



Shown following presentation of awards are (from left) Elizabeth Bennett, MSgt. Richard Maxted, Norman Ward, Manuel Garavito, Capt. Robert Garcia and Joe Giba.
PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

Air National Guard Thanks MTA for Supporting Garavito's Participation

(May 1, 2001) Whenever Manuel Garavito, an MTA communications technician and a sergeant in the Air National Guard, goes on a lengthy deployment, someone has to fill in for him at work.

In the past three years, Tech. Sgt. Garavito has spent a total of 105 days in Saudi Arabia providing radio communications for American forces stationed there. A 17-year veteran, he is a member of the 261st Combat Communications Squadron, based in Van Nuys.

His colleagues in the ITS communications shop at the Regional Rebuild Center – and especially his supervisor, Norman Ward – understand the importance of Garavito's military duty and they've covered shifts during his absence.

Last Wednesday, it was Garavito's turn to say "thank you." He arranged for the presentation of an "Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve" award by representatives of the Air National Guard.

Certificate and commemorative coin

Garavito's squadron commander, Capt. Robert Garcia, presented a certificate and special commemorative coin to Ward in appreciation for his support of Garavito's Air National Guard participation. Certificates and coins also were presented to Ward's supervisor, Systems Maintenance Manager Joe Giba and to Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett.

"We understand that our members have civilian careers and cannot continue without their employer's support," Garcia told members of Garavito's department. "What they contribute to units like ours is the best of both worlds. They bring all their experience and skills from their civilian jobs to the military."

As it happens, Norman Ward is a former technical sergeant in the Air National Guard. He served from 1977 to 1984 in a job similar to Garavito's.

"I understand the importance of what Manuel does for the Air National Guard and how difficult it is to schedule that and have a full-time job," said Ward. "We do what we have to do to get our mission done here at the MTA. In this day and

time, without the draft, we need the Air National Guard and the Reserves even more than when I was in the military."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)