

Tuck McAtee

Inducted 2023



Thomas "Tuck" McAtee is a decorated combat fighter pilot and test pilot, who founded and became the first President of the Williamsburg Aviation Scholarship Program (WASP). Since 2014, WASP has expanded and diversified America's pilot workforce by enabling Virginia students to earn a private pilot license through a structured flight training program at no cost to them or their parents.

Tuck began his career in the F-100, flying 258 combat missions in Vietnam while earning 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 8 Air Medals. He developed an integrated bombing tactic with the F-105 that greatly enhanced their effectiveness and became known as the "Misty FAC".

As a test pilot, Tuck led the AGM-65 Maverick Missile test program and was the first person to shoot a Maverick. He was also an initial test pilot for the YF-16 and led the F-16 tropical climate tests in Panama where he set the world record for coast-to-coast flight across America in 01:40. He also led the F-16's first trans-oceanic crossing and European test program, and he established the F-16 schoolhouse at MacDill AFB. Tuck also transformed the USAF Weapon School (FWS), the Air Force's equivalent to the Navy's Top Gun, from a disparate group of separate schools into a unified curriculum with integrated training.

As Lockheed Martin's F-16 Engineering Program Manager, Tuck led enhancements to the F-16's through every version upgrade, culminating in the F-16 Block 60. He also pioneered the F-22's vectored thrust technology by developing the F-16 MATV. He was also instrumental in providing F-16s to the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, South Korea, and Israel.

His most significant legacy to aviation, though, will be the myriad of Virginia's youth whose aviation careers are enabled and begun through WASP. With a graduation success rate that triples the national average and an ever-increasing class size, WASP will continue to expand and diversify Virginia's pilot force.