



National Reconnaissance Office Release

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NRO Honors Two New Pioneers of National Reconnaissance

In a ceremony January 15, 2020 before the NRO workforce and guests, Director of the National Reconnaissance Office (DNRO) Dr. Christopher Scolese honored Edward C. Mahen, Jr. and the late Carol A. Staubach as Pioneers of National Reconnaissance. Recognized as the highest honor in the field, Pioneers are individuals who have made contributions to national reconnaissance that changed the direction and scope of the discipline and its practice. Ms. Staubach and Mr. Mahen join a cadre of 93 other NRO Pioneers.

“This award recognizes and pays tribute to legendary American patriots representing the very best in their field. They were and are truly brilliant people; the experts of their day. And they are national heroes,” said DNRO Scolese, calling the Pioneer Award the “Hall of Fame for NRO.”

Carol Staubach was inducted posthumously into the Pioneer Hall for pioneering the future of overhead reconnaissance by modernizing the NRO’s SIGINT ground architecture, delivering unprecedented intelligence capabilities and the blueprint for the future NRO enterprise. She overcame social, fiscal, international, and technical challenges to positively impact the course of the NRO.

“Carol enabled our systems to achieve even greater tactical and strategic relevance for the nation,” said Dr. Scolese. Ms. Staubach’s family accepted the honor on her behalf.

Ed Mahen was honored for pioneering the development of a revolutionary new reconnaissance satellite and supporting infrastructure that significantly enhanced and strengthened national security over the past decade.

“Mr. Mahen’s work enabled intelligence analysts to understand adversary capabilities and intent and helped our warfighters locate and track adversaries,” said Scolese.

“We have such great respect for the lasting and critical contributions of our Pioneers of National Reconnaissance,” said Scolese. “Their remarkable achievements illustrate the fearless spirit of innovation that has defined the NRO since our beginning. Their exceptional service and pioneering work contributed to strengthening the nation’s security and positioning the NRO as a leader in space reconnaissance.”

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The NRO is the Intelligence Community element and Department of Defense agency responsible for developing, acquiring, launching, and operating America’s intelligence satellites to meet the national security needs of our nation.