

LTGEN THOMAS P. STAFFORD '52, USAF (RET.)

To say that Lieutenant General Thomas P. Stafford '52, USAF (Ret.), has enjoyed a stellar career would be entirely appropriate: he has piloted no fewer than 127 different types of aircraft, flown four space missions and served as an advisor to Presidents Reagan and George H. W. Bush.

Upon his graduation with distinction in 1952, Stafford was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force. He finished first in his class at Air Force Test Pilot School before being assigned to the 54th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron at Ellsworth AFB. Upon being selected by NASA in 1962 as a member of the second group of astronauts, Stafford entered the space program.

In 1965, Stafford piloted Gemini 6 and completed the first ever rendezvous in space, with Gemini 7. In 1966, he commanded Gemini 9, and in 1969 he commanded Apollo 10 in an exploratory mission to select a lunar landing site for Apollo 11. It was during Apollo 10's reentry that Stafford earned a Guinness World Record for the highest speed ever reached by human—24,791 statute miles per hour.

He completed his fourth and final space flight in 1975 as commander of the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project, a cooperative endeavor between the United States and the Soviet Union.

As Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Research, Development and Acquisition, Stafford next guided the initial phase of America's stealth technology program. His knowledge and vision resulted in production of the Stealth Attack F-117A, the advanced stealth strategic B-2 bomber and the F-22 Raptor aircraft.

Under his supervision, the CFM-156 (F-108) jet engine was developed; it was ultimately used by commercial airlines and resulted in significant reductions in fuel requirements. Stafford's current focus is the tripling of air-to-air missile payloads of F-35 fighters operating under stealth conditions.

Stafford's leadership has been evident on the International Space Shuttle Advisory Committee, the COLUMBIA Accident Review Board, the first Hubble Telescope Spacecraft Servicing and Repair Mission and the U.S. Naval Academy Foundation Board of Trustees. Stafford was also recently elected to the National Academy of Engineering.

He holds seven honorary doctorate degrees, has received numerous decorations, citations and medals, both foreign and domestic, and has appeared in several television and film productions.

General Stafford and his wife, Linda, live in Florida.

