

CCT @ The Eye of the Storm

SPECIAL OPS MEMBERS GARNER AWARDS by Master Sgt. Raheem Moore, Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs (From AFSOC Public Affairs Website).

October 24, 2010 – Washington, DC (AFNS) -- Twelve members of the Air Force special operations community recently received annual awards presented by Lt. Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, the deputy chief of staff for operations, plans and requirements.

The awards ceremony recognized the 2009 United States Air Force Combat Rescue Officer of the Year, Special Tactics Officer of the Year and the Pararescue, SERE Specialist, Combat Controller Senior NCO, NCO, and Airman of the Year awards.

"These brave Airmen repeatedly, and without hesitation, faithfully answer the call to defend our nation and our way of life, away from personal comforts or desires and often at the expense of birthdays, anniversaries, holidays and family vacations," General Breedlove said. "The actions of these Airmen and others who have paid the ultimate sacrifice remind us that freedom is not free, and our nation is committed to answer the call to defend freedom."

Tech. Sgt. Robert K. O'Connor received the Combat Control NCO of the Year award, and according to his citation, was the only combat controller attached to a Navy SEAL team in Afghanistan. Sergeant O'Connor's technical expertise and professionalism on 34 assault missions led to 141 enemies killed in action, 67 captured, 22 of which were high-value individuals.

Captain Dave Depiazza was recognized as the combat rescue officer of the year, and according to his citation, while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, he was the officer in charge of 40 personnel at four separate locations. Captain Depiazza's efforts and leadership led to the successful completion of 211 combat missions, 60 lives saved and 10 deceased servicemembers returned home.

In addition to Captain Depiazza and Sergeant O'Connor, 10 others received awards:

- Special Tactics Officer of the Year award: Major Mark McGill, assigned to the 24th Special Tactics Squadron
- Combat Rescue Officer of the Year award: Captain Dave Depiazza, assigned to the 38th Rescue Squadron

SURVIVAL, EVASION, RESISTANCE AND ESCAPE SPECIALIST

- Senior NCO of the Year Tier 1 award: Senior Master Sgt. Lawrence M. Richards, assigned to the Air Force Special Operations Command
- Senior NCO of the Year Tier 2 award: Master Sgt. Micheal D. Furguson, assigned to the 22nd Training Squadron
- NCO of the Year award: Tech. Sgt. Michael P. Butler, assigned to the 6th Special Operations Squadron
- Airman of the Year award: Senior Airman Jesse A. Soboleski, assigned to the 1st SOS

COMBAT CONTROL

- Senior NCO of the Year award: Master Sgt. Scott A. Innis, assigned to the Det. 1 Special Tactics Training Squadron

NOTE: This online-only information was added to the CCT history after publication of The Eye of the Storm – A history of Combat Control Teams.

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- NCO of the Year award: Staff Sgt. Rob O'Connor, assigned to the 24th STS
- Airman of the Year award: Senior Airman Jeremy W. King, assigned to the 320th STS

PARARESCUE

- Senior NCO of the Year award: Master Sgt. Brendan Deligio, assigned to the 24th STS
- NCO of the Year award: Staff Sgt Luke Naughton, assigned to the 24th STS
- Airman of the Year award: Staff Sgt. Brent Moore, assigned to the 48th RS

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