

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. RES. 646

Honoring the life and legacy of Lieutenant General Thomas P. Stafford.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 16, 2024

Mr. LANKFORD (for himself and Mr. MULLIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

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## RESOLUTION

Honoring the life and legacy of Lieutenant General Thomas P. Stafford.

Whereas, on September 17, 1930, Lieutenant General Thomas Patten Stafford (referred to in this preamble as “General Stafford”) was born in Weatherford, Oklahoma, to Thomas and Mary Ellen Stafford;

Whereas, in 1952, General Stafford graduated with honors from the United States Naval Academy, after which he joined the newly formed Air Force;

Whereas, in 1958, General Stafford entered the United States Air Force Experimental Test Pilot School at Edwards Air Force Base, California;

Whereas, in 1959, General Stafford graduated from the United States Air Force Experimental Test Pilot School, receiving the A.B. Honts Award as the outstanding grad-

uate, and thereafter became an instructor and wrote flight performance and aerodynamics textbooks for the school;

Whereas, in 1962, General Stafford was chosen among the second group of astronauts by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (referred to in this preamble as “NASA”) to serve in projects Gemini and Apollo;

Whereas, in 1965, General Stafford developed techniques for and piloted Gemini VI, completing the first rendezvous in space;

Whereas, in 1966, General Stafford commanded Gemini IX, demonstrating 3 different types of rendezvous, including the rendezvous that would be used in future Apollo lunar missions;

Whereas, in 1969, General Stafford commanded Apollo 10, piloted the first lunar module to descend within 9 miles of the Moon, designated the first lunar landing site, performed reconnaissance of future Apollo landing sites, and completed each of the essential steps in the final preparation for the upcoming Moon landing, including the first rendezvous around the Moon;

Whereas General Stafford and his crew won the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Special Trustees Award (commonly known as an “Emmy Award”) for initiating development of and taking the first colored images from space;

Whereas, during the return of the Apollo 10 mission, General Stafford set the record for the fastest speed traveled by a human, at 24,791 miles per hour (or Mach 36), which, as of 2024, is still the record and is documented in the Guinness World Book of Records;

Whereas, in 1975, General Stafford took command of the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project for his final space mission, during which General Stafford and Cosmonaut Alexei Leonov shook hands during docking, completing the first international space flight and helping to diminish Cold War tensions;

Whereas General Stafford was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in the Apollo-Soyuz mission;

Whereas, in 1975, General Stafford left NASA to serve as the commander of the Air Force Test Center at Edwards Air Force Base, California;

Whereas General Stafford, as Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Research, Development, and Acquisition, established requirements for, and initiated development of, the first stealth attack aircraft, the F117A, which was the only stealth attack aircraft in the world for 25 years, and initiated the Air Force roadmap for the air superiority fighter that is still in use in 2024;

Whereas General Stafford, just before his retirement in 1979, wrote the specifications for, and initiated the development of, the Advanced Technology Bomber, now known as the B-2 Stealth Bomber, the only stealth bomber force in the world as of 2024, and initiated the development of the AGM-129 Advanced Cruise Missile;

Whereas, from 1991 to 1993, General Stafford led the efforts of NASA to repair and service the Hubble Space Telescope and was presented with the NASA Public Service Award;

Whereas, in 2011, General Stafford was awarded the Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy for pioneering achievements that have led the way to the Moon, to greater inter-

national cooperation in space, and to a safer United States;

Whereas General Stafford completed more than 507 hours in space flight time and flew more than 127 types of aircraft and helicopters during his career, along with 4 kinds of spacecraft and 3 types of boosters;

Whereas General Stafford advised several Presidents on space policy and served as the Chairman of the NASA Advisory Task Force on the International Space Station;

Whereas General Stafford gave a lifetime of service to the United States—

(1) as a member of the Armed Forces;

(2) as an astronaut and commander at NASA; and

(3) while serving in other positions in the executive branch;

Whereas General Stafford contributed immensely to the space race and the advancement of the United States in space policy and exploration; and

Whereas General Stafford demonstrated extraordinary dedication and service to the United States throughout his distinguished career: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) honors the life and legacy of Lieutenant

3       General Thomas P. Stafford for his contributions to

4       the Armed Forces and the space mission of the

5       United States; and

1           (2) extends its heartfelt condolences to the fam-  
2           ily and friends of Lieutenant General Thomas P.  
3           Stafford.

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