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February 19, 2018

Jason Brewer '95 Honored as National Guard Missile Defender of the Year



Capt. Jason Brewer, 2017 National Guard Missile Defender of the Year, center, poses with Riki Ellison, Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance chairman and founder, left, and U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, at the MDAA Missile Defender of the Year ceremony in Alexandria, Va. Photo courtesy of Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance

As North Korea tests missiles and increases threats against the United States, an alumnus of Gardner-Webb University is working to keep America safe. Capt. Jason Brewer, '95, is the operations officer in charge of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade in Colorado Springs, Colo.

For his critical role in protecting the country, Brewer was recently named the 2017 United States National Guard Missile Defender of the Year. According to the U.S. Army News Service, the award is presented each year by the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance to the best missile defender from the Army, Navy, Air Force and National Guard.

During the award ceremony held in Alexandria, Va., Brewer was introduced by U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, the vice chief of the National Guard Bureau.

“As a member of the National Guard, Jason exemplifies the citizen-soldier’s role in our missions of warfighting, defending the homeland and building and sustaining partnerships,” Hokanson said. “While National Guard troops are the force of choice for (responding to) natural disasters, what is less known is our soldiers and airmen are on watch daily supporting U.S. Northern Command and our military services. The 49th and its ballistic missile defense mission is a prime example of how the guard is always ready and always there for America.”

A Tennessee native, Brewer majored in social studies at GWU and played football for Woody Fish, Vice President for University Advancement and former head coach and athletic director. A linebacker, Brewer was named to the All-America team in 1995, his

senior year. He said Fish was a great coach and a man of integrity. “He taught us a work ethic and created a brotherhood,” Brewer assessed. “He drove home the importance of teamwork, which you have to have in the Army.”

Jason Brewer

Off the field, Brewer appreciated his professors, who invested time in their students. “It was a family,” he reflected. “They cared that you got the material and helped you learn to love education. The only reason I am here is because of GWU. It shaped my career. Dr. Tony Eastman (professor emeritus of history) is why I earned my master’s. When I taught school, I sounded like Dr. Eastman.”

Brewer was a teacher and football coach until the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks inspired him to join the Army. His first assignment in 2008 was at Joint Base Elmendorf, Richardson, Alaska, with the 1/40 Cav and USARAK, where he deployed in support of Enduring Freedom. He later joined the Alaska National Guard and served as the personnel director of the 38th Troop Command in Anchorage. In 2016, he became the Missile Defense Operations Chief at the 100th Missile Defense Brigade in Colorado Springs, Colo.

In 2017, he was responsible for the planning and execution of Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) fire control software upgrades. He was nominated for the award by Col. Kevin Kick, brigade commander, and Lt. Col. Michael Strawbridge, the operations and training officer. In his award nomination, Strawbridge noted, “During perhaps the highest operations tempo year in the brigade’s history, Capt. Brewer played a critical role in training and enabling crews to meet the 24-7 readiness requirements in defense of the homeland and led the unit’s successful test initiatives to ensure our nation continues to have the most effective and modern missile defense system in the world.”

During his military career, Brewer has also received the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Ribbon and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.