



NEWS RELEASE

# The Nuts and Bolts of an award-winning career

2/16/2024

- American Airlines team member Ken MacTiernan is the first aviation maintenance technician to be honored with the Airlines for America Nuts and Bolts Award while actively working in the profession.
- The award recognizes those who demonstrate outstanding service and achievements in the engineering or maintenance fields within the commercial aviation industry.

SAN DIEGO — American Airlines aviation maintenance technician (AMT) Ken MacTiernan was honored with the **Airlines for America** (A4A) Nuts and Bolts award, marking the first time an AMT has received with the award while actively working in the profession since the award launched in 1967.

The award recognizes individuals who demonstrate outstanding service and achievements in the engineering or maintenance fields within the commercial aviation industry. Each year, airline and nonairline honorees are chosen for the award.

"It's humbling to be recognized, but to be recognized for giving back to my profession means everything to me," said Ken. "This award encourages me to keep promoting my craft by showing others in the industry, and those entering the industry, that the work you do has a positive impact. It's a win-win for the industry and American Airlines."

"The entire American team is thrilled that Ken is being honored with this prestigious award," said Evie Garces, American's Vice President of Line Maintenance. "He is not only a highly skilled AMT, but he is a true advocate of the AMT profession. Ken and his commitment to aviation maintenance are legends across the industry."

Evie Garces, Vice President – Line Maintenance; Ken; Chris Oriyano, Director – Line Maintenance

"Ken's passion and efforts for the AMT will be felt for generations to come," said Bob Ireland, A4A Vice President —

Safety, Maintenance and Engineering, “This recognition is particularly well-deserved.”

Ken started his aviation career as a Boeing B-52 mechanic in the United States Air Force in Merced, California. While wrapping up his time in the Air Force, he simultaneously worked to obtain his airframe and powerplant licenses to ensure he could work on civil aircraft after being discharged. He joined American at New York’s LaGuardia Airport (LGA) in 1986 as an AMT, then transferred to SAN 11 months later, trading in hats and gloves for shorts and sandals.

“On February 15, 1987, it was 32 below with the wind coming off the Hudson,” Ken vividly recalled as if it were yesterday. “I was working on a DC-10 and I remember thinking, ‘This isn’t going to work long-term. If I’m going to do this for the next 30-plus years, I might want to go someplace warmer.’ I visited some buddies from the Air Force in San Diego and the rest is history.”

And what a history it’s been.

Over the years, Ken worked hard to promote his craft. He helped establish National AMT Day, which is celebrated May 24 — the birthday of Charles Taylor, mechanic to Orville and Wilbur Wright. Ken is also a founder of **The Competition** (formerly known as the Aerospace Maintenance Competition), an annual event that brings teams of aviation and aerospace maintenance professionals and students under one roof in a two-day competition to showcase their talents. This year’s event will be held April 9–11 in Chicago and will feature a record 90 teams from around the world.

Daughter Danielle, wife Maribell, Ken and son Ronan

If that wasn’t enough, American’s annual Excellence in Aviation Maintenance award is named after Ken, too. The award honors AMTs who exhibit the qualities of professional AMTs, strive to uphold the highest standard in aircraft maintenance, and support and promote the profession.

What does Ken love most about his job?

“There are several things,” Ken said. “I enjoy the camaraderie I have with my fellow mechanics. I enjoy learning something new almost every day. And I just like fixing things.”

Ken will be honored by industry leaders this April at **Aviation Week’s MRO Americas** conference in Chicago where he will officially receive the Nuts and Bolts Award. The conference coincides with this year’s maintenance competition.