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Lieutenant General Thomas Patten Stafford
(USAF, Retired)
To Receive 2011 Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy

Washington, DC [September 21, 2011] – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) announced that Lt. General Thomas Patten Stafford (USAF, Retired) will receive the prestigious 2011 Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy for his pioneering achievements that have led the way to the moon, to greater international cooperation in space, and to a safer America.

NAA established this award in 1948 to honor the memory of Orville and Wilbur Wright. The trophy is awarded annually to a living American for significant public service of enduring value to aviation in the United States.

Walter Boyne, Chairman of the National Aeronautic Association, lauded the choice. “General Stafford’s manifold contributions to aviation and space are properly recognized with this award. His heroic leadership in national and international space triumphs will be an inspiration for future generations.”

In his long and distinguished career, General Stafford has been a fighter pilot, flight instructor, distinguished test pilot, pioneering astronaut, aerospace record setter, author and an advisor to federal agencies and U.S. Presidents alike. He established a successful pattern that leads directly from the Gemini missions to the International Space Station. His Apollo X mission was a pathfinder that laid the foundation for the successful lunar landings. Today’s international cooperation and partnership in space was forged upon the historic handshake he offered his (then) Soviet counterpart during the Apollo-Soyuz mission in 1975.

As an advisor to NASA, General Stafford had a profound influence on the team that successfully repaired the Hubble Space Telescope, thereby providing a treasure trove of data and spectacular pictures, forever altering our understanding of the universe. As Commanding General at Edwards AFB, he presided over the development of some of the most important military aircraft in recent history including the B-1A, and F-15. As the US Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Research, Development and Acquisitions, he conceived of and urged the development the stealth aircraft technology which later led to the F-117, B-2 and F-22 Raptor.

“The Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy has been bestowed upon some of the most historic aviation leaders in the world, and General Stafford can be certainly included on that list,” said NAA President and CEO Jonathan Gaffney, who chaired the Selection Committee. “We are very honored to be able to present this great trophy to him.”

Members of the Selection Committee included:

- Walter Boyne, NAA Chairman
- The Honorable Norm Augustine, Wright Trophy Recipient, 2008
- Dan Elwell, Aerospace Industries Association
- Tom Hendricks, Air Transport Association
- Monte Belger, President, Aero Club of Washington
- Dr. Mark Lewis, American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics

Lt. General Stafford will be presented with the award at the Wright Memorial Dinner on Friday, December 16, 2011, at the Washington Hilton Hotel. For more information on the award, please visit www.naa.aero. For more information on the Wright Memorial Dinner, please visit www.aeroclub.org.

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