

USAF Nominee For

America's TEN OUTSTANDING YOUNG MEN of 1968

Note: In 1968, for the 31st time, the U.S. Jaycees sought nominations to select America's Ten Outstanding Young Men of the year and honor them at an awards congress. Young men from all fields of endeavor were nominated for this award. The United States Air Force nominated Marko Milakovich. While he was not selected, his nomination is a significant reflection of his character and achievements while he was serving the United States of America in Vietnam and Southeast Asia as a young communications engineer assigned to the First Mobile Communications Group.

1. Marko Milakovich earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in electrical Engineering, graduating from Washington State University in 1965. While at the University, he participated in the United States Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program and was selected as a Distinguished Military Graduate. He maintained a high academic average and was active in campus organizations. He served as President of the University Radio Club for two years and as President of the folk-Dance Club for one year. Because of his demonstrated ability in electronics, he was employed by the university to make evaluations of two competing types of communications equipment to determine a contract award for the city of Seattle. After graduation from the University in 1965, he went on active duty with the United States Air Force. He attended a 48-week communications course at Keesler AFB, Mississippi, advancing through the course at an accelerated rate to complete the entire course in only 34 weeks. Upon completion of the communications course, he was assigned to the 1st Mobile Communications Group, Clark Air Base, Republic of the Philippines. During his two year tour of duty with that organization, he distinguished himself by outstanding service to the field of communications and the United States Air Force. He has been recommended to receive the award of the Bronze Star Medal for service rendered in Southeast Asia.

2. Lt Marko Milakovich has contributed immeasurably to the establishment of vital communications systems in Southeast Asia. He has rendered distinguished service in the research engineering, and installation of numerous highly complex systems. He has been deployed as a mobile team commander to locations in Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Korea. He has demonstrated unparalleled technical knowledge of newly developed tropospheric scatter modes of communications equipment. He has been tasked to perform complicated site surveys and path feasibility studies. While his electrical engineering background has well suited him for his role, his dedication to duty, diligent efforts, and qualities of outstanding leadership have insured the highly successful completion of every project.

His initial assignment as a mobile team commander required him to make site surveys and install a network of AN/MRC-98 tropospheric scatter radio relay systems in Thailand. Overcoming many obstacles, he accomplished the successful completion in record time and was subsequently selected to conduct radio frequency interference tests in conjunction with the Defense Communications Agency and an Army RFI unit.

As the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam undertook a comprehensive program of planning for the commitment of various types of tropospheric scatter systems throughout the Republic of Vietnam, Lt. Milakovich was selected to direct the monumental task of making numerous site surveys and path feasibility evaluations. Although on occasions he and his men were subjected to hostile enemy action, he aggressively continued to accomplish the essential field operations. The precise mathematical calculations made by Lt. Milakovich were used as a basis for establishing the network of tropospheric scatter systems employed by the United States Armed Forces in Southeast Asia. He made comprehensive technical reports outlining equipment modifications which he engineered and designed to insure maximum equipment reliability and operational capability. He engineered circuits to overcome intricate equipment interface problems, thus allowing a versatility in the types of equipment used. By virtue of his engineering talents, the United States Armed Forces Tropospheric Scatter communications System was designed to function at the peak of efficiency. In response to urgent requirements for communications, Lt Milakovich led a team to install the AN/TRC-97A tropospheric scatter relay between Qui Nhon and Tuy Hoa Air Base. The highly successful completion of this project earned a personal letter of appreciation from General Huey, Assistant Chief of Staff (J6), MACV. As the communications requirements escalated along with the war effort, Lt Milakovich returned to Vietnam many times to install additional communications systems and to restore or recover damaged equipment.

Although Lt Milakovich has been primarily engaged in satisfying the heavy communications requirements in Vietnam. He has also been of assistance to the Philippine Air National Defense System. Upon request, he performed a series of site surveys for establishing a vital communications system. He discovered that a communications link had been previously established. He was able to correct all the existing difficulties with the system in being, resulting in the timely activation of communications and considerable savings of resources.

Immediately following the "Pueblo Incident", Lt Milakovich was deployed to Korea to survey possible communications requirements. During the month he spent in Korea, he accomplished numerous site surveys for tropospheric scatter system, air-to-ground communications, and telephone and cabling requirements. He also gave technical advice and assistance to other units. His contribution to the planning phase were highly commended by personnel of 5th Air Force. After attending a provisioning conference in New York, Lt Milakovich deployed and installed a new tropospheric scatter system, AN/TRC-103, to fulfill communications requirements in Korea. Although this was the first installation and operational use of the AN/TRC-103, the system was fully operational in minimum time.

During his two year tour with the 1st Mobile Communications Group, Lt Milakovich has voluntarily deployed on twenty-two occasions and has accumulated 323 days of temporary duty in southeast Asia. While at his home station, he has compiled a wealth of technical data into a practical text to be used in meeting future requirements. He most assuredly has an unsurpassed record of achievements and has made an unparalleled contribution to the field of communications.

3. The following excerpt from Grigaier General Sam L. Huey's letter of appreciation to Lt Marko Milakovich attests to the accomplishments and contribution of this officer to the communications mission in Southeast Asia:

"During this period, you were responsible for the surveys of multiple paths of the proposed employment of numerous types of tropospheric scatter equipments. Your concise and accurate evaluations of path predictions proved invaluable in ensuring the timely commitment of appropriate tropospheric scatter systems to meet operation communications requirements. Your leadership and technical expertise were largely responsible for the rapid and efficient survey, siting, deployment and installation of an AN/TRC-97A tropospheric scatter system between Qui Nhon and Tuy Hoa AB on 18 August 1967, which was operational within 72 hours after its introduction into RVN. Your cooperation, tact, efficiency and high degree of professionalism have been instrumental in the successful accomplishment of the communications-electronics mission in the Republic of Vietnam and reflect great credit upon yourself and your organization."

The highly successful achievements of Lt Milakovich in the field of communications constitutes an exceptional contribution and is greatly magnified by the fact that his achievements were rendered in a war zone contributing directly to enhancing our military posture in Southeast Asia and advancing the attainment of our national interest. He has contributed more than any other single individual to the establishing of vital communications systems employed in Southeast Asia. He has diligently applied his vast technical knowledge to effect solutions to seemingly insurmountable problems. He has designed and engineered several equipment modifications resulting in greater equipment reliability and operational capability. Most of all he has led teams in the field to install and operate complex communications systems never before employed by the United States Air Force in Southeast Asia. Time and time again, Lt Milakovich was called upon to respond to an urgent requirement for communications support in southeast Asia. In every case he was able to satisfy the requirement beyond all expectations. The remarkable success of each and every endeavor is indicative of the highest caliber of professionalism and dedicated service. I am therefore convinced that Lt Marko Milakovich is truly one of the nation's outstanding young men and I am justly proud to nominate him for this award.

FOR NOMINEE: I attest to all facts contained on this form and give permission for the facts to be used for publication..... – signed --

WE BELIEVE: That faith in God gives meaning and purpose to human life / That the brotherhood of man transcends the sovereignty of nations / That economic justice can best be won by free men through free enterprise / That government should be of laws rather than of men / That earth's great treasure lies in human personality / And that service to humanity is the best work of life. THE JAYCEE CREED