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Nicolas Tièche and Laurent Sciboz of the Fribourg Freiburg Challenge Team to Receive 2018 Harmon Trophy

Washington, DC, August 29, 2018 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is proud to announce that Nicolas Tièche and Laurent Sciboz of the Fribourg Freiburg Challenge Team have been selected as the recipient of the 2018 Harmon Trophy. The trophy was established in 1926 by Colonel Clifford B. Harmon and is to be awarded annually for “... the most outstanding international achievement in the art and/or science of aeronautics (ballooning) for a period covering July 1 through June 30 with the art of flying receiving first consideration.”

Tièche and Sciboz are being recognized “... for their impressive achievement during the Americas Challenge 2017, where they piloted a gas balloon 2,280 miles from Albuquerque, New Mexico, to just outside Labrador City, Newfoundland in 59 hours and 19 minutes.”

The two pilots founded the Fribourg Freiburg Challenge (FR Challenge) Team in 2015 with the goal to bring competitive gas ballooning to a higher level. They have competed at the Gordon Bennett three times (2015-2017) with top rankings each year. Tièche and Sciboz won the Americas Challenge 2017 with a distance of 2,280 miles, which is less than 15% short of the current world record of 2,626 miles set by David Hempleman-Adams in 2007. Their flight during the Americas Challenge 2017 was done in a competition setting where the take off time and place isn't optimized, as opposed to a record flight where the pilot can choose the ideal take off time based on the weather window.

“This performance exceeds any measure of excellence in ballooning,” said 2015 Harmon Trophy recipient, Troy Bradley. “To take such a small balloon such a great distance in a race is phenomenal.”

The Harmon Trophy will be presented at the NAA Fall Awards Ceremony at a date and location to be determined. For more information or to view a complete list of previous recipients, please visit www.naa.aero.

The National Aeronautic Association is a non-profit membership organization devoted to fostering opportunities to participate fully in aviation activities and to promoting public understanding of the importance of aviation and space flight to the United States. NAA is the caretaker of some of the most important aviation awards in the world, and certifies all national aviation records set in the United States. For information, visit www.naa.aero.

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