

SMDC honors pioneering astronaut with induction into ‘Hall of Fame’

By MAJ Laura Kenney

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — “I remember watching that astronaut on television, attached to absolutely nothing, circling the Earth at 17,500 miles an hour, a million feet up, and thinking that it was the bravest thing I’d ever seen. It is now my honor and privilege to induct that same astronaut into Space and Missile Defense Command’s Pioneer Conference Room Hall of Fame.”

So spoke then-MG Larry J. Dodgen, commanding general of SMDC, referring to the historic, 1984 untethered Space walk of then astronaut Robert Stewart, as Dodgen prepared to induct the now retired brigadier general into SMDC’s equivalent of a “Hall of Fame,” in a ceremony Jan. 27.

The Pioneer Conference Room in SMDC’s branch headquarters building here is dedicated to honoring men and women who have furthered the efforts of the Army in Space.

Stewart was an Army astronaut when he, along with Navy Capt. Bruce McCandless, stepped into Space during the 1984 Challenger mission. The extravehicular activities were used to conduct evaluations of the Manned Maneuvering Units — one man propulsion backpacks that snap onto the back of a Space suit’s life support system. An MMU allows an astronaut to work outside a spacecraft in flight without a tether.

Although those missions undoubtedly are the most famous of Stewart’s career, and earned him the “Hall of Fame” spot, Stewart made many other notable contributions to the military during his 28-year career. He was the senior test pilot for the Apache helicopter, and wrote the Flight Re-entry manual for the shuttle program. When asked what were his own personal highest moments, Stewart didn’t hesitate.

“Flying combat operations in Vietnam. The time I spent serving with the men I flew with form the proudest moments of my life,” Stewart said.

Dodgen commented on that time period when he praised Stewart’s long and varied career.

“I asked General Stewart what that untethered walk was like, and he responded with, ‘It was a walk in the park next to combat.’ This is a man who bled for his country, and was a Soldier long



Then-MG Larry J. Dodgen, left, and BG (Ret) Robert L. Stewart unveil the portrait that now hangs in the Pioneer Conference Room of the SMDC/ARSTRAT Colorado Springs headquarters building. *Photo by Joe Fischer*

before he began the career for which we honor him today. It is fitting that we will hang his picture in our Pioneer Conference Room. If you look up the word ‘pioneer’ in the dictionary, it usually says something to the effect of ‘one who goes somewhere for the first time’ or ‘someone who has led the way.’ General Stewart is truly one who both went first, and who has led the way.

“He is our second inductee into this Hall of Fame recognizing those who began the dream of the Army in Space — his portrait will hang next to someone who built rockets, MG John B. Me-
(See *Pioneer*, page 56)

New Missions ... from Page 33

funding and adequate technology. Any dramatic escalation of current operational engagement will significantly impact our ability to transform.

Our operational center of gravity is projecting the force and providing global strike, global ballistic missile defense, information operations, C4ISR and Space operations capabilities anywhere in the world, in either a supported or supporting role. Our critical vulnerability would be any inability to rapidly and effectively respond. We need to apply a capability to any area of the globe with no technological limitations, communications shortfalls or impediments in acquiring, processing and applying information from the global information grid.

As the new mission areas are integrated with existing ones, we continue to adapt as we take on increased responsibilities and a broader perspective. At the operational level, the fielding of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense marks a significant insertion of capability based on technological developments. Future enhancements to our warfighting capabilities in all mission areas will continue as we continue to focus on the objectives at hand.

Army Support Plan

The Army, as the service component for U.S. Strategic Command offers the following campaign plan:

- Aggressively fill the 64 positions authorized by the Department of the Army to conduct deliberate and crisis action planning across all Strategic Command mission areas. Organized by mission area in the command's G-3 Plans and Exercises Division, these additional personnel (comprised of active component, reserve component and civilians) will plan, coordinate and integrate Army capabilities.

- Develop concepts of operations for each of the newly assigned mission areas, which will clearly define how this command will provide capabilities as the Army service component to U.S. Strategic Command.

- Implement the required connectivity architecture to perform the new missions. Full mission capability requires reliable and comprehensive connectivity across the entire band of communications and connectivity systems. Actions are ongoing to ensure that operations center command and control systems, restricted access facilities, additional

clearances for required personnel, etc., meet new mission requirements. This includes updating architectures and systems to ensure the integration of Army capabilities worldwide.

Conclusion

The mission requirement is to build, maintain and sustain a fully capable support command with a trained and ready Army force able to plan, coordinate, integrate and execute all aspects of its assigned missions, functions and responsibilities from U.S. Strategic Command. Challenges exist, but the performance of SMDC/ARSTRAT is critical to the nation's defense.

William G. Furr serves as the Deputy Director, Interagency Coordination for Law Enforcement and Security at NORAD and U.S. Northern Command. He previously was the Deputy Chief, G-3 Plans and Exercises Division with SMDC/ARSTRAT in Colorado Springs and was directly responsible for the evolution of Space plans to a multifaceted plans and exercises office which now provides support to U.S. Strategic Command. Mr. Furr served in the active duty Army for 8 years in various leadership and command positions. He began his Civil Service career in 1989 as a Counter Drug analysts supporting NORAD. He was cited for Exceptional Meritorious Service in November 2003.

Pioneer ... from Page 43

daris, the first commander of the Army Ballistic Missile Agency. General Stewart rode those rockets," said Dodgen.

Stewart took the podium with characteristic vigor, promising the large audience comprised of his family, friends and SMDC/ARSTRAT Soldiers and civilians that, if they didn't already know just what the Army did in Space, he was about to educate them. And he did, tracing the Army's development of the first satellite to answer the Soviet Union's Sputnik, and the Army's rocket that put the first astronauts into Space through today's support of the

warfighter with high-speed communication and imagery.

"We have a long and proud history in Space, and I'm privileged to be a part of it. But first and foremost, I was a Soldier."

(Earlier, Stewart told tales of tagging along with National Guard units during their annual summer training when he was 11, serving as their water boy just so he could do "Army things.")

"I am humbled to have my portrait hang next to that of General Medaris, who personified the meaning of "audacity" — a key characteristic of any pioneer. But what I like most

to remember about General Medaris is that, when he retired after serving his country so illustriously, he began a second career — as an Episcopalian priest. I think one of you all (addressing the audience) should someday put a plaque over his portrait, maybe bronze, saying "He served his country and his God." All I'd ask is a small one over mine, saying, "Me too."

With that, Dodgen and Stewart ceremoniously unveiled the portrait of Stewart, in NASA garb, that would hang in the Pioneer Conference Room Hall of Fame.