

NRO selects 2006 class of Pioneers

The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) has selected its Pioneer Class of 2006 - four people who made significant and lasting contributions to the discipline of national reconnaissance. The four selectees are Ingard Clausen, Fred Hellrich, David Klinger, and Jane Wood. The new pioneers will be honored in a ceremony at 2:00 p.m. on Sept. 20 in the Jimmie D. Hill Auditorium at NRO headquarters in Chantilly, Va. Acting Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, Lieutenant General, USA, Ronald L. Burgess, Jr. is this year's featured speaker. NRO Director (DNRO) Donald M. Kerr will induct this year's honorees as members of Pioneer Hall where commemorative plaques will be permanently displayed in their honor.

Mr. Ingard M. Clausen pioneered the early preliminary design and development of the Discoverer/Corona satellite reentry vehicle that later became the world's first manmade object recovered from earth orbit. He led the team that conceived of a system that could endure the harsh environment of space and the heat of reentry into the Earth's atmosphere. His contributions to the field of rocketry and engineering laid the groundwork for the program's highly successful recovery capability. His career in national reconnaissance spanned from 1958 to 1965.

Mr. Fred V. Hellrich pioneered the architecture, design, development, deployment, and integration of the first digital computer system to process satellite ELINT data at remote ground stations. This new technology allowed for the transmission and collection of compressed data, dramatically reducing the time required to process from weeks to minutes. His innovations provided a revolutionary improvement in the productivity, accuracy, and timeliness of electronic intelligence product and near-real-time reporting to the tactical user. Mr. Hellrich is the Associate Director of the Naval Center for Space Technology, Naval Research Laboratory, in Washington, D.C. His career in national reconnaissance spans from 1965 to the present.

Dr. David L. Klinger pioneered the development, manufacturing, test, and deployment of a new technology that substantially enhanced the ability of the NRO to collect overhead intelligence. He and his team designed, built, and brought on line new manufacturing and test facilities in parallel with the technology development. He also conceived and developed new processing techniques and a star catalog required for accurate geo-location of intelligence targets. His career in national reconnaissance spans from 1967 to the present.

Ms. Jane Wood pioneered the development of a budget and accounting system that accurately tracked expenditures for many of the most sophisticated U.S. space assets. She was preeminent in the national reconnaissance fiscal world in developing reliable budgets for complex satellite programs, establishing an environment of financial stability that furthered the growth of reconnaissance capability. Her career in national reconnaissance spanned from 1969 to 1992.

These pioneers performed critical work toward establishing the NRO's reputation for engineering excellence, responsiveness, and technical innovation. Building upon their foundation, today's NRO strives to provide a global perspective when users need the information. Sixty-nine pioneers have now been selected over the past seven years. Being designated a Pioneer of National Reconnaissance is the highest honor in this field.

News media wishing to attend the event must contact the NRO Office of Corporate Communications at (703) 808-5050 and must be at the NRO Visitor's Center by 1:30 p.m. on Sept. 20.