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NG-24 Cargo Delivery Mission to the International Space Station

Northrop Grumman is proud to name the NG-24 Cygnus spacecraft in honor of astronaut Steven R. Nagel. It is the company's tradition to name each Cygnus spacecraft after an individual who has made significant contributions to human spaceflight. Nagel was a distinguished former NASA astronaut with extensive experience in aerospace engineering and military aviation.

Steven R. Nagel, Colonel, USAF (Ret.), was born on October 27, 1946, in Canton, Illinois. He graduated from Canton Senior High School in 1964 and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Illinois in 1969. He went on to complete a Master of Science degree in mechanical engineering from California State University, Fresno, in 1978, laying a strong foundation for his career in both the military and space exploration.

He began his military career upon commissioning in 1969 through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) program at the University of Illinois. Completing undergraduate pilot training at Laredo Air Force Base, Texas, in February 1970, he subsequently trained on the F-100 at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. Nagel flew as an F-100 pilot with the 68th Tactical Fighter Squadron and later served as an instructor pilot for the Laotian Air Force in Thailand and the A-7D instructor pilot at England Air Force Base, Louisiana. In 1975, he attended the USAF Test Pilot School at Edwards Air Force Base, where he logged over 12,600 flight hours, including 9,640 hours in jet aircraft.

Steve joined NASA in 1978 as a member of the first astronaut class selected for the Space Shuttle program. He served as the backup T-38 chase pilot for STS-1. He played a pivotal part in software verification for the Shuttle Avionics Integration Laboratory and represented the Astronaut Office in developing the crew escape system for the space shuttle. Over the course of his career, Nagel became a veteran of four space flights, including STS-51G, STS-61A, STS-37, and STS-55. His missions produced significant contributions to science and technology, including the deployment of multiple satellites and extensive research aboard the Space Shuttle.

Following his retirement from the Air Force on February 28, 1995, Nagel transitioned from the Astronaut Office to a role as Deputy Director for Operations Development, Safety, Reliability, and Quality Assurance Office at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston. He later served in the Aircraft Operations Division, where he took on responsibilities as a research pilot and chief of aviation safety. Nagel officially retired on May 31, 2011, leaving behind a legacy of excellence in aviation and space exploration.

Nagel's numerous honors include the Air Force Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with seven Oak Leaf Clusters, and several NASA awards, including the Exceptional Service Medal and the Outstanding Leadership Medal. His contributions to aerospace engineering and space exploration are widely recognized, earning him a prestigious reputation in the field.