

Air Force Technical Sergeant Elvin Sanders

Spotlight On

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Air Force Technical Sergeant Elvin Sanders

He loves God, family, country and his job. He also loves serving those individuals who are less fortunate.

And though Tech Sgt. Elvin Sanders, who is assigned to North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command at Peterson AFB, said he "appreciates" being named one of the outstanding military representatives in the Colorado Springs area, his "real reward" is in heaven.



Tech. Sgt.
Elvin
Sanders

"I'm not looking for rewards down here, though it's nice to be recognized," said Sergeant Sanders, a burly noncommissioned officer who is one of three military members selected "best of the best" by the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee.

Sergeant Sanders and the other winners were selected from 12 nominees representing all of the military installations in the area. The Chamber of Commerce honored all of the nominees at its annual Armed Forces Day Luncheon at the Broadmoor International Center May 14.

Sergeant Sanders was the category two winner, representing people in the grades E-5 to E-6. Senior Airman Trey Goodwin, 50th Security Forces Squadron, Schriever AFB, was the winner in category one, E-1 to E-4, and Sgt. 1st Class John Kent from A Battery at Fort Carson was the winner in category three, E-7 to E-9.

The Military Affairs Committee sponsors the outstanding enlisted representative award to recognize top performers in the active-duty, Guard and Reserve forces. Nominees received a plaque, gifts and prizes, donated by area businesses, totaling more than \$8,000.

Although he has been an award winner most of his military career, Sergeant Sanders said the latest honor came as a shock. "I was surprised but grateful," said the 16-year Air Force veteran. "I never expected to win an award of this caliber." Considering some of his past honors, it is easy to see why the sergeant finished in the top three.

Most recently, Sergeant Sanders was selected the U.S. Space Command NCO of the Year and one of the command's nominees for the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the

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Year. He has been the squadron NCO of the quarter at various bases more times than he can accurately remember as well as the 12th Air Force NCO of the quarter. Also, he has been selected numerous times as the outstanding enlisted member because of his dress and appearance.

Sergeant Sanders began his military career in 1989 vehicle maintenance. But during a deployment to the Gulf War in 1990, he developed a form of sleep apnea and ? after a two-year stint in a military hospital ? was retrained as a personnel specialist. His illness requires the use of a special machine for sleep, but it has not slowed his pace on or off duty.

Sergeant Sanders said he is an avid bowler. In fact, he met his wife, Carol, at the bowling center on Peterson AFB several years ago. He also is an active member of the Masonic Lodge and routinely volunteers with local agencies that feed the homeless, visits the elderly, and makes it possible for blind athletes to compete in track and field events.

As a lodge member, he assists with special events at the YMCA, helps with blood drives, and cleans up a three-mile stretch along Interstate 25. And when the pace slows in his office, he is a guest speaker for the first-term airmen?s program at Peterson AFB, which helps young troops adjust to military life. The sergeant has even earned the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.

Despite his numerous activities, Sergeant Sanders said his first priority is spending time with his wife and daughter.

?I was taught ?do your best and you?ll never fail. ?Shoot for the moon and, even if you don?t make it, you?ll still be among the stars.?? The quotes, he said, are from his mother who single handedly reared Sergeant Sanders and three siblings. He said his mother cried when he told her about his recent award.

Sergeant Sanders, who hails from Detroit, Mich., was assigned to Peterson AFB in 2002. Other assignments include Hahn AB, Germany, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz. Sergeant Sanders is currently pursuing an associate?s degree in human resource management and vehicle maintenance.