



National Reconnaissance Office
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**NRO honors three new Pioneers of National Reconnaissance
and achieves program milestone with 100th inductee**

CHANTILLY, Va. – The National Reconnaissance Office honored the late Betty L. Johnson, Jeffrey D. Grant, and Dr. Charles V. Spalletta as the 2022 Pioneers of National Reconnaissance in a ceremony at NRO headquarters Wednesday, June 21. Recognized as the NRO’s highest honor, Pioneers are selected for their significant, lasting contributions to national reconnaissance that inspired future innovations.

“These awards recognize that, for all the incredible accomplishments of these individuals and of NRO, they are the result of collaborations – of teams and of partnerships that go beyond one person or one organization,” said Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence Stacey Dixon, who delivered the ceremony’s keynote address. “Partnerships, collaboration, teamwork, and integration – they are all incredibly important to our shared success.”

NRO Director Dr. Chris Scolese presented Pioneer medallions and citations that will also be displayed in NRO’s Pioneer Hall. With today’s ceremony, 102 Pioneers have received this distinction.

“The Pioneers we recognize today were trailblazers and visionaries whose innovative work changed the direction and scope of national reconnaissance,” Dr. Scolese said. “We thank them for their boundary-pushing efforts to develop new and better technology that has helped make our nation safer and more secure.”

Johnson designed and developed the first computer software systems and integrated data architecture for mission planning, simulations, operational targeting, and exploitation management. Her contribution dramatically improved operational efficiency and increased the overall satisfaction of intelligence requirements. The Pioneer Selection Board specifically chose Johnson as the 100th Pioneer to be recognized for contributions to the NRO; 2023 also marks the centennial of her birth. Johnson died in 2000, and her niece accepted the honor on her behalf.

Grant laid the foundation for a new generation of NRO satellites by making significant technical improvements to the overhead electro-optical constellation. Capabilities he developed have proven critical to warfighters and analysts who depend on NRO imagery.



Dr. Spalletta applied cutting-edge mathematical techniques and technologies to enable some of the nation's most advanced and challenging reconnaissance missions ever attempted.

Learn more about the NRO Pioneers of National Reconnaissance at NRO.gov.

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The NRO develops, acquires, launches, and operates the world's best intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance satellites to secure and expand America's advantage in space. We are building a diversified and resilient architecture of spacecraft and ground systems designed to meet the challenges of a changing space environment by accelerating innovation and leveraging strategic partnerships, backed by a diverse and highly skilled workforce. At NRO, we see it, hear it, and sense it so our nation's warfighters and policymakers have decision advantage amid increasing global competition.

Learn more at NRO.gov.