



Uniformed Services University

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News Release

Air Force service member wins Airman of the Year award

BETHESDA, Md – A Carlisle, Pa., native at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences here has recently earned the coveted Airman of the Year award.

Air Force Senior Airman Thomas Echelmeyer, son of Debra and the late Thomas Echelmeyer, a retired Air Force master sergeant, competed against three other Air Force airmen on Feb. 14. For the award, Echelmeyer received the Joint Services Achievement Medal.

Echelmeyer is a bioenvironmental engineering technician in USU's Environmental Health and Occupational Safety Department. His job includes managing the USU Infectious Waste Disposal Program, which ensures compliance with laws set by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Maryland Department of the Environment. He has collected, packaged stored and disposed of more than 2,000 pounds of regulated medical waste. He also manages the USU Laboratory Chemical Ventilation Program, which ensures proper airflow and performance of around 65 ventilation hoods.

The four Airmen of the Quarter award winners compete for Airman of the Year. Echelmeyer was Airman of the Quarter for October through December. A board of senior Air Force non-commissioned officers evaluate each quarterly award winner, who must be an E-6 or below. The board members ask each airman a variety of questions on topics such as general

military knowledge, chain-of-command and the Uniformed Code of Military Justice. The senior NCOs also evaluate each airman's written nomination package, which includes information about their leadership qualities, job performance and self-improvement. Each airman receives points for the number of questions they answered correctly, and their military bearing in meeting the board.

"It was an exciting and proud moment to be up in front of the Airman of the year board. It was a good experience to be able to answer questions about Air Force history, customs and courtesies and current events. The board members were great and I am thankful that I was able to progress as far as I did," said Echelmeyer

Echelmeyer graduated from Big Spring High School in 1994 before joining the Air Force in 1997 to see the world and broaden his horizons. In his spare time, Echelmeyer attends Prince George's Community College at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. He enjoys listening to music, playing guitar and reading. In the future, he plans on becoming a commissioned officer in the Air Force after earning his bachelor's degree.

USU was established by Congress under the Department of Defense in 1972 and has the nation's only fully accredited federal school of medicine and graduate school of nursing. With its motto "Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way," the university has a worldwide reputation as a center of excellence for military medical education and research.