



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **United States Air Force Crew of Draco 42 Flight to Receive 2018 Mackay Trophy**

**Washington, DC, July 24, 2019** – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is pleased to announce that United States Air Force Major Caitlin Reilly, Captain Samantha Lang, Captain Patrick Perez, and Senior Airman Kyle Hanson, the aircrew of Draco 42 flight, have been named the recipients of the 2018 Mackay Trophy.

The Mackay Trophy was first presented by Clarence Mackay in 1912 and was later deeded to the National Aeronautic Association. Administered by the United States Air Force and NAA, the trophy is awarded for the "...most meritorious flight of the year by an Air Force person, persons, or organization."

As outlined in the United States Air Force nomination, the crew of Draco 42 distinguished themselves as a U-28A crew, 319<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Special Operations Squadron, Combined Joint Special Operations Air Component-Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel while serving as the Tactical Air Controller-Airborne for a joint, interagency, time-sensitive mission on August 14, 2018.

Despite multiple rounds of indirect fire impacting near the aircraft at their forward refueling location, Draco 42 continued to coordinate rapidly evolving target and concept of operation changes with geographically separated air and ground assets. Once airborne, Draco 42 managed the highly complex operation of simultaneous helicopter infiltrations to time-sensitive targets in urban areas that yielded valuable intelligence on a top-level Al Qaeda leader and four enemy killed in action. The professional ability and outstanding aerial accomplishments of the crew of Draco 42 reflect great credit upon themselves and the United States Air Force.

The Mackay Trophy will be presented at the NAA Fall Awards Ceremony at a date and location TBD. For more information or to view a complete list of previous recipients, please visit [www.naa.aero](http://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](http://www.naa.aero).*

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