony since the wall was initiated, but never thought I'd be eligible for induction, especially when you think of some of the other fantastic people who have had their name put on the wall. I'm always impressed how the men and women of AFTAC do everything 'first-class' and today was no exception."

McClelland joined the AFTAC's long range detection team in 1964. During his career, he served at various overseas detachments in New Zealand, Ascension Island and Korea, as well as at the 1155th Technical Operations Squadron at the now-defunct McClellan Air Force Base in California. While the chief retired in 1984, he continued his tenure with the treaty monitoring center as a contractor, where he still serves today.

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2-2-2 WALL

The chief's daughter was overcome with emotion after witnessing her father's induction.

"This is so impressive," said Cheryl McClelland, choking back tears of pride. "My father has always been the best dad a girl could ever ask for, and seeing him recognized for a lifetime of achievement is incredibly overwhelming. I'm so thrilled for all of today's inductees, and can't thank the men and women of AFTAC enough for being like family to us. It's such an honor!"



The third inductee served 26 years on active duty. Spencer began her Air Force career as a pharmacy technician, but ultimately cross-trained to become an applied physics lab specialist. She was a gifted microscopist and oversaw AFTAC's trace particle program throughout the years. Prior to her retirement in 1999 and because of her vast knowledge and skills, she was selected to support the closure of the McClellan Central Laboratory and AFTAC's Technical Operations Division.

While Wiley and McClelland were able to attend the ceremony in person, Spencer was unable to make it to Florida's Space Coast. Instead, she asked to have former co-worker and friend Doris Bruner accept the award on her behalf. Bruner is the technical advisor for AFTAC's Director of Operations and said it was a privilege to serve as Spencer's proxy.

"When Chief Spencer found out she was being inducted, she told me it was an honor and greatly appreciated," said Bruner. "She was disappointed she couldn't attend the ceremony, and hopes to arrange a visit one day in person to see her name on the wall. She also wanted me to express her thanks and gratitude to all those who made this happen – she knows what a huge effort and time commitment it takes."

Bruner added, "Chief said the best part is she's now back in touch with everyone from the Alumni Association, and is thrilled to be in contact with so many from her AFTAC family, past and present."

Each inductee received a hefty medallion with an inscription that reads, "Let this medallion signify its recipient is a member of an elite and noble group of Airmen who stand in silent vigil for the good of all humankind."

Pictured on the medallion is an American Bald Eagle clutching a scroll in one talon and a sword in the other. The scroll symbolizes the Limited Test Ban Treaty and the sword illustrates military strength and might. Above the eagle are the words "Sapientia Potentia Est," Latin for "Wisdom is Power."

Col. Greg Sawyer, AFTAC's vice commander, officiated the ceremony.

"Today, we honor our collective history and the legacy of three fellow Airmen whose distinguished service provides innumerable examples of innovation that outpaced and countered our adversaries," Sawyer said. "We honor their service and contributions, and we honor them for the inheritance they have provided this generation of AFTAC personnel. On this day, you join the ranks of our AFTAC forefathers and luminaries, and we are better for having shared its spaces and responsibilities with you. A significant portion of your lives and talents have been freely given to this organization, and for that we are eternally grateful."

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3-3-3 WALL

Immediately following the medallion presentation, the inductees and their family members were invited to pose for photos in front of their newly-engraved plaques.

Dr. Mike Young, AFTAC's Historian, spearheaded the effort to induct this year's honorees.

"Selection to the Wall of Honor is no easy feat," Young explained. "The Heritage Committee meticulously reviews dozens of nomination packages of former scientists, analysts, engineers and technicians, and only three per year are considered for induction. The committee looks for nominees who demonstrated great character and whose actions truly discriminated them from thousands of other center employees, both military and civilian. The 2018 inductees absolutely exceed those standards, and it was a privilege to be a part of this process."