



National Aeronautic Association
Hangar 7, General Aviation Terminal
Reagan National Airport
Washington, D.C., 20001

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
September 12, 2023

Contact: Tina Wu
703-416-4888
twu@naa.org

ROBERT CRIPPEN SELECTED TO RECEIVE THE 2023 WRIGHT TROPHY

Aviator and astronaut recognized for enduring public service and advancement of American aerospace

Washington, DC, – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is pleased to announce that Captain Robert “Crip” Crippen, USN, Ret., has been selected as the recipient of the 2023 Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy.

Crippen is being recognized for his devotion to public service and the advancement of American aerospace; his achievements as an aviator, astronaut, and leader; and his selfless dedication to the future of humankind. After completing a degree in aerospace engineering, Crippen joined the USN and was selected for the USAF Manned Orbiting Laboratory. In 1981, he was chosen to pilot STS-1, the first orbital spaceflight of NASA's Space Shuttle program. Crippen's NASA career comprised of many firsts including serving with the first American woman in space (STS-7), commanding the first satellite refueling with an EVA (STS-41G), and commanding the first spacewalk by an American woman (STS-41G).

“For the last 40 years the name Bob Crippen has been synonymous with Human Space Flight. From his and John Young's STS-1 flight, which ushered in the Space Shuttle Era, to his leadership of the KCS, to his running of Thiokol, a major space contractor, Bob has contributed mightily to our country's space programs. Beyond his formal roles, Bob has worked tirelessly as an advocate for technology, space travel, and exploration. Bob's body of work clearly merits this recognition,” said Jim Albaugh, NAA Board Chair.

In 1990, Crippen was named Space Shuttle Director at NASA Headquarters. He followed that by serving as Director of NASA's Kennedy Space Center, providing leadership for over 13,000 civil service and contractors. Post-NASA, Crippen worked at Lockheed Martin as the VP for Simulation and Training Systems. In 1996, he became President of Thiokol Propulsion, which was responsible for producing the Shuttle Reusable Solid Rocket Motors.

NAA President & CEO Greg Principato said, “Bob Crippen embodies the criteria of this trophy, the most significant individual award in American aviation. His service and achievements will endure as long as aviation does. His devotion to service is unsurpassed. His selection honors the Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy and all it stands for.”

Established by NAA in 1948 to honor the memory of Orville and Wilbur Wright, the Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy is awarded annually to a living American for significant public service of enduring value to aviation in the United States. The Wright Trophy reflects a timeline of the most innovative inventors, explorers, industrialists, and public servants in aeronautics and astronautics.

Always humble, Crippen said, "I am indeed honored by this recognition and to have my name enshrined along with the great recipients of the past. Everything I have been privileged to accomplish has been as a team member with some great people."

Crippen will be presented with the Wright Trophy at the Aero Club of Washington's 75th Annual Wright Memorial Dinner on December 15, 2023, in Washington, DC. For more information about the award or to view a list of past recipients, please visit www.naa.aero. For updated information regarding the presentation of the Wright Trophy, please visit www.aeroclub.org.

The 2023 Selection Committee Members are:

Richard Aboulafia
Managing Director, AeroDynamic Advisory
James F. Albaugh
Board Chair, National Aeronautic Association
Edward M. Bolen
President & CEO, NBAA
Darby Becker
President, Aero Club of Washington
Nicholas E. Calio
President & CEO, Airlines for America

Eileen Collins
2022 Wright Trophy Recipient
Daniel L. Dumbacher
Executive Director, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
Eric Fanning
President & CEO, Aerospace Industries Association
Pam Melroy
Deputy Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration
General W. Lloyd “Fig” Newton
2018 Wright Trophy Recipient

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.