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Contact: Stephanie Berry
703-416-4888 Ext 104
awards-events@naa.aero

United States Air Force Crews of WEASEL 41 and WEASEL 51 Flight to Receive 2015 Mackay Trophy

Washington, DC, September 7, 2016 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is proud to announce that United States Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Cohen, Major Seth Taylor, Captain Danielle Kangas, and Captain Mathew Park, the aircrews of the Pacific Air Forces' WEASEL 41 and WEASEL 51 Flight, have been named the recipients of the 2015 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, on July 26, 2015, WEASEL 41 and WEASEL 51 flight arrived on scene over Hassekah, a major city in northeast Syria, where friendly Syrian Kurdish ground units were battling the last significant holdout of a group of Islamic State enemy personnel. A firefight in the southeast portion of the city had erupted, pinning Kurdish ground units in a dense urban city block.

Overcoming targeting complicated by weather and limited communications, Lieutenant Colonel Cohen and Major Taylor expertly coordinated and employed several successful munitions in support of Kurdish forces despite highly restrictive attack parameters. Captain Kangas and Captain Park tracked and executed an effective attack on fleeing enemy soldiers wearing blankets to reduce their infrared signature.

In a four-hour period, the crews of WEASEL 41 and WEASEL 51 flight employed 15 precision guided munitions, destroying eight enemy fighting positions, with no friendly or civilian casualties. Their dedication, professionalism, bravery, and airmanship displayed on July 26th marked the end of a three-month operation in Northern Syria that resulted in friendly Kurdish

forces retaking over 17 thousand square kilometers of territory, securing the Syria/Turkey boarder between Iraq and the Euphrates River.

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.

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 world and national aviation records set in the United States. For information, visit www.naa.aero.

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