



2022 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards Environmental Quality, Individual/Team Award

Each year since 1962, the Secretary of Defense has honored installations, teams, and individuals for outstanding achievements in Department of Defense (DoD) environmental programs. These accomplishments include outstanding conservation activities, innovative environmental practices, and partnerships that improve quality of life and promote efficiencies without compromising DoD's mission success. The 2022 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards cycle encompasses an achievement period from October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2021 (Fiscal Years [FY] 2020-2021). A diverse panel of 53 judges with relevant expertise representing Federal and state agencies, academia, and the private sector evaluated all nominees to select one winner for each of the nine categories. These nine categories cover six subject areas including natural resources conservation, environmental quality, sustainability, environmental restoration, cultural resources management, and environmental excellence in weapon systems acquisition.

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Apr 20, 2022

Department of Defense

OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

About the Environmental Quality, Individual/Team Award

The Environmental Quality, Individual/Team award recognizes efforts to ensure mission accomplishment and the protection of human health and the environment in the areas of environmental planning, waste management, and compliance with environmental laws and regulations (e.g., Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Toxic Substances Control Act). Meeting or exceeding all environmental requirements not only enhances the protection of our environmental assets, but also sustains DoD's ability to effectively train and maintain readiness. The 2022 winner of the Environmental Quality, Individual/Team award is *Air Force Radioactive Recycling and Disposal Team, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio*.

About Air Force Radioactive Recycling and Disposal Team, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

The Air Force Radioactive Recycling and Disposal (AFRRAD) Team is located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (AFB) in Ohio. Wright-Patterson AFB provides operational support for more than 100 associated units, supporting on average 47,000 aircraft operations every year and providing a total economic impact to the State of Ohio of \$5.65 billion annually. The AFRRAD team resides within the 88th Civil Engineer Group's Environmental branch and has sole responsibility for low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) and low-level mixed waste disposal for the entire Department of the Air Force, and provides radioactive material (RAM) recycling services for DoD. AFRRAD is also the focal point for management and disposition of Air Force legacy radioactive waste from sites such as McClellan AFB and Davis-Monthan AFB. AFRRAD supports the Department of the Air Force Radiation Program mission to ensure the safe and regulatory-compliant use of all RAM required to support a combat-ready Air Force.



AFRRAD Team (from left to right): Mr. Brian Mitchell, Mr. Seth Walton, Mr. Christopher Anthony, and Mr. Zachary Olds.

Major Accomplishments in FY 2020-2021

- The team provided 215 man-days of support for RAM management and disposal actions at numerous Air Force installations in the continental United States. Team members delivered a multitude of services ranging from inventorying, packaging, shipping, permit consultation, and oversight of contracted waste brokers, all of which minimized contract costs by \$1.2 million and resulted in over 123,000 pounds of LLRW disposed and 65,000 RAM items recycled.
- AFRRAD provided subject matter expertise to 137 installations for RAM oversight, management, and consultative services. AFRRAD provided the Navy with a RAM recycling outlet for chemical agent detection alarms, which reduced waste volumes by over 99 percent and recycled the radioactive sources. AFRRAD oversaw radioactive waste broker disposal services at 10 installations over 19 days to remove 7,140 RAM items.
- AFRRAD established written procedures for safe and efficient removal of radioactive sources from more than 12 makes/models of devices used for chemical agent and explosives detection by the DoD. Nearly 1,200 of these devices containing radioactive nickel-63 were transferred to Wright-Patterson AFB, disassembled by AFRRAD, and their radioactive sources packaged and sent for disposal. Other agencies and non-government radioactive waste processors have requested access to these procedures, recognized as a benchmark in the radioactive waste industry for waste minimization and operational efficiency at their facilities.
- During the historic closure of Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, DoD personnel sent the AFRRAD team information and photographs of 27 items discovered at the Airfield labeled as radioactive. AFRRAD researched, identified, and validated an accurate LLRW inventory. In addition, the AFRRAD team instructed Bagram Airfield personnel on properly preparing the items for international shipment; authorized funding for transport; and coordinated among logistics personnel, the environmental coordinator, and the Radiation Safety Officer for removal of the items in nine days.
- AFRRAD fostered partnerships across the environmental community. The team partnered with Air Force Materiel Command headquarters logistics staff to develop the first Department of the Air Force-sponsored Department of Transportation Class 7 (radioactive) Specialist training. In FY21, AFRRAD assisted Federal, State, and local emergency response organizations in the planning and implementation an annual training exercise that covers determination, identification, and mitigation of radiological hazards.
- AFRRAD is responsible for managing and maintaining the largest, most diverse RAM permit in the Department of the Air Force. This permit allows AFRRAD to perform radioactive source removal, reducing radioactive waste disposal total volumes by over 95 percent. Radioactive waste disposal fees are assessed by volume; as a result, AFRRAD's volume reduction best practices generated \$200,000 in disposal cost reduction.



Mr. Brian Mitchell and Mr. Seth Walton take radiation dose measurements in preparation for radioactive waste disposal.



Mr. Seth Walton disassembles a Navy Shipboard Chemical Agent Detector Alarm.